

1 Here's the Idea

We and Us with Nouns

The pronoun *we* or *us* is sometimes followed by a noun that identifies the pronoun (*we students*, *us students*).

- **Use *we* when the pronoun is a subject or a predicate pronoun. Use *us* when the pronoun is an object.**

We humans don't always appreciate trees.

↑ SUBJECT

Trees can feed and shelter **us humans**.

↑ OBJECT OF VERB

Here's How Choosing *We* or *Us*

Some trees depend on (**us, we**) **humans** for survival.

1. Drop the identifying noun from the sentence.

Some trees depend on (**us, we**) for survival.

2. Decide whether the pronoun is used as a subject or an object. In this sentence, the pronoun is the object of the preposition *on*.

Some trees depend on **us** for survival.

3. Use the correct pronoun with the noun.

Some trees depend on **us humans** for survival.

Unclear Reference

- **Be sure that each personal pronoun refers clearly to only one person, place, or thing.** If there is any chance your reader will be confused about whom or what you are talking about, use a noun instead of a pronoun.

Confusing

Sara and Anne want to become tree farmers. **She** works after school at an orchard. (Who works? Sara or Anne?)

Clear

Sara and Anne want to become tree farmers. **Anne** works after school at an orchard.

2 Why It Matters in Writing

Readers get frustrated and may give up if your writing is too confusing. To get your ideas across, you must be clear about who is doing what. This is especially important when there is more than one noun that a pronoun could be replacing.

STUDENT MODEL

Until a century ago, humans competed with animals in the eastern United States. ^{Animals} They needed the nuts to get through hard winters. Farmers saw them as a cash crop.

3 Practice and Apply

A. CONCEPT CHECK: Pronoun Problems

Choose the correct noun or pronoun from the words in parentheses.

The Majestic Chestnut Tree

1. For decades, (we, us) carpenters used the wood from chestnut trees to build houses and furniture.
2. Chestnuts were a nutritious food for both (we, us) country dwellers and wildlife. The trees provided bushels of them.
3. Then in 1904, a fungus began killing (them, the trees).
4. Now scientists are crossbreeding American chestnut trees with Chinese chestnut trees. (They, Chinese chestnut trees) resist the blight.
5. (They, Scientists) hope the new hybrid trees will survive for centuries.

→ For a SELF-CHECK and more practice, see the EXERCISE BANK, p. 324.

B. REVISING: Correcting Pronoun Errors

Correct the five pronoun errors in the following paragraph.

If Trees Could Talk . . .

Us chestnut trees are very generous. We give you boards for building and nuts for eating and even flowers in the spring. They make fine furniture. They taste sweet and crunchy. However, a fungus is killing us. What do we ask you to do for we trees in return? Just help us fight it.

1 Here's the Idea

Using Pronouns in Compound

Pronouns sometimes cause difficulty when they are parts of compound subjects and compound objects.

- Use the subject pronoun *I, she, he, we, or they* in a compound subject or with a predicate noun or pronoun.

Greg and **she** decided to learn more about Sacajawea.

The researchers are **Polly and I**.

- Use the object pronoun *me, her, him, us, or them* in a compound object.

Her story has always fascinated **Polly and me**.

The research was divided between **Greg and her**.



To choose the correct case of a pronoun in a compound part, read the sentence with only the pronoun in the compound part. Mentally screen out the other pronoun or other noun. Then choose the correct case.

My grandmother told the story to ~~Ron and~~ **me**.

Phrases That Interfere

Sometimes a group of words comes between a noun and a pronoun that refers to it. Don't be confused by the words in between.

REFERS TO

Sacajawea, ~~who guided Lewis and Clark~~, never lost **her** way. (*Her* agrees with *Sacajawea* and not with *Lewis and Clark*.)

REFERS TO

About 40 **men** ~~started up the Missouri River~~ on **their** voyage. (*Their* agrees with *men* and not with *Missouri River*.)

2 Why It Matters in Writing

Many people think it sounds better to use *I* rather than *me* in a compound object. This isn't true—use *me* as part of a compound object.

