



Agreement of Pronoun and Antecedent

What is an **antecedent**? An antecedent is the word to which a pronoun refers.

Betty brought her book to class.

In this sentence, *her* is the only pronoun. Its antecedent is *Betty* because *Betty* is the word to which the pronoun refers. When we talk about pronoun-antecedent agreement, we mean that pronouns must agree in number and gender with their antecedents. If *Betty* is the antecedent, we couldn't say, "Betty brought *his* book," or "Betty brought *their* book." In those sentences, the pronouns don't agree with their antecedents.

The only time this gets tricky is when we use the indefinite pronouns. These are indefinite pronouns: *one, everyone, someone, no one, anyone, everybody, nobody, anybody, somebody, each, either, neither, several, few, both, many, all, most, any, none.*

Here are the rules about using indefinite pronouns properly so that the pronoun and antecedent agree:

1. These indefinite pronouns are singular and therefore take a singular antecedent: *one, everyone, someone, no one, anyone, everybody, nobody, anybody, somebody, each, either, neither.*

It's easy to remember most of these because most of them end in either *one* or *body*, and we know that *one* and *body* are singular.

Everybody has his or her book.

Note: In the above sentence, many people would use the word *their* in place of *his or her*. This is incorrect because *everybody* is a singular pronoun which is not gender specific. Many people prefer to use the male pronoun *his* when referring to all of us. This is still considered acceptable grammar. Nowadays, however, we generally say *his or her* so that we have a singular pronoun and are not being gender-biased.

2. These indefinite pronouns are **plural** and therefore take **plural antecedents**: *several, few, both, many.*

Several students lost their books.

Many of us have taken our tests.

3. These indefinite pronouns may be either singular or plural, depending on how they are used in a sentence: *all, most, any, none.*

Most of the apples are rotten. (plural)

Most of the milk is gone. (singular)

Note: If a sentence has a **compound antecedent** (more than one) joined by *or* or *nor*, the pronoun agrees with the antecedent closer to it.

Either the girls or Jose brought *his* car.

Either Jose or the girls brought *their* car.



Pronoun-Antecedent Agreement Practice

Name _____

Exercise 1

Underline the pronouns that agree with their antecedents.

1. Nobody brought (their/his or her) jacket.
2. Some of the students raised (their/his or her) hands.
3. Each of the girls took (their/her) turn.
4. Either the boys or Cindy will volunteer (their/her) time.
5. Someone left (their/his or her) gloves.
6. Neither Bob or Jack brought (their/his) shoes.
7. Most of the kids like (their/his or her) teacher.
8. Everybody must ask (their/his or her) parents for permission.
9. Many of the teachers drove (their/his or her) cars.
10. One of the boys lost (their/his) book.
11. Somebody should raise (their/his or her) hand.
12. Nobody dropped (their/his or her) cards.
13. Bob and Jose lost (their/his) pencils.
14. Maria or Cindy brought (their/her) car.
15. Anybody who likes grammar should raise (their/his or her) hand.



Answer Key

Page 6 Introduction to Nouