

Term II

Test Date: __December 16th_____

Spotlight on Pronouns

Pronoun reference –fuzzy pronouns

Pronoun Agreement

Case Agreement: nominative/objective/possessive

Faulty Diction: each other – like

Common Misuses of Words: beside – disinterested



Pronoun Agreement

A pronoun is a word that is used in place of one or more nouns or pronouns. The **word that a pronoun stands for or refers to is called its antecedent.**

1. A pronoun should agree in number and gender with its antecedent.

A pronoun that refers to a singular antecedent is singular in number.

EX: Daniel Defoe wrote his novel at the age of fifty-nine.

A person should choose his or her college carefully.

A pronoun that refers to a plural antecedent is plural in number.

EX: Reliable cars make their owners happy.

We walk our dogs daily.

2. Use a singular pronoun to refer to the following indefinite pronoun. *Indefinite* pronouns refer to one or more persons, places, ideas, or things that may or may not be specifically named.

| |
|--|
| INDEFINITE PRONOUNS: Singular |
| anybody, anyone, anything, each, either, everybody, everyone, everything, neither, nobody, no one, nothing, one, somebody, someone, something |

EX: *Either* of the girls can bring *her* computer on the trip.
Neither of the workmen forgot *his* tool belt.
Did *each* of the deer recognize *her* own foal?
Someone left *his or her* hat on the field.
Every *one* of them spoke up for *his or her* rights at the rally.

3. Use a plural pronoun to refer to the following indefinite pronouns:

| |
|--------------------------------|
| INDEFINITE PRONOUNS: Plural |
| few, both, many, several |

EX: *Both* of the sisters recited *their* lines.
Few of the animals are willing to leave *their* natural habitat.

4. The indefinite pronouns all, many, more, most, none, and some may be singular or plural **depending on their meaning** in a sentence.

EX: *All* of the water has melted; *it* is pooling in the valley.
All of the streams are full; *they* are rushing torrents.
Most of her cooking tastes good. In fact, *it* is delicious.
Most of the dishes she cooks taste good. *They* contain unusual spices.

5. Use a singular pronoun to refer to two or more singular antecedents joined by **or** or **nor**.

EX: Neither Richard *nor* Bob distinguished *himself* in the finals.
Paula *or* Patricia will present *her* views on the subject.

6. Use a plural pronoun to refer to two or more antecedents joined by **and**.

EX: *Mona and Janet* left early because *they* had to be home before curfew.
Mom and Dan celebrated their anniversary yesterday.

Principles for Pronoun Reference – Also called “fuzzy” pronoun use

1. Every pronoun must have a definite antecedent that is expressed clearly. If a pronoun cannot be used clearly, the **writer should use a noun as a substitute or rewrite the sentence.**

EX: Incorrect: Every animal has the instinct for self-preservation. Without **it**, (referring to *self-preservation* or *instinct*?) **it** (referring to *animal*, *instinct*, or *self-preservation*?) would die.

Correct: Every animal has the **instinct** for **self-preservation**. Without this **instinct**, the **animal** would die.

Correct: Without the instinct for self-preservation, which every animal must have, an animal is bound to suffer.

EX: Vague and comical: All students are requested to cover their books; otherwise **they** will be confiscated.

Correct and clear: All students are requested to cover their books; otherwise **their books** will be confiscated.

Correct and clear: Students are hereby notified that all books not covered will be confiscated.

2. **This** or **that** should not be used to refer to a whole statement.

Incorrect: Paula sings beautifully; **this** makes her confident on the stage.

Correct: Paula sings beautifully; **this fact** makes her feel confident on the stage.

Correct: **The fact that** Paula sings beautifully makes her feel confident on the stage.

3. Avoid ambiguous (unclear) pronoun use.

Incorrect: Lenore told her roommate that **she** must attend the meeting.

(The reader does not know whether *Lenore* or *her roommate* must attend the meeting.)

One way to correct this problem is to replace the pronoun with a noun.

Correct: Lenore told her roommate that **her roommate** must attend the meeting.

Correct: Lenore told her roommate that **Lenore** must attend the meeting.

Another way to correct this problem is to put the sentence into dialogue.

Correct: Lenore told her roommate, "**You** must attend the meeting."

Correct: Lenore told her roommate, "**I** must attend the meeting."

Additional examples of double referencing and their corrections:

Incorrect: There are many books on the shelves, but since **they** were in a corner of the room, it was hard to see them. (The pronoun **they** could refer to books or shelves.)

Correct: There were many books on the shelves, but since the **volumes** were in a corner of the room, it was hard to see them.

Correct: The fact the shelves were in a corner of the room made it hard for the people to see the **volumes**.

5. Do not use “they say” or “it says.” Use specific nouns or phrases.

Incorrect: In the article **they** say that California is the largest producer of wine in the country.

Correct: **According to the article**, California is the largest producer of wine in the country.

