

Pronouns are words that are used to replace nouns. Personal pronouns are the most common type of pronouns and refer to people, places, or things.

Personal pronouns:

	Singular	Plural
First Person	I, me, my, mine	us, we, our, ours
Second Person	you, your	yours
Third Person	he, she, him, her, his, hers	they, them, their

Three types of problems frequently occur when using pronouns:

1. **Pronoun-antecedent agreement:** The pronoun and the word it's referring to are not in agreement.

- a. ✓ Correct:



Students should always check **their** work before handing it in.

- b. ✗ Incorrect:



A student should always check **their** work for mistakes before handing it in.

- ✓ Correct: **A student** should always check **his or her** work before handing it in.

TIP: Avoid sexist language by using **'he or she'** or **'his or her'** rather than just 'he' or 'him'.

2. **Pronoun reference:** The pronoun does not clearly refer to the word that it's replacing.

- a. ✓ Correct:



Mike thought that **his** shoes were waterproof.

- b. ✗ Incorrect:



Serg told **Josh** that **his** shoes were probably not waterproof. **Whose shoes?**



3. **Subject vs. Object Pronouns:** A subject pronoun represents the person or thing *doing* the action, and an object pronoun represents the person or thing *receiving* the action.

a. ✓ Correct:

Juan Marcos and I went to the game last weekend.

Anish went with Seher and **me** to the game last weekend.

b. ✗ Incorrect:

Juan Marcos and **me** went to the game last weekend.

Anish went with Seher and I to the game last weekend

Tip: To check whether to use 'I' or 'me', **cover the other part** of the compound subject or object. If the sentence **makes sense**, you have **used the correct pronoun**.

Practice

Correct the pronoun errors in all of the following sentences.

1. A hiker should make sure to bring plenty of water in his backpack.
2. Melea and her sister showed us her latest work of art.
3. A member has to pay his or her dues and make sure they attend all meetings.
4. The professor gave the answers to Tyrell and I, so we could check our homework.
5. In 1984, my family and me came to live in San Francisco.
6. The schedule our supervisor gave he and I is overwhelming.

Find out more. Search the web or a grammar book for **colons, semicolons, conjunctive adverbs, or joining independent clauses**.