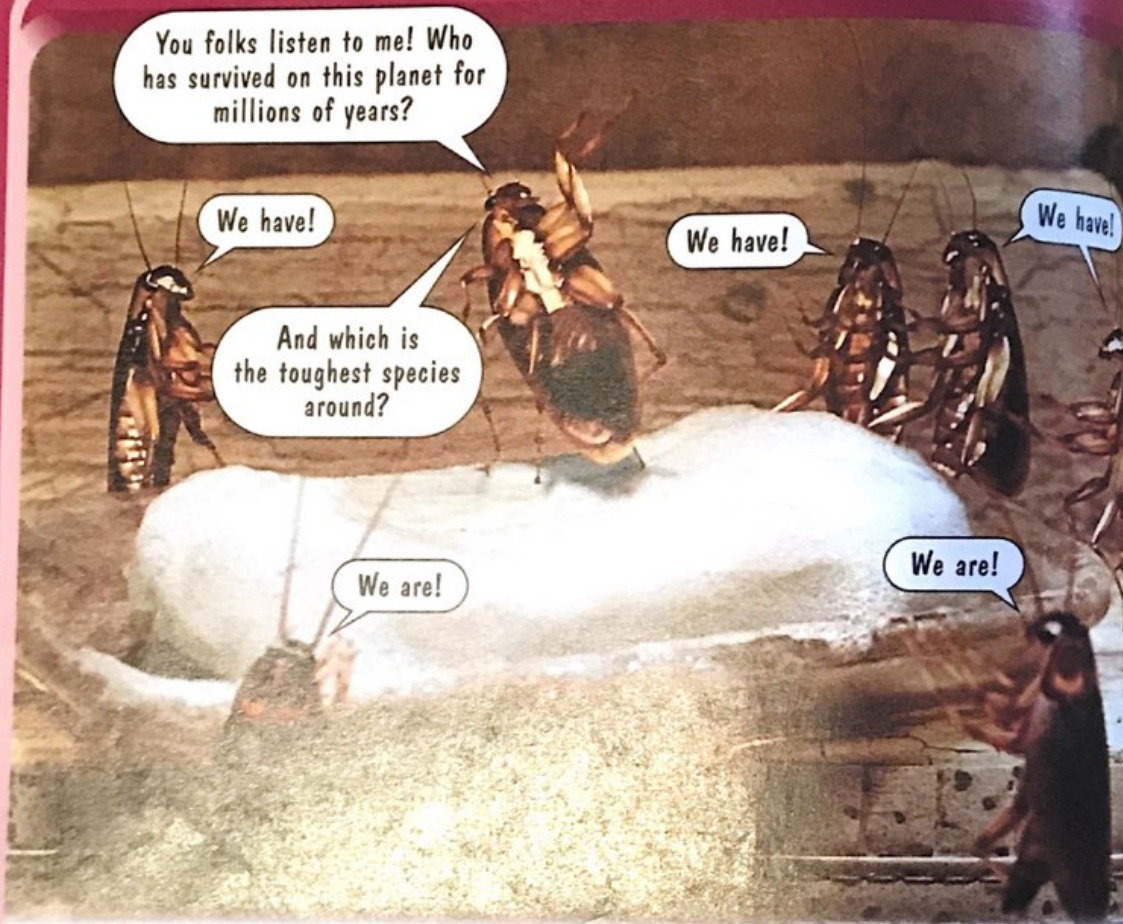


Pronouns



Theme: Survival Hanging On

Imagine this conversation without the words *you*, *me*, *who*, *we*, and *which*. These words are called **pronouns**. They take the place of other nouns or pronouns. Be careful, though. If you don't use pronouns correctly, your meaning may not survive.

Write Away: Survival Instincts

Humans, like all living species, have a strong survival instinct. Every day, people survive injury, illness, natural disaster, and plain old tough times. Write a paragraph describing the survival of someone you know. Place the paragraph in your

Working Portfolio.

Diagnostic Test: What Do You Know?

Choose the letter of the best revision for each underlined word or group of words.

