Pronouns

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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>First Person</strong></td>
<td>I, me, my, mine</td>
<td>us, we, our, ours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Second Person</strong></td>
<td>you, your</td>
<td>yours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Third Person</strong></td>
<td>he, she, him, her, his, hers</td>
<td>they, them, their</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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?
Pronouns

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**.