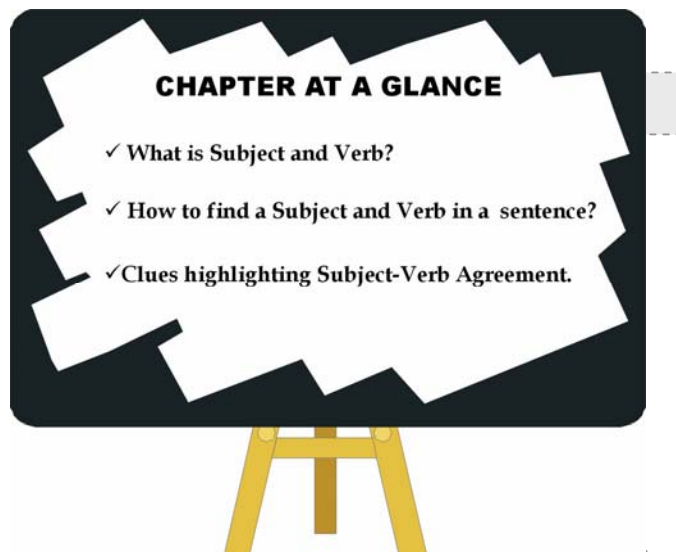


GRAMMAR LECTURE – 1

SUBJECT – VERB AGREEMENT



One cannot find a subject without finding the verb (in ideal cases). So, first the Verb is discussed.

VERB

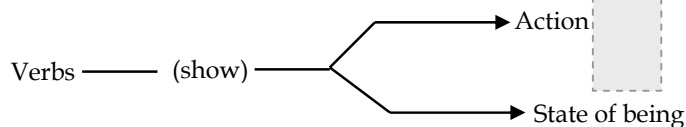
Definition

- A term expressing an action or a state of being



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When students think of verbs, many immediately think of action. It is true that some verbs convey **action**, but not all of them do. Some indicate **condition** or **state of being**, while others convey both **action** and **condition**, depending on the context that those verbs are in. Hence;





TIP

Every grammatically correct sentence has a verb.

Action Verbs (To Do)

Action verbs convey action. In order to perform an action you must do something, not be something. To hate, to laugh, to jump, to bark, and to ski are verbs that indicate action, not condition.

Linking Verbs (To Be)

Linking verbs indicate condition or state of being. You can seem reserved, feel sad, smell like a rose, or you can be sick. All these verbs indicate condition or state of being, not action.

You have been spared from other intimidating definitions like – Verb is a word that functions as a predicate of a sentence.

Find the verbs in the following sentences:

- Susan soaked her tired feet in cool creek.
- Jack cried for help.
- He is tall.

Soaked in the first sentence, cried in the second and is in the third are verbs. The first two show action while the last one shows state of being.



TIP

Transitive Verbs

express an action, which passes from the subject to the object. E.g. I read a book.

Intransitive Verbs

express an action which does not pass over from the subject to an object. E.g. She sleeps.

SUBJECT

Definition

- The subject of a verb is the argument which generally refers to the origin of the action or the undergoer of the state shown by the verb. However, this definition depends on the particular language under consideration. In languages where a passive voice exists, the subject of a passive verb may be the target or the result of the action. This is a semantic definition.
- An alternative definition would be: the subject of an intransitive verb is its only argument; the subject of a transitive verb is its main argument. Transitive verbs usually agree with the subject, if such agreement exists at all. This is a morphosyntactic definition.

Never mind if you did not understand that. It was meant not to be. But it is the best definition that we have ever come across. Just try saying it with a poker-face, you will suddenly seem smarter. I have unleashed it often on many unsuspecting souls!

Let us try something that will make some sense. Another common definition of Subject is;

The subject tells what the sentence is about.

This is closer to reality but with this information if you have to find a subject in a sentence many will be clueless. Just try:

The boy hit the girl. (Is the sentence about the boy or the girl?)

The girl was hit by the boy. (Girl or boy?)

It's too subjective

So we come to the next important thing:



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How to find a Subject in a sentence?

1. First find the **verb** and
2. Then make a question by placing ``who?" or ``what?" before it.

Ex: The boy hit the girl.

1. **Find the verb** --- hit
2. **Make a Question** - Who hit the girl?
3. **Answer:** The Boy

Hence, "The boy" is the Subject.

Similarly, in the sentence;

The girl was hit by the boy.

Question is: Who was hit by the boy?

So the Subject is: The girl

The reason why we learnt about Subject and verb is to understand the following Clue:



TIP

Noun + s = Plural Noun

Verb + s = Singular
Verb

Subjects and Verbs must agree

When we say that the subject and verb must agree, it means that:

- ☞ **If the subject is singular, the verb must be singular.**
- ☞ **If the subject is plural, the verb must be plural, too.**

Singular or plural- A dilemma?

If you recall that boy is singular and boys are plural, the only conclusion is when I add s, the word becomes plural.

(That's how we remembered it since our third grade)

But be careful, there are different Clues for verbs when compared to subjects.

Nouns: Add s, the word becomes plural (boys, girls)
Without the s, the word is singular (boy, girl)

Verbs: Add s, the word becomes singular (talks, runs)
Without s, the word becomes plural (talk, run)

SUBJECT-VERB RELATIONSHIP

CLUE – 1

‘One of the most’

One of the most expensive store in town is the Aristocrat.

