PRONOUNS

A pronoun is a word that **replaces** a **noun** or **noun phrase**. Using pronouns correctly eliminates unnecessary noun repetition in your writing.

Unnecessary repetition: e.g., Mary **1** is in Mary's **1** office, but Mary **1** asked not to be interrupted.

Pronoun use eliminates repetition: e.g., Mary¹ is in **her**² office, but **she**² asked not to be interrupted.

Noun
Pronoun

Common Pronouns

Personal Pronouns (the most common type)

Personal pronouns refer to **people** and **things**; they can be **singular** or **plural**, and their form often changes according to their grammatical function in a sentence, as seen in the table below:

	Pronoun as Subject (Subjective)	Pronoun as Object (Objective)	Possessive
	Ι	me	my/mine
	you	you	your/yours
Singular	he	him	his
	she	her	her/hers
	it	it	its
	we	US	our/ours
Plural	you	you	your/yours
	they	them	their/theirs

(Adapted from The Little Brown Compact Handbook, 3rd Ed., J.E. Aaron, M. McArthur)

Demonstrative Pronouns (this, that, these, those)

Demonstrative pronouns identify or point to a noun.

- e.g., This lab report is due tomorrow.
- e.g., That looks like the computer I used to have.
- e.g., Put these pencils on your desk.
- e.g., Those were the best days of my life.





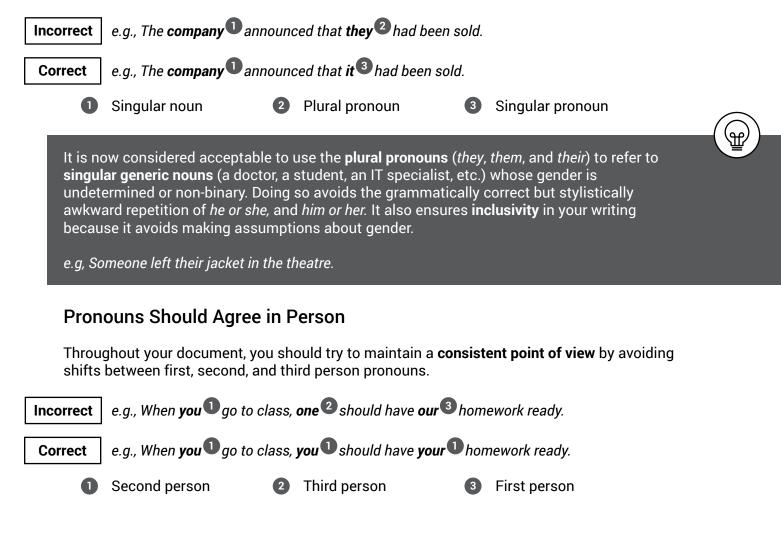
Relative Pronouns (who, whom, whose, which, that)

Relative pronouns begin **adjective clauses** and usually refer to the **noun** that comes right **before** them.

- e.g., Rachael is a manager whom everyone respects.
- e.g., I don't know **who** is responsible for setting up the lab equipment.
- e.g., You need to talk to the students **whose** laptops were stolen.
- e.g., My Sociology textbook, which costs \$125, is full of factual and grammatical errors.
- e.g., The new software lacks many of the benefits **that** the company promised.
- 🛞 Using Pronouns Clearly and Correctly

Pronouns Should Agree in Number

Generally, **singular pronouns** refer to **singular nouns**, and **plural pronouns** refer to **plural nouns**. Lack of agreement can lead to awkwardness or confusion.







Pronouns Should Have Clear References

When there are two or more nouns in your sentence, your reader should not have to think twice when linking the pronoun to its associated noun. The following examples demonstrate unclear pronoun references and potential revisions to improve clarity.

Unclear	e.g., Although the car hit the tree, it was not damaged.	
	It is unclear whether <i>it</i> refers to the car or the tree.	
Clear	e.g., The car was not damaged even though it hit the tree.	
	It clearly refers to the car.	
Unclear	e.g., I have attached some data on euthanasia in my email. I urge you to consider this seriously.	
	It is unclear whether this refers to euthanasia or some data.	
Clear	e.g., I urge you to consider this information carefully.	
	This clearly refers to information.	