At age eighteen, Daniel Huffman was a football star planning to play football in college. But they had a problem. His grandmother, Shirlee Allison, was dying. She needed a kidney transplant. Would someone donate his kidney? Whom would help? His grandmother and him discussed it. Huffman decided that he himself would give her a kidney, even though that meant he would never play college ball. Right after the transplant, Allison began to regain her health. Daniel had made herself a very lucky person. "That was happiness for me," said Daniel. It was him who then received a full scholarship to Florida State and an appointment as athletic trainer for it's football team.

1. A. he
B. she
C. someone
D. Correct as is
2. A. Their
B. Her
C. They're
D. Correct as is
3. A. Would someone donate their
B. Would someone donate his or her
C. Would someone donate her
D. Correct as is
4. A. Who would help?
B. Whose would help?
C. Who would help who?
D. Correct as is
5. A. Him and his grandmother
B. Him and her
C. His grandmother and he
D. Correct as is
6. A. himself
B. himselfes
C. themselves
D. Correct as is
7. A. Daniel had made her
B. Daniel had made him
C. Daniel had made she
D. Correct as is
8. A. I
B. us
C. myself
D. Correct as is
9. A. It was his
B. It was he
C. It was himself
D. Correct as is
10. A. their football team
B. his football team
C. its football team
D. Correct as is

What Is a Pronoun?

1 Here's the Idea

- **A pronoun is a word that is used in place of a noun or another pronoun.** Like a noun, a pronoun can refer to a person, place, thing, or idea. The word that a pronoun refers to is called its **antecedent**.

REFERS TO
Maria was lost. **She** didn't panic.

REFERS TO
She checked the **flashlight**. **It** still worked.

Personal Pronouns

- **Pronouns such as we, I, she, them, and it are called personal pronouns.** Personal pronouns have a variety of forms to indicate different **persons, numbers, and cases**.

Person and Number There are first-person, second-person, and third-person personal pronouns, each having both singular and plural forms.

| Singular | Plural |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------|
| I shivered. | We lit a fire. |
| You slept. | You all fell asleep. |
| She saw a light. | They ran toward it. |

Case Each personal pronoun forms has three cases: subject, object, and possessive. Which form to use depends on the pronoun's function in a sentence.

Subject: **She** took a deep breath.

Object: Jerry told **her** about the problem.

Possessive: I like **your** story better than **mine**.

The chart on the next page shows all the forms of the personal pronouns.

Personal Pronouns

| | Subject | Object | Possessive |
|-----------------|-------------|--------------|---------------------|
| Singular | | | |
| First person | I | me | my, mine |
| Second person | you | you | your, yours |
| Third person | he, she, it | him, her, it | his, her, hers, its |
| Plural | | | |
| First person | we | us | our, ours |
| Second person | you | you | your, yours |
| Third person | they | them | their, theirs |

2 Why It Matters in Writing

Pronouns often are used to make writing flow smoothly from sentence to sentence. Notice how some of the pronouns in this paragraph connect one sentence to the sentence before it.

STUDENT MODEL

My friend Jan and I barely survived last summer. **We** were sailing with **her** family off the coast of Florida when a storm came up. **It** capsized our boat. Fortunately, we had life jackets, which saved our lives.

We refers to *My friend Jan and I*.

Her refers to *Jan*.

It refers to *storm*.

3 Practice and Apply

A CONCEPT CHECK: What Is a Pronoun?

List the personal pronoun(s) in each sentence.

Wilderness Survival

1. Hannah Nyala is known for her tracking expertise.
2. She has found many lost hikers before they got into real trouble.
3. She wrote a book called *Point Last Seen*.
4. She learned some of her skills in the Mojave and Kalahari deserts.

5. Other experts remind us to plan ahead for danger.
6. To them, a first-aid kit is a necessity.
7. They advise us to find out before we go whether the water is safe to drink.
8. We are also advised to conserve our energy.
9. We are told to find shelter and avoid becoming too hot or too cold.
10. They say that all hikers should carry plenty of water with them.

→ For a **SELF-CHECK** and more practice, see the **EXERCISE BANK**, p. 319.



Name the antecedents for the personal pronouns in sentences 1–4 and 6.