There is a mistake in the above mentioned sentence. Now look at the sentence given below.



TIP

Singular subjects need singular verbs,
plural subjects need plural verbs.

One of my friends is an MBA.

From this sentence we know that the speaker has more than one friend. Let us consider he has four friends. When he says this, we know he is telling us that he has four friends and one of them is an MBA. Now there is no doubt that the word friends in the sentence must be plural, because there are four of them.

The same explanation applies to the ‘expensive stores’. So the construction **one of the most...** must be followed by a plural noun as in similar expressions such as; the best of all worlds, the mother of all inventions, etc.



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But remember the whole expression itself is singular. This is why the correct form contains the main verb is, not are.

“One of the most expensive stores in town is the Aristocrat.”

CLUE – 2

Teasing Subject

Look at the sentence below:

The quality of sweaters were not good.
P.S P.V

What do you think? Is this sentence right or wrong? Well, most of you must be dead sure it is right as the plural noun ‘sweaters’ has to be supported by a plural verb ‘were’.

But we are sorry, you are wrong. You need to be very careful while making the verb agree with its proper subject. Most of the time the verb is made to agree in number with a noun near it instead of with its proper subject. As done in the above mentioned sentence. This error is known as “**error of proximity**”. This should be avoided.



All you need to do is locate the right subject. Here the main subject is 'Quality'. Which you can locate by asking; what is not good? Since the subject is singular, so the verb used will be also singular.

"The Parenthetical Effect"

- * Ram as well as his brothers are planning to go to a trip.
- ✓ Ram as well as his brothers is planning to go to a trip.

Why first option is wrong? This must be the first question, which might be striking your mind. Well, all you need to know is; *as well as*, *along with*, etc are actually not conjunctions though they seem to do the similar function as ‘and’ does. The phrase introduced by *as well as* or *along with* will modify the earlier word (Ram in this case), but it does not join the subjects (as the word ‘and’ would do) like done in the first sentence.

S-V agreement

Ram as well as his brothers **is** planning to go to a trip.

S.S Parenthetical S.V effect

V

This rule is made clear by the following example:

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CLUE – 4



TIP

Either...

Or/Neither...Nor

Either S.S or S.S

⇒ S.V

Either P.S or S.S

⇒ S.V

Either S.S or P.S

⇒ P.V

Either P.S or P.S

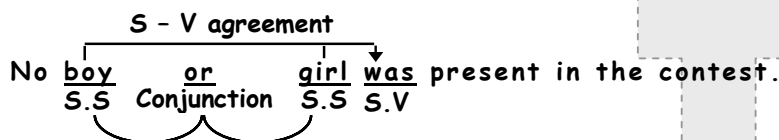
⇒ P.V

In other words, the second subject determines the verbs.

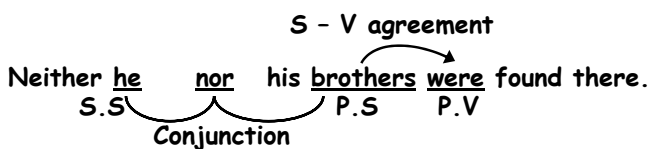
'Or' and 'Nor'

If two or more singular subjects are connected by 'or' and 'nor' then they require a singular subject.

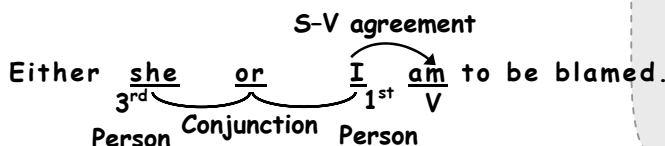
Look at the sentence given below



Simple! Isn't it! But there is more to this Clue. In case one of the subjects joined by 'or' or 'nor' is plural, then the verb used is plural and place the plural subject nearest to the verb.



Now coming to the Subject Person. When the subjects joined by 'or' or 'nor' are of different persons, the verb agrees with the nearer one;



CLUE – 5



TIP

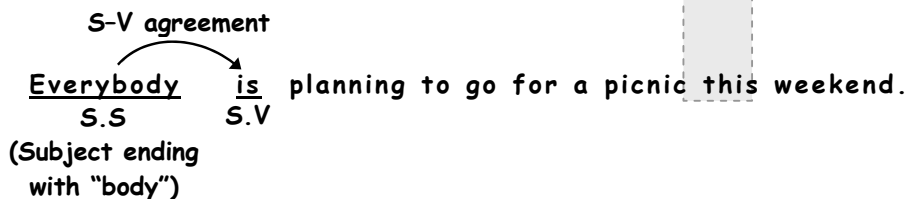
Indefinite Pronouns refer to or replace non specific people, places, things or ideas.

"-Body", "-One" and "Thing" words

The correct term to refer to these words is **Indefinite Pronouns**.

Never mind if you are not able to remember them as indefinite pronouns. You will be able to spot them easily if you remember them as "-body", "-one," and "-thing" words. Well, all you need to know is that if a word has one of these ending (like everybody, everyone, anything, etc) it is always singular.

Look at the following example:



Well, words like each, either and neither can also come in this category.

