Pronouns

Pronouns make our language more pleasant to hear. Without pronouns, we would have to repeat nouns again and again. Pronouns undergo many changes according to their jobs in a sentence. In addition, the same pronoun can perform different jobs in a sentence.

Personal Pronouns—Memorize them!!! Case and Number

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Subjective (Nominative)</th>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Possessive</th>
<th>Reflexive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First person singular</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>Me</td>
<td>My, mine</td>
<td>myself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First person plural</td>
<td>we</td>
<td>Us</td>
<td>Our, ours</td>
<td>ourselves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second person singular</td>
<td>You</td>
<td>You</td>
<td>Your, yours</td>
<td>Yourself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second person plural</td>
<td>You</td>
<td>You</td>
<td>Your, yours</td>
<td>Yourselves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third person singular</td>
<td>He, she, it</td>
<td>Him, her, it</td>
<td>His, her, hers, its</td>
<td>Himself, herself, itself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third person plural</td>
<td>They</td>
<td>Them</td>
<td>Their, theirs</td>
<td>Themselves</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Case—the function or job that a noun or pronoun performs in a sentence. If the pronoun is a subject, use the subjective (nominative) form. If it’s an object (direct object or preposition), use the objective form.

- Subjective or nominative case pronouns are used as subjects or predicate nouns.
  
  *Examples:*

  **Subject**—They did not bother to do their homework.
  I kissed her.

  **Predicate noun**—The person responsible for this mess is he. Note: You could turn this sentence around, and it would still be correct. He is the person responsible for this mess. Why does the first sentence sound incorrect? Well, we have used the incorrect pronoun so often and for so long that the wrong pronoun sounds better. Go figure!

- Objective case pronouns are used as direct objects and objects of prepositions.

  *Examples:*

  **Direct object**—Joe hit him so hard that his shoes fell off.
  I kissed her.

  **Object of preposition**—The crate of bananas fell on top (of him).
  The argument was between Allen and me.
Possessive case pronouns show ownership.

Examples:
The baby turned its little head.
The team turned in their uniforms.
Mary took her books off the shelf.

Number—Pronouns may be singular or plural.

Gender—Pronouns may be masculine or feminine.

Common Pronoun Errors

1. The principal presented Good Citizenship Awards to Giselle and I.

   Would you say, “The principal presented a Good Citizenship Award to I?” No. You would know to use the objective case pronoun me, not the nominative case pronoun I. Once you get rid of Giselle, you get the correct pronoun. If you have any doubt, check your pronoun by itself.

2. Expressions such as the following are always incorrect.

   Him and me went duck hunting yesterday. (He and I)
   Them are good croissants. (Those)
   Us students have trouble with them pronouns. (We)
   Give Alec and he those books. (him)
   Me and my brother make a good team. (My brother and I)

3. A college student should have textbooks of their own.

   The problem—A generic noun may represent anyone in a group, male or female. A singular generic noun (student) cannot be replaced by a plural pronoun (their). Always using the masculine pronoun he, his, or him results in sexist language. To correct this problem, use one of the three options suggested below.
   a. Change the antecedent to a plural indefinite pronoun or a plural noun.
      College students should have textbooks of their own.
   b. Reword the sentence to eliminate the pronoun.
      A college student is responsible for purchasing textbooks.
   c. Substitute he or she or his or her for the singular pronoun.
      Warning: Use this strategy sparingly.
      A college student should have textbooks of his or her own.

4. Improper use of reflexive pronouns. Hisself and theirselves are always incorrect.

   The Senator spoke with the mayor and myself yesterday. (me)
   The bank president and myself will address the issue. (I)