Using Pronouns

If you only had nouns to refer to people, places, and things, you would have to express an idea like this:

Andy strummed Andy’s guitar and sang the lyrics that Andy had written.

Luckily, you can avoid such awkward sentences. Instead of nouns you can use pronouns. Then you can say:

Andy strummed his guitar and sang the lyrics that he had written.

Notice how the words his and he take the place of the noun Andy. These pronouns convey the same meaning in a direct way.

Personal Pronouns

A pronoun is a word used in place of a noun. Pronouns are very helpful words. They may be used in three situations:

1. They may refer to the person speaking.
   I teach.          we played cards.

2. They may refer to the person spoken to.
   You tune your own car, don’t you?

3. They may refer to other people, places, or things.
   She asked him a question.        They opened their mail.

The examples above show that a pronoun often refers to a person. For that reason, the largest group of pronouns is called personal pronouns.

There are many variations of personal pronouns. Like nouns, personal pronouns may be singular or plural. In the following chart, see how personal pronouns change from singular to plural.
Singular:  I           me                 my, mine
you         you                your, yours
he, she, it him, her, it       his, her, hers, its

Plural:we           us               our, ours
you         you                your, yours
they        them               their, theirs

As the chart shows, most plural pronouns are totally different from
their singular forms. Notice these examples:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I escaped</td>
<td>We escaped.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stop her!</td>
<td>Stop them!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It fell</td>
<td>They fell.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Identify the pronouns used in place of nouns in these sentences. After
each pronoun write the nouns or nouns it stands for.

1. A crane lifted the boulder and loaded it onto a truck.
2. Blair and Katee parked their motorcycles.
3. The hailstones bounced as they landed.
4. The politician repeated his promises.
5. The dancers rehearsed for their performance.
6. The paramedics arrived. They took charge.
7. The mirror shattered when it dropped.
8. Susan, did you get a checking account?
9. Justin and Matt held a garage sale in their driveway.
10. Barry and Levon took the wreck and made it run.
11. The doctor made her rounds.
12. Steve met his best friend and walked home with him.
13. The little girl stuck out her tongue.
14. Andrea bought a Pepsi and drank it with her lunch.
15. The passengers had their luggage searched.
Pronouns and Antecedents

A pronoun is defined as a word used in place of a noun. This noun is called the pronoun's antecedent. A pronoun refers to its antecedent.

Anna never answers her phone.
(her takes the place of the noun Anna. Anna is the antecedent.)

The shop closed its doors.
(its refers to the noun shop. Shop is the antecedent.)

The antecedent usually appears before the pronoun. The antecedent may appear in the same sentence or in the preceding sentence, as in this example:

The tractor pushed the stones and bricks. It cleared a path.
(It stands for the antecedent tractor.)

Pronouns may be the antecedents of other pronouns:

You missed your bus.
(you is the antecedent of you.)

A pronoun must be like its antecedent in one important way. A pronoun must have the same number as its antecedent. If the antecedent is singular, the pronoun must be singular. If the antecedent is plural, then the pronoun must be plural.

A pronoun must agree with its antecedent in number.

The photographers grabbed their cameras.
(Photographers is plural; their is plural.)

The typist erased his error.
(Typist is singular; his is singular.)

TV fans have their favorite shows.
(Fans is plural; their is plural.)
In these sentences the personal pronouns are in bold type. Circle the antecedent for each pronoun.

1. The window washers saw the street far below them.
2. The girl carried a radio in her bag.
3. Jim looked at the gift and knew it was a book.
4. Don't wear those shoes if they hurt.
5. Tony made a pizza and topped it with head cheese.
6. Mrs. Barclay quit her job.
7. Lee gave the boys their dinner.
8. Freida and I studied our menus.
10. Some people hide their feelings.
11. The ship veered from its course.
12. I have lost my voice.
13. Mr. Monroe moved to his new apartment.
14. Gayle opened the bottle and filled it with water.
15. Some gas caps have locks on them.

