

2 Pronouns

A pronoun is a word that takes the place of a noun. There are different kinds of pronouns.

Personal Pronouns

Personal pronouns may be used as:

- the subject of a verb, or
- the object of a verb.

Subject Pronouns

The subject of a verb does the action of the verb. The personal pronouns **I**, **you**, **he**, **she**, **it**, **we** and **they** can all be used as the subject of a verb. Study the following two sentences:

Lisa likes cats. **She** has four cats.

In the first sentence, the proper noun **Lisa** is the subject of the verb *likes*.
In the second sentence, the pronoun **she** is the subject of the verb *has*.

Here are some more pairs of sentences that show personal pronouns used as subjects of verbs.

My name is Michael. I am fourteen.

My father works hard. He works in a factory.

My sister is older than me. She is twelve.

Our dog is very naughty. It likes to chase cats.

Bob, you are a bad dog!

David and I are playing football. We like sports.

Jim and Jeff are my brothers. They are older than I am.

Object Pronouns

The object of a verb receives the action of the verb. The personal pronouns **me, you, him, her, it, us** and **them** can all be used as the object of a verb. Look at the following two sentences:

Lisa likes **cats**. She likes to stroke **them**.

In the first sentence, the noun **cats** is the object of the verb *likes*. In the second sentence, the pronoun **them** is the object of the verb *stroke*.

Here are some more pairs of sentences that show personal pronouns used as objects of verbs.

I'm doing my homework. Dad is helping **me**.

Goodbye, children! I'll call **you** later.

Where is John? I need to speak to **him**.

Miss Garcia is very nice. All the children like **her**.

The car is very dirty. Mom is cleaning **it**.

Uncle Harry called Mary to ask **her** a question.

My chocolates are all gone. Someone has eaten **them**.

First Person, Second Person and Third Person

In grammar, the person who is speaking is called the first person. The one spoken to is called the second person, and the one spoken about is called the third person.

Here is a table to help you remember which pronouns to use.

	subject	object
first person singular	I	me
second person singular	you	you
third person singular	he she it	him her it
first person plural	we	us
second person plural	you	you
third person plural	they	them

Reflexive Pronouns

Reflexive pronouns are words that refer to the noun or pronoun that is the subject of the verb. The words **myself**, **yourself**, **himself**, **herself**, **itself**, **ourselves**, **yourselves** and **themselves** are reflexive pronouns.

My brother built this computer **himself**.

Be careful not to cut **yourself** with that knife.

John was looking at **himself** in the mirror.

Kate fell and hurt **herself**.

Our cat washes **itself** after every meal.

We baked the cake by **ourselves**.

Come in, everybody, and find **yourselves** a seat.

The children cleaned their room all by **themselves**.

Bears like to rub **themselves** against a tree.

The bird washed **itself** by splashing in a puddle.

The players train every day to keep **themselves** fit.

Have **yourselves** a good time.

Here is a table to help you remember which reflexive pronoun to use with which personal pronoun.

singular personal pronoun	reflexive pronoun	plural personal pronoun	reflexive pronoun
I (subject pronoun)	myself	we (subject pronoun)	ourselves
me (object pronoun)	myself	us(object pronoun)	ourselves
you (subject/object pronoun)	yourself	you (subject/object pronoun)	yourselves
he (subject pronoun)	himself	they (subject pronoun)	themselves
him (object pronoun)	himself	them (object pronoun)	themselves
she (subject pronoun)	herself		
her (object pronoun)	herself		
it	itself		

Possessive Pronouns

Possessive pronouns are used to talk about things that belong to people. The words **mine**, **yours**, **his**, **hers**, **ours** and **theirs** are possessive pronouns.

This book is **mine**.

Have you lost **yours**, Tom?

This pen is **mine** and that one is **his**.

Sarah has lost her cat. Is this cat **hers**?

I can see our car, but where is **yours**?

We've had our lunch, but they haven't had **theirs**.

Here is a table to help you remember which possessive pronoun to use with which personal pronoun.

singular personal pronoun	possessive pronoun	plural personal pronoun	possessive pronoun
I, me	mine	we, us	ours
you	yours	you	yours
he, him	his	they, them	theirs
she, her	hers		

Demonstrative Pronouns

Demonstrative pronouns are used for pointing out things. The words **this**, **that**, **these** and **those** are demonstrative pronouns.

This is my desk.

This is the Mings' house.

That is my friend's house.

That's my mother's car.

You'll have to work harder than **this**.

We can do better than **that**.

It's raining again. **This** is awful!

Who is **that** knocking at the door?

Hi, Kathleen. **This** is Michael.

These are my pets.

These are sheep but **those** are goats.

Those are horses.

