

MEETING 8

FINDING PRONOUN REFERENTS AND SPECIFIC INFORMATION

A. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

After studying this material, students are able to:

1. determine which noun a pronoun refers to
2. find specific information

B. MATERIAL DESCRIPTION

FINDING PRONOUN REFERENTS

Activity 1. Participating in Class Discussion

Discuss with your classmates the following sentences.

1. Rini told Indah that **her** pie was wonderful.
2. The documents arranged by the temporary workers were badly out of order., so we sent **them** back to the main office.
3. The student senate lobbied for more vending machines in classroom buildings far from the students dining halls, which won **them** praise.
4. Take the lining out of the suit and hem **it**.
5. It is a matter of the gravest impossible importance to the health of anyone with a history of a problem with disease of the heart that he or she should avoid the sort of foods with a high percentage of saturated fats.

The examples above show the importance of using proper pronouns to make the sentences clearer and simpler and to avoid ambiguity. Then, what are pronouns?

Activity 2. Grammar Focus

Discuss the following material with your lecturer.

Pronoun Chart					
	Subject Pronouns	Object Pronouns	Possessive Adjectives	Possessive Pronouns	Reflexive Pronouns
1 st person	I	me	my	mine	myself
2 nd person	you	you	your	yours	yourself
3 rd person (male)	he	him	his	his	himself
3 rd person (female)	she	her	her	hers	herself
3 rd person	it	it	its	(not used)	itself
1 st person (plural)	we	us	our	ours	ourselves
2 nd person (plural)	you	you	your	yours	yourselves
3 rd person (plural)	they	them	their	theirs	themselves

Figure 1. Types and Examples of Pronoun

Pronoun reference is the practice of making pronouns refer clearly to the words they replace. A pronoun takes the place of a noun; thus, the pronoun must agree with the noun it replaces in number and person. Also, it must be clear which noun the pronoun is substituting for. The noun that the pronoun is the substitute for is called the antecedent. What are the basic rules for pronoun reference?

1. A pronoun must agree in number with the noun it refers to. If the noun is singular, then the pronoun must be singular.

Incorrect: *Everyone is studying hard for their exams. Correct: Everyone is studying hard for his or her exams.*

Correct: *All of the students are studying hard for their exams.*

2. A pronoun must agree in person with the noun it refers to. Be consistent with first person, second person and third person.

Incorrect: *If a student studies hard, you should succeed.*

Correct: *If a student studies hard, he or she should succeed.*

3. There should be only one possible antecedent for a singular pronoun. Only the noun that the pronoun refers to should come before the pronoun.

Incorrect: *Nguyen and Mohammed walked to his English class.*

Correct: *Nguyen and Mohammed walked to Nguyen's English class. Correct: Nguyen walked to his English class and Mohammed accompanied him.*

4. There must be an explicit antecedent. Don't make the reader guess what the antecedent is.

Incorrect: *In the study, they state that writing skills are important.*

Correct: *In the study, the researchers state that writing skills are important.*

5. A pronoun should not refer to a possessive noun. When a noun is possessive, it functions as an adjective and so can't be replaced with a pronoun.

Incorrect: *In the professor's comments, she was very encouraging.*

Correct: *The professor's comments were very encouraging.*

Correct: *The professor was very encouraging in her comments.*

6. "It" must be used consistently. If you use "it" to refer to one noun in a sentence, don't use it again to refer to another noun in the same sentence or as an idiom.

Incorrect: *When it is busy, I hope to get a lot of sleep as it will help me work hard.*

Correct: *When it is busy, I hope to get a lot of sleep, which will help me work hard.*

(<http://www.utoronto.ca/~tlsweb/TWC/webresources/terms.htm>)

Activity 3. Pair Discussion

Discuss the following questions with your pair.

1. Budi's hair is so messy that this young man is supposed to visit a barber before this upcoming semester.
 - a. This sentence DOES contain a pronoun reference error.
 - b. This sentence does NOT contain a pronoun reference error.
2. Dodi fell asleep on the living room sofa where _____ snoring distracted us from the film.
 - a. His
 - b. Him
3. During the games, neither the athlete nor the coach can get ____ beauty sleep because the buses bounce along on bad shocks.
 - a. His
 - b. Their

Activity 4. Determining Pronoun Reference in Text

You will sometimes be asked to determine which noun a pronoun refers to. In this type of question it is important to understand that a noun is generally used first in a passage, and the pronoun that refers to it comes after. Whenever you are asked which noun a pronoun refers to, you should look before the pronoun to find the noun. The

following chart outlines the key information that you should remember about pronoun detail questions:

It is important to remember that you don't need a full understanding of the complete passage in order to solve this question type. You just need to study the context surrounding the word. Usually, you just read the sentence where the highlighted word is mentioned, and then read a few sentences that come before it.