S.V. agreement

Neither of the boys is planning to go to the picnic.

Category subject S.V



TIP

Simply memorize the endings of words that are always singular, then you won't have problems in the application of this rule.

Beware! This Clue is applicable only when we have one subject. Incase we have 2 subjects joined by "either or" or "neither - nor" then getting the agreement right may give you fits. But the best way out is to make the verb agree with the subject closest to the verb.

Check out the following examples:

1.

S-V agreement

Either the postman or the washermen are making my dog bark.

1st subject 2nd subject P.V
(Closest to the verb)

2.

S-V agreement

Neither my maids nor my servant is paying attention to my orders.

P.S (Closest verb) S.V
(S.S)

CLUE – 6

"Who," "Which", and "That"

Here we are dealing with the pronouns (refer to the Pronoun chapter to know what are pronouns).

Before we begin explaining this grammar Clue. Remember 'who' is used to refer to the human beings, 'which' to refer to the animals, birds and non-living things and "that" can be used to refer to both human beings and birds, animals and non - living things.

When "who", "which" and "that" take the place of singular noun, they are singular.



TIP

Pronouns are words used in place of nouns. E.g. he, she, it, they, their.

S-V agreement

Rohit is the boy who is taking part in the painting competition.

S.S Pronoun V

In the above sentence, **who** is the subject of a dependent clause. It takes the place of a boy (a singular form), and that's why 'is' is correct.

- This is the house which is being bought by us.
noun Pronoun

- This is the house which is being bought by us.
Singular Pronoun
noun

- This is the house which is being bought by us.
- Singular Pronoun Sing
noun verb

“Reversed Sentence Order”

We all know that the normal pattern for English sentences is **Subject** following the **Verb**.



50 mangoes are kept in the basket.
P.S P.V

However, there are few situations where this order is reversed. In the sentences starting with *there* and *it*, interrogative sentences and exclamatory sentences (In order to know what these sentences are, refer to sentence chapter), the verb comes before the subject.

Consider the following examples:

1. There are 50 mangoes in the basket. (Starting with there)
V S
2. Where are they going? (Interrogative Sentence)
V S
3. On the table are the mangoes! (Exclamatory Sentence)
V S

CLUE – 8

“Stuff In Between the Sentence”

The first step in making the subject – verb agree is identifying the subject. The stuff is the prepositional phrases which are one of the main culprits in the misidentification of the true subject of the clause. Remember to cross out the prepositional phrases in order to find out the right subject. Now look at the following sentence and find out what’s wrong with it.

The vegetables on the table are fresh.
S.S P.V

Well good guess! The subject does not agree with the verb. In that case you have taken ‘table’ a singular noun as the subject and the verb ‘are’ is plural. But your guess regarding your subject is wrong. To find out the real subject cross out the prepositional phrase and you’re left with

The vegetables are fresh.

“The vegetables... are fresh?”
P.S P.V

Now the subject – verb agreement sounds right. Plural noun ‘vegetables’ takes a plural verb ‘are’.

Once you know how to look for this problem, it shouldn’t be too hard to get rid of it.

CLUE – 9



TIP

With these expletive constructions, the subject follows the verb but still determines the form of the verb.

“Confusing Expletives”

Expletives like; **Here** and **There** are not subjects. Disregard them when determining the subject that the verb must agree with.

S-V agreement

There are fewer students in this class.
P.V P.S

The true subject in this sentence is students and ‘there’ is not playing any role.

S-V agreement

Mom, here is the man I was talking to you about.
S.V S.S

The true subject in this sentence is man and ‘here’ has no role to play

CLUE – 10

Mathematical Expressions

S-V agreement

Some of the work is still left to be done.

S.S S.V

S-V agreement

Some of the students are still studying.

P.S P.V

Confused?? Why singular verb in the first sentence and plural verb in the second sentence? Well, it's very simple. Fractional expressions such as half of, a part of, a percentage of, a majority of are sometimes singular and sometimes plural, depending on the meaning. (The same is true, of course when all, any, more, most and some act as subjects).



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Beware! Sums and products of mathematical processes are expressed as singular and require singular verbs.

Consider the following examples:

S-V agreement

1. Two and Two is four.

S.S S.V

(Sum of
mathematical
processes)

S-V agreement

2. Four times four divided by two is eight.

S V

(Mathematical process)



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Remember the expression “more than one” (oddly enough) takes a singular verb.

More than one student is talking.

S-V agreement

CLUE – 11

Specific Quantity

Twenty minutes are allowed to each speaker.

The above statement sounds pretty correct. After all “twenty minutes” is a plural subject and in the statement it is followed by the plural verb ‘are’. But you are wrong the statement should have been;



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CLUE – 12

S-V agreement

Twenty minutes is allowed to each speaker.

Plural noun denoting S.V
specific quantity

Remember, when a plural noun denotes some specific quantity or amount considered as a whole, the verb is generally singular.

The “And” Rule

Two or more singular nouns when joined by conjunction ‘and’ are always followed by a plural verb.

Example:

S-V agreement

He and I are studying in the same class.

S.S conjunction S.S P.S

Now look at the below mentioned sentence.

S-V agreement

The horse and carriage is at the door.

S V

What are you looking at? The verb error? Since the 2 singular subjects joined by ‘and’ take plural verb. But in this case the two nouns refer to one idea to the mind i.e. ‘horse and carriage’.



