

Pronouns

WHAT IS A PRONOUN?

A pronoun is a word that refers to or takes the place of a noun. The noun being referred to is called the *antecedent*. The identity of the pronoun is made clear by the antecedent.

For example:

The boy said that he was tired.

Antecedent Pronoun

In this example, the pronoun "he" is referring back to the noun antecedent "boy."

There are many different types of pronouns: *personal, possessive, reflexive, intensive, demonstrative, interrogative, relative, indefinite, and reciprocal.*

Personal Personal Pronouns are pronouns that refer to a specific person or thing in a sentence and can be divided into two groups: *nominative and objective*.

- **Nominative personal pronouns** can act as the subject of a sentence (I, you, he, she, it, we, they). For example:

I went to the store after work.

You should not go to class if you are sick.

- **Objective personal pronouns**, on the other hand, act as objects of a sentence (me, you, him, her, it, us, them). For example:

Alex came out with Joe and me.

A neighbor helped us.

Possessive Possessive Pronouns are pronouns that show ownership; in other words, something belongs to someone else (my/mine, your/yours, his, her/hers, its, our/ours, their/theirs). For example:

That book is mine.

Their shoes are under the bed.

Reflexive Reflexive Pronouns are pronouns that are used to show that the subject of the sentence is receiving the action of the verb (myself, yourself, himself, herself, itself, ourselves, themselves). For example:

She can handle the situation herself.

We can write the paper ourselves.

<u>Personal</u> (Nominative)	<u>Personal</u> (Objective)	<u>Possessive</u> Adjective /Pronoun	<u>Reflexive</u>
I	me	my/mine	myself
you	you	your/yours	yourself
he	him	his	himself
she	her	her/hers	herself
it	it	its	itself
we	us	our/ours	ourselves
they	them	their/theirs	themselves

Intensive **Intensive Pronouns** are pronouns that are used only to place emphasis on the subject and are not essential to the meaning of the sentence. Note: These pronouns look the same as reflexive pronouns, but they act differently in the sentence and are always placed next to the subject that they are emphasizing (myself, yourself, himself, herself, itself, ourselves, themselves). For example:

You yourself must go to the police station.

*Here, the pronoun “yourself” is used only to place emphasis on the subject “you” and does not change the meaning of the sentence.

Demonstrative **Demonstrative Pronouns** are pronouns that are used to identify nouns and answer the question “which one?” (this, that, these, those) For example:

These are the books that John was talking about.

*Here, the pronoun “these” identifies which books John was talking about.

Interrogative **Interrogative Pronouns** are pronouns that are used only in reference to a question (who, what, which, whom, whose). For example:

Which one of these pens is yours?

Who is that girl?

Relative **Relative Pronouns** are pronouns that are used to connect clarifying information to nouns or other pronouns within a sentence (who, that, which, whom, whose, whoever, whichever, whomever, whatever).

Who vs. Whom

Who is used when referring to a subject.

Who went to the store after work?

Who sings this song?

Whom is used when referring to an object.

With whom did Alex go out?

The letter should be addressed to whom?

Note: Refer back to the Personal Pronouns section on page 1 . “Who” works like a nominative pro-noun, while “whom” works like an objective pronoun.

Who vs. That

Who is used to refer to people or animals with names.

Liz, who wrote the review, got in trouble.

That is used to refer to things.

The paper that I wrote last night vanished.

That vs. Which

That is used in essential clauses (clauses necessary for understanding the subject of a sentence).

The pizza parlor that is down the street from the college is great.

*The subject is unclear without the additional information. Which pizza parlor? *The one that is down the street from the college.*

Which is used in nonessential clauses (clauses unnecessary for understanding the subject of a sentence).

*My mom's jewelry was stolen, **which** upset her very much.*

*The subject is clear without the additional information.

Indefinite Indefinite Pronouns are pronouns that are used in reference to a person or thing that is not specific or not known. Indefinite pronouns are also used to identify a general group of people or things (i.e. everyone, everybody, anyone, anybody, somebody, most, all, each every, some, none, one, few, both, many, several). For example:

Everybody has to take the Writing Proficiency Examination in order to graduate.
All of the seniors were excited for graduation.

Note: Singular indefinite pronouns must always take singular verbs.

Reciprocal Reciprocal Pronouns are pronouns that are used to refer to a mutual set of people (each other, each other's, one another, one another's). For example:

We need to help one another survive.
They had remembered each other's phone numbers.

-We use each other and one another to show that each person in a group of two or more people does something to the others. There is very little difference between each other and one another and we can normally use them in the same places.

-We use each other's and one another's as possessive determiners.

AVOID AMBIGUOUS AND IMPLIED ANTECEDENTS

- **Clarify ambiguous references** by revising the sentence. Often a pronoun does not provide enough clarity, especially if two or three subjects are involved.
e.g., Jack told John that *he* won the prize.