The Forms of Pronouns

Pronouns can be used in all the ways that nouns are used. Personal pronouns can be subjects, objects, predicate words, and possessives. However, a personal pronoun changes forms as its use in a sentence changes. Look at these sentences:

He pitched. (He is the subject.)
Riley tagged him. (Him is the direct object.)
His pitch was wild. (His shows possession.)

The three pronouns in these examples all refer to the same person. The forms though are different.

The three forms of a personal pronoun are subject form, object form, and possessive form. Here are the forms for all personal pronouns:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Object</th>
<th>Possessive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Singular:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>me</td>
<td>my, mine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>you</td>
<td>you</td>
<td>your, yours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>he, she, it</td>
<td>her, him, it</td>
<td>his, her, hers, its</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plural:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>we</td>
<td>us</td>
<td>our, ours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>you</td>
<td>you</td>
<td>your, yours</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In the following sentences identify the form of each personal pronoun used (i.e., singular/plural and subject/object/possessive).

Ex: We ate head cheese and anchovy sandwiches for lunch.
   We is a plural - subject

1. We reported the accident.
2. A blizzard halted us.
3. Did you endorse your check?
4. Wendy and she showed their identification.
5. The editorial convinced me.
6. That was he.
7. They served on a jury.
8. The camera is his.
9. I went fishing with Joe and her.
10. The dog gnawed his bone.
11. Our car bumped her bike.
12. Sandy makes candles and sells them.
13. The next dance is yours.
14. The pleasure was mine.
15. The car dealer sold him a Ford.

The Possessive Form of Pronouns

Possessive Pronouns
my, mine       our, ours
your, yours    your, yours
his, her, hers its, their, theirs

Possessive pronouns show belonging or ownership. Many times, possessive pronouns are used by themselves. Then, like a noun a possessive pronoun has one of these uses: subject, object, or predicate word. Look at these examples:

That suitcase is his. (predicate pronoun)
Hers is much prettier. (subject)
Paul and Maria are carrying theirs. (direct object)
The boy gave his a shove. (indirect object)
This suitcase looks like mine. (object of preposition)
At other times, possessive pronouns are not used alone. Instead, they are used to tell about nouns. Look at these sentences:

Phil trained his German Shepherd.
Each ethnic group has its customs.
The team celebrated their victory.
Will you read your lines?

Pronoun Exercises

**Exercise A** Choose the correct pronoun from the two given in parentheses.

1. The news shocked (he, him).
2. The waiter spilled spaghetti on (I, me).
3. (They, Them) moved to our neighborhood.
4. The cashier gave (she, her) incorrect change.
5. Was that (he, him)?
6. All of (we, us) are taller than our parents.
7. The idea was (my, mine).
8. The artist sold (her, his) work at a fair.
9. Joy sent (he, him) a funny birthday card.
10. The security guard stopped (we, us).
11. A pro team drafted (he, him).
12. Is this makeup (your, yours)?
13. The caller is (she, her).
14. During the summer (I, me) work at the daycare center.
15. Next year, (we, us) will be able to vote.
16. wasn't it (he, him) at the door.
17. Garbage surrounded (they, them).
18. Aaron handed the earphones to (I, me).
19. Rebecca brought (her, hers) favorite CD.
20. All of those drawings are by (he, him).

**Exercise B** The personal pronouns in the following sentences are in italics. Circle each pronoun and label it Subject Form, Object Form, or Possessive Form.

1. Laura rehearsed the scene with him.
2. She loaded the film into the camera.
3. The movie bored us.
4. It's they!
5. Curt's older sister gave him a haircut.
7. Wendy painted pinstripes on her car.
8. The best artwork is his.
9. We ate all the tacos.
10. Beth loaned me a sweatshirt.

Compound Personal Pronouns

A compound personal pronoun is a pronoun with -self or -selves added.

myself ourselves
yourself yourselves
himself, herself, itself themselves

Notice how compound personal pronouns are used for emphasis:

Maggie herself opened the vault.
The manager himself handled the sale.
I planned the reunion myself.
They called the police themselves.

