

ENGLISH PRONOUNS

ACTIVITY TYPE

Reading, Writing, Grammar,
Exercises

LANGUAGE FOCUS

English Pronouns

AIM

To learn and practice English
Pronouns in English

LEVEL

Beginner, Elementary, Intermediate,

TIME

60 Minutes

INTRODUCTION

After going through your regular review and teacher talk, tell the students that they're going to learn the use of English Pronouns (Subject, Object, Possessive and Reflexive Pronouns) in English

PREPARATION

Make one copy of the worksheet for each student

PROCEDURE

Give one copy of the worksheet to each student.
Go through the grammar and exercises together.

English Pronouns

Pronouns are words that take the place of nouns. We often use them to avoid repeating the nouns that they refer to.

Pronouns have different forms for the different ways we use them.

A **pronoun** (*I, me, he, she, herself, you, it, that, they, each, few, many, who, whoever, whose, someone, everybody, etc.*) is a word that takes the place of a noun. In the sentence *Joe saw Jill, and he waved at her*, the pronouns *he* and *her* take the place of *Joe* and *Jill*, respectively. There are three types of pronouns: **subject** (for example, *he*); **object** (*him*); or **possessive** (*his*).

Subject Pronouns

Subject pronouns are used when the pronoun is the subject of the sentence.

You can remember subject pronouns easily by filling in the blank subject space for a simple sentence.

Example: ___ did the job.

I, he, she, we, they, who, whoever, etc., all qualify and are, therefore, subject pronouns.

Subject pronouns are also used if they rename the subject. They will follow *to be* verbs, such as *is, are, was, were, am, will be, had been*, etc.

Examples:

It is he.

This is she speaking.

It is we who are responsible for the decision to downsize.

NOTE

In informal English, most people tend to follow *to be* verbs with object pronouns like *me, her, them*. Many English scholars tolerate this distinction between formal and casual English.

Example: It could have been them.

Technically correct: It could have been they.

Example: It is just me at the door.

Technically correct: It is just I at the door.

This rule surprises even language watchers: when *who* refers to a personal pronoun (*I, you, he, she, we, they*), it takes the verb that agrees with that pronoun.

*Correct: It is I who **am** sorry. (I **am**)*

Incorrect: It is I who is sorry.

*Correct: It is you who **are** mistaken. (you **are**)*

Incorrect: It is you who's mistaken.

Object Pronouns

Object pronouns, are known more specifically as **direct object**, **indirect object**, and **object of a preposition**.

Object pronouns include *me, him, herself, us, them, themselves*.

Examples:

*Jean saw **him**.*

Him is the direct object of the verb *saw*.

*Give **her** the book.*

The **direct object** of *give* is *book*, and *her* is the indirect object. **Indirect objects** always have an implied *to* or *for* in front of them: *Give [to] her the book. Do [for] me a favor.*

Are you talking to me?

Me is the object of the preposition *to*.

The pronouns *who, that, and which* become singular or plural depending on the subject. If the subject is singular, use a singular verb. If it is plural, use a plural verb.

Example: He is the only one of those men who is always on time.

The word *who* refers to *one*. Therefore, use the singular verb *is*.

Sometimes we must look more closely to find a verb's true subject:

Example: He is one of those men who are always on time.

The word *who* refers to *men*. Therefore, use the plural verb *are*.

In sentences like this last example, many would mistakenly insist that *one* is the subject, requiring *is always on time*. But look at it this way: *Of those men who are always on time, he is one.*

Pronouns that are singular (*I, he, she, everyone, everybody, anyone, anybody, no one, nobody, someone, somebody, each, either, neither, etc.*) require singular verbs. This rule is frequently overlooked when using the pronouns *each, either, and neither*, followed by *of*. Those three pronouns always take singular verbs. Do not be misled by what follows *of*.

Examples:

Each of the girls sings well.

Either of us is capable of doing the job.

Neither of them is available to speak right now.

Exception: When *each* follows a noun or pronoun in certain sentences, even experienced writers sometimes get tripped up:

Incorrect: The women each gave her approval.

Correct: The women each gave their approval.

Incorrect: The words are and there each ends with a silent vowel.

Correct: The words are and there each end with a silent vowel.

To decide **whether to use the subject or object pronoun** after the words *than* or *as*, mentally complete the sentence.

Examples:

John is as smart as she/her.

If we mentally complete the sentence, we would say *John is as smart as she is.*

Therefore, *she* is the correct answer.

Zoe is taller than I/me.

Mentally completing the sentence, we have *Zoe is taller than I am.*

Daniel would rather talk to her than I/me.