STUDENT MODEL

When our friends go camping, they always like to take along my sister and ^{me} ~~I~~. She and I have a lot of experience.

3 Practice and Apply

A. CONCEPT CHECK: More Pronoun Problems

Write the correct word to complete each sentence. Choose from those given in parentheses.

Sacajawea, Young Explorer

1. Meriwether Lewis is a favorite topic for Polly and (I, me).
2. In 1803, President Jefferson sent (he, him) and William Clark to explore thousands of miles of wilderness.
3. Lewis and Clark met Sacajawea, a young Shoshone woman, in 1804; (they, she) hired her as a guide.
4. They had first hired her husband, Toussaint Charbonneau, as an interpreter. Both Sacajawea and (he, him) translated their conversations with Native Americans.
5. Lewis, Clark, a band of soldiers, and (she, her) headed west when she was around 17.
6. She survived near starvation and illness as (she, they) accompanied the explorers.
7. Greg, Polly, and (I, me) learned that she was very important to the expedition.
8. The baby on Sacajawea's back made (her, it) much less threatening to Native Americans than the white soldiers alone would have been.
9. At one point, she, Lewis, and Clark visited (her, their) people's summer home.
10. The expedition, short on food and medicines, was able to restock (its, their) supplies from her tribe's stores.

➔ For a SELF-CHECK and more practice, see the EXERCISE BANK, p. 325.

B. PROOFREADING: Correct Use of Pronouns

Rewrite the passage below, correcting the pronoun errors.

Sacajawea: Explorer and Survivor

Polly and me read Lewis and Clark's journals. Sacajawea and them met at Fort Mandan, near present-day Bismarck, North Dakota. Several months later, Lewis described how their supplies were washed overboard as he traveled by boat. Sacajawea's quick thinking saved journals, instruments, and medicines.

Sacajawea introduced Lewis and Clark to their tribe, the Shoshone, in the summer of 1805. Lewis had left she, Clark, and most of the other men behind while he scouted ahead, looking for the Shoshone villages. Finally, he met a Shoshone leader named Cameahwait. When Clark and Sacajawea rejoined Lewis, she recognized Cameahwait; he was her brother! Now Lewis and him could be friends.



C. WRITING: Using Pronouns Correctly

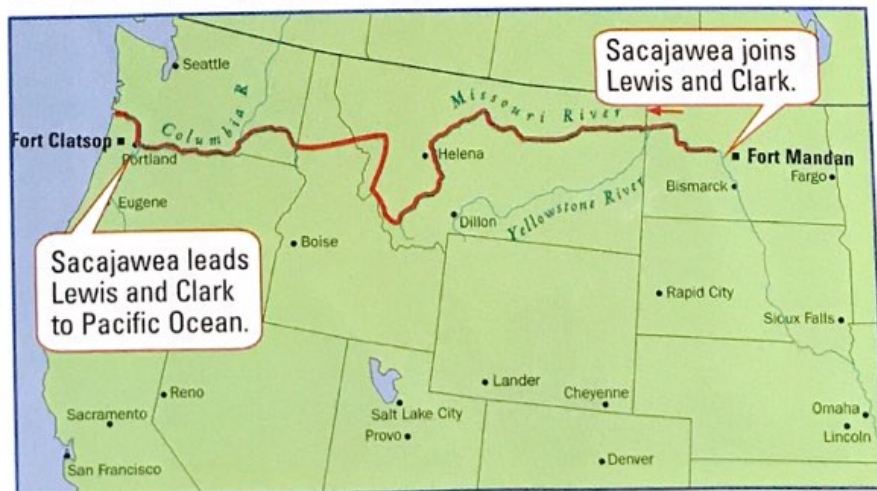
The map shows milestones in Sacajawea's journey. Working with a partner, use it and the information in exercises A and B to write a paragraph, explaining in your own words what she survived and accomplished.

Underline the pronouns you use. Proofread your work to be sure you have used the pronouns correctly.

Example: No one could have guessed how hard the journey would be.