Beside each sentence write the correct compound personal pronoun and its antecedent.

1. Dana and I wrote the lyrics (pronoun).
2. Amy gave (pronoun) a slap on the back.
3. The workers (pronoun) choose their hours.
4. The governor (pronoun) pardoned the prisoner.
5. The members (pronoun) set the club rules.
6. I cooked this meal by (pronoun).
7. The cheerleaders yelled (pronoun) hoarse.
8. Make (pronoun) comfortable, Elliot.
9. We watched (pronoun) on TV.
10. The general (pronoun) issued the orders.
11. Brian and Bob found (pronoun) in trouble.
12. The doctor (pronoun) became very sick.
13. Sarah drove (pronoun) to the hospital.
14. Give (pronoun) enough time, Debbie.
15. The problem will work (pronoun) out.
Demonstrative Pronouns

The pronouns this, that, these, and those point out people or things. They are called demonstrative pronouns.

This and these point to people or things that are near in space or time. That or those point to people or things that are farther away in space or time.

This makes a good dessert. These are leather boots.
That was our first date. Those were great times.

Write the correct demonstrative pronoun for the blank space in each sentence.

1. ___________ are your gloves, not these.
2. ___________ are terrific tacos we're eating.
3. ___________ is better than that.
4. ___________ was a good concert last night.
5. ___________ is my bike beside me.
6. ___________ must be our bus over there.
7. ___________ is my counselor in the principal's office.
8. ___________ is beautiful weather today.
9. ___________ is the canyon out there.
10. ___________ were our happiest years.

Interrogative Pronouns

Certain pronouns are used to ask questions. They are called interrogative pronouns. The interrogative pronouns are who, whom, whose, which, and what.

Who won an Emmy award? Which is your favorite?
Whom did Gloria call? What started the fire?
Whose is this coat?

Circle all the pronouns in each sentence. Next to the sentence indicate if the pronoun is interrogative or demonstrative.

Example: Is that the law? That - demonstrative pronoun

1. Who knows the old man's age?
2. That makes sense.
3. Which is Carl's suitcase?
4. These are strange lights.
5. Is that Tony's handwriting?
6. Whom does Andrea trust with the money?
7. These are the latest fashions.
8. Are those the house keys?
9. What makes Andrea so lucky?
10. Whose are these?

**Pronouns in Compound Constructions**

Compound sentence parts, or compound constructions, in a sentence have more than one part. The parts are joined by and, or, or nor, as in Ben and me. A pronoun may be one or both of these parts.

You may wonder which pronoun form to use in compound construction. Here are sentences with pronouns used correctly as compound parts:

Laura and I learned a form of self-defense. (Laura and I are both subjects. The form I is used.)

Mr. Kim taught her and me judo. (Her and me are both indirect objects. The object forms are used.)

Just between you and me, I'm tired. (You and me are objects of the preposition between. The object forms are used.)

You can avoid problems with compound parts if you think of each part separately. For instance, in the first example above, omit the words Laura and. Should the sentence read I learned a form of self-defense or Me learned a form of self-defense? The pronoun I is correct.

Here is another example:

Gail gave Matt and (I, me) more coffee.
Gail gave me more coffee.

Circle the right pronoun from the two given.

1. Rick and (she, her) are going to the show.
2. Save seats for Lori and (I, me).
3. Ann invited (we, us) for supper.
4. Soap operas don't appeal to Jenny and (I, me).
5. The argument was between Jamie and (they, them).
6. The judge fined Pam and (she, her).
7. Steve's best friends are Anthony and (he, him).
8. My uncle and (he, him) are business partners.
9. My boss relies on (I, me).
10. The shopkeeper ignored Megan and (she, her).
11. Kate-E and (he, him) met on a bus.
12. That speeding car headed toward John and (I, me).
13. A child with a water pistol squirted Brad and (he, him).
14. The best dancers are Lyndsey and (he, him).
15. My boss relies on (she, her) and (I, me)

We and Us (with nouns)/Them and Those

The pronouns we and us are often used with nouns, as in the phrase we boys or us students. Sometimes such phrases cause problems.