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CLUE – 13

Remember if the nouns suggest one idea to the mind, or refer to the same person or thing, the verb is singular. So the above mentioned sentence is completely right having a singular verb ‘is’.

Unit of Measurement

* He has four dozens pencils

Numerical Unit of Plural Noun
Value Measurement
(Plural)

✓	He	has	<u>four</u>	<u>dozen</u>	<u>pencils</u> .
			Numerical Value	Unit of Measurement (Singular)	Plural Noun

The first sentence does not sound to be correct. If the word representing the unit of measurement like score, dozen, hundred, thousand, etc are preceded by any other word denoting number and are proceeded immediately by a plural noun, then they do not take a plural form.

However, it is not the same case in the following type of sentences.

Dozens of seats are vacant.

In the above case; the word representing the unit of measurement is neither preceded by any other word denoting number nor immediately with the plural noun. So, it can take plural form.

CLUE – 14

Words that are always Plural Subject

- When a compound subject is joined by a coordinating conjunction (and), it always takes a plural verb if the subject refers to different persons or things and if the subject cannot be considered a unit.
Your investments and property are sure to increase in value.
- Indefinite pronouns (both, few, many, several) always take plural verbs.
Both are acceptable choices.
- "A number" as the subject of a sentence always takes plural verbs.
A number of tenants are in the building.
- Certain plural subjects always take plural verbs.
The news media are under attack. (singular of media: medium)

CLUE – 15

Words that are always a Singular Subject

First it might be helpful to remember that the singular form of all verbs except **to be** and **to have** is formed by adding "s" or "es." For example: dives, runs, answers and crashes, presses and tosses.

- When used as a subject or adjective these indefinite pronouns are always singular and, therefore, they take singular verbs.

another	anybody	anyone	anything	each	each one
either	everyone	everybody	everything	much	
neither	nobody	no one	nothing	one	other
somebody	something	someone			

- These pronouns may be used as subjects, and they take a singular verb.

Everyone has been invited.

She said that something was all she wanted for her birthday.

The Democratic leadership suggested two solutions but neither was acceptable to the committee chair.

When they are used as adjectives, the noun they modify always takes a singular verb.

Neither solution works for the committee chair.

Each tragedy gives the population less time to recover from the previous shock.

- The number--when used as subject of a sentence (an organized unit) – takes a singular verb.

The number of tenants without heat is increasing.

- Subjects that stand for definable units of money, measurement, time, organization, food and medical problems always take singular verbs.

Six months is not enough time.

Five thousand dollars is the minimum bid.

Ham and eggs is my favorite meal.

- Singular subject followed by phrases such as *together with* and *as well as* take singular verb.

The tax measure, together with its amendments, has passed.

- When all parts of a compound subject are singular and refer to the same person or thing.

The head of the expedition and mayor of the village was the same person.

- When the subject is followed by the phrase "the only one of".

Jake is the only one of the runners who has finished.

BUT: Jake is one of those runners who have finished.

(In this case, Jake is one of many [those] runners. The verb "have" agrees with "those runners" not with Jake.)

CLUE – 16

Words that are either Singular or Plural Subject

- When the parts of a compound subject are joined by;
or, but, either ... or, neither ... nor, not only ... but also
the verb must agree with the subject nearest to the verb.
Neither the Oregon players nor the coach was overconfident.
Neither the Oregon coach nor the players were intimidated by Arizona.

- Collective nouns and certain plural words may take singular or plural verbs- depending on the meaning in the sentence.
- If the word indicates persons or things working together as an identifiable unit, a singular verb is used.

The jury was seated at 9 a.m. ("It" was seated.)

BUT: The jury were being interviewed by the media.

(Refers to individual members of the jury; could be rewritten as:

"The jurors were ...")

Politics is a hot topic. (Politics as a single topic)

BUT: The mayor's politics are offensive.

(Politics as several actions over time)

- The pronouns **any**, **none** or **some** and the nouns **all** and **most**:
 1. take singular verbs when they refer to a unit or quantity
Some of the money was missing. (a bag of money)
 2. take plural verbs when they refer to number, amount or individuals
Some of the gold coins were missing. (a series of coins)
 3. "NONE":
 - a. "No Single One"; "Not One"--Singular
**None of the gold coins was missing.
(not one of the coins)**
 - b. "No Two" or "No Amount"--Plural
**None of the goods were missing.
(no amount of the goods)**
**None of the forests were destroyed.
(no amount of the forests)**
- When subject is a fraction or a word such as half, part, plenty, rest, its intended number is suggested by the object of the preposition that follows it.
Three-fourths of the enemy's army is wounded.
Three-fourths of the enemy's soldiers are wounded.

