

Pronouns

Pronouns are one of the eight parts of speech: they take the place of nouns in sentences. There are four case forms of pronouns. They are nominative, objective, possessive, and reflexive.

Nominative pronouns function as the subjects in sentences. They are the “naming” pronouns.	I	he	she	we	they	who	you	it
Objective pronouns function as objects in sentences or objects of propositions.	me	him	her	us	them	whom	you	it
Possessive pronouns show ownership. Unlike other possessive words, possessive pronouns are never formed with an apostrophe.	my mine	his	her hers	our ours	their theirs	whose	your yours	its
Reflexive pronouns direct the action of the verb back to the subject.	myself	himself	herself	ourselves	themselves		yourself	itself
Examples:	Susan and I attended the banquet with Bill and him. We officers will complete the drill today. It was their flip chart and my markers that were left in the room. You must meet with them yourself to discuss the financials.							

Nouns/pronouns

- A noun and its pronoun must agree, in person and numbers, whether they act as subject, object, or possessor.
 - *I* must stand by *my* client, just as *you* must stand by *yours*.
 - *John* said *he* did it.
 - *Alice* likes *her* new job.
 - The *company* won't change *its* policy.
- Use *who* and *whoever* when you can substitute *he* or *she* for the who clause.
 - Who was promoted?
 - Who did they say was chosen?
 - I will speak to whoever answers.
 - Write to whoever you think can supply the information.
- Use *whom* and *whomever* when you can substitute *him*, or *her* as the object of the verb or the object of the preposition in the whom clause.
 - Whom did you see today?
 - Whom were you talking about?
 - I will hire whomever I can find.

*Hint: Cover up all of the words that come before and include whoever or whomever. Does it make sense to use he or him? (he/she=who, him/her=whom)

Pronouns with multiple nouns

- If two nouns are joined by *and*, the pronoun is usually plural.
 - John and Mary brought *their* reports to the meeting.
- If both male and female are involved, it's better to change the wording from singular to plural.
 - Instead of: Each manager must meet with his staff.
 - Use: Managers must meet with *their* staffs.
- When a pronoun refers to nouns joined by *or*, *nor*, *either ... or*, or *neither ... nor*, and one of the nouns is plural, make the pronoun match the closest noun.
 - Neither Fred *nor* the Smiths parked *their* cars.
 - But: Neither of them parked *his* car.
- Remember, watch collective nouns like *team*, *committee*, *staff*, and *board*. These are singular words that refer to collections of people. Use a singular pronoun.
 - The *staff* took *its* break in the lunchroom.

Keys:

- Always avoid sexist language
- Use parallel language.
 - Instead of: men and ladies
 - Use: men and women
- Use terms that include both sexes.
 - Instead of: chairman, manned, and fireman
 - Use: chairperson, staffed, and firefighter