To decide whether to use we or us, omit the noun. Say the sentence with we and then with us. You will then probably be able to choose the correct pronoun.

   Problem:  (we, us) linemen do the blocking.
   Correct:  We do the blocking.
   Correct:  We linemen do the blocking.

Them and those are sometimes confused. To use the words correctly, remember that them is always a pronoun. It takes the place of a noun.

   A search party found them.
   (In this sentence, them is used as the direct object)
   Them is never used to tell about or describe a noun. Those should be used.

   Incorrect: Have you ever worn them shoes?
   Correct: Have you ever worn those shoes?

Circle the correct pronoun from the two given in parentheses.

1. (we, us) girls hooked up the antenna.
2. (we, us) officers have special quarters.
3. Did you see (them, those) state troopers?
4. Can you take advantage of (them, those) new airfares?
5. (Them, those) greeting cards are funny.
6. The flag signaled (we, us) drivers.
7. (we, us) athletes are often tense before games.
8. Kim tried one of (them, those) back dives.
9. When will (we, us) Americans host the Olympics?
10. The ball nearly hit (we, us) spectators.
11. The Army Reserve wants to talk to (we, us) students.
12. Will (them, those) additives improve gas mileage?
13. (we, us) girls pushed the stalled car.
14. Did you eat all of (them, those) strawberries?
15. Yesterday (we, us) campers hiked up a mountain.

Who and Whom

Many people have problems with the pronouns who and whom. Who sounds natural in most quotations. Use who as the subject of a sentence.

Who tuned the piano? Who is there?

Whom is harder to get used to. Whom is used as an object.

Whom did the Smiths adopt?
(direct object of the verb did adopt)
To whom are tax forms sent?
(object of the preposition to)

Circle the correct pronoun from the two given in parentheses.

1. (Who, Whom) can predict the weather?
2. (Who, Whom) insulted your friend?
3. (Who, Whom) did you tape record?
4. (Who, Whom) were you watching on TV?
5. (Who, Whom) is the sportscaster?
6. (Who, Whom) towed your car?
7. (Who, Whom) runs the drill press?
8. (Who, Whom) will you stay with?
9. (Who, Whom) do these running shorts belong to?
10. (Who, Whom) did you visit in St. Louis?
11. (Who, Whom) works the switchboard?
12. (Who, Whom) did the lifeguard rescue?
13. (Who, Whom) did the noise awaken?
14. (Who, Whom) polluted the water?
15. For (who, whom) was the school named?
Indefinite Pronouns

Some pronouns do not refer to a definite person or thing. Such pronouns are called indefinite pronouns.

The following are indefinite pronouns. They are singular.

Another     each        everything        one
anybody     either       neither            somebody
anyone     everybody  nobody            someone
anything   everyone     no one

Because they are singular, the above pronouns are used with the singular possessive pronouns his, her, and its.

Each of the stores has its own hours.
Somebody forgot his ski cap.
Somebody forgot his or her ski cap.
The final example uses the phrase his or her instead of simply his.

That phrase shows that the indefinite pronoun may refer to a male or a female.

Although most indefinite pronouns are singular, some are plural. They refer to more than one person or thing. The following indefinite pronouns are plural. They are used with the plural possessive their. Study these examples.

Both      many       few       several
Both of the swimmers timed their sprints.
Few of the passengers left their seats.
Many of our neighbors grow their own vegetables.
Several of the racers overturned their cars.

A few indefinite pronouns can be either singular or plural, depending on the meaning of the sentence. Read these examples:

all     none      some
All of the water has chemicals in it.
All of the drivers loaded their trucks.
None of the medicine has lost its strength.
None of these comedians use their own material.
Some of the fire burned itself out.
Some of the workers took their breaks.
Indefinite Pronoun Exercises

Exercise A
Circle the indefinite pronoun in each of the following sentences.

