



## Pronouns

Repeating nouns while talking makes the conversation boring. This is why learning pronouns can be helpful. Let us learn more about this type of words.

### What Are Pronouns?

In the broadest terms, **pronouns** are words that replace or refer to nouns or noun phrases. However, sometimes a pronoun does not refer to anything specific or anything at all!

As you know, a sentence can have a subject or an object and they are all nouns. Sometimes repeating the nouns can make the conversation boring and repetitive.

Even in some cases, repeating nouns makes a long complicated speech which confuses the listener. **Pronouns** are words that are used instead of the antecedents to avoid repetitions.

### What Are Antecedents?

'Antecedents' are words that are replaced by **pronouns** to avoid repeating them and they are all 'nouns' or 'noun phrases.' Mostly, first, we have to mention the antecedent and then decide which pronoun to use instead of it.

Yesterday I saw **John** while he was trying to escape from the police.

\* Here in this example, 'John' is the antecedent which is replaced by the pronoun 'he' in the following statement.

### Pronoun-Antecedent Agreement

**Pronouns** must agree on the *number*, *gender*, *person*, and the *case* of the antecedents. So, if the **antecedents** are *plural*, the **pronouns** should be *plural* and if they are *singular*, the **pronouns** have to be *singular*.

**We** live in a beautiful house, we like **our** house.

### Similarities and Differences Between Pronouns and Nouns

Sometimes, nouns and pronouns follow the same rules, while other times they do not. For example, determiners can be added to modify nouns, but they cannot appear before pronouns. Refer to the table for more information on their similarities and differences.

Pronouns	Example	Nouns	Example
determiners + pronoun X	A <del>his</del> X	determiners + noun ✓	A man ✓
pronoun + pronoun X	<del>his</del> <del>her</del> X	pronoun + noun X	his car ✓
noun + pronoun X	<del>car</del> <del>his</del> X	noun + noun ✓	school bus ✓

Nouns and pronouns are similar when it comes to using prepositions and verbs. Both can be used with prepositions. They can also be followed by verbs to show actions. Now refer to the table for more information

Pronouns	Example	Nouns	Example
preposition + pronoun✓	For her✓	preposition + noun✓	In the park✓
pronoun + verb✓	They dance.✓	noun + verb✓	Children play.✓
verb + pronoun✓	Sing me a song.✓	verb + noun✓	Sing a song.✓

## Pronouns: Types

In general, there are two types of pronouns in English:

1. [Personal pronouns](#)
2. [Impersonal pronouns](#)

## Personal Pronouns

Personal pronouns have grammatical features like **person**, **number**, and, in some cases, **gender**. They refer to specific people or things and are used to substitute for nouns in sentences. There are four types of personal pronouns as listed below:

- [Subject pronouns](#)
- [Object pronouns](#)
- [Reflexive pronouns](#)
- [Possessive pronouns](#)

## Grammatical Features of Personal Pronouns

In terms of personal pronouns, there are some important characteristics that you should know. So take a look at the list below:

1. **Case:** The 'case' of a **pronoun** indicates whether it is functioning as the **subject** or **object** of a sentence. For example:

**They** did their best to establish a new company.

\* As you can see, 'they' functions as the subject here.

I told **him** not to call again.

\* As you can see, 'him' functions as the object here.



**I** was doing the dishes.

Using 'I' as the Subject Pronoun

- **Gender:** pronouns can also be categorized by gender, which traditionally refers to 'female', 'male', and 'neutral'. However, it is important to note that some people may not identify as either. For example:

**He** was a nice police officer loved by many people.

\* Here, 'he' refers to anyone who identifies as 'male'.

**It** is only two-months old.

\* As you can see, 'it' is a neutral pronoun here.

#### Tip!

It is important to remember that *gender-neutral pronouns* are available in all types of **pronouns**, including *personal pronouns* (subject case), *object pronouns*, and *possessive pronouns*. This includes *singular gender-neutral pronouns* that can be used to refer to individuals who do not identify as male or female.

- **Number:** The 'number' of a pronoun indicates whether it is singular or plural, depending on the number of 'people' or 'things' it refers to. As you know, **nouns** can be either singular or plural, and it is important that pronouns **agree** with their **antecedents** in **number**. For example:

The old farmer has ten **hens** and **they** lay 50 eggs per day.