CLUE – 17

"Positive–Negative"

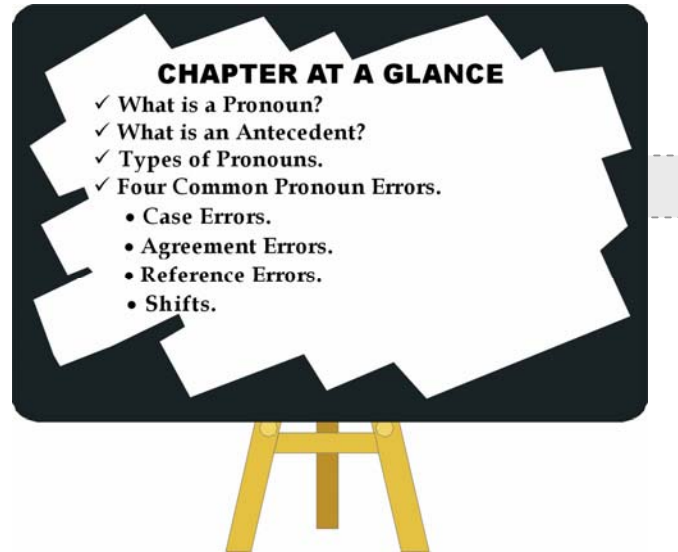
If your sentence compounds a positive and a negative subject and one is plural, the other singular, the verb should agree with the positive subject.

The department members but not the chairman have decided not to teach on Valentine's Day.

It is not the faculty members but the president who decides this issue.

It was the speaker, not his ideas, that has provoked the students to riot.

PRONOUN



A pronoun is a substitute for a noun. It refers to a person, place, thing, feeling, or quality but does not refer to it by its name. The pronoun in the following sample sentence is highlighted in italics.

The critique of Plato's *Republic* was written from a contemporary point of view. It was an in-depth analysis of Plato's opinions about possible governmental forms.



TIP

Examples of pronouns:
He, She, It, They, etc

Antecedent

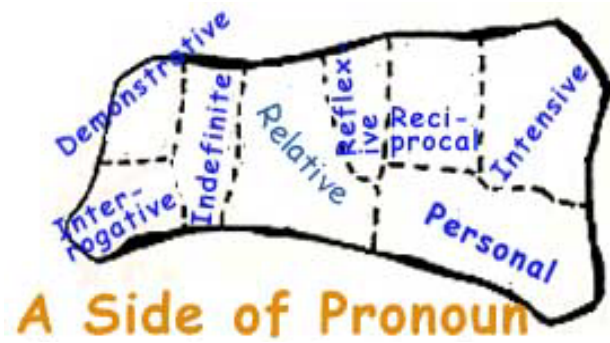
An antecedent is the word, phrase, or clause to which a pronoun refers, understood by the context. The antecedent in the following sample sentence is highlighted in italics.

The critique of Plato's *Republic* was written from a contemporary point of view. It was an in-depth analysis of Plato's opinions about possible governmental forms.

Generally (but not always) pronouns refer to a noun, an individual or individuals or thing or things (the pronoun's antecedent) whose identity is made clear earlier in the text (as in the above example of Plato's *Republic*). However, some pronouns will not have an antecedent.

- **Everyone here earns over a thousand dollars a day.**
The word "everyone" has no antecedent.

TYPES OF PRONOUNS



Personal Pronouns

Personal pronouns can be characterized or distinguished by **person**.

First person refers to the speaker(s) or writer(s)
("I" for singular, "we" for plural).

Second person refers to the person or people being spoken or written to
("you" for both singular and plural).

Third person refers to the person or people being spoken or written about
("he," "she," and "it" for singular, "they" for plural).

Forms of Personal Pronouns



TIP

Pronouns used in this way would receive special stress in a spoken sentence.

	First Person (Who talks)	Second Person (With whom you talk)	Third Person (About whom you talk)
Subject/ Nominative Case	I, We	You	He, She, It, They
Object/ Accusative Case	Me, Us	You	Him, Her, It, Them
Possessive Case	My, Mine Our, Ours	Your, Yours	His, Her, Hers, Its, Their, Theirs

Demonstrative Pronouns

The family of demonstratives (this/that/these/those/such) behave as pronouns.

As pronouns, they identify or point to nouns.

- ***That is incredible!* (referring to something you just saw)**
- ***I will never forget this.* (referring to a recent experience)**
- ***Such is my belief.* (referring to an explanation just made)**

A sense of emotional distance or even disdain can be conveyed with the demonstrative pronouns:

- ***You're going to wear these?***
- ***This is the best you can do?***

Relative Pronouns

The relative pronouns (*who/whoever/which/that*) relate groups of words to nouns or other pronouns.

The student *who* studies hardest usually does the best.

The word *who* connects or relates the subject, *student*, to the verb within the dependent clause (*studies*).

Indefinite Pronouns

The indefinite pronouns

(everybody/anybody/somebody/all/each/every/some/none/one) do not substitute for specific nouns but function themselves as nouns.

Everyone is wondering if anybody is left.

One of the chief difficulties we have with the indefinite pronouns lies in the fact that "everybody" feels as though it refers to more than one person, but it takes a singular verb.

Everybody is accounted for.

If you think of this word as meaning "every single body," the confusion usually disappears.

There are other indefinite pronouns, like:

enough, few, fewer, less, little, many, much, several, more, most, all, both, every, each, any, either, neither, none, some.

- ***Few will be chosen; fewer will finish.***
- ***Little is expected.***

Intensive Pronouns

The intensive pronouns (such as myself, yourself, herself, ourselves, themselves) consist of a personal pronoun plus *self* or *selves* and emphasize a noun.

I myself don't know the answer.