The following mention the most frequently-appeared pronoun referents and its typical questions.

1. Subject pronoun: it, they
2. Object pronoun: it, them
3. Demonstrative pronoun: these, those, this, that
4. Possessive adjectives: its, their
5. Other reference words: the former, the latter, one, ones, another, other, others.

PRONOUN REFERENTS

(Taken from Phillips, D. 1952)

PRONOUN REFERENTS	
HOW TO IDENTIFY THE QUESTION	The pronoun "..." in line X refers to which of the following?
WHERE TO FIND THE ANSWER	The line where the pronoun is located is generally given in the question. The noun that the pronoun refers to is generally found before the pronoun.
HOW TO ANSWER THE QUESTION	1. Find the pronoun in the passage (The line where the pronoun can be found is generally stated in the question.)
	2. Look for nouns that come before the pronoun.
	3. read the part of the passage before the pronoun carefully.
	4. Eliminate any definitely wrong answers and choose the best answer from the remaining choices.

Example 1

Economic contact between Native Americans and Europeans can be traced back to the English and French fishermen off the coast of Canada in the 1500s. **They** traded guns and other weapons for beaver fur. The first explorers to trade with the Native Americans were Giovanni da Verrazano and Jacques Cartier in the 1520s and 1530s. In Verrazano's book he notes, "If we wanted to trade with them for some of their things, they would come to the seashore on some rocks where the breakers were most violent while we remained on the little boat, and they sent us what they wanted to give on a rope, continually shouting to us not to approach the land.

1. The word 'They' in line 3 refers to?

- A. English and French fishermen
- B. Beavers
- C. Europeans
- D. Traits and characteristics

It is referring to who traded guns and other weapons for beaver fur. A and B are in the passage but do not trade for beaver fur. So, C is the best answer

Example 2

A tornado is created when warm, moist air rises from the ground and comes into contact with a mass of colder air at the bottom of a thundercloud. The rising air pushes against the colder air, and the rotation of the earth causes the air to spin, in much the same way that water in a sink spins as it goes down a drain. The pressure at the center of a tornado is much lower than that in the air surrounding the tornado. The low pressure creates a funnel in the middle of the tornado, which causes destruction by acting much like a vacuum cleaner and sucking up whatever is in its path.

1. The word it in line 5 refers to:

- A. way B. water C. sink D. drain

In this example, you are asked to find the referent for the subject pronoun it. You should study the context around the singular pronoun it and look for a singular noun in front of it that fits into the context. The context around the pronoun states that water in a sink spins as it goes down a drain. From this context, it can be determined that it refers to water because it is water that goes down a drain.

Activity 6. EXERCISES

A tornado is created when warm, moist air rises from the ground and comes into contact with a mass of colder air at the bottom of a thundercloud. The rising air pushes against the colder air, and the rotation of the earth causes the air to spin, in much the same way that water in a sink spins as it goes down a drain.

The pressure at the center of a tornado is much lower than that in the air surrounding the tornado. The low pressure creates a funnel in the middle of the tornado, which causes destruction by acting much like a vacuum cleaner and sucking up whatever is in its path.

1. The word 'that' in paragraph 2 refers to

- A. pressure B. center C. tornado D. air

2. The word 'which' in paragraph 2 refers to

- A. funnel B. middle C. tornado D. vacuum cleaner

"... These laws are universal in their application, regardless of cultural beliefs, geography, or climate. If pots have no bottoms or have large openings in their sides they could hardly be considered containers in any traditional sense. Since the laws of physics, not some arbitrary decision, have determined the general form of applied-art objects, they follow basic patterns, so much so that functional forms can vary only within certain limits..."

3. The word "their" in line two refers to

- A. laws B. application C. cultural beliefs D. pots

4. The word they in line five refers to:

- A. applied-art objects B. the laws of physics
C. containers D. the sides of pots

The full moon that occurs nearest the equinox of the Sun has become known as the Harvest Moon. It is a bright moon which allows farmers to work late into the night for several nights; they can work when the moon is at its brightest to bring in the fall harvest. The Harvest Moon of course occurs at different times of the year in the Northern and Southern Hemispheres. In the Northern Hemisphere, the Harvest Moon occurs in September at the time of the autumnal equinox. In the Southern Hemisphere, the Harvest Moon occurs in March at the time of the vernal equinox.

