

PRONOUNS

It is difficult to define a pronoun because this part of speech includes groups of quite different words. In general, though, a pronoun is a word that can be replaced by a noun in most sentences. Both nouns and pronouns are like nouns in having plural forms and a possessive case formed with -s. We can say that a “pronoun acts in the place of one or more nouns.”

Pronouns are classified as:

- A. Personal
- B. Relative
- C. Demonstrative
- D. Interrogative
- E. Reflexive
- F. Intensive
- G. Indefinite
- H. Reciprocal

A. Personal Pronouns: A personal pronoun refers to an individual or individuals. Of all pronouns this group causes the greatest difficulty. Personal pronouns have thirty case forms, some of which include all genders and some with special forms for feminine, masculine and neuter. They also have different forms for the third person singular. Third person pronouns involve considerations of number and gender, as shown in the following table:

	NOMINATIVE Subject Case	POSSESSIVE Or Genitive	OBJECTIVE Object Case
	SINGULAR		
		Adj. Pron Poss. Pron.	
1ST PERSON	I	My mine	me
2ND PERSON	you	Your yours	you
3RD PERSON	he	His his	him
MASCULINE			
FEMININE	she	Her hers	her
NEUTER	it	Its its	it
	PLURAL		

1ST PERSON	we	Our ours	us
2ND PERSON	you	Your yours	you
3RD PERSON ALL GENDERS	they	Their theirs	them

B. Relative Pronouns: A relative pronoun relates or connects the clause it introduces to an independent clause. Specifically, a relative pronoun connects an adjective clause to an antecedent (the noun or pronoun to which a pronoun refers or for which it is substituted).

Examples:

The candidate who wants to become President must campaign vigorously.

The car, which was badly in need of repair, broke down yesterday.

The novel that I read has since become a best seller.

Each of these relative pronouns has an antecedent (candidate, car, novel) and each introduces a subordinate clause.

The relative pronoun forms **who, whose, whom, that**, have no specific gender or number. Their having gender depends instead upon their antecedent.

WHO, WHOSE and WHOM are used to refer to persons.

WHICH is used to refer to inanimate objects, animals, and groups of persons.

THAT may refer to either things or persons.

WHOEVER, WHENEVER, WHICHEVER, AND WHATEVER are relative pronouns less frequently used.

C. Demonstrative Pronouns: A demonstrative pronoun points and identifies a noun or another person. The important demonstrative person are **THIS** and **THAT** (singular), **THESE** and **THOSE** (plural) and **SUCH** (singular or plural).

Examples:

This is the woman I told you about in my letter.

That is the school I attended for six years.

These are the missing articles.

Those are the ideals we admire.

Such a newspaper and such magazines are worth reading.

D. Interrogative Pronouns: An interrogative pronoun introduces a question. The important interrogative pronouns are: **WHO, WHOM, WHOSE, WHICH, WHAT** and occasionally **WHOEVER, WHICHEVER, and WHATEVER**.

Examples:

Who has asked you to go hiking?

Whom did they expect to play in the finals?

Which of the experts did they recommend?

Whose car has the best chance of winning the race?

Whatever do you mean by that remark?

E. Reflexive Pronouns: A reflexive pronoun is used to refer to the subject of a sentence or clause. It is compound of one of the personal pronouns plus -self or -selves: **myself, yourself, himself, itself, ourselves, yourselves, themselves.**

Examples:

Did you burn yourself?

He gave himself a present for his birthday.

They appointed themselves to the committee.

F. Intensive Pronouns: They are used to draw particular attention to a noun. Intensifiers take the same form as reflexives.

Examples:

We must give the same right to the workers themselves.

The doctor himself examined the X-rays.

G. Indefinite Pronouns: An indefinite pronoun is less specific in reference and less exact in meaning than other pronouns. It is often difficult or impossible to pin down a precise antecedent for an indefinite pronoun. Among the more frequently used are: **ALL, ANOTHER, ANY, ANYONE, ANYTHING, EVERYBODY, EVERYONE, EVERYTHING, FEW, MANY, NOBODY, NONE, ONE, SEVERAL, SOME, and EACH.**

The pronoun **ONE**, its compound form built on the element **-BODY**, form the possessive in the way as nouns (anybody's, everyone's).

H. Reciprocal Pronouns: A reciprocal pronoun completes an interchange of action - **EACH OTHER** and **ONE ANOTHER** are the only reciprocal pronouns.

Examples:

The two teams complimented **each other**.

The opposing teams scowled at **one another**.

EXERCISE

Classify each of the pronouns in the sentences below as one of the eight kinds of pronouns.

Ex. Mary looked like **her** sister.

her - personal/possessive adjective

1. The senator was happy because **he** was reelected.
2. Be sure to put a stamp on the letter before mailing **it**.
3. Frederick lost **his** jacket.
4. The men wrote regularly to **their** wives.
5. The children didn't get as many presents as **they** wanted.
6. "**You** shouldn't do that", said Mr. Johnson to his young daughter.
7. Money has no real value in **itself**.
8. The man **who** works hard deserves to succeed.
9. The mayor was angry at the people **who** had campaigned against him.
10. The United Nations celebrated **its** thirty-fifth anniversary in October, 1980.
11. The plants **that** were planted in the sun doubled their growth in a month.
12. Mr. and Mrs. Johnson were angry with **their** children.
13. Nobody **who** is talented likes to be ignored.
14. The love of books is a love **which** requires neither justification, nor apology, nor defense.
15. The barrel was full of apples. Twenty of **which** were rotten.
16. We find it sometimes easier to be honest with others than with **ourselves**.
17. She was one of those women **who** are never at a loss for words.
18. Every adult should have a sense of responsibility for **his** actions.

19. Either Jane or Louise left **her** pocketbook in the restaurant.

20. The candidates **whom** I interviewed yesterday seemed very satisfactory.

ANSWER KEY

Classify each of the pronouns in the sentences below as one of the eight kinds of pronouns.

Ex. Mary looked like **her** sister.

her - personal/possessive adjective

1. The senator was happy because **he** was reelected.

He - personal/nominative

2. Be sure to put a stamp on the letter before mailing **it**.

It - personal/objective

3. Frederick lost **his** jacket.

His - personal/possessive adjective

4. The men wrote regularly to **their** wives.

Their - personal/possessive

5. The children didn't get as many presents as **they** wanted.

They - personal/nominative

6. "**You** shouldn't do that", said Mr. Johnson to his young daughter.

You - personal/nominative

7. Money has no real value in **itself**.

Itself - reflective

8. The man **who** works hard deserves to succeed.

Who - relative

9. The mayor was angry at the people **who** had campaigned against him.

Who - relative

10. The United Nations celebrated **its** thirty-fifth anniversary in October, 1980.

Its - personal/possessive adjective

11. The plants **that** were planted in the sun doubled their growth in a month.

That - relative

12. Mr. and Mrs. Johnson were angry with **their** children.

Their - personal/possessive adjective

13. Nobody **who** is talented likes to be ignored.

Who - relative

14. The love of books is a love **which** requires neither justification, nor apology, nor defense.

Which - relative

15. The barrel was full of apples. Twenty of **which** were rotten.

Which - relative

16. We find it sometimes easier to be honest with others than with **ourselves**. Ourselves - reflexive
17. She was one of those women **who** are never at a loss for words. Who - relative
18. Every adult should have a sense of responsibility for **his** actions. His - personal/possessive adjective
19. Either Jane or Louise left **her** pocketbook in the restaurant. Her - personal/possessive adjective
20. The candidates **whom** I interviewed yesterday seemed very satisfactory. Whom - relative