B. REVISING: Substituting Pronouns for Nouns

Rewrite this student's draft of a science report. Change the underlined nouns to pronouns to connect the sentences smoothly.

Experts say we will run out of natural resources some day. (1) Experts point out that Americans use nearly 25 percent of the world's resources, but (2) Americans make up only four percent of the world's population. This overuse is not fair, environmentalists say. (3) Environmentalists say that (4) this overuse is leading to a shortage of resources and too much pollution.

C. WRITING: Dialogue

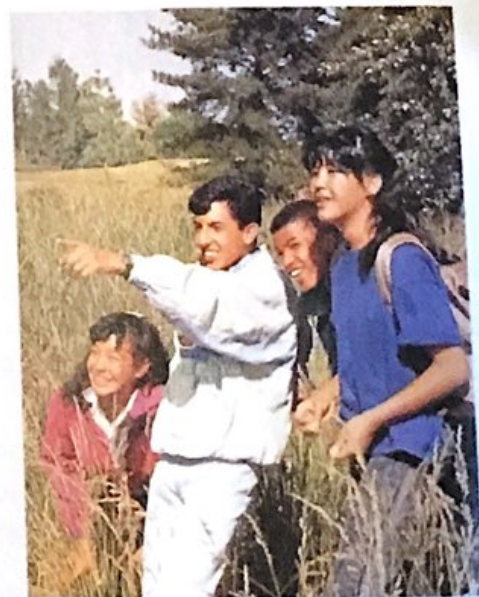
Based on the photograph below, write a short dialogue between two people who are hiking. Use pronouns to make the dialogue sound natural.

Example:

Speaker 1: Do **you** see that moose?

Speaker 2: Yes, **I** do. In fact, **I** see a mother moose and **her** calf.

Speaker 1: **I** can't see the calf. Shall **we** get closer to **them**?



Subject Pronouns

1 Here's the Idea

- A subject pronoun is used as the subject of a sentence or as a predicate pronoun after a linking verb.

| Subject Pronouns | |
|------------------|--------|
| Singular | Plural |
| I | we |
| you | you |
| he, she, it | they |

Pronouns as Subjects

Use a subject pronoun when the pronoun is a subject or part of a compound subject.

The Apollo program was a great success.

It got us to the moon. (*It*, referring to *The Apollo program*, is the subject of the sentence.)

A pronoun can be part of a compound subject.

You and I both think we should go on to Mars.

Predicate Pronouns

A predicate pronoun follows a linking verb and identifies the subject. Use the subject case for predicate pronouns.

The greatest **astronauts** were **they**.

IDENTIFIES
↑ SUBJECT ↑ PREDICATE PRONOUN

The biggest **supporters** were **she and I**.

IDENTIFIES

The first **astronaut** on Mars will be **I**.

Remember, the most common linking verbs are forms of the verb *be*, including *is*, *am*, *are*, *was*, *were*, *has been*, *have been*, *can be*, *will be*, *could be*, and *should be*.



2 Why It Matters in Writing

It's sometimes difficult to know which pronoun forms to use in writing because many people use them incorrectly in speech. Always double-check the pronouns in your writing, and make sure you've used the correct forms.

STUDENT MODEL

Neil Armstrong commanded Apollo 11, the first mission to reach the moon. Buzz Aldrin and ^{he}~~him~~ spent hours on the moon. They were trailblazers.

3 Practice and Apply

CONCEPT CHECK: Subject Pronouns

Write the correct form of the pronoun(s) to complete each sentence.

Apollo 13: A Close Call

1. Some big fans of space exploration are Sam and (I, me).
2. (We, Us) learned that in April 1970, the Apollo 13 astronauts almost didn't make it back to Earth.
3. (They, Them) never did land on the moon.
4. Two hundred thousand miles from home, (they, them) heard an explosion.
5. Jim Lovell was the mission commander; it was (he, him) who radioed the message "Houston, we've had a problem."
6. Then (he, him), Jack Swigert, and Fred Haise were forced to abandon the main ship for the lunar module.
7. The tiny module was designed to keep two people alive for just two days, but (they, them) were four days from Earth.
8. (They, Them) finally splashed down in the Pacific Ocean four days later, having overcome crisis after crisis.
9. (We, Us) watched the movie about their dangerous journey.
10. It was (they, them) who won our respect and admiration.