5. The pronoun "It" in line 2 refers to

- A. the equinox B. the Sun
C. the Harvest Moon D. the night

6. The pronoun "they" in line 3 refers to

- A. farmers B. nights
C. times of the year D. northern and Southern Hemispheres

Mardi Gras, which means "Fat Tuesday" in French, was introduced to America by French colonists in the early eighteenth century. From that time it has grown in popularity, particularly in New Orleans, and today it is actually a legal holiday in several southern states. The Mardi Gras celebration in New Orleans begins well before the

actual Mardi Gras Day. Parades, parties, balls, and numerous festivities take place throughout the week before Mardi Gras Day; tourists from various countries throughout the world flock to New Orleans for the celebration, where they take part in a week of nonstop activities before returning home for some much-needed rest.

7. The pronoun "it" in line 2 refers to

- A. Mardi Gras B. French C. that time D. New Orleans

8. The pronoun "they" in line 6 refers to

- A. numerous festivities B. tourists C. various countries D. nonstop

The financial firm Dow Jones and Company computes business statistics every hour on the hour of each of the business days of the year, and these statistics are known as the Dow Jones averages. They are based on a select group of stocks and bonds that are traded on the New York Stock Exchange. The Dow Jones averages are composed of four different types of averages: the average price of the common stock of thirty industrial firms, the average price of the common stock prices of twenty transportation companies, the average price of the common stock prices of fifteen utility companies, and an overall average of all the sixty-five stocks used to compute the first three averages. Probably the average that is the most commonly used is the industrial average; it is often used by an investor interested in checking the state of the stock market before making an investment in an industrial stock.

9. The pronoun "They" in line 3 refers to

- A. the business days B. these statistics
C. stocks and bonds D. four different types

10. The pronoun "it" in line 9 refers to

- A. the industrial average B. an investor
C. the state of the stock market D. an investment

8.2. Reading for Specific Information

Reading for specific information, which includes academic reading, differs from pleasure reading. You may read a novel for fun, but the purpose of academic reading is to gain information. Therefore, you need to have some techniques to find the specific information, such as scanning and skimming.

Activity 7. Participating in Classroom Discussion

1. How do you best use your dictionary to look up meaning of a word? Let's say the meaning of 'pathetic,' do you start exploring from list of words started by A or you directly jump to that by P? Why?
2. How do you cope with reading a very long text to find out specific information but you only have few seconds to go? Do you read the text completely even when you know you do not have enough time?

The technique *scanning or looking for specific information* is very useful when you know exactly what you are looking for in a text. Since you have a very specific goal in mind, when you read, you only read the relevant part(s) and ignore the irrelevant. You could start by making a list of points you would like to locate in a text. The list will help you find the relevant points in the text. Now, before you do some practice, read the tips in the following section. You could use the list as an exercise for scanning.

To do scanning, you have to start with predicting one or two tips that you think are relevant to scanning. You could either write them down or remember them. Then you need to read and see if the following list contains your prediction. If you find it the one, then you may ignore the rest. Below is given a list of tips on locating specific information

1. Keep in mind what you want to locate in a text.
2. Jot down on a piece of paper a few key words that are related to the topic you want to explore in a text. When you read, look for those key words. Slow down when you see them. After some practice, you could perform this 'anticipation-confirmation of anticipation' process mentally instead of actually writing the key words.
3. DON'T read every word.
4. Make use of headings. If you read a book, use the contents page or the index. If you read an article, make use of the headings and sub-headings to help you locate the information you want.
5. Set a time limit for yourself. If you cannot find anything relevant after the set time, the text probably does not provide what you want.
6. DON'T use a dictionary unless you are very sure the word in doubt is related to the information you are looking for.

Activity 8. Scanning

Read the text carefully and answer the questions below!

PRAMBANAN TEMPLE



Prambanan is the largest Hindu temple located in Central Java, Indonesia. It is approximately 18 km east of Yogyakarta. The temple is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and is one of the largest Hindu temples in south-east Asia.