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It is possible (but rather unusual) for an intensive pronoun to precede the noun it refers to.

Myself, I don't believe a word he says.

Reflexive Pronouns

The reflexive pronouns (which have the same forms as the intensive pronouns) indicate that the sentence subject also receives the action of the verb.

Students who cheat on this quiz are only hurting themselves.

You paid yourself a million dollars?

She encouraged herself to do well.

What this means is that whenever there is a reflexive pronoun in a sentence there must be a person to whom that pronoun can "reflect." In other words, the sentence:

Please hand that book to myself.

would be incorrect because there is no "I" in that sentence for the "myself" to reflect to (and we would use "me" instead of "myself"). A sentence such as; **"I gave that book to myself for Christmas"**. Might be silly, but it would be correct.

Interrogative Pronouns

The interrogative pronouns (who/which/what) introduce questions.

What is that?

Who will help me?

Which do you prefer?

Reciprocal Pronouns

The reciprocal pronouns are *each other* and *one another*. They are convenient forms for combining ideas. If Bob gave Alicia a book for Christmas and Alicia gave Bob a book for Christmas, we can say that they gave each other books (or that they gave books to each other).

- **My mother and I give each other a hard time.**



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Four Common Pronoun Errors

Case Errors

Agreement
Errors

Reference
Errors

Shifts

Case Errors

Also called the I/me error or he/him problem, many students are at their wit's end when it comes to choosing between the two.

For example, is this correct?

- ***Sophia and him are going to the movies tonight.***
(Correction: ***he*** instead of ***him***)
- ***Grandma bought gifts for Sarah and I. (me instead of I)***

The reasoning for the above corrections will be clear after understanding of the Clues mentioned below:

Often the confusion lies between the usage of Subject and Object case, though Possessive Case can also pose some problems.

Subject Case

Using the nominative case indicates that the pronoun is acting as the subject of a given clause or as a predicate nominative following a linking verb.



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The subject pronouns are: **I, you, he, she, they, we, who** and **it**.

- Pronouns as the subject of a clause:
 - ♦ ***He will never leave cricket completely.***
 - **HE** is the subject of the sentence.
 - ♦ ***While I was playing," she said, "I had another dream that had nothing to do with winning championships."***
 - **I** is the subject of the first clause. **SHE** is the subject of the second clause, and **I** is the subject of the third clause.
 - ♦ ***He can recognize somebody who needs a boost—teammate or community.***
 - **HE** is the subject of the independent clause. **WHO** is the subject of the dependent clause.



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Remember: Relative pronouns are part of the dependent clause.

- ♦ ***Who is going to be available in two years or three years?***
 - **WHO** is the subject of the sentence.
- Pronouns as the Predicate Nominative
 - ♦ ***We both recalled that it was she who offered the gift.***
 - **WE** is the subject of the independent clause. **IT** is the subject of the dependent clause. **SHE** is the predicate nominative to **IT**. **WHO** is the subject of the final dependent clause.

- ♦ ***It is I who have the money.***
 - IT is the subject of the independent clause. I is the predicate nominative to IT. WHO is the subject of the final dependent clause.
- ♦ ***If I were she, I would take the job.***
 - I is the subject of the dependent clause. SHE is the predicate nominative to I. I is the subject of the independent clause.
- ♦ ***Remember the paintings that I told you about? These are they.***
 - I is the subject of the dependent clause. THEY is the predicate nominative to THESE.
- **Pronouns in a comparison**
 - ♦ Use the subjective case after "than" when the pronoun would use the same verb in an "implied clause of comparison" as the subject of the sentence,
 - ***My friend likes playing more than I.***
This means that my friends like playing more than I do.
 - ***My friend likes studying more than me.***
This means that my friends like studying more than they like me.
 - ***We drive faster than they. (drive)***
 - ♦ Use the subjective case after "than" when the pronoun is being compared or contrasted to a quality only (e.g., adjective or adverb) of the subject.
 - ***She is taller than he. (is tall)***



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If the sentence included a noun with taller, the pronoun would be objective
(There is no taller player than her).

- ***He is happier than she. (is happy)***

Objective Case

Using the objective case indicates that the pronoun is acting as an object.



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The object pronouns are: **me, you, him, her, them, us, whom** and **it**.