➔ For a SELF-CHECK and more practice, see the EXERCISE BANK, p. 320.

1 Here's the Idea

- An object pronoun is used as a direct object, an indirect object, or an object of a preposition.

Object Pronouns

| Singular | Plural |
|--------------|--------|
| me | us |
| you | you |
| him, her, it | them |

Direct Object The pronoun receives the action of a verb and answers the question *whom* or *what*.

SCARE WHOM?
Bad storms scare **me**.

↑ DIRECT OBJECT

Do you like **them**? (like what? *them*)

Indirect Object The pronoun tells to whom or what or for whom or what an action is performed.

TO WHOM? DIRECT OBJECT
Give **me** an explanation of how hurricanes form.

↑ INDIRECT OBJECT

I told **him** the story of Hurricane Floyd.

Object of a Preposition The pronoun follows a preposition (such as *to*, *from*, *for*, *against*, *by*, or *about*).

When he sees big storms, he runs from **them**.

PREPOSITION ↑ OBJECT

The storm is coming straight at **us**.

Always use object pronouns after the preposition *between*.

It's a contest between **him** and **me**. (NOT between he and I.)



2 Why It Matters in Writing

People commonly misuse subject and object pronouns in conversation, especially *I* and *me*. Pay attention to your use of these words when they are part of compound subjects or objects.

My mother and ^I~~me~~ listened to a radio program about Hurricane Floyd.

3 Practice and Apply

MIXED REVIEW: Subject and Object Pronouns

Write the correct pronoun(s) for each sentence. Label each pronoun *subject* or *object*.

Hurricane Floyd

1. Hurricane Floyd ravaged the East Coast in 1999; the extent of the damage horrified my friends and (I, me).
2. My brother and (I, me) read that Floyd was 600 miles across and had winds of 155 miles an hour.
3. Gerald Keeth is a U.S. sailor; the hurricane gave (he, him) the scare of his life.
4. "The bad weather started pounding (we, us) Tuesday night," he wrote.
5. "(We, Us) launched our life raft in . . . 55-foot seas with 60-knot winds."
6. The raft accidentally left (he, him) and two others behind.
7. (They, Them) had only life jackets and an emergency locator beacon.
8. "I could hear each wave from behind (I, me) like a freight train coming."
9. Then a helicopter rescued (they, them).
10. "Rescue swimmer Shad Hernandez put a harness on each of (we, us), and (we, us) were hauled into the helicopter."

→ For a SELF-CHECK and more practice, see the EXERCISE BANK, p. 320.

Tell how each pronoun functions in the sentence.



1 Here's the Idea

- A possessive pronoun is a personal pronoun used to show ownership or relationship.

Possessive Pronouns

| Singular | Plural |
|---------------------|---------------|
| my, mine | our, ours |
| your, yours | your, yours |
| her, hers, his, its | their, theirs |

The possessive pronouns *my, your, her, his, its, our, and their* come before nouns.

OWNERSHIP

The dog pricked up **its** little ears.

RELATIONSHIP

It saw the boy and heard **his** loud cry for help.

RELATIONSHIP

The owner and **his** best friend came to the rescue.

The possessive pronouns *mine, ours, yours, his, hers, its, and theirs* can stand alone in a sentence.

This cat is **mine**. That cat is **his**.

Is the striped cat **yours**? No, **mine** is all black.

What color is **his**? **Hers** hasn't come home yet.

Possessive Pronouns and Contractions

Some possessive pronouns sound like contractions (*its/it's, your/you're, their/they're*). Because these pairs sound alike, writers often confuse possessive pronouns and contractions.

Remember, a possessive pronoun *never* has an apostrophe. A contraction, however, *always* has an apostrophe. The apostrophe shows where a letter or letters have been left out in a combination of two words. Look on the next page to see how this works.

QUICK-FIX SPELLING MACHINE

POSSESSIVE PRONOUNS

its Its paws are muddy.

your Your dog is nice.

their Their dog is smart.

CONTRACTIONS

it's It's been a long day.

you're You're all right.

they're They're proud of her.