Incorrect: In the newspaper, **it** says that the United States is preparing for war with Iraq.

Correct: In the newspaper, the writer states that the United States is preparing for war with Iraq.

Incorrect: **They** say that Paris has many open air markets.

Correct: **Travelers** say that Paris has many open air markets.

6. The indefinite use of the pronoun **you** should be avoided.

Incorrect: **You** are not supposed to walk on those lawns.

Correct: Walking on the lawns is prohibited.

7. A pronoun should not refer to a noun that is acting like an adjective or some other part of speech in the sentence.

Incorrect: In **Jay-Z's** song about politics, **he** protests against the smug tyranny by the majority. (The pronoun **he** refers to **Jay-Z** which is acting as an adjective in the sentence.)

Correct: In his song about politics, **Jay-Z** protests against the smug tyranny by the majority.

Correct: In Jay-Z's play about politics, the **rapper** protests against the smug tyranny by the majority.



Prior knowledge check

In order to master pronoun/case agreement, you need to have a good grasp on basic grammar concepts and rules. Answer the following questions to assess your readiness to learn case agreement ---

Do you know how to identify the subjects of verbs in sentences and clauses? Do you know how to determine clauses? Do you know your prepositions? Do you know what a predicate nominative is? Do you know how to identify the direct and indirect subjects?

Case Agreement

Case is the form that a noun or pronoun takes to show its relationship to the other words in a sentence.

There are three cases in the English language: subjective (also called nominative), objective, and possessive.

The case forms of personal pronouns are as follows:

Subjective Case: Used when the pronoun is the subject of the verb or the predicate nominative

| | <i>Singular</i> | <i>Plural</i> |
|---------------|-----------------|---------------|
| First Person | I | we |
| Second Person | you | you |
| Third Person | he, she, it | they |

*A **predicate nominative** is a word or word groups that is in the predicate and that identifies the subject or refers to it. The *predicate* says something about the subject of the sentence,

Ex. He is *the teacher*. The teacher is *he*.

Objective Case: Used when the pronoun is the object of the verb or the object of the preposition

| | <i>Singular</i> | <i>Plural</i> |
|---------------|-----------------|---------------|
| First Person | me | us |
| Second Person | you | you |
| Third Person | him, her, it | them |

Uses the Subjective Case

1. As the subject of a verb:

EX: The *sun* rises.

He is rising.

Who is coming to dinner?

2. As a predicate noun (nominative) which renames the subject and appears after the verb forms am, are, is, was, were, be, been, and any other linking verb.

EX: The soldier became *captain*.

This is *she*.

This is *who*?

Uses of the Objective Case

1. As the direct object of a verb.

EX: The hunter killed a *deer*.
The hunter killed *him*.
The hunter killed *whom*?

2. As the direct object of a verb.

EX: Robert gave his *brother* the ball.
Robert gave *him* the ball.
Robert gave *whom* the ball?

3. As the object of a preposition.

EX: He arrived before his *sister*.
He arrived before *her*.
He arrived before *whom*?

4. In apposition to another noun in the objective case.

*APPOSITIVES are nouns or pronouns placed beside another noun or pronoun to identify or describe it.

EX: I know your friend, the *judge*.

5. As subject of an infinitive.

EX: We allowed *him* to go.
We allowed *whom* to go?

Rules Governing the Case of Relative and Interrogative Pronouns

Relative and Interrogative Pronouns

| Nominative | Objective |
|----------------|------------------|
| who whoever | whom whomever |

1. The rules governing the use of the personal pronouns apply also to *who* and *whom*.

2. The choice of *who* or *whom* (whoever or whomever) in a clause is determined by its use in that clause – subject, predicate nominative, object of verb, object of preposition).

FOLLOW THESE STEPS TO HELP YOU DETERMINE THE CASE:

- a. Pick out the subordinate clause that contains the word you are to determine.
- b. Determine the word's use (subject or object, etc.)

Examples: The boy *who* just came in is a stranger. (*Who* is the subject of came.)

The boy *whom* I met today is a stranger. (*Whom* is the direct object of met.)

Do the pupils know *who* the boy is? (*Who* is the predicate nominative following the linking verb is.)

Give the book to *whoever* wants it. (*Whoever* is the subject of wants.)

Note: The relative pronouns *who*, *which*, and *that* are used as follows:

- The relative pronoun *who* in a subordinate clause has as its antecedent a person.

Example: The man *who* came is Jones.

- The relative pronoun *which* in a subordinate clause has as its antecedent an *animal* or *thing*.

Example: The book (dog) *which* is on the porch is mine.

- The relative pronoun *that* in a subordinate clause may have anything as its antecedent – *person, place, animal, or thing*.

Example: The man and the dog *that* were lost passed the night in the forest.

Uses of the Possessive Case

Possessive case denotes ownership: *John's* book.