- **A pronoun as a direct object**
 - ♦ ***My dog likes me.***

- DOG is the subject of the sentence. ME is the direct object of the verb **LIKES**.
 - ♦ **If you don't mind, would you please take *him* to class.**
 - YOU is the subject of the independent clause. HIM is the direct object of the verb **WOULD TAKE**.
 - ♦ **The teachers sent *her* to the infirmary.**
 - **TEACHERS** is the subject of the sentence. **HER** is the direct object of the verb **SENT**.
 - ♦ ***Whom* does Alejandro wish to see?**
 - **ALEJANDRO** is the subject of the sentence. **WHOM** is the direct object of the verb **DOES WISH**.
 - ♦ **Alex is the person *whom* she met at the opening.**
 - **SHE** is the subject of the dependent clause. **WHOM** is the direct object of the verb **MET**.
- **A pronoun as an indirect object**
 - ♦ **Danny handed *her* the ball.**
 - **DANNY** is the subject of the sentence. **BALL** is the direct object of the verb **HANDED**. **HER** is the indirect object.
 - ♦ **When Eric returned from camp, his father gave *him* a hug.**
 - **FATHER** is the subject of the independent clause. **HUG** is the direct object of the verb **GAVE**. **HIM** is the indirect object.
 - ♦ **Tom offered Mark and *me* a ride home.**
 - **Tom** is the subject of the sentence. **RIDE** is the direct object of the verb **OFFERED**. **MARK** and **ME** are the indirect objects.
 - ♦ **Marvin wondered *whom* he should give the message.**
 - **HE** is the subject of the dependent clause. **MESSAGE** is the direct object of the verb **SHOULD GIVE**. **WHOM** is the indirect object.
 - ♦ **Did the group announce *whom* they had presented the bonus?**
 - **THEY** is the subject of the dependent clause. **BONUS** is the direct object of the verb **HAD PRESENTED**. **WHO** is the indirect object.
 - **A pronoun as an object of a preposition**
 - ♦ **For *him*, no other choice seems reasonable.**
 - **FOR** is a preposition. **HIM** is the object of the preposition.

- ♦ **Between you and me, this is a tough test.**
 - **BETWEEN** is a preposition. **YOU** and **ME** are an objects of the preposition.
- ♦ **Experts agree that there is a time bomb inside her just waiting to go off.**
 - **INSIDE** is a preposition. **HER** is the object of the preposition.
- ♦ **To whom do you wish to speak?**
 - **TO** is a preposition. **WHOM** is the object of the preposition.
- ♦ **Did Cody's father tell him *whom* he wanted to save this letter for?**
 - **FOR** is a preposition. **WHOM** is the object of the preposition.
- **A pronoun as an object of a verbal (Gerund, Participle, Infinitive)**
 - ♦ **Reprimanding *Jerry* and *her* does little good.**
 - **REPRIMANDING** is a gerund. **HER** is an object of the gerund.
 - ♦ **He wants to call *her*.**
 - **TO CALL** is an infinitive. **HER** is the object of the infinitive.
 - ♦ **Calling *him* from the shore, Tina tried to get Allan's attention.**
 - **CALLING** is a participle. **HIM** is the object of the participle.
- **Objective pronouns in a comparison**
 - ♦ Use the objective case after "than" if the pronoun doesn't compare or contrast with the subject, but is being compared or contrasted to an object or complement.
 - **He likes us better than *them*. (objective case)**
This means that he likes us better than he likes them.
 - **He likes us better than *they*. (subjective case)**
This means that he likes us better than they like us.
 - ♦ Use the objective case after "**than**" if the comparison features a noun or pronoun with the adjective.
 - **There is no faster *runner* than *her*.**
If the sentence included only the adjective **FASTER**, the pronoun would be subjective (There is no faster than she).
 - **You are a much better *artist* than *him*.**

Possessive Case

Using the possessive case indicates that the pronoun is showing ownership. The possessive pronouns are: my, mine, your, yours, his, her, hers, their, theirs, our, ours, whose and its.

- With Indefinite Pronouns (Add Apostrophe and "S")
 - ♦ *Someone's* misfortune can be another's gain.
 - ♦ At this point, it is *anyone's* guess who will win the series.
- With Personal Pronouns (No Apostrophe)
 - ♦ The gift is *hers*.
 - ♦ *Theirs* is the best example he as ever seen of interactive web design.
 - ♦ The team gave its all in the game against the Bears.
- With Relative or Interrogative Pronouns (No Apostrophe)
 - ♦ *Whose* books are on my desk? versus: *Who's* making dinner tonight? (contraction of: Who is...)
- With Gerunds
 - ♦ We admired *her* going out for track.
 - We admire what? The action of going out for track.
 - Whose action? Hers.
 - ♦ *Your* skipping class is beginning to affect your grade.



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Remember: Pronouns stand in for nouns. This is standing in for a person's name. It is that person's action that is causing the problem. Not the person.

CLUE – 1

Agreement Errors

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

Explanation:

This Clue means that –

- singular antecedents require singular pronouns;
- plural antecedents require plural pronouns;
- a masculine antecedent requires a masculine pronoun;
- a feminine antecedent requires a feminine pronoun; and
- an antecedent that may be masculine or feminine requires a non-sexist pronoun (such as the he or she combination).

Watch Out for THEY, THEM, or THEIR!

If you find the word they, them, or their in your writing, WATCH OUT! Make sure that this plural pronoun does actually refer to a plural antecedent. It should not refer to singular antecedents when no gender is specified.

Watch Out for Indefinite Pronouns

If the antecedent is an indefinite pronoun, WATCH OUT!

Error: When a student attends a local college, they can live quietly and inexpensively at home.

Analysis: Student is singular, but they is plural. Also, a student can be either male or female.

Correction: When a student attends a local college, he or she can live quietly and inexpensively at home.

The Singular Indefinite Pronouns

The following indefinite pronouns are always singular.

one (of them)	everyone	everybody	everything
each (of them)	anyone	anybody	anything
either (of them)	someone	somebody	something
neither (of them)	none	nobody	nothing

Error: When anyone attends a local college, they should register early to make sure they get the classes they want.

Analysis: Anyone is singular, but they is plural. Also, anyone can be either male or female.

