

# MPC English & Study Skills Center

## Pronouns

**Pronouns** either take the place of a noun (Tom = **he**) or make reference to a noun (Susan's book = **her** book). Pronouns are grouped into several different types depending on their purpose: **Personal, Indefinite, Demonstrative, Reflexive or Intensive, Interrogative, and Reciprocal.**

### Personal Pronouns

Person	Subject	Object	Possessive Pronoun	Possessive Adjective
1 <sup>st</sup> person singular	I	Me	Mine	My (book)
1 <sup>st</sup> person plural	We	Us	Ours	Our (new car)
2 <sup>nd</sup> person singular	You	You	Yours	Your (dog)
2 <sup>nd</sup> person plural	You	You	Yours	Your (cat)
3 <sup>rd</sup> person singular	He	Him	His	His (magazine)
“ “	She	Her	Hers	Her (necklace)
“ “	It	It	Its	Its (bone)
3 <sup>rd</sup> person plural	They	Them	Theirs	Their (home)

### Subject Pronouns

‡ Subject pronouns can only act as subjects in clauses:

- **I** saw that movie, but **he** fell asleep.
- They work hard, but **we** like to relax.
- Teaching is hard work, but **it** is interesting.

### Object Pronouns

‡ Object pronouns can act as direct objects, indirect objects, and object of prepositions, gerunds, or infinitives.

- Direct object: I saw **him** at the movies.
- Indirect object: Jackson sent **her** a letter.
- Object of preposition: I did all of the dishes for **you**.
- Object of gerund: Teaching **him** was very difficult.
- Object of infinitive: Tanisha tried to warn **us** to stay away from the bridge.

### Possessive Pronouns

‡ Possessive pronouns show ownership.

- That scarf is **hers**.
- This car is **mine**.
- She didn't take the money because it wasn't **hers**.

## Possessive Adjectives

‡ Possessive adjectives are pronouns in the sense that they refer to nouns; however, they are, in fact, adjectives and are followed by a noun.

- Here is **my** key.
- Has Todd seen **his** sister?
- Please get **your** book out now.

## Indefinite Pronouns

Singular		Plural	Singular or Plural
Any	Everyone	Both	All
Anybody	Everything	Few	Any
Anyone	Neither	Many	Some
Anything	None	Others	
Each	Someone		
Either	Something		
Everybody	Other		

### Singular Indefinite Pronouns

‡ Even though a singular indefinite pronoun may sound as though it refers to more than one (everyone), it is referring to “one” at a time, but not someone or something specific; it must be matched with a singular verb and a singular pronoun.

- **Everyone** is waiting his or her turn.
- **Each** of the boys wants to go to the game.
- **Neither** wants to stay home.
- **Someone** shows his or her gratitude by sending flowers.
- One boy goes to school; the **other** stays home.

### Plural Indefinite Pronouns

‡ A plural indefinite pronoun takes a plural verb because, although it is not referring to specific people or things, it is referring to more than one.

- **Few** were at the early meeting.
- **Many** of the girls are in the bus on their way home.

### Singular or Plural Indefinite Pronouns

‡ Some indefinite pronouns can be either singular or plural, depending upon the noun or pronoun to which they refer.

- **Some** of the ice cream is missing.
- **Some** of the runners are faster than others.
- **All** of the cookies are missing.
- **All** of the cake is missing.

## Demonstrative Pronouns

Singular	Plural
This	These
That	Those

‡ Demonstrative pronouns point out something close (this, these) or something farther away (that, those) in proximity or time. They may be used as nouns or adjectives.

- **This** cat looks just like **those** over there.
- **That** assignment is due later than **this** one.
- **This** is the correct answer.
- Take **that!**

## Reflexive or Intensive Pronouns

Singular	Plural
Myself	Ourselves
Yourself	Yourselves
Herself/Himself	Themselves

### Reflexive Pronouns

‡ Reflexive pronouns act as direct or indirect objects. They show that the subject is the same thing as the object.

- Direct object: I saw **myself** in the mirror.
- Indirect object: She bought **herself** a new jacket.

### Intensive Pronouns

‡ Intensive pronouns emphasize a preceding noun or pronoun.

- Mary **herself** saw the murder happen.
- I saw the man **himself** at the scene of the crime.

## Relative Pronouns

That	Which	Whose
When	Who	
Where	Whom	

‡ A relative pronoun connects an adjective clause to a main clause. The relative pronoun should follow the word it describes (modifies). The same pronouns can also introduce noun clauses.

**Note:** Not all authorities include “when” and “where,” but they are used increasingly as relative pronouns, so they are included on this list.

- The woman **who** is wearing a fur coat is not an environmentalist.
- The town **where** I grew up is in Idaho.
- That dog, **which** has been barking incessantly, is annoying the whole neighborhood.

## Interrogative Pronouns

What	Which	Whose
When	Who	Why
Where	Whom	How

‡ Interrogative pronouns introduce questions that ask for information rather than a “yes” or “no” response.

- **What** is your name?
- **Why** didn't you call?
- **Where** do you live?
- **Whose** book is on the table?

## Reciprocal Pronouns

Each other [2 people]	One another [3 or more people]
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‡ Reciprocal pronouns refer individually to the parts that make up a plural antecedent noun or pronoun (a noun or pronoun that appears earlier in the sentence).

- Maria and Steve sent messages to **each another** through a friend.
- We all looked at **one other** silently.

## Correcting Vague Pronouns

‡ Sometimes it is difficult to tell which word or words a pronoun refers to, especially when the sentence contains several possibilities. In those cases, when the **pronoun reference is unclear**, it is important to **replace the pronoun** in the sentence **with a noun**.

### Example 1:

In the display case, there were a chocolate chip cookie, a piece of banana cream pie, and a raspberry cupcake. I decided to buy **it**.

*“It” could be referring to the cookie, the pie, or the cupcake –or even the display case. Therefore, in this sentence, it is important to clarify what “it” is!*

### Corrected Sentence:

In the display case, there were a chocolate chip cookie, a piece of banana cream pie, and a raspberry cupcake. I decided to buy **the cupcake**.

Notice, here, you could insert any of the listed items, and the sentence would still be correct!

**Example 2:**

Neither Kathleen nor Maya knew who would get the job at The Pizza Barn, but, in the end, **she** was offered the position.

*Who is “she” in the sentence: Kathleen, Maya, or someone else? It’s not clear.*

**Corrected Sentence:**

Neither Kathleen nor Maya knew who would get the job at The Pizza Barn, but, in the end, **Maya** was offered the position.

Again, you could insert **Kathleen** here, and the sentence would still be correct!

**Example 3:**

The teachers established a tutoring center for math students and added new foreign language courses. **They** have been very helpful.

*In this sentence, we can guess what “They” is suggesting, but, again, the pronoun could mean several things.*

**Corrected Sentence:**

The teachers established a tutoring center for math students and added new foreign language courses. **These new programs** have been very helpful.

Notice, here, you could insert “**the teachers**” or perhaps “**the math tutors,**” and the sentence would still be correct! Unlike the previous examples, you may have to change some wording rather than just drop in a noun in order for the sentence to make sense.