

Pronouns

A pronoun is a word that is used instead of a noun or a noun phrase in a sentence. Pronouns make up a small subcategory of nouns. The distinguishing characteristic of pronouns is that they can be substituted for other nouns. Some of the different types of pronouns are given below.

Personal Pronouns

Personal pronouns are used to replace the subject in a sentence. You might also see them called "subject" pronouns, as they designate the person speaking (I, me, we, us), the person spoken to (you), or the person or thing spoken about (he, she, it, they, him, her, them). Personal pronouns are pronouns that refer to specific individuals and groups. Personal pronouns come in three subject, object, and possessive.

Subject Pronouns

A subject pronoun takes the place of a subject in a sentence. The following commonly used words are subject pronouns:

- I
- we
- you (singular and plural)
- he
- she
- it
- they

Examples:

I drive the car. (**I** is a subject pronoun because I am doing the action)

You are welcome.

She is the new teacher.

He speaks three languages.

They are very friendly neighbors.

Here are a few examples of personal pronouns underlined, with the nouns they're referring to bolded:

The new students will arrive today. They will need a seating assignment and a name tag.

My family loves nachos. We make them every Friday for movie night.

Antecedents

In order to use a pronoun, you need to introduce the noun first? That noun has a name. It is called an antecedent.

Antecedents are necessary because pronouns are versatile. Think about it—"it" can refer to a bike, a tree, a car, or a city. For example,

The sign was too far away for Jorge to read **it**.
Danita said **she** is almost finished with the application.

Object Pronouns

Object pronouns are used as the object of a verb or a preposition.

- me
- us
- you (singular and plural)
- her
- him
- it
- them

They offered **me** a ride. ("Me" is the object of the verb "offered." The **me** is receiving the action.)

This letter is addressed to **me**. ("Me" is the object of the preposition "to.")

They gave **us** free tickets to the show. ("Us" is the object of the verb "gave.")

Possessive Pronouns

A possessive pronoun shows ownership. The possessive pronoun clarifies who or what owns something. A possessive pronoun takes the place of a noun. The independent possessive pronouns are

- mine
- ours
- yours (singular and plural)
- hers
- his
- its
- theirs

Possessive pronoun examples

1. The green gloves are **mine**.
2. That cat is **hers**.
3. The red house is **theirs**.

Possessive Adjectives

Like a possessive pronoun, a possessive adjective shows ownership. Unlike possessive pronouns, which replace nouns, **possessive adjectives** go before nouns or pronouns to modify them. The possessive adjectives are

- my
- our
- your
- his
- her
- its
- their.

Possessive pronoun examples

1. **My** book is on the table.
2. **Your** dinner is read.
3. Can you bring **his** tea out to him?
4. Never judge a book by **its** cover.

A common mistake with “its” and “it’s”

A very common mistake is putting an apostrophe in the possessive adjective its. It is easy to confuse “**its**” with the contraction “**it’s**” which stands for “it is”. Remember! Possessive adjectives never use apostrophes.

Incorrect: The cat drinks **it’s** milk.

Correct: The cat drinks **its** milk.

Look at these sentences.

- A. Pepsi is **my** cat. **They** like it very much. (Incorrect)
B. Pepsi is **their** cat. **They** like it very much. (Correct)

We need a possessive adjective before the noun 'cat'. 'B' is correct because the second sentence begins with 'they'.

Reflexive Pronouns

Reflexive pronouns might be the easiest group to remember because they all have one thing in common: the ending "self" or "selves." That's because reflexive pronouns show how the actions of an aforementioned person or group affects him or her (or them).

- myself
- yourself
- herself
- himself
- itself
- ourselves
- yourselves
- themselves

Reflexive pronoun examples

- I bought **myself** a new car.
- That man thinks a great deal of **himself**.
- We may be deceiving **ourselves**.
- She checked **herself** out of the hotel thirty minutes before check-out time.
- Take care of **yourselves**.

Indefinite Pronouns

As the word "indefinite" suggests, these pronouns do not specify the identity of their referents. They are more vague than other pronouns.

- all
- another
- any
- anybody
- anyone
- anything
- both
- each
- either
- everybody
- everyone
- everything
- few
- many
- most
- neither
- nobody
- none
- no one
- nothing
- one
- other

- others
- several
- some
- somebody
- someone
- something
- such

Indefinite pronouns examples

Both were candidates.

No one is home.

Several of the workers went home sick.

Everybody was late to work because of the traffic jam.

It matters more to **some** than others.

Nobody knows the trouble I've seen.

Interrogative Pronouns

This group of pronouns question which individual referent or referents are intended by the rest of the sentence.

- what
- whatever
- which
- whichever
- who
- whoever
- whom
- whomever
- whose

Interrogative pronoun examples

Who left the meeting?

Which of these is yours?

Do **whatever** you please.

Which movie do you want to watch?

Who visited Malia yesterday?

Whom did Dave visit yesterday?

Relative Pronouns

A relative pronoun is one which is used to refer to nouns mentioned previously, whether they are people, places, things, animals, or ideas. Relative pronouns can be used to join two sentences.

There are only a few relative pronouns in the English language. The most common are which, that, whose, whoever, whomever, who, and whom. In some situations, the words what, when and where can also function as relative pronouns. Because there are only a few of them, there are also just a few rules for using relative pronouns. Keep them in mind as you write.

- Relative clauses are typically introduced by relative pronouns, and that the relative pronoun can function as a possessive pronoun, an object, or a subject.
- When relative pronouns introduce restrictive relative clauses, no comma is used to separate the restrictive clause from the main clause.

Which and that

“Which” and “that” both refer to something previously mentioned when introducing another clause.

The difference between them is “which” introduces a non-essential clause and “that” introduces an essential one.

The clause that comes after the word “which” or “that” is the determining factor in deciding which one to use.

If the clause is essential to the meaning of the sentence, you use “that.”

If you could drop the clause and leave the meaning of the sentence intact, use “which.” For example,

1. My house, which has four bedrooms, is located in the Caribbean.
2. My house that has four bedrooms is located in the Caribbean.

The first sentence discusses the location of my only house and it just so happens to have four bedrooms.

The second sentence points out that the house I own with four bedrooms is located in the Caribbean, which means I have more than one houses. “That has four bedrooms” is how I distinguish between my many houses.