Notes

- Use **this** and **these** when you are talking about things near you.
- Use **that** and **those** when you are talking about things farther away.

Interrogative Pronouns

Notes

Interrogative pronouns are used to ask questions. The words **who**, **whose**, **what**, **which** and **whom** are interrogative pronouns.

Who used all my paper?

Who is Mom talking to?

Who are those people?

Whose pen is this?

Whose are these shoes?

What is your brother's name?

What does Tom want?

What is the date today?

What do you want to be when you grow up?

Which of these desks is yours?

Which do you prefer?

Which of your sisters is the tallest?

Whom did the President criticize?

- In writing and formal speaking, you can also use **whom** as the object of verbs and prepositions. For example:

Whom did the president criticize?

Whom is the principal talking to?
or

To whom is the principal talking?

but you cannot use **whom** as the subject of a verb. So you cannot say:

✗ Whom came to the party last night?

You have to say:

✓ Who came to the party last night?

- **Who** can be used as the subject or the object of a verb. For example:

Who broke the window? (*as the subject*)

Who are you inviting to your party?
(*as the object*)

- **Who** can be used as the object of a preposition. For example:

Who is Mom talking to?

- You can also use **whom** as the object of a preposition. For example:

Whom is Mom talking to?

If you put the preposition before the interrogative pronoun, you must use **whom**:

To whom is Mom talking?

Indefinite Pronouns

An indefinite pronoun does not refer directly to any other word. Most indefinite pronouns express the idea of quantity.

Everybody is welcome at the meeting.

Many prefer their coffee with sugar.

Does **anybody** care for a cheese sandwich?

Few choose to live in the arid desert.

Indefinite Pronouns

all	each	most	other
another	either	neither	several
any	everybody	nobody	some
anybody	everyone	none	somebody
anyone	few	no one	someone
both	many	one	such

The pronoun **they** is considered an indefinite pronoun when it makes an indefinite reference.

They produce a lot of coal in your state.

Why don't **they** repair the bad roads?

Exercise 1

Read the following passage. Write the missing **subject** and **object pronouns** in the blank spaces.

My name is Charlie. _____ have two brothers. _____ are both older than _____ . Sometimes they take me to the park and _____ play football together. I like playing football with _____ because they are very good. We are going to the park today. Would you like to come with _____ ? _____ can all play together. Afterwards, _____ can come to my house if _____ want to. I think _____ will like my dad. He is very funny and _____ makes great pizzas. Do _____ like pizza?

Exercise 2

Some of the **reflexive pronouns** in the following sentences are used correctly, but some are not. Put a checkmark ☒ in the box if the reflexive pronoun is correct. Put an x ☐ in the box if it is not correct. Then write the correct reflexive pronoun in the blank space.

1. Sometimes I wash the dishes all by himself ☐ _____.
2. Dad had an accident. He cut herself ☐ _____ with a knife.
3. Sally washes the car by herself ☐ _____.
4. Do you think the doctor can cure itself ☐ _____ when he is ill?
5. The cat stays clean by licking itself ☐ _____.
6. Anna and May made the dinner all by herself ☐ _____.
7. Mom lets me walk to school by myself ☐ _____.
8. Can you dress themselves ☐ _____, boys and girls?
9. David can swim all by himself ☐ _____ now.
10. This light is automatic. It switches itself ☐ _____ on at night.

Exercise 3

Write a short sentence using each of the **interrogative pronouns** below.

Example: Who Who is this man?

Who _____

Whose _____

What _____

Which _____

Whom _____

Exercise 4

Read the following passage. Write the missing **demonstrative pronouns** in the blank spaces.

Henry and I went for a walk on the beach. "What's _____ over there?" I asked. "It looks like broken glass," said Henry. He gave me a bag. "Put it in _____," he said. I put the broken glass into the bag. "We'd better put _____ in the trash," I said. He took the bag from me. "You have to hold it like _____," said Henry, "so that you don't cut your hand."

Exercise 5

Write the missing **possessive pronouns** in the blank spaces to complete the sentences.

1. I chose this seat first so it's _____.
2. Can we borrow your coloring pens? We've lost _____.
3. We live in the city and they live in the countryside. Our house is smaller than _____.
4. John, is this pencil _____?
5. Sally is looking for her gloves. Are these gloves _____?
6. Can Julie use your bike? _____ is broken.
7. Tom got the books mixed up. He thought mine was _____ and his was _____.

Exercise 6

Circle at least one **indefinite pronoun** in each sentence.

1. One never knows who might be listening.
2. Many are called but few are chosen.
3. I finished my cookie and asked for another.
4. Both were punished for the crime they committed.
5. Several applied for the job, but no one was hired.