

Pronouns

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Personal Pronouns

A pronoun is a word that takes the place of one or more nouns.

The most frequently used pronouns are called personal pronouns. They refer to people or things.

Subject Pronouns

A subject pronoun is used as the subject of a sentence.

She is my best friend.

It is my dog.

Does **he** know the answer?

You and **I** will meet later.

List of Personal Pronouns

Singular

Plural

Subject Pronouns

I	we
you	you
he, she, it	they

Object Pronouns

me	us
you	you
him, her, it	them

Pronouns and Antecedents

Read the following sentences. Can you tell to whom the word *She* refers?

Arachne competes with Athena. *She* weaves skillfully.

The sentence is not clear because the word *She* could refer to either Arachne or Athena. Sometimes you must repeat a noun or rewrite the sentence.

Arachne competes with Athena. Athena weaves skillfully.

Pronouns and Antecedents

The noun or group of words that a pronoun refers to is called its **antecedent**.

When you use a pronoun, you should be sure that it refers to its antecedent clearly. Be especially careful when you use the pronoun **they**. Read the following sentence.

They have several books about Greek myths at the library.

Pronouns and Antecedents

The meaning of **They** is unclear. The sentence can be improved by rewriting it in the following manner.

Several books about myths are available at the library.

Types of Pronouns: Demonstrative

These pronouns are used to demonstrate (or indicate). **This, that, these** and **those** are all demonstrative pronouns.

Examples:

This is the one I left in the car.

(In this example, the speaker could be indicating to a mobile phone, in which case, the pronoun "this" replaces the words "mobile phone".)

Shall I take **those**?

Types of Pronouns: Indefinite

Unlike demonstrative pronouns, which point out specific items, indefinite pronouns are used for non-specific things. This is the largest group of pronouns. **All, some, any, several, anyone, nobody, each, both, few, either, none, one** and **no one** are the most common.

Example:

Somebody must have seen the driver leave.

(somebody - not a specific person)

We are **all** in the gutter, but **some** of us are looking at the stars. (Oscar Wilde)

I have **nothing** to declare except my genius. (Oscar Wilde)

Types of Pronouns: Interrogative

These pronouns are used in questions. Although they are classified as pronouns, it is not easy to see how they replace nouns. **Who, which, what, where** and **how** are all interrogative pronouns.

Example:

Who told you to do that? **Possessive Pronouns**

- Possessive pronouns are used to show possession. As they are used as adjectives, they are also known as *possessive adjectives*. **My, your, his, her, its, our** and **their** are all possessive pronouns.

Have you seen **her** book?

(In this example, the pronoun "her" replaces a word like "Sarah's".)

Types of Pronouns: Relative

Relative pronouns are used to add more information to a sentence. **Which, that, who** (including **whom** and **whose**) and **where** are all relative pronouns.

Examples:

Dr Adam Sissons, **who** lectured at Cambridge for more than 12 years, should have known the difference.

(In this example, the relative pronoun "who" introduces the clause "who studied at Cambridge for 12 years" and refers back to "Dr Adams Sissons".)

The man **who** first saw the comet reported it as a UFO.

(In this example, the relative pronoun "who" introduces the clause "who first saw the comet" and refers back to "the man".)

Types of Pronouns: **Absolute Possessive**

These pronouns also show possession. Unlike possessive pronouns (see above), which are adjectives to nouns, these pronouns sit by themselves. Mine, yours, his, hers, ours and theirs are all absolute possessive pronouns.

Examples:

The tickets are as good as **ours**.

Shall we take **yours** or **theirs**?

Types of Pronouns: Reciprocal

Reciprocal pronouns are used for actions or feelings that are reciprocated (a fancy word that means returned – like you return a favor). The two most common reciprocal pronouns are **each other** and **one another**.

Examples:

They like one **another**.

They talk to **each other** like they're babies.

Types of Pronouns: Reflexive

A reflexive pronoun ends **...self** or **...selves** and refers to another noun or pronoun in the sentence. The reflexive pronouns are: **myself, yourself, herself, himself, itself, ourselves, yourselves** and **themselves**.

Example:

John bakes all the bread **himself**.

(In this example, the reflexive pronoun "himself" refers back to the noun "John".)

Pronouns List

A all another any anybody anyone anything

B both

E each each other either everybody everyone everything

F few

H he her hers herself him himself his

I I it its itself

M many me mine more most much myself

N neither no one nobody none nothing

O one one another other others ours ourselves

S several she some somebody someone something

T that their theirs them themselves these they this those

U us

W we what whatever which whichever who whoever whom whomever whose

Y you your yours yourself yourselves