Sacajawea's Journey West with Lewis and Clark, 1805

Shown on a current map of the western United States



Grammar in Literature

Using Personal Pronouns Effectively

When you write, you have a choice about pronouns. You might choose to use first-person pronouns—like *I*, *me*, *we* and *us*—or you might find it better to use third-person pronouns—including *he*, *she*, *him*, *her*, *they*, *them*. First-person pronouns show a close relationship between writer and reader. In the passage below, the late actor Christopher Reeve used first-person pronouns to reveal his reactions to a horse-riding accident that left him paralyzed.

from

Still Me

by Christopher Reeve

[T]he chief radiologist . . . showed **me** that the damage to **my** spinal cord was only one centimeter wide, and said that if **I** had landed with **my** head twisted only a fraction further to the left, **I** would have been killed instantly. If **I** had landed with **my** head slightly more to the right, **I** probably would have sustained a bruise and been up on **my** feet within a few weeks. **I** just happened to hit the rail at an angle that turned **me** into a C2 vent-dependent quadriplegic. The irony of it hit **me** very hard, although **I** kept **my** emotions to myself. **I** knew there was no point dwelling on it. But now **I** knew on a visceral level how fragile **our** existence is.

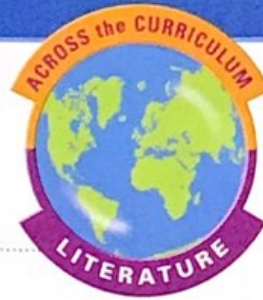
FIRST PERSON

pronouns create a sense of closeness. You are there with Reeve, reading his innermost thoughts.

What effect does Reeve produce by using the pronoun *our*? How would the last sentence change if the pronoun were omitted?



Christopher Reeve with his wife after his injury left him paralyzed.



Practice and Apply

WRITING: Using Pronouns

The following passage is from a news story about Reeve's accident. Read the passage; then follow the directions below.

Section

"He was in the middle of the pack . . . , and he was pretty excited about it," says Lisa Reid, [who] witnessed his May 27 ride. "The horse was coming into the fence beautifully. The rhythm was fine and Chris was fine, and they were going at a good pace." But then, Reid says, . . . "The horse put his front feet over the fence, but his hind feet never left the ground." . . . "Chris is such a big man. He was going forward, his head over the top of the horse's head. He had committed his upper body to the jump. But the horse . . . backed off the jump. . . . Reeve kept moving, pitching forward over the horse's neck." To Reid it appeared that Reeve first hit his head on the rail fence, then landed on the turf on his forehead.

—"Fallen Rider," *People Weekly*, June 12, 1995

PRONOUNS

1. The passage is written from an observer's point of view. What pronouns does the observer use?
2. Imagine that Reeve himself wrote the report, and revise the passage, using first-person pronouns like *I* and *me*.
3. Compare your revision with the original. Which version is more personal and immediate? Why?

Save your revision in your Working Portfolio.

Mixed Review

A. Pronouns Write the pronoun that correctly completes the sentence. Choose the correct pronoun from those in parentheses.

1. E. L. Konigsburg tells an unusual survival story in (her, its) book *From the Mixed-Up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler*.
2. It's the story of Claudia Kincaid; (she, herself) ran away to live in the Metropolitan Museum of Art.
3. (She, Her) and her brother Jamie lived there for a week.
4. They slept in an antique bed and took (their, they're) baths in a fountain.
5. The fountain had coins all over (it's, its) base.
6. (These, This) is where both of the children collected (their, his or her) lunch money.
7. There was a new statue; (its, it's) origin was a mystery to everyone.
8. Claudia and Jamie decided to solve the mystery (themselves, themselves).
9. They contacted Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler. That statue had come from (her, his) private collection.
10. (Who, Whom) made the statue? You'll have to read the book (yourself, itself)!

B. Pronoun Use This student report about the novel *Island of the Blue Dolphins* contains nine errors in pronoun usage. Rewrite the passage to correct the errors.

STUDENT MODEL

What if my brother and me were abandoned by my entire community on our island home? How would us castoffs survive? What would we do with ourself?

In *Island of the Blue Dolphins*, by Scott O'Dell, the heroine was left behind with her brother, who was soon killed by wild dogs. It was her who remained on the island for eighteen years. She tamed one of the island dogs herself and named it Rontu; it's friendship was invaluable to her.