We can interpret this sentence in two ways: *Daniel would rather talk to her than to me.* OR *Daniel would rather talk to her than I would.*

A sentence's meaning can change considerably, depending on the pronoun you choose.

Possessive Pronouns

The possessive pronouns *yours, his, hers, its, ours, theirs, and whose* never need apostrophes. Avoid mistakes like *her's* and *your's*.

The only time *it's* has an apostrophe is when it is a contraction for *it is* or *it has*. The only time *who's* has an apostrophe is when it means *who is* or *who has*. There is no apostrophe in *oneself*. Avoid "one's self," a common error.

Examples:

It's been a cold morning.

The thermometer reached its highest reading.

He's the one who's always on time.

He's the one whose wife is always on time.

Keeping oneself ready is important.

Reflexive Pronouns

Pronouns that end in *-self* or *-selves* are called **reflexive pronouns**. There are nine reflexive pronouns: *myself, yourself, himself, herself, itself, oneself, ourselves, yourselves, and themselves*.

Reflexive pronouns are used when both the subject and the object of a verb are the same person or thing.

Example: *Joe helped himself.*

If the object of a preposition refers to a previous noun or pronoun, use a reflexive pronoun:

Example: *Joe bought it for himself.*

Reflexive pronouns help avoid confusion and nonsense. Without them, we might be stuck with sentences like *Joe helped Joe*.

Correct: *I worked myself to the bone.*

The object *myself* is the same person as the subject *I*, performing the act of working.

Incorrect: *My brother and myself did it.*

Correct: *My brother and I did it.*

Don't use *myself* unless the pronoun *I* or *me* precedes it in the sentence.

Incorrect: *Please give it to John or myself.*

Correct: *Please give it to John or me.*

Correct: *You saw me being myself.*

Myself refers back to *me* in the act of being.

A sentence like *Help yourself* looks like an exception to the rule until we realize it's shorthand for **You** *may help yourself*.

In certain cases, a reflexive pronoun may come first.

Example: *Doubting himself, the man proceeded cautiously.*

Reflexive pronouns are also used for emphasis.

Example: *He himself finished the whole job.*

The use of *they* and *their* with singular pronouns is frowned upon by many traditionalists. To be consistent, it is a good practice to try to avoid *they* and its variants (e.g., *them*, *their*, *themselves*) with previously singular nouns or pronouns.

Not consistent: *Someone has to do it, and they have to do it well.*

The problem is that *someone* is singular, but *they* is plural. If we change *they* to *he* or *she*, we get a rather clumsy sentence, even if it is technically correct.

Technically correct: *Someone has to do it, and he or she has to do it well.*

Replacing an inconsistent sentence with a poorly written one is a bad bargain. The better option is to rewrite.

Rewritten: *Someone has to do it, and has to do it well.*

Many writers abhor the *he or she* solution. Following are more examples of why rewriting is a better idea than using *he or she* or *him or her* to keep sentences consistent.

Inconsistent: *No one realizes when their time is up.*

Awkward: *No one realizes when his or her time is up.*

Rewritten: *None realize when their time is up.*

Inconsistent: *If you see anyone on the trail, tell them to be careful.*

Awkward: *If you see anyone on the trail, tell him or her to be careful.*

Rewritten: *Tell anyone you see on the trail to be careful.*

When a pronoun is linked with a noun by *and*, mentally remove the *and* + noun phrase to avoid trouble.

Incorrect: Her and her friend came over.

If we remove *and her friend*, we're left with the ungrammatical *Her came over.*

Correct: She and her friend came over.

Incorrect: I invited he and his wife.

If we remove *and his wife*, we're left with the ungrammatical *I invited he.*

Correct: I invited him and his wife.

Incorrect: Bill asked my sister and I.

If we remove *my sister and*, we're left with the ungrammatical *Bill asked I.*

Correct: Bill asked my sister and me.

If two people possess the same item, and one of the joint owners is written as a pronoun, use the possessive form for both.

Incorrect: Maribel and my home

Incorrect: Mine and Maribel's home

Correct: Maribel's and my home

Incorrect: he and Maribel's home

Incorrect: him and Maribel's home

Correct: his and Maribel's home

Incorrect: you and Maribel's home

Incorrect: yours and Maribel's home

Correct: Maribel's and your home

Note: As the above examples demonstrate, when one of the co-owners is written as a pronoun, use **possessive adjectives** (*my, your, her, our, their*).

Avoid **possessive pronouns** (*mine, yours, hers, ours, theirs*) in such constructions.

NOTE

Do not combine a subject pronoun and an object pronoun in phrases like *her and I* or *he and me*. Whenever *and* or *or* links an object pronoun (*her, me*) and a subject pronoun (*he, I*), one of those pronouns will always be wrong.

Incorrect: Her and I went home.