This is ambiguous: *he* can refer to either man. To clarify, rewrite the sentence by inserting a name or using a direct quote.

e.g., Jack told John that he, Jack, won the prize.

Jack told John, "I won the prize."

- **The antecedent cannot be implied: the antecedent must be present.**
e.g., As a student here, it struck me that there is not enough parking on campus.
Incorrect: *It* cannot refer to *student*, so there is no antecedent for *it*.

-As a student here, *I* am struck by the fact that there is not enough parking on campus.

Correct: *I* refers to *student*.

- **Make sure the pronoun refers to specific people or items.**

It, this, and *that* should not be used to refer to a broad idea or an entire preceding

sentence. Instead, use a noun or phrase to express the broad idea.

MORE TRICKY SITUATIONS

Collective nouns as antecedents

- Any **group that functions as a unit**, such as *committee, jury, crowd, corporation,* is

singular; use the singular pronoun, *it*.

e.g., The jury reached its decision. > Correct

The jury reached their decision.> Incorrect

The committee published its agenda for the upcoming retreat. > Correct

The committee published their agenda for the upcoming retreat. > Incorrect

Xenia Corp. made a billion in profits last year. It increased profits by 25% over last Year. > Correct

Xenia Corp. made a billion in profits last year. They increased profits by 25% over last year. > Incorrect

Comparisons: *than, as*

- **Use the correct form/case** of pronoun when comparing persons or items.

e.g., Jack is taller than I [am]. > Correct

Jack is taller than *me* [am]. > Incorrect

We valued no other employee more than [we valued] her. > Correct

We valued no other employee member better than [we valued] *she*. > Incorrect

Compound antecedents

- If there are two nouns, one singular and the other plural, in an either-or situation, the pronoun agrees with the noun nearer to it in the sentence.

e.g., Neither the squirrel **nor** the *birds* found *their* way to the bin of seed.

What Do We Need to Be Careful About?

sometimes we use me when it might seem logical to use I. We also use it sometimes to refer to people.

I love house music > I do too / Me too.
Who's that? > Me. / It's me. / It's Fran.

Sometimes we use they instead of he or she, them instead of him or her and their instead of his or hers.

When you meet your new teacher, they will give you the books.
If anyone asks where I am, tell them I'm in Istanbul this week.
Someone left their gloves in the classroom.

Even *someone* was singular we used "their" because nowadays they avoid using, he or she for people in general, so "they" has been used instead, especially in speaking.

What About Animals?

Usually it/they used for animals, but when people are talking about their own pets, they use he or she.

-The dog must be thirsty. Give him some water.

APOSTROPHE S
POSSESSIVE NOUN

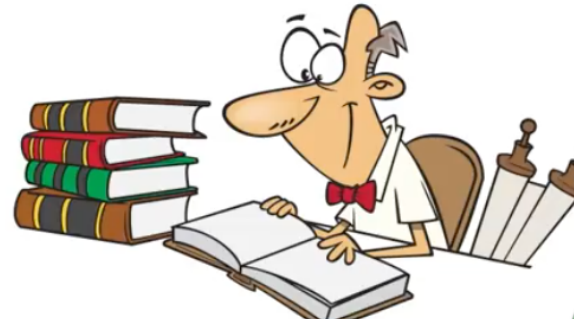
APOSTROPHES

POSSESSIVE NOUNS

1 John's tall.

2 John's studied.

3 John's car.

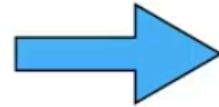


APOSTROPHE S

POSSESSIVE NOUNS

1 John's tall.

's + adjective

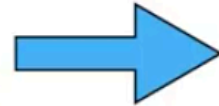


= John is tall.

's = is

2 John's studied.

's + past participle

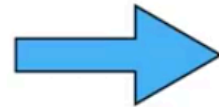


= John has studied.

's = has

3 John's car.

's + noun



= "The car of John."

's = to show possession or that something belongs to someone or something



APOSTROPHE S

POSSESSIVE NOUNS

1 **Paul's** house is very big.
= "The house of Paul."

2 Where is **Julie's** book?
= The book belongs to Julie.

3 Do you want to go to **Mike's** party?
= It is the party that Mike is having.

4 I'm going to meet **Susan's** parents tonight.
= "The parents of Susan."

Possessive Noun
= to show possession,
a relationship, or that
something belongs to
someone or something.

APOSTROPHE S

POSSESSIVE NOUNS

Singular Nouns

Add: 's (apostrophe S)

- 1 We went to **Ange's** house last night.
= the house belongs to Ange.
- 2 Is that your **friend's** bike?
= the bike that belongs to your friend.
- 3 Where is the **dog's** bone?
= "The bone of the dog."



APOSTROPHE S

POSSESSIVE NOUNS

Plural Nouns ending in S

Only add the apostrophe (no S)

Where are the dogs' bones?

= "The bones of the dogs."