2 Why It Matters in Writing

Proofread your work carefully to see that you haven't confused contractions and possessive pronouns. Remember that the spell-checker on a computer won't catch these mistakes.

STUDENT MODEL

Many Alpine travelers owe ~~they're~~^{their} survival to the trusty St. Bernard dog. This dog was first used in the 1600s by a group of monks at the St. Bernard monastery in the Swiss Alps. The dog's intelligence and ~~it's~~^{its} keen sense of smell enable it to find lost travelers or warn them of dangerous footing. Even today, the monks of St. Bernard and ~~they're~~^{their} dogs rescue many travelers every winter.



3 Practice and Apply

A. CONCEPT CHECK: Possessive Pronouns

Write the correct pronoun or contraction for each sentence.

Bustopher, the Rescue Cat

1. Has (your, you're) pet ever saved a life?
2. David and Marjorie Giles can say yes; a woman survived an accident because of (their, they're) cat.
3. One morning in Dobbins, California, Bustopher was in (its, it's) yard.
4. Birds were calling, but amidst (their, they're) songs David Giles heard a peculiar noise.
5. Then he noticed Bustopher; (its, it's) front paw was pointing.
6. There is a steep drop-off to a canyon beyond the Gileses' lawn; (its, it's) not far away.
7. When Giles walked over to the drop-off, he heard the noise again; (its, it's) source was in the canyon.
8. He looked and saw (they're, their) neighbor, an 84-year-old woman who had fallen and broken her hip.
9. "(Your, You're) going to be all right," Giles assured her.
10. (Its, It's) amazing how animals can help people to survive.

→ For a SELF-CHECK and more exercises, see the EXERCISE BANK, p. 321.

B. PROOFREADING: Using Possessive Pronouns

Correct the possessive pronoun errors in the paragraph below. If a sentence contains no error, write *Correct*.

Marie Murphy was paralyzed, and she used an iron lung to help her breathe. (1) It's mechanism breathed for her at night, while she and her family slept. (2) One night she awoke and realized that they're electricity had gone out—she could no longer hear the machine's electrical hum. (3) You're probably wondering what someone who couldn't move or breathe would do. (4) Its remarkable, but she had just enough breath to whisper to her dog, Rosie, whose barking woke Murphy's family. (5) Their quick response, putting the iron lung on batteries, saved her life.

Reflexive and Intensive Pronouns

1 Here's the Idea

A pronoun that ends in *self* or *selves* is either a **reflexive** or an **intensive** pronoun.

Reflexive and Intensive Pronouns

| | | |
|-----------|------------|--------------------------|
| myself | yourself | herself, himself, itself |
| ourselves | yourselves | themselves |

Reflexive Pronouns

- A reflexive pronoun refers to the subject and directs the action of the verb back to the subject. Reflexive pronouns are necessary to the meaning of a sentence.

The Carson family tried to lift **themselves** out of poverty.

Ben Carson dedicated **himself** to becoming a doctor.

Notice that if you drop the reflexive pronoun, the sentence no longer makes sense. (*Ben Carson dedicated to becoming a doctor.*)

Intensive Pronouns

- An intensive pronoun emphasizes a noun or another pronoun within the same sentence. Intensive pronouns are not necessary to the meaning of the sentence.

You yourself have overcome many hardships.

Dr. Carson himself has survived great poverty.

Notice that when you drop the intensive pronoun, the sentence still makes sense. (*Dr. Carson has survived great poverty.*)

Avoid the use of *hissself* and *theirselves*, which are grammatically incorrect. Use *himself* and *themselves* instead.



2 Why It Matters in Writing

You can use an intensive pronoun to stress a point. In the following model, the writer used the pronoun *himself* to emphasize that Ben Carson knew something just as well as the other students knew it.

PROFESSIONAL MODEL

When Ben Carson was in fifth grade, his classmates considered him the dumbest kid in the class. They teased him, but he didn't seem to mind. He **himself** knew that he couldn't read very well.

3 Practice and Apply

CONCEPT CHECK: Intensive and Reflexive Pronouns

Write the reflexive or intensive pronoun in each sentence. Then identify it as reflexive (R) or intensive (I).

