

Making Pronouns Agree with Their Antecedents

The word a pronoun replaces is called its **antecedent**.

Jason plays his guitar every evening.

(The antecedent of the pronoun *his* is *Jason*.)

Pronouns must agree with their antecedents in number. A pronoun that refers to a singular antecedent must be singular. A pronoun that refers to a plural antecedent must be plural.

The actress blew kisses to her fans. (singular)

Police controlled the fans by keeping them behind ropes. (plural)

Pronouns must also agree with their antecedents in gender. Pronouns and antecedents may be masculine (*he, him, his*), feminine (*she, her, hers*), or neuter (*it, its*).

The soldier wrote a letter to his mother. (masculine)

That singer writes all her own songs. (feminine)

I need my wallet because it contains my license. (neuter)



Circle the antecedent of the underlined pronoun in each sentence. Identify the number of the pronoun and its antecedent. On the line, write **S** for singular or **P** for plural.

- _____ The diners had to wait over fifteen minutes for their check.
- _____ Kris enjoys visiting the pandas at the zoo because they are so cute.
- _____ The landscaper hired Brad as her assistant.
- _____ Ray likes oatmeal and makes it for himself every morning.

Circle the antecedent of the underlined pronoun in each sentence. Identify the gender of the pronoun and its antecedent. On the line, write **M** for masculine, **F** for feminine, or **N** for neuter.

- _____ Sara wanted a leather jacket but couldn't afford it.
- _____ Dan brings his lunch to work every day.
- _____ Karen looked forward to Friday night, when she would see her friends.
- _____ John bought the book because it had gotten good reviews.

B**Practice**

Pronouns must also agree with their antecedents in person. You use first person when you talk about yourself. You use second person when you talk to someone else. You use third person when you talk about other persons or things.

I picture myself as a world traveler. (first person)

You yourself can be the judge. (second person)

Maria and her sisters went on a cruise. (third person)

It is important to make relative pronouns agree with their antecedents, too. Use *who* and *whom* when the antecedents are people. Use *which* and *that* when the antecedents are not people.

The artist who painted this picture has moved to New York. (The *artist* is a person.)

The dress was made of silk that had come from China. (*Silk* is a thing.)

Circle the antecedent of the underlined pronoun in each sentence. Identify the person of the pronoun and its antecedent. On the line, write 1 for first person, 2 for second person, or 3 for third person.

1. _____ When Hector visits the doctor's office, he takes along a good book.
2. _____ I am surprised that Elaine remembered my birthday.
3. _____ The protesters held up their signs and shouted at the speaker.
4. _____ You may set your wet clothes by the fire to dry.
5. _____ Because Margot loves peaches, she buys them by the peck.

Underline the pronoun that correctly completes each sentence. Circle its antecedent.

6. Sean slowed down when (it, he) saw the flashing lights ahead.
7. The homeowner (which, whose) garden was pictured in the paper felt proud.
8. The astronauts put on (his, their) space suits and waited for the signal to board.
9. Kelly and Celeste locked (ourselves, themselves) out of their car.
10. The bear ran back into (their, its) cave, where it felt safe.
11. Laura has asked (his, her) brother to usher at the wedding.
12. The home, (who, which) was built in 1924, was filled with antiques.
13. I (himself, myself) can't remember the address.
14. Steve bought bagels and shared (it, them) with his coworkers.

C**Apply**

Read each sentence. If it has a pronoun that does not agree with its antecedent, rewrite the sentence correctly on the line. If there is antecedent agreement, write *Correct*.

1. After Mike got his paycheck, he deposited them in the bank.

2. The flight was scheduled for take-off an hour ago, but it has been delayed.

3. The cows slowly lifted her heads when the farmer approached.

4. The king and her court enjoyed the juggler's act.

5. The prize should go to the dancer that wore the red costume.

6. We knocked on the door, but the guard would not let us in.

7. Grandmother is proud of his grandchildren.

8. Mia drove slowly because you could barely see through the fog.

9. Please give me the files so I can study it.

10. Fans begged the actress for its autograph.

D**Check Up**

Choose the pronoun that best completes each sentence.

1. Justin bought a dozen roses for _____ girlfriend.
A their
B his
C her
D its
2. A writer _____ interviewed the mayor wrote this article.
F who
G whom
H which
J that
3. Before you receive _____ lunch, you must pay the cashier.
A our
B his
C your
D their
4. Alicia finished last but was still pleased with _____.
F myself
G herself
H themselves
J ourselves
5. Russ learned a new song, and he played _____ for the family.
A it
B them
C him
D they
6. Lifeguards must stay at _____ posts until the pool closes.
F his
G her
H its
J their

Read each set of sentences. Then choose the sentence that is written correctly.

7. A The man who got the job will start tomorrow.
B I will catch the train who gets in at noon.
C The person to which you should speak will be back shortly.
D He is the officer that wrote the ticket.
8. F Ned and Jim wanted to come, but he had to work.
G A student must make their own course choices in the fall.
H David is going back to school to get more training in his field.
J Lisa wrote several letters and sent it to the governor.