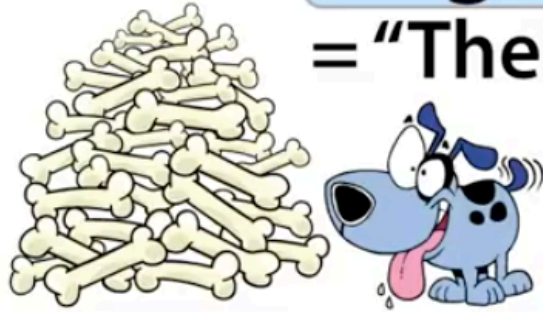
APOSTROPHE S

POSSESSIVE NOUNS

(dog - singular)

1 Where are the **dog's** bones?

= "The bones of the dog."



(dogs - plural)

(only an apostrophe)

(plural noun ending in S)

dogs's bones ✘

2 Where are the **dogs'** bones? ✔



APOSTROPHE S

POSSESSIVE NOUNS

(child - singular)

- 1 The **child's** toys are on the floor.
= "The toys of the child."

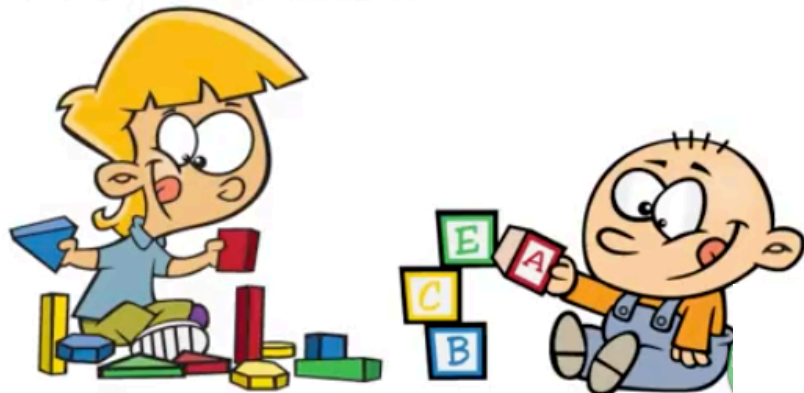


(children - plural)

- 2 The **children's** toys are on the floor.
= "The toys of the children."

The plural of child is **children**, not ~~childrens~~.

~~childrens~~' toys ❌



APOSTROPHE S

POSSESSIVE NOUNS

Plural Nouns NOT ending in S

Add: 's (apostrophe S)

- 1 The **children's** camping trip.
= "the camping trip of the children."
- 2 He always corrects **people's** grammar.
= "grammar of the people."



APOSTROPHE S

POSSESSIVE NOUNS

Singular Nouns ending in S

(class - singular)

- 1 The **class's** project. /IZ/ syllable
= "The project of the class."

(classes - plural)

- 2 The **classes'** projects.
= "The projects of the classes."

~~classes's~~ ✘



APOSTROPHE S

POSSESSIVE NOUNS

Singular Nouns ending in S

Add: 's (*apostrophe S*)

- 1 The **class's** teacher is nice.
= "the teacher of the class"
- 2 The **princess's** dress is pink.
= "the dress of the princess."



APOSTROPHE S

POSSESSIVE NOUNS

Names ending in S

Add: 's ...OR... only apostrophe

Both forms
are correct.

1 James's dog is hungry.

(with an apostrophe + S)

My preference

2 James' dog is hungry.

(only an apostrophe)



APOSTROPHE S

POSSESSIVE NOUNS

Classical or religious names ending in S

Only add the apostrophe (no S)

1 Sophocles' plays are still performed today.

(only an apostrophe)

2 Hercules' strength seemed unlimited.

(only an apostrophe)



APOSTROPHE S

POSSESSIVE NOUNS

Two or more people

Add: 's ...OR... only apostrophe

Depends on
the other rules.

1 Stacy and Steve's car is old.

TWO joint owners of the same car



2 Stacy's and Steve's cars are old.

TWO owners of two different cars



APOSTROPHE S

POSSESSIVE NOUNS

Usually we don't put the noun (or object) after the 's to avoid repetition, especially when the meaning is clear.

• My car is older than **John's**.

← The meaning is clear.
We know we are talking about cars.

= My car is older than **John's** car.

← The word CAR is not necessary.
It sounds repetitive.

APOSTROPHE S

POSSESSIVE NOUNS

The apostrophe S can also be used with time periods.

- 1 Have you seen today's newspaper?
- 2 This morning's meeting was boring.
- 3 Last year's profits increased significantly.



APOSTROPHE S

POSSESSIVE NOUNS

The apostrophe S can also be used with time periods.

We do NOT use an apostrophe with decades or years.

~~80's~~ ✗

- A lot of great music was created in the **80s.**



APOSTROPHE S

POSSESSIVE NOUNS

We do NOT use an apostrophe S as the plural of an acronym.

- 1 There have been many sightings of **UFOs**
in the area.
~~UFO's~~ ❌
- 2 He has just sold all of his **DVDs**.
~~DVD's~~ ❌