Beyond Survival to Success

1. By fifth grade, Ben Carson considered himself the dumbest kid in his class.
2. His mother was raising Ben and his brother herself.
3. When she saw his report card, she decided that she herself would give him extra homework assignments: two book reports every week.
4. She also told her sons to limit themselves to only two TV shows each week.
5. Ben outdid himself.
6. He learned to love reading and then to love learning itself.
7. He promised himself he would rise to the top of his class.
8. Carson went on to become a first-rate doctor, surprising even himself with some of his successful cases.
9. He has performed many operations that other doctors feared to try themselves.
10. He himself likes the challenge of difficult surgery.

→ For a SELF-CHECK and more practice, see the EXERCISE BANK, p. 322.

Indefinite-Pronoun Agreement

1 Here's the Idea

- **An indefinite pronoun does not refer to a specific person, place, thing, or idea.**

Indefinite pronouns often do not have antecedents.

Nothing lasts forever.

Anyone can make a time capsule.

- **Some indefinite pronouns are always singular, some are always plural, and some can be either singular or plural.**

Indefinite Pronouns

| Singular | | Plural | Singular or Plural |
|------------|-----------|---------|--------------------|
| another | much | both | all |
| anybody | neither | few | any |
| anyone | nobody | many | most |
| anything | no one | several | none |
| each | nothing | | some |
| either | one | | |
| everybody | somebody | | |
| everyone | someone | | |
| everything | something | | |



Pronouns containing *one*, *thing*, or *body* are always singular.

Singular Indefinite Pronouns

- **Use a singular personal pronoun to refer to a singular indefinite pronoun.**

REFERS TO

Everyone added **his** or **her** favorite item to the capsule.
(*Everyone* could be male or female.)

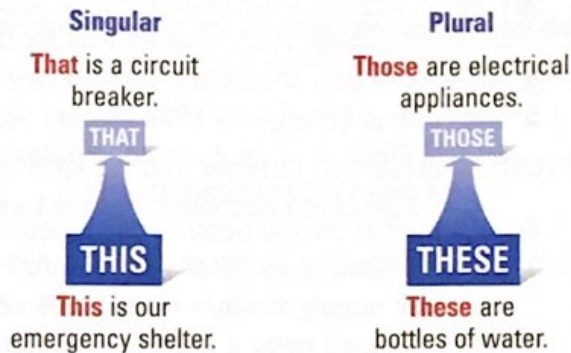
REFERS TO

One of the girls put **her** soccer ball in the box.

Demonstrative Pronouns

- A demonstrative pronoun points out a person, place, thing, or idea.

The demonstrative pronouns—*this*, *that*, *these*, and *those*—are used alone in sentences as shown below.



Never use *here* or *there* with a demonstrative pronoun. The pronoun already tells which one or ones. *This* and *these* point out people or things that are near, or *here*. *That* and *those* point out people or things that are far away, or *there*.

This ~~here~~ is a dead refrigerator.

That ~~there~~ is five pounds of rotting food.

2 Why It Matters in Writing

In dialogue, questions can show a character's mood, such as curiosity, shock, or anger. The author in this model uses interrogative pronouns in questions to show Sammy's confusion.

PROFESSIONAL MODEL

"**What** just happened?" Sammy cried.

"The lights went out. We must have lost power," said Gilberto. There was a knock at the door.

"**Who's** there?" Sammy called out.

"It's your neighbor." Sammy's heart began to beat fast.

"**Which** neighbor? I don't have any neighbors!" he said.

3 Practice and Apply

A. CONCEPT CHECK: Interrogatives and Demonstratives

Choose the correct word in parentheses.

Urban Emergency

1. (What, Whose) would you do if a natural disaster like an earthquake or blizzard struck close to home?
2. (That, Those) is a good question.
3. (These, That) is a situation in which you might not have access to water, food, or electricity for days.
4. To (who, whom) should you turn for advice?
5. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has a plan. (This, That) is its most important advice: store lots of clean water ahead of time.
6. (What, Who) do you need to purify your water?
7. (What, Whom) does FEMA recommend? They advise a two-week supply of water for each person.
8. For food, you'll need a manual can opener and a camp stove or grill. Make sure you have (these, this).
9. (Who, Whom) will be responsible for your family's emergency plan?
10. (Whose, Who's) most organized and knowledgeable? You should choose that person.

