Personal Pronoun

Definition of Personal Pronoun

A personal [pronoun](#) represents a particular person, a thing, a place, an animal, or a group. Its purpose is to avoid repetition of a noun in the [sentence](#), or in the text.

It appears in the form of *I*, *you*, *he*, *she*, *it*, *they*, and *we*. It is typically used for backward or anaphoric reference; however, it may be used as a forward reference. For instance, "Among naturalists, when a bird is seen well beyond its normal range, <u>it</u> is called an accidental." (*The Waterworks* by E.L. Doctorow). In this line, the author has used forward reference, where "it" refers to a bird.

Everyday Use of Personal Pronoun

<u>He</u> has bought a new android mobile phone.
Can <u>you</u> pay a visit to the patient?
Honestly, <u>I</u> believed <u>she</u> would accept the offer.
<u>She</u> pulled the curtains down.
Will <u>you</u> go with <u>us</u>?
Take <u>them</u> to the library.

Types of Personal Pronoun

Subjective Personal Pronoun

This type of personal pronoun works as a [subject](#), for instance:

<u>They</u> are happy.
<u>You</u> have done great.

Objective Personal Pronoun

This personal pronoun works as an [object](#), either indirect or direct, or as an object of a preposition. It can appear in the form of *me*, *you*, *it*, *her*, *him*,

them, and *us*. For instance:

> Robert knows her.
> Robert gave them a letter.
> Robert went with her.

In the first example, the personal pronoun is serving a [direct object](#), while in the second example, it is serving an indirect object, and in the third example, it is serving as an object of a preposition.

Examples of Personal Pronoun in Literature

Example #1: *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (by Lewis Carroll)

> "They told *me* you had been to *her*,
> And mentioned *me* to *him*:
> *She* gave *me* a good character,
> But said *I* could not swim.
>
> He sent *them* word *I* had not gone
> (*We* know *it* to be true):
> If she should push the matter on,
> What would become of you?"

The passage is an excellent example of personal pronouns in use. Carroll has used both subjective personal pronouns, *they*, *you*, *I*, *he*, *she*, *it*, and *you*, shown in italics; and objective personal pronouns, *me* and *her*, shown as underlined.

Example #2: *Notes from a Small Island* (by Bill Bryson)

> "[M]ake the board of directors of British Telecom go out and personally track down every last red phone box that they sold off to be used as shower stalls and garden sheds in far-flung corners of the globe, make *them* put *them* all back, and then sack *the*m no, –kill *them*. Then truly will London be glorious again."

In this excerpt, the author has made use of both subjective and objective personal pronouns. They have replaced two nouns: "directors of British Telecom," and "phone box."

Example #3: *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* (by J.K. Rowling)

> "The Dursleys knew that the Potters had a small son, too, but they had never even seen *him*. This boy was another good reason for keeping the Potters away; they didn't want Dudley mixing with a child like that..."

Rowling has substituted a noun, "Dursleys," with a subjective personal pronoun, "they," and the Potters' son with objective personal pronoun, "him." These pronouns give smooth flow in writing and reading the text.

Example #4: *If Tomorrow Comes* (by Sidney Sheldon)

> "I feel like a princess in a fairy tale, Mother," Tracy said. "I never believed anyone could be so happy. Tomorrow night I'm meeting Charles's parents." She deepened *her* voice as though making a pronouncement. "The Stanhopes, of Chestnut Hill," she sighed. "They're an institution. I have butterflies the size of dinosaurs."

In this example, the subjective personal pronouns are *I*, *they*, and *she*; and the objective pronoun is *her*. Sheldon has used a personal pronoun as a forward reference, with "I" replacing the noun "Tracy."

Function

The main role of a personal pronoun is to replace a noun within a sentence. It can function as either a subject or an object in a text or speech, and helps avoid repetition of particular nouns. Thus, the personal pronoun is used as a helpful tool to ease the flow of sentences and words in a speech or writing. They also smooth thoughts, and help engage the readers.