Correct: She and I went home. (She went and I went.)

Here is a scheme

Pronouns			Determiners
Subject	Object	Possessive	Possessive
I	<u>me</u>	<u>mine</u>	<u>my</u>
you	<u>you</u>	<u>yours</u>	<u>your</u>
he	<u>him</u>	<u>his</u>	<u>his</u>
she	<u>her</u>	<u>hers</u>	<u>her</u>
it	<u>it</u>	<u>its</u>	<u>its</u>
we	<u>us</u>	<u>ours</u>	<u>our</u>
they	<u>them</u>	<u>theirs</u>	<u>their</u>
<i>who</i>	<u><i>Whom,</i></u> <u><i>what</i></u>	<u><i>whose</i></u>	<u><i>whose</i></u>

NOTE: TO' is necessary when the indirect object follows the direct object. Therefore an easy way to identify the indirect object is to see which object needs TO'

IMPORTANT NOTES		
<i>The object pronoun has two 'jobs,' either as an indirect object, or direct object. Please see the following example.</i>		
VERB	INDIRECT OBJECT	DIRECT OBJECT
Give	the dog	a bone
	HIM	IT
VERB	DIRECT OBJECT	INDIRECT OBJECT
GIVE	a bone	to the dog
	IT	TO HIM

Exercises

SUBJECT PRONOUNS

Fill in the sentences with the correct subject pronoun

1. Egbert is not English; is Australian
2. Dominic and Kaye are in love; are going to get married.
3. This is Lyn's first job and is very nervous.
4. Have seen my new car? No, haven't.
5. are going on holiday at the end of the month.
6. Will you look after our cat please? will need food and water whilst are away.

Replace all the nouns with pronouns.

- 1 Tony saw that girl yesterday.

- 2 Sarah and I had lunch with Nicola and Michael.

- 3 Can you lend Billy and me the car?



4 I saw you and Andy at the disco.

5 Alison kissed Billy.

6 Susana gave the letter to her mother.

7 Billy phoned Alison.

8 The dog chased the cat.

9 Alison and I love Billy and Tommy.

10 Sally and Susana don't like cheese.

OBJECT PRONOUNS

Fill in the sentences with the correct object pronoun

1. Help to prepare for my exam please.
2. Your dog keeps jumping up at me; please tell to stop.
3. Give some advice please; we are so worried.
4. Carl and Ellie rode their bicycles to Juliette's house; she was out, so they didn't see
5. The police are patrolling the town centre. Have you seen?
6. Dave is very thirsty. Would you give something to drink please?
7. Albert says he knows, because he met at your party last week.

POSSESSIVE ADJECTIVES

Fill in the sentences with the correct possessive adjective

1. Alfred and Henry are in car.
2. Gertrude is cleaning teeth.
3. Tom is drinking drink.
4. Is this hamburger?
5. I am working on homework.
6. Please give the dog bone now.

POSSESSIVE PRONOUNS

1. That is Clara's shoe; that's
2. This is Jennifer and Tom's home; it's
3. That is Peter's car over there; it's
4. "Whose money is this? Is it"? "No, it's not, because I didn't have any."

Circle the correct answer.

- 1 This is _____ new car. I bought it yesterday.
- 6 A family photo. Which one's _____ sister?

A my

A your

B mine

B yours

C its

C you

- 2 I'd like you to meet Rita. She's a great friend of _____.
- 7 Michael's married. _____ wife is an accountant.

A our

A His

B us

B Her

C ours

C Its



3 They live on the other side of the street. That's _____ house, the red one.

- A they
- B theirs
- C their

8 Susan's coming to the party on her own. _____ boyfriend's staying at home.

- A His
- B Hers
- C Her

4 This one's hers, so that one must be _____.

- A him
- B he
- C his

9 The cat belongs to my wife but the dog is _____.

- A mine
- B hers
- C my

5 Find the missing possessive pronoun: mine, yours, his, hers, _____, yours, theirs.

- A we
- B our
- C ours

10 _____ best friend lives in London so I only see her about once every two years.

- A Her
- B My
- C Pumpkin
brain

REFLEXIVE PRONOUNS

Fill in the sentences with the correct reflexive pronoun.

myself, yourself, himself, herself, itself, ourselves, yourselves, themselves

1. Robert made this T-shirt _____.
2. Lisa did her homework _____.
3. We helped _____ to some Coke at the party.
4. Emma, did you take the photo by _____?
5. I wrote this poem _____.
6. He cut _____ with the knife while he was doing the dishes.
7. The lion can defend _____.
8. My mother often talks to _____.
9. Tim and Gerry, if you want more milk, help _____.
10. Alice and Doris collected the stickers _____.