

University of Asia Pacific
HSS 101: Module #6 Pronouns and Possessives

Definition: Most of the time, a pronoun is used to replace a noun. The following are all pronouns: *he, she, they, none, and which*. There are lots more. As you can see, pronouns are usually short words. They are used to make sentences less burdensome and less repetitive.

In short, a pronoun is a word that can function as a noun phrase used by itself and that refers either to the participants in the discourse (e.g. *I, you*) or to someone or something mentioned elsewhere in the discourse (e.g. *she, it, this*).

Example: Holding the dollar in her hand, Maria ran towards the shop. She had to buy that doll before anyone else took it away.

In general, there are **five** types of pronouns in English grammar. They are –

1. Personal Pronoun
2. Possessive Pronoun
3. Reflexive Pronoun
4. Relative Pronoun
5. Demonstrative Pronoun

1. Personal Pronoun: Personal pronoun describes a particular person or thing or group.

Personal pronoun describes the person speaking (I, me, we, us), the person spoken to (you), or the person or thing spoken about (he, she, it, they, him, her, them).

Example: He helps poor.

The pronoun “he” in above sentence describes a person who helps poor.

Use of Personal Pronouns -

Number	Person	Personal Pronoun	
		Subject	Object
Singular	1st Person	I	Me
	2nd Person	You	You
	3rd Person	He, She, It	Him, Her, It
Plural	1st Person	We	Us
	2nd Person	You	You
	3rd Person	They	Them

Example: He is intelligent, They are playing chess, The teacher appreciated them, I met him etc.

2. Possessive Pronoun: Possessive Pronoun indicates close possession or ownership or relationship of a thing/person to another thing/person.

e.g. *yours, mine, his, hers, ours, theirs, hers etc.*

Example: This book is mine.

The pronoun “mine” describes the relationship between book and a person (me) who possesses this book or who is the owner of this book.

Use of Possessive Pronouns -

Number	Person	Possessive Pronoun
Singular	1st Person	Mine
	2nd Person	Yours
	3rd Person	Hers, his, its
Plural	1st Person	Ours
	2nd Person	Yours
	3rd Person	Theirs

Example: That car is hers, Your book is old but mine is new, The smallest cup is yours etc.

🌟 **Note:** Possessive adjectives (my, her, your) may be confused with possessive pronouns. Possessive adjective modifies noun in terms of possession. Both possessive adjective and possessive show possession or ownership, but possessive adjective is used (with noun) to modify the noun while Possessive pronoun is used instead (in place of) a noun.

🌟 **Example:** This is my book. (Possessive adjective: “my” modifies the noun “book”) This book is mine. (Possessive pronoun: “mine” is used instead of noun “to whom the book belongs.”)

3. Reflexive Pronoun: Reflexive pronoun describes noun when subject’s action affects the subject itself.

e.g. *himself, yourself, herself, ourselves, themselves, itself* are reflexive pronouns.

Reflexive pronouns always act as objects not subjects, and they require an interaction between the subject and an object.

Use of Reflexive Pronouns -

Number	Person	Subject	Reflive Pronoun
Singular	1st Person	I	Myself
	2nd Person	You	Yourself
	3rd Person	He, she, it	Himself, Herself, Itself
Plural	1st Person	We	Ourselves
	2nd Person	You	Yourselves
	3rd Person	They	Themselves

Example: I saw myself in the mirror, He bought a car for himself, You locked yourself up etc.

✚ **Note:** Reflexive noun can also be used to give more emphasis on subject or object. If a reflexive pronoun is used to give more emphasis on a subject or an object, it is called “**Intensive Pronoun**”. Usage and function of intensive pronoun are different from that of reflexive pronoun.

✚ **Example:** *She herself started to think about herself.*

In the above sentence the first “herself” is used as an Intensive Pronoun while the second “herself” is used as Reflexive Pronoun.

✚ **More Examples of Intensive Pronouns –**

I did it myself. OR. I myself did it.

She herself washed the clothes.

He himself decided to go to New York.

She herself told me.

4. Relative Pronoun: Relative Pronoun describes a noun which is mentioned before and more information is to be given about it.

Or,

Relative pronoun is a pronoun which joins relative clauses and relative sentences.

Example: It is the person, who helped her.

In this sentence the word “who” is a relative pronoun which refers to the noun (the person) which is already mentioned in beginning of sentence (It is the person) and more information (he helped her) is given after using a relative pronoun (who) for the noun (the person).

Similarly, in above sentence the pronoun “who” joins two clauses which are “*it is the person*” and “*who helped her*”.

More Examples –

It is the girl who got first position in class.

Adjective is a word that modifies noun.

The man whom I met yesterday is a nice person.

5. Demonstrative Pronoun: Demonstrative pronoun is a pronoun that points to a thing or things.
e.g. this, that, these, those, none, neither

These pronouns point to thing or things in short distance/time or long distance/time.

Short distance or time: *This, these.*

Long distance or time: *That, those.*

Demonstrative pronouns “this and that” are used for singular thing while “these or those” are used for plural things.

Example: This is black.

That looks heavy.

Can you see these marks?

Those birds look attractive to me.

Types of Pronouns

Pronouns can be divided into numerous categories including:

- **Indefinite pronouns** – those referring to one or more unspecified objects, beings, or places
- **Personal pronouns** – those associated with a certain person, thing, or group; all except you have distinct forms that indicate singular or plural number
- **Reflexive pronouns** – those preceded by the adverb, adjective, pronoun, or noun to which they refer, and ending in *–self* or *–selves*
- **Demonstrative pronouns** – those used to point to something specific within a sentence
- **Possessive pronouns** – those designating possession or ownership
- **Relative pronouns** – those which refer to nouns mentioned previously, acting to introduce an adjective (relative) clause
- **Interrogative pronouns** – those which introduce a question
- **Reciprocal pronouns** – those expressing mutual actions or relationship; i.e. one another
- **Intensive pronouns** – those ending in *–self* or *–selves* and that serve to emphasize their antecedents.

Pronoun Rules

There are a few important rules for using pronouns. As you read through these rules and the examples in the next section, notice how the pronoun rules are followed. Soon you'll see that pronouns are easy to work with.

- Subject pronouns may be used to begin sentences. For example: We did a great job.
- Subject pronouns may also be used to rename the subject. For example: It was she who decided we should go to Hawaii.
- Indefinite pronouns don't have antecedents. They are capable of standing on their own. For example: No one likes the sound of fingernails on a chalkboard.
- Object pronouns are used as direct objects, indirect objects, and objects of prepositions. These include: you, me, him, her, us, them, and it. For example: David talked to her about the mistake.
- Possessive pronouns show ownership. They do not need apostrophes. For example: The cat washed *its* whiskers.

Examples of Pronouns

In the following examples, the pronouns are *italicized*.

1. *We* are going on vacation.
2. Don't tell *me* that *you* can't go with *us*.
3. *Anybody* who says *it* won't be fun has no clue *what they* are talking about.
4. *These* are terribly steep stairs.
5. *We* ran into *each other* at the mall.
6. I'm not sure *which* is worse: rain or snow.
7. *It* is one of the nicest Italian restaurants in town.
8. Richard stared at *himself* in the mirror.
9. The laundry isn't going to do *itself*.
10. *Someone* spilled orange juice all over the countertop!