1. Did someone call me?
2. Anyone can win the sweepstakes.
3. What is everybody waiting for?
4. Only one of the headlights works.
5. Several of the players signed contracts.
6. Many of the starting players fouled out.
7. Kristen made both of the free throws.
8. Why is everyone cheering?
9. Brad got all of the rebounds.

Exercise B
Circle the correct pronoun from the two given.

10. One of the actresses missed (her, their) cue.
11. Many of the stores have lowered (its, their) prices.
12. Somebody left (his or her, their) checkbook here.
13. Everyone listed (her or his, their) address.
14. If anyone calls, tell (him or her, them) I'll be right back.
15. Neither of our wrestlers pinned (his, their) opponent.
16. Some of the runners wore out (her, their) shoes.
17. All of the passengers in the boat wore (his or her, their) lifejackets.
18. Did anybody go out of (her or his, their) way to help?

Exercise C
After identifying the indefinite pronoun, circle the correct verb from the two given.

19. Nobody (looks, look) very interested in the game.
20. Everyone (makes, make) mistakes.
21. Neither of the teams (has, have) a strong defense.
22. Very few of these foods (is, are) high in calories.
23. One of my sisters (has, have the flu.
24. Some of the Packers' games (is, are) televised.
25. Many of the cases (is, are) settled out of court.
Special Problems With Pronouns

Contractions and Possessives

Certain contractions are sometimes confused with possessive pronouns.

Contractions are formed by joining two words and omitting one or more letters. An apostrophe shows where letters are left out.

- It's = it + is      they're = they + are
- you're = you + are  who's = who + is

The above contractions are sometimes confused with the possessive pronouns its, your, their, and whose. The words sound alike but are spelled differently.

Incorrect:    The plant lost it's leaves
Correct:    The plant lost its leaves

If you can't decide which word is correct, substitute the words the contraction stands for. If the sentence sounds right, then the contraction is correct.

Incorrect: Their enjoying they're trip.
Correct: They're (They are) enjoying their trip.

Exercise A Choose the right word from the pair in parentheses.

1. The movers parked (their, they're) van in front of the building.
2. (Your, You're) expecting a call, aren't you?
3. Wax gives the car (its, it's) shine.
4. (Whose, who's) signature is this?
5. Is that (your, you're) camera?
6. (Their, They're) trapped in the mine.
7. (Whose, who's) taking the ball out of bounds?
8. (Its, It's) half time now.
9. (Whose, who's) the woman with the microphone?
10. (Your, You're) friends are waiting at the station.

Exercise B Write the words each contraction below stands for.

11. They're appealing to a higher court.
12. I'd like to ride in a boat.
13. Soon we'll be on our own.
14. You're spilling your tea!
15. She's ready for a change.
16. They've scouted all the teams.
17. Who's offered you a job?
18. What's wrong with the picture tube?
19. I'm playing third base.
20. We'd like longer weekends.

**Pronoun Review**

Circle the correct pronoun from those given in parentheses.

1. (They, Them) put new shingles on the roof.
2. Does (she, her) work in a lab?
3. The teacher asked (she, her) for help.
4. Jackson tossed the ball to (she, her) for the third out.
5. A chunk of plaster landed on (him, his) head.
6. Julia and (he, him) work in a sporting goods store.
7. Alex took Nancy and (I, me) to a football game.
8. Todd and (I, me) dug holes for fenceposts.
9. Don't hurt (himself, yourself) on the blade, Mike.
10. Some men shave (himself, themself, themselves) without using a mirror.
11. (This, That, Those) is Mt. Ranier off in the distance.
12. Has anyone had (his or her, their) fortune told?
13. Some of the gymnasts have (her, their) own warm-up exercises.
14. Each of the parking lots has (its, their) own rates.
15. The bikers loaded (their, they're) backpacks with food for the trip.
16. Does (your, you're) car use unleaded fuel?
17. (Who, Whom) did you sign a contract with?
18. (Who, Whom) brought the radio?
19. (We, Us) city dwellers are used to noise.
20. Have you tried one of (them, those) egg rolls?