

PRONOUN CASE HANDOUT

Pronouns are used to replace proper and common nouns. Pronouns take different forms depending on how they function within a sentence. These different forms are called "pronoun case." The pronoun cases are "subjective," "objective," "reflexive," and "possessive."

She studied in Europe for a year.	(Subjective)
I saw her at the grocery store.	(Objective)
Mary walked her dog.	(Possessive)
Mary looked at herself in the mirror.	(Reflexive)

The following are the common pronouns and their cases:

	Subjective	Objective	Reflexive	Possessive	Possessive Adj.
SINGULAR					
1st person	I	me	myself	mine	my
2nd person	you	you	yourself	yours	your
3rd person	he	him	himself	his	his
	she	her	herself	hers	her
	it	it	itself	its	its
PLURAL					
1st person	we	us	ourselves	ours	our
2nd person.	you	you	yourselves	yours	your
3rd person	they	them	themselves	theirs	their

A **SUBJECTIVE PRONOUN** is used to replace the **subject of a sentence or clause**:

Mr. Jones went to work early.
He went to work early.

If you do not know if a singular third person subject is masculine, use "he or she." Do not use "their."

The new instructor is not here yet.
He or she is not here yet.

An **OBJECTIVE PRONOUN** is used to replace the **direct object of a verb**, the **indirect object of a verb**, or the **object of a preposition**.

I saw **John**. (direct object of the verb "saw")
I saw **him**. (direct object of the verb "saw")
I told the **children** a story. (indirect object of the verb "told")
I told **them** a story. (indirect object of the verb "told")
I gave the gift to the **boys**. (object of the preposition "to")
I gave the gift to **them**. (object of the preposition "to")

If you do not know if a third person singular object is masculine or feminine, use "him" or "him or her."

If you do not hear from the company president, send **him or her** a letter.

A common error many people make is using a subjective pronoun when an objective pronoun is needed and an objective pronoun when a subjective pronoun is needed.

Me and John went to the movies. (**WRONG!!!!!!**)
John and **I** went to the movies. (**Correct**)

In a compound subject in which one of the pronouns is "I," I always comes last.

Another common error is using a subject pronoun when an object pronoun is needed, especially when two objects are used after a preposition or before an infinitive.(to + present tense verb).

I called Bob and **she**. (**WRONG!!!!!!**)
 I called Bob and her. (**Correct**—object of the verb “called”)
 I wanted John and **she** to hurry. (**WRONG!!!!!!**)
 I wanted John and **her** to hurry. (**Correct**—object of the verb “wanted”)

To help you determine if you need a subjective or an objective pronoun in a compound subject or object, try eliminating the noun used in conjunction with the pronoun.

For example: “**Me** and Bob left early” may sound correct to you even though it is incorrect, but “Me left early”.....is clearly incorrect.

As another example: “He told the secret to Fred and **I**” may sound correct to you, but “He told the secret to I”.....is clearly incorrect.

In a comparison using **than** or **as**, a subjective pronoun must be used if you are comparing two subjects, and an objective pronoun must be used if you are comparing two objects.

Mary is taller than **me**. (**WRONG!!!!!!**)
 Mary is taller than **I**. (**Correct**)

If the correct form sounds too formal, you can say...

Mary is taller than **I am**.(**Correct but does not sound as formal**).

If you are comparing two objects, you must use the objective case:

This will help you as much as it did **him**.

You must be careful because the case you choose may alter the meaning of the sentence:

Jane likes Bob as much as **she**.

Because “she” is a subject, it is being compared to the other subject in the sentence, “Jane.” This sentence means that Jane likes Bob as much as she likes Bob.

In the sentence...

Jane likes Bob as much as **her**.

Because “her” is an object, it is being compared to the other object in the sentence, “Bob.” This sentence means Jane likes Bob as much as Jane likes her.

REFLEXIVE PRONOUNS are used to emphasize the subject of a sentence.

The **baby** stood up all by **himself**.
John must do the work **himself**.

Reflexive pronouns are also used when the subject and the object of an action are the same.

She looked at **herself** in the mirror.

Some common errors with reflexive pronouns are using “self” instead of “selves” in the plural form (“ourselves,” not “ourself,” etc.) Also the reflexive form of “he” is “himself,” not “hissself,” and the reflexive form of “they” is “themselves” not “theirselves.”

PRONOUN CASE PRACTICE EXERCISE

Write the correct word in parentheses.

1. This is (our, ours) book.
2. You and Don should do your work by (yourself, yourselves).
3. (John and I, Me and John) went to a movie.
4. I told Barry and Mike to solve the problem (theirselves, themselves).
5. This car is similar to (your, yours).
6. The argument is between Maria and (he, him).
7. She sent the gift to Anne and (me, I).
8. I told (them, they) to hurry.

9. I found (they, them) to be very nice people.
10. The car stopped near (Jim and me, Jim and I).
11. He fixed the car (hissself, himself).
12. Debbie and Joe went on the trip by (themselves, themself).
13. (John and I, Me and John) are best friends.
14. I want (he, him) to go with us.
15. This is important to my sister and (myself, me).
16. The secret is between (she and I, her and me).
17. She called (him and me, him and I).
18. I asked Harry and (she, her) to hurry.
19. I think (they, them) are wrong.
20. The decision is up to (you and me, you and I).

PRONOUN CASE PRACTICE EXERCISE ANSWER KEY

1. our
2. yourselves
3. John and I
4. themselves
5. yours
6. him
7. me
8. them
9. them
10. Jim and me
11. himself
12. themselves
13. John and I
14. him
15. me
16. her and me
17. him and me
18. her
19. they
20. you and me