The temple is easily reachable by visitors either by foot or by provided vehicles. The path before reaching the main building is approximately 1 kilometer. The main building is so unique. There are so many temples there. The shape is all characterized by its high and pointed architecture, typical of Hindu temple architecture, and by the 47 meter high central building inside a large complex of individual temples. The structure is so awesome. It is chained by none of modern materials but the maintenance is so strong. The main surface of the building is fulfilled by ash but it does not alleviate the beauty of the temple at all.

The original building is still preserved though it has many renovations. The temple was ever damaged during the earthquake in Java in 2006. It caused some destruction. Early photos suggest that although the complex appears to be structurally intact, the damage is significant. Large pieces of debris, including carvings, were scattered over the ground. The temple was closed to the public for a quite long time. It is now already open for public after many renovations.

Source: *Tourismdestinations.blogspot.com*

1. In what paragraph can you find the information about Prambanan's structure?
2. How many kingdoms were involved during the Prambanan's building process?
3. How many years were needed to complete the reconstruction?
4. What does the last paragraph tell you about?
5. Which paragraph tells you about the process of building the temple?
6. What does the word "it" in line 8 refer to?
7. What does the word "it" in line 12 refer to?

8. What tense is used in the text?

C. EXERCISES

Answer the following questions.

Bioluminescence, defined as the emission of visible light by living organisms, is a characteristic of many near-surface ocean creatures. Most of these creatures produce light when they are irritated by something around them. Scientists have produced light the way these animals do, but the light which is produced by living creatures in the dark will always be beautiful.

There are about forty main kinds of organisms that produce bioluminescence. Of these organisms, fireflies are the best known as insects that have lights. Fireflies can control their lights so that they serve as signals between males and females. Other insects such as the cucujo beetle and the lantern fly, which are found in tropical forests, produce a very intense light. It is so bright that an army surgeon once performed an operation under the light of a beetle.

1. Where in the passage does the author give a definition?

A. Paragraph 1, lines 1-2	B. Paragraph 1, lines 3-4
C. Paragraph 2, lines 1-2	D. Paragraph 2, line 3-4
2. Where in the passage does the author mention the use of the insect light to illuminate surgery?

A. Paragraph 1, lines 2-3	B. Paragraph 1, lines 1-2
C. Paragraph 2, lines 3-4	D. Paragraph 2, lines 6-8

The word citizen comes from the Latin word *civitas*, meaning membership of a city. Today, citizenship refers mainly to membership in a nation. Citizenship is also called nationality, a full membership in a nation. But nationality has a wider meaning and implies a right to protection by one's own country when visiting another country. Almost all people have citizenship in at least one country.

Citizens have certain rights and duties. The rights of citizens differ from nation to nation. Many nations have constitutions that provide for basic rights known as civil rights, which include freedom of speech, freedom of religion, and freedom of assembly. In order to vote, citizens must be registered and must have reached the minimum age. Like citizens' rights, the duties of citizens also differ from one nation to another. Most governments demand that citizens pay taxes, defend their countries, and obey its laws.

3. Where in the passage does the author discuss the origin of the word citizen?

- A. Lines 1-2 B. Lines 3-5 C. Lines 6-7 D. Lines 10-11

4. Where in the passage does the author mention the obligations of a citizen?

- A. Paragraph 1, line 2 B. Paragraph 1, line 5
C. Paragraph 2, lines 1-2 D. Paragraph 2, lines 7-8

Coral is a limestone formation formed in the sea by millions of tiny animals. Coral formations may look like large domes, small irregular crusts, or tiny organ pipes. The living coral forming animals become the color of the coral: beautiful shades of tan, orange, yellow, purple, and green. Most coral-forming animals feed at night on plankton and other small organisms. Poison cells released from their tentacles paralyze these small creatures before they are captured. In addition, hair-like structures around their mouths assist in gathering nutrients.

When these animals die, they leave limestone "skeletons" that form the foundations of barriers and ridges in the sea called coral reefs. The reefs are mostly found in warm, shallow tropical seas because they cannot live in water colder than 18° C. Coral reefs abound throughout the South Pacific, in the Caribbean Sea, in the East Indies and in the Indian Ocean. They also form around Madagascar, along the Florida coast, and along the tropical coast of Brazil.

There are three kinds of coral reefs: (1) fringing reefs; (2) barrier reefs; and (3) atolls. Fringing reefs extend from the shore into the sea. Barrier reefs follow the shoreline and form a barrier between the water near the shore and the open sea. An atoll is a ring-shaped coral island in the open sea.