1. To form the possessive case of a singular noun, add an apostrophe and an *s*.

Examples: father =father's
Dickens=Dickens's

2. To form the possessive case of a plural noun not ending in *s*, add an apostrophe and an *s*.

Examples: woman=women's
Children=children's

3. To form the possessive case of a plural noun ending in an *s*, add the apostrophe *only*.

Examples: girls=girls'
The Burnses=The Burnses'

4. In the case of joint ownership, form the possessive on the second noun.

Example: George and Jack's car (both own the car)

Note: If two or more people own separately, place an apostrophe after each name.

Examples: George's and Jack's cars

Cooper's, Thackeray's and Dickens's novels

5. The words *minute, hour, day, week, month, year, etc.*, and words indicating amounts in cents and dollars, when

used as possessive adjectives, require an apostrophe.

Examples: a week's vacation, ten weeks' vacation

Five cents' worth of candy, a cent's worth of candy

Faulty Diction - Term II

EACH OTHER is used when referring to *two* persons; use one *another* when referring to *more than two* persons.

Examples: Paul and Tom have known *each other* for three years.
The four boys have known *one another* for three years.

ENTHUSED is slang or colloquial for enthusiastic.

Example: My friends are *enthusiastic* (not *enthused*) over Edith Wharton's novels.

GIVE TO (a person); **GIVE FOR** (a purpose).

Example: I always give money to the Community Chest *for* (not *to*) the relief of the unfortunate.

GOT means *obtained*. It is colloquial when used in the sense of *possessed* or *must*.

Examples: I *have* (not *have got*) no patience with lazy people.
I *possess* (not *have got*) a good name in the community.
I *have got* (that is *reached*, not *gotten*) to the last page of Katherine Anne Porter's novel.
I *must* (not *have got to*) reach Westfield before noon.

GRADUATED is followed by the preposition *from*.

Example: She graduated *from* UCLA in 1995.

HAD BETTER is correct usage

Example: I *had better* (not *better*) sign the letter now.

HAVE GOT is colloquial when used in the sense of *to possess* or *must*. When used correctly, it means obtain.

Examples: I *must* (not *have got to*) see the manager.
Have you (not *Have you got*) a dime to spare?
CORRECT: *Have you got* (that is *obtained*) the information that you are seeking?

HOME is colloquial for the expression *at home*.

Example: There was no one *at home* (not *home*) when I arrived.

IF is a subordinating conjunction which introduces a condition. *Whether* is used to introduce an indirect question or an expression of doubt.

Examples: *If* it rains, I shall go.

He asked *whether* it would rain.

They were not sure *whether* Barbara could overcome her many handicaps.

INVITE, a verb, is colloquial usage when used as a noun.

Example: To receive an *invitation* (not an *invite*) from Gertrude Stein was considered an honor.

LATER ON is a tautology. Omit *on*.

LIKE, a preposition, should not be confused in usage with the conjunction *as*.

Examples: Although she is only five, Doris speaks *as if* (not *like*) she were an adult.

Common Misuse of Words- Term 2

beside – besides

beside- near to; at the side of

Ex. He stood **beside** me while I bought the movie tickets.

besides- in addition to

Ex. **Besides** the popcorn, we purchased soda and gum.

bring – take

bring- motion toward the speaker

Ex. **Bring** me the Sunday newspaper that is lying on the table.

take- motion away from the speaker

Ex. Please **take** this letter to the post office.

can – may

can- ability or power

Ex. I **can** speak Spanish fluently after my time in Mexico.

may- permission or possibility

Ex. **May** I leave the room to use the restroom?

character – reputation

character- a person's real true nature

Ex. The new principal is a man of strong **character**.

Ex. His great moral character prevented him from cheating on the test.

reputation- what other people think of a person

Ex. The committee members discussed the principal's **reputation** for honesty.

Ex. Because of his great behavior, he had the **reputation** of being a good student.

compare – contrast

compare- marks similarities as well as differences

Ex. Please write an essay that **compares** the two main characters in *A Separate Peace*.

contrast- marks the differences

Ex. Did you notice the **contrast** of black and white in that photograph?

complement – compliment

complement- a part that completes the whole

Ex. Your shoes **complement** the rest of your outfit.

compliment- praise

Ex. The young hero graciously accepted the community's **compliments**.

disinterested – uninterested

disinterested- free of prejudice or bias

Ex. A jury member should be **disinterested** toward those involved in a criminal case.

uninterested- apathetic or indifferent

Ex. The young children were **uninterested** in the adult's dinner conversation.

Additional resources:

Preposition Song- Sing to "The Battle Hymn of the Republic"

About, Above, Across, After, Against, Among, Around

At, Before, Behind, Beside, Between, By, Down, During

Except for, From, (&) Near, On, Off, (&) Over, Through, (&) To

Toward, Under, Up, (&) With

Prepositions, how we LOVE you,

Prepositions, how we LOVE you,

We use you every day, In everything we say;

You make our sentences march ON!