

What is a Possessive Pronoun?

Understanding the different types of pronouns can be a bit confusing. So when the question, "What is a possessive pronoun?" arises, students may try to run for the door.

There's nothing to be afraid of though. Possessive pronouns are simply the replacement team for nouns or noun phrases that run the risk of sounding repetitive. And, of course, they also show possession.

One of the best ways to understand possessive pronouns is to know how they function in a sentence. Let's take a look.

Defining Possessive Pronouns

Possessive pronouns do exactly what it seems like they should do. They are the pronouns that help us show possession or ownership in a sentence. There are two types of possessive pronouns:

- The strong (or absolute) possessive pronouns are **mine, yours, his, hers, its, ours, yours,** and **theirs**. They refer back to a noun or noun phrase already used, replacing it to avoid repetition: "I said that phone was **mine**."
- The weak possessive pronouns (also called possessive adjectives) are **my, your, his, her, its, our, your,** and **their**. They function as determiners in front of a noun to describe who something belongs to: "I said that's **my** phone."

When we want to use a pronoun to show possession, we cannot use subject pronouns. Does the following make sense?

- This is my brother. **He** name is Alex.

No. And here's why. "He" is a subject pronoun. Now, if you replace it with the appropriate possessive pronoun, it will make a lot more sense:

- This is my brother. **His** name is Alex

- Here's a reminder of the possessive forms:

Subject Pronoun	Possessive (absolute)	Possessive (adjective)
I	Mine	My
You	Yours	Your
He	His	His
She	Hers	Her
It	Its	Its
We	Ours	Our
They	Theirs	Their

Practice Possessive Pronouns

Practicing with possessive pronouns is the best way to familiarize yourself with them. Here are some examples that use possessive pronouns correctly:

- *Your* cat is adorable, but not as adorable as **ours**.
- *My* pen won't work, can I borrow **yours**?
- The jewelry that the police accused Mrs. Jones of stealing turned out to be **hers** all along

Can you fix them? (Answers are below.)

1. His paintings were very colorful, but I liked hers paintings better.
2. Mine eyes are the color blue.
3. I like listening to Bruno Mars more than Michael Jackson, but he dance moves are far more iconic