5. Where in the passage does the author describe how coral-producing animals find food?

- A. Paragraph 1, line 1 B. Paragraph 1, lines 3-4
C. Paragraph 1, lines 4-5 D. Paragraph 1, lines 6-8

6. Where in the passage does the author explain why and where coral reefs are formed?

- A. Paragraph 1, lines 2-3 B. Paragraph 2, lines 1-2
C. Paragraph 2, lines 3-4 D. Paragraph 2, lines 6-8

7. Where in the passage does the author describe the different kinds of reefs?

- A. Paragraph 1, lines 7-10 B. Paragraph 2, lines 5-7
C. Paragraph 3, lines 2-3 D. Paragraph 3, lines 1-2

Civil rights are the freedoms and rights that a person may have as a member of community, state, or government. Civil rights include, among others, freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of religion, the right to peaceful assembly, and equal rights and opportunities for all people regardless of race, sex, religion, age or disability.

In some countries, civil rights are protected by law and custom. The constitutions of these countries have bills of rights that describe basic liberties and rights. Courts of law decide whether a person's civil rights have been violated. In other countries, the governments claim to respect and guarantee civil rights, but such claims differ greatly from actual conditions. In these countries, the people are denied such basic rights as freedom of speech and of the press, even though their constitutions guarantee these rights. Because of this contradiction, activists of civil rights hold campaigns to gain their rights. Civil rights campaigns consist mostly of public meetings, marches, and other forms of protests, such as people sitting down on a public highway. They also include taking test cases to court and lobbying members of the legislative body in an effort to change legislation. Such campaigns make people aware of the issues and demonstrate popular support.

All civil rights have limits so that people do not use their freedoms to violate the rights of other people. For example, a person may use freedom of speech as long as his speech will not lead to the violent overthrow of the government. In addition, a person may not use civil rights to justify actions that might seriously harm the health, welfare, safety, or morals of others.

8. In what lines does the author mention the kinds of civil rights?

- | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| A. Paragraph 1, lines 1-2 | B. Paragraph 1, lines 2-6 |
| C. Paragraph 2, lines 11-13 | D. Paragraph 3, lines 4-7 |

9. In what lines does the author mention that in some countries people cannot apply their rights?

- | | |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| A. Paragraph 2, lines 2-3 | B. Paragraph 2, lines 6-7 |
| C. Paragraph 2, lines 8-10 | D. Paragraph 2, lines 12-14 |

10. Where in the passage does the author mention the effect of civil right campaigns?

- | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| A. Paragraph 2, line 3 | B. Paragraph 2, lines 6-8 |
| C. Paragraph 2, lines 14-15 | D. Paragraph 3, lines 2-4 |

11. Where in the passage does the author describe the restrictions of civil rights?

- | | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| A. Paragraph 2, line 1 | B. Paragraph 2, lines 8-10 |
| C. Paragraph 2, lines 12-13 | D. Paragraph 3, lines 4-6 |

Law is a set of enforced rules under which a society is governed. Law is a basic social institution, one of the most necessary. No society could exist if all the people did just as they pleased, without regard of the rights of others. Nor could a society exist if its members did not recognize their certain obligations toward one another. The law thus establishes the rules that define a person's rights and obligations. The law also sets penalties for those who violate it and states how the government should enforce the rules and penalties.

In most societies, various government bodies, especially police agencies and courts, see to it that people obey the laws. Because people can get a penalty for disobeying the law, most of them agree that laws should be just. Justice is a moral standard that applies to all human conduct. The laws enforced by governments usually have a strong moral element, and so justice has generally been one of the law's guiding principles. But governments can, and sometimes do, enforce laws that many people believe to be unjust. If this belief becomes widespread, people may lose respect for and may even disobey them. But in democratic societies, the law itself provides ways to amend or abolish unjust laws.

Law can be divided into two main branches: private and public. Private law deals with the rights and obligations people have in their relations with one another, while public law concerns the rights and obligations people have as members of society and as citizens. Both private law and public law can be subdivided into several branches. However, they are closely related, and in many cases, overlap.

12. Where in the passage does the author discuss the importance of law?

- | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| A. Paragraph 1, line 1 | B. Paragraph 1, line 2 |
| C. Paragraph 2, lines 4-5 | D. Paragraph 2, lines 5-7 |

D. REFERENCES

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