→ For a SELF-CHECK and more practice, see the EXERCISE BANK, p. 322

B. WRITING: Using Demonstrative Pronouns

You are a TV reporter showing your audience some things they should have on hand for emergencies. Write a one-paragraph script naming the necessary items and explaining why they are necessary. Use four demonstrative pronouns in your paragraph and underline them.



1 Here's the Idea

- The antecedent is the noun or pronoun that a pronoun replaces or refers to. The antecedent and the pronoun can be in the same sentence or in different sentences.

The Hopi **people** made **their** homes in the desert.

REFERS TO
ANTECEDENT PRONOUN

The **Hopi** settled what is now Arizona. **They** have been here for more than ten centuries.

REFERS TO

Pronouns must agree with their antecedents in number, person, and gender.

Agreement in Number

- Use a singular pronoun to refer to a singular antecedent.

Hopi **culture**, in all **its** forms, is alive and well.

REFERS TO

- Use a plural pronoun to refer to a plural antecedent.

Traditional **members** keep cattle on **their** farms.

REFERS TO

Agreement in Person

- The pronoun must agree in person with the antecedent.

Tribal **elders** tell the myths of **their** people.

3RD PERSON

We like to listen to **our** grandparents' stories.

1ST PERSON

Avoid switching from one person to another in the same sentence or paragraph.

Incorrect

Visitors realize you can learn from other cultures.

(*Visitors* is third person; *you* is second person.)

Correct

Visitors realize they can learn from other cultures.

(*Visitors* and *they* are both third person.)

Agreement in Gender

- **The gender of a pronoun must be the same as the gender of its antecedent.**

Personal pronouns have three gender forms: masculine (*he, his, him*), feminine (*she, her, hers*), and neuter (*it, its*).

Derrick Davis performs his hoop dances.

Laurel Mansfield teaches her students at Hopi High.



Don't use only masculine or only feminine pronouns when you mean to refer to both genders.

DRAFT:

Each dancer has his favorite moves.

(The dancer could be male or female.)

There are two ways to make this sentence more accurate.

1. Use the phrase *his or her*.

Each dancer has his or her favorite moves.

2. Rewrite the sentence using a plural antecedent and a plural pronoun. Be careful! Other words in the sentence, especially verbs, may also need to be made plural.

The dancers have their favorite moves.

2 Why It Matters in Writing

For many years, people used the pronoun *he* to refer to nouns or pronouns of unclear gender. This custom is changing. Often, the problem can be fixed by changing the subject to the plural form.

The Native American artist ^{s are} is becoming better known.

They are

~~He is~~ working with traditional ideas in new materials.

3 Practice and Apply

A. CONCEPT CHECK: Pronoun-Antecedent Agreement

Write the pronouns in these sentences, along with their antecedents.

Old Cultures Survive in a New World

1. Native cultures have faced great threats to their survival.
2. For years, Native Americans were pushed to adopt a white, industrial way of life. They have had to fight to hold on to their own cultural and spiritual traditions.
3. Rose Robinson was a member of the Hopi tribe. She founded the Native American Journalists' Association.
4. Robinson monitored and resisted nuclear-waste dumping in her tribal lands.
5. Raymond Cross is a lawyer for the Mandan, Arikara, and Hidatsa nations. He sued the government for flooding tribal land with a dam. He won \$150 million for the tribes.
6. Other tribes have gone to court to get back the rights to their land, minerals, and other valuable resources.
7. Native languages are another important issue; speaking them helps people keep their heritages alive.
8. Each person follows his or her own spiritual path based on respect for nature.
9. Native arts and crafts continue to celebrate both function and beauty; they also earn income.
10. Self-determination is the right of a group to make decisions about its future. It is becoming a reality for Native American nations.

→ For a SELF-CHECK and more practice, see the EXERCISE BANK, p. 323.



Write the number, person, and gender of each pronoun.