Correction: When anyone attends a local college, he or she should register early to make sure he or she gets the classes he or she wants.

Concise Correction: When anyone attends a local college, he or she should register early to make sure to get the best classes before they fill up.

Whenever you see the words in the first column above as antecedents, be sure to ignore anything mentioned in an "of" phrase that follows.

Error: One of my sisters just wrecked their car.

Analysis: One is singular, but their is plural.

Correction: One of my sisters just wrecked her car.

The Plural Indefinite Pronouns

The following indefinite pronouns are always plural.

both

few

several

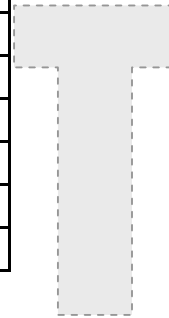
many

two (or any other number greater than one)

The Sometimes Singular/Sometimes Plural Indefinite Pronouns

The following indefinite pronouns are sometimes singular and sometimes plural. When you see these, you must pay attention to the objects in the "of" phrase that follows, whether the "of" phrase is stated explicitly or implied.

SINGULAR	PLURAL
all (of it)	all (of them)
any (of it)	any (of them)
some (of it)	some (of them)
none (of it)	none (of them)
more (of it)	more (of them)
most (of it)	most (of them)



CLUE – 2

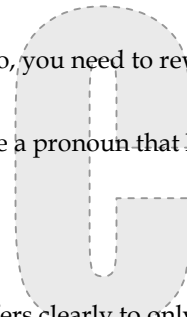
Reference Errors

Pronouns must refer clearly to an antecedent.

Explanation:

This Clue means that –

- if you can't figure out what the pronoun refers to, you need to rewrite the sentence without using the pronoun at all.
- it is better to repeat a noun for clarity than to use a pronoun that has an ambiguous meaning.

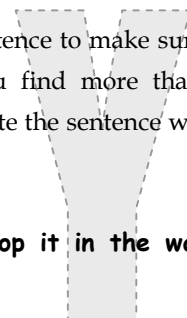


Watch out for all 3rd-person pronouns!

If you find one of these pronouns, make sure that it refers clearly to only one antecedent:

- he, him, his
- she, her
- it, its
- they, them, their

When you find one, trace backwards through the sentence to make sure that the pronoun refers to only one antecedent. If you find more than one possible antecedent or no antecedent at all, then rewrite the sentence without the pronoun.



Error: After drying your dog with a towel, drop it in the washing machine.

Analysis: It may refer to either the dog or the towel. You should delete it and replace it with a noun.

Correction: After drying your dog with a towel, drop the towel in the washing machine.

Error: On the menu it says that the chili is homemade.

Analysis: It may refer to the menu; but then the sentence doesn't make sense, for in essence it would be saying, "On the menu, the menu says that the chili is homemade," as if there were a menu on the menu. You should rewrite the sentence without it.

Correction 1: The menu says that the chili is homemade.

Correction 2: According to the menu, the chili is homemade.

Watch out for this and that!

(The demonstrative pronouns)

If you find the pronoun *this* or *that* in a sentence (when the word *that* is not the first word of an adjective clause), make sure that this pronoun refers clearly to only one antecedent. As a pronoun, *this* is often used to refer to an action or activity. Make sure that you don't use the pronoun *this* to refer to a verb; pronouns must refer to nouns.

Error: Jack just heard that his mother has cancer. This made him very angry.

Analysis: Does *this* refer to the cancer or to Jack's just now hearing the news? Grammatically, *this* can't refer to *heard*, a verb in the past tense. Logically, the news probably made him angry, not the cancer itself; but the noun *news* is not in the sentence and so is not the antecedent.

Correction 1: (Turn the pronoun *this* into an adjective by adding the noun *news* to the sentence.) Jack just heard that his mother has cancer. This news made him very angry.

Correction 2: (Drop *this* completely and replace it with the noun.) Jack just heard that his mother has cancer. The news made him very angry.

Correction 3: (Rewrite the idea completely without any awkward pronouns.) The moment Jack heard that his mother has cancer, he became very angry.

CLUE – 3

Shifts

Do not shift your "point of view" as you write.

Explanation:

This clue is based on the three points of view that the personal pronouns convey.

- 1st person point of view = the writer or speaker. Every time a writer uses the words I, me, my, or mine in a sentence, these words refer to the writer himself or herself.

- 2nd person point of view = the reader or audience. Every time a writer uses the words you or your in a sentence, these words refer to the person who is reading the written material.
- 3rd person point of view = a third party. Every time a writer uses any other designations—a person, everyone, an individual, people, individuals, someone, a student, he, him, his, she, her, it, they, them, their, etc.—these words refer to a person or to people who are being written about, whether named or unnamed.

The bottom line for this Clue is as follows: do not start writing about someone, everyone, people, he, she, or they and then suddenly switch to writing about you.

Watch out for YOU!

Error: When a student is placed on probation, you may file an appeal with the dean.

Analysis: As this sentence reads now, it sounds as if the reader (you) should file an appeal when some other student goes on probation. Why would the reader do that? This sentence starts by talking about some unknown student but then shifts to talking about the reader, as if the reader were a student.

Correction: (Replace *you* with an appropriate 3rd-person pronoun.)

When a student is placed on probation, he or she may file an appeal with the dean.