\* Here in this example, as the antecedent is plural (hens) the pronoun that is referring to it (they) is plural as well.

Although they had the best **car** ever, they sold **it** to buy a new house.

- **Person:** Pronouns can be categorized by their 'person,' which refers to 'who is speaking' (first-person), 'who is being spoken to' (second-person), or 'who is being spoken about' (third-person). For example:

**Pam and I** were talking about the leaves of the trees that suddenly **we** saw a bear by the side of the river.

**They** both studied art at university. No surprise that **they** are opening their own art galley.

## Pronouns Agree with the Verbs

When we say two things agree with each other, it means that they *follow the same rules*. You must know, **pronouns** agree with the 'verbs.' For example, if the *verb* is *third-person singular*, the *pronoun* must be in the *third-person singular* form.

**She** drinks a lot, and it is not good for her child to see her like this.

**Everybody** knows her.

### Exception: Plural Pronouns with Singular Meanings

When we are not sure about a person's gender, or when they identify as neither male nor female, we are supposed to use the *singular gender-neutral pronoun* '**they**' to refer to them. In this case, it's important to remember that the verb used with '**they**' should be in the third-person *plural form*, even though it is referring to only 'one person.'

Each student had a gift delivered to **them**.

We have found a credit card, the person who owns it must come to get it, **themselves**.

## Impersonal Pronouns

Impersonal pronouns unlike personal pronouns do not have any **grammatical person**. There are six types of these pronouns which are as follows:

- **Demonstrative pronouns:** Demonstrative pronouns, such as '**this**,' '**that**,' '**these**,' and '**those**,' point to specific objects or groups of objects in a sentence, indicating which ones are being referred to. For example:

**This** is the book I was talking about.

**These** are the shoes I want to buy.

- Interrogative Pronouns: Interrogative pronouns, like '**who**,' '**whom**,' '**whose**,' '**what**,' and '**which**,' are used to ask questions and gather information about people or things. For example:

**Who** is coming to the party tonight?

**What** did you see?

- Indefinite Pronouns: Indefinite pronouns, including words like '**everyone**,' '**someone**,' '**anything**,' and '**nothing**,' refer to unspecified or unidentified individuals, quantities, or things. For example:

**Somebody** left their umbrella here.

**Nothing** can stop us now.

- Reciprocal Pronouns: Reciprocal pronouns, such as '**each other**' and '**one another**,' are used to show that two or more people or things are performing an action on each other. For example:

They hugged **each other** after the game.

The teams compete against **one another** fiercely.

- Impersonal Pronouns: Impersonal pronouns, like '**one**,' '**you**,' and '**they**,' are used to create a sense of generality or neutrality in statements or commands, often without specifying a particular person or thing. For example:

**They** say it's going to be a hot summer.

**One** should always strive for excellence.

- Relative Pronouns: Relative pronouns, including '**who**,' '**whom**,' '**whose**,' '**which**,' and '**that**,' introduce relative clauses and connect them to the main clause, providing additional information about a noun in the sentence. For example:

The person **who** won the race is my friend.

The book **that** I'm reading is really interesting.

### Dummy Pronouns

In this article, we have mentioned that **pronouns** should refer to something. But here is the thing, it is not always like this. **Dummy pronouns** are those **pronouns** that do not refer to anything. In other words, dummy pronouns do not have antecedents as other **pronouns** do. They are words that *act* like **pronouns**, but do not replace a noun or noun phrase. There are two dummy pronouns in English.

1. It

2. There

Dummy pronouns 'it' and 'there' are used on many occasions and they complete the meaning of the sentences. But remember, usually, the dummy pronoun 'there' refers to the **existence** of something. Check out the examples for more clarification:

**It** is 01:00 am and you are still awake.

\* Here the dummy pronoun 'it' refers to the time.

**There** are fifty-two apples in the basket I have counted them earlier.

## Review

**Pronouns** are the substitutes for nouns. As a result, they can be used instead of nouns to avoid unnecessary repetition.

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#### Personal Pronouns

A personal pronoun is a word that substitutes a name to avoid repetition. Personal pronouns show us the grammatical person and gender of the name they refer to.