B. REVISING: Correcting Errors in Agreement

The paragraph below contains four errors in pronoun-antecedent agreement. Rewrite the paragraph, correcting the errors.

Lance Polingyouma works at a Native American learning center, where he teaches tourists about the customs of his or her people, the Hopi. The tourists hope to expand her knowledge of the Hopi culture. Lance often asks his elders for his advice about how to explain the Hopi ways. If a tourist asks a question, Lance wants to give him a thorough answer.

Indefinite-Pronoun Agreement

1 Here's the Idea

- An indefinite pronoun does not refer to a specific person, place, thing, or idea.

Indefinite pronouns often do not have antecedents.

Nothing lasts forever.

Anyone can make a time capsule.

- Some indefinite pronouns are always singular, some are always plural, and some can be either singular or plural.

Indefinite Pronouns

| Singular | | Plural | Singular or Plural |
|------------|-----------|---------|--------------------|
| another | much | both | all |
| anybody | neither | few | any |
| anyone | nobody | many | most |
| anything | no one | several | none |
| each | nothing | | some |
| either | one | | |
| everybody | somebody | | |
| everyone | someone | | |
| everything | something | | |



Pronouns containing *one*, *thing*, or *body* are always singular.

Singular Indefinite Pronouns

- Use a singular personal pronoun to refer to a singular indefinite pronoun.

REFERS TO

Everyone added **his or her** favorite item to the capsule.
(*Everyone* could be male or female.)

REFERS TO

One of the girls put **her** soccer ball in the box.

Plural Indefinite Pronouns

- Use a plural personal pronoun to refer to a plural indefinite pronoun.

REFERS TO

Many contributed **their** favorite CDs or video games.

REFERS TO

Few realized that **their** electronics may become completely outdated.

Singular or Plural Indefinite Pronouns

- Some indefinite pronouns can be singular or plural. The phrase that follows the indefinite pronoun will often tell you whether it is singular or plural.

Some of the **time capsule** looks like **it** is very old.

↑
SINGULAR
INDEFINITE PRONOUN

↑
SINGULAR NOUN

↑
SINGULAR
PERSONAL PRONOUN

Some of the **time capsules** list **their** contents outside.

↑
PLURAL
INDEFINITE PRONOUN

↑
PLURAL NOUN

↑
PLURAL PERSONAL PRONOUN

2 Why It Matters in Writing

You can use indefinite pronouns in your writing when you want to show how a whole group of people is acting or feeling.

LITERARY MODEL

She heard the irritability in their voices, knew that soon **someone** would refuse to go on. . . . **No one** commented. **No one** asked any questions.

—Ann Petry, *Harriet Tubman: Conductor on the Underground Railroad*

3 Practice and Apply

A. CONCEPT CHECK: Indefinite-Pronoun Agreement

Choose the pronoun that agrees with the indefinite-pronoun antecedent.

A Message to the Future

1. Everyone likes to think that (he or she, they) will leave a mark on the world.
2. We all want to create something, and we hope (it, they) will outlive us.
3. Some take an unusual approach; for (him or her, them), a time capsule is the answer.
4. Anyone who assembles a time capsule hopes that (he or she, they) can send a message to the future.
5. Each of the people who planned the time capsule at the New York World's Fair in 1939 had (his or her, their) opinion about what should go into it.
6. What did all of those experts finally agree on? (He or she, They) put nineteen items in the capsule.
7. Most of the items would be familiar to us today. (They, It) included an alarm clock, a safety pin, and a dollar bill.
8. However, none of the people knew at the time that (his or her, their) slide rules would become outdated in just a few decades.
9. One of California's tar pits acts as a time capsule because (it, they) contains people's throwaways.
10. Although time capsules often remain sealed for decades, few are meant to keep (their, its) treasures hidden for as long as the Crypt of Civilization. Completed in 1940, it is meant to last until the year 8113!

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

B. WRITING: Using Correct Indefinite-Pronoun Agreement

Write a paragraph describing what you would choose to put in a time capsule and why. Use at least one singular indefinite pronoun, one plural indefinite pronoun, and one indefinite pronoun that could be singular or plural. Underline all of the indefinite pronouns.