Few of the people I know would take such good care of himself or herself if left alone on an island. Even these who know the wilderness might not have the mental strength to last alone for such a long time. O'Dell's heroine showed great skill, courage, and patience. Whom else would be so strong?

Mastery Test: What Did You Learn?

Choose the correct replacement for each underlined word in the passage, or indicate if it is correct as is.

Who is Thomas Eisner? Him⁽¹⁾ and his wife Maria are entomologists, or insect experts. Their⁽²⁾ concerned about the survival of endangered insects. Himself⁽³⁾ and writer Diane Ackerman explored insect life in Florida. Ackerman describes what she learned in her⁽⁴⁾ book *The Rarest of the Rare: Vanishing Animals, Timeless Worlds*. It was him⁽⁵⁾ who proved that some insects contain medicines that can cure human diseases. That⁽⁶⁾ has encouraged drug companies to help protect the rain forests for insect research. Eisner has also testified before members of the U.S. Senate, asking them⁽⁷⁾ to reauthorize the Endangered Species Act. Eisner reminded the Senate that us⁽⁸⁾ humans share the planet with many other species. In helping them survive, we may ultimately help themselves⁽⁹⁾.

- | | |
|------------------|------------------|
| 1. A. Whom | 6. A. he |
| B. Which | B. himself |
| C. Whose | C. his |
| D. Correct as is | D. Correct as is |
| 2. A. Himself | 7. A. These |
| B. He | B. His discovery |
| C. His | C. This |
| D. Correct as is | D. Correct as is |
| 3. A. There | 8. A. it |
| B. They're | B. those |
| C. Them are | C. they |
| D. Correct as is | D. Correct as is |
| 4. A. Him | 9. A. our |
| B. Them | B. my |
| C. He | C. we |
| D. Correct as is | D. Correct as is |
| 5. A. his | 10. A. ourselves |
| B. their | B. we |
| C. hers | C. humans |
| D. Correct as is | D. Correct as is |

Student Help Desk

Pronouns at a Glance

Subject Case

I	we
you	you
he	they
she	
it	

Use this case when

- the pronoun is a **subject**
- the pronoun is a **predicate pronoun**

Object Case

me	us
you	you
him	them
her	
it	

Use this case when

- the pronoun is the **direct object**
- the pronoun is the **indirect object**
- the pronoun is the **object of a preposition**

Possessive Case

my/mine	our/ours
your/yours	your/yours
his	their/theirs
her/hers	
its	

Use this case for

- pronouns that show **ownership or relationship**

Pronoun-Antecedent Agreement

We'll Do Our Best

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

A singular antecedent takes a singular pronoun.

Marisella is saving **her** candles for a power outage. (singular)

A plural antecedent takes a plural pronoun.

The **Garcias** have boarded up **their** house against the hurricane. (plural)

Avoid incorrect gender reference.

Everyone has **his or her** favorite precautions.

We all have **our** favorite precautions.



Types of Pronouns

Everything
in Its Place

Intensive & Reflexive

myself
yourself
herself
himself
itself
ourselves
yourselves
themselves

Interrogative

who
whom
what
which
whose

Demonstrative

this
that
these
those

Indefinite

someone
anyone
each
several
many
all
most
none

For a full list of indefinite pronouns,
see page 76.

Pronoun Problems

A Clear-cut Case

We: Subject/Predicate Pronoun

Us: Object

Who: Subject/Predicate Pronoun

Whom: Object of verb or preposition

We Californians have survived
many natural disasters.

So many natural disasters have
struck **us** Californians.

Who has ever survived a tornado?

To **whom** will we turn for advice?

The Bottom Line



Checklist for Pronouns

Have I . . .

- ___ used the subject case for pronouns that are subjects and predicate pronouns?
- ___ used the object case for pronouns that are objects of verbs or prepositions?
- ___ used the possessive case to show ownership or relationship?
- ___ used *who* and *whom* correctly?
- ___ made sure that pronouns agree with their antecedents in number, person, and gender?
- ___ used the correct cases in compound subjects and objects?