**Impersonal sentences: ONE / YOU / THEY**

We can use ONE and YOU to talk about people in general, including the speaker and the hearer. We only use them in generalizations, when we mean "**anyone, at any time**."

Examples:

- You can't learn a language in one month. = One can't learn a language in one month.

- You need a visa to enter the USA. = One needs a visa to enter the USA.

- You shouldn't be too hard on yourself. = One shouldn't be too hard on oneself.

- For you, your children are always the best. = For one, one's children are always the best.

When speaking, we prefer YOU. ONE is more formal, so it is found mainly in written texts.

THEY is not so general as ONE or YOU. It refers to a particular group of people, but **not** a precise group, or everyone.

- **They** are very nice in this city. = (Not everybody in the world, but everybody who lives here.)

- Your son is a teenager, and you know that **they** are very complicated. = (Teenagers in general, but not everybody.)

- I'm sure **they** will sell a new model of this phone next year. = (The company who makes the phones.)

- **They** are building a new bridge over the river. = (The construction company.)

- **They** are planting flowers in all the city parks = (The Parks Department, or maybe volunteers.)

- You work to earn money and **they** take it away with taxes. = (The local, state or federal government)

We also use THEY to talk about one or more people when **we don't know who they are**, or we don’t know if they’re a man or a woman (= somebody).

- **They** broke my window yesterday.

- I went to buy an umbrella, but **they** had bought the last one.

- Who made this mess in my yard? If I catch **them,** I'll call the police!

Impersonal YOU and THEY

- If **you** go to Hawaii, **they** give you flowers at the airport.

- **They**’re always doing highway projects in the summer, so **you** always get stuck in traffic.

-**You** should be careful when you’re crossing the street downtown. **They** drive crazy there.

In these examples, YOU is not "only you", but "everybody", and THEY refers to an unknown group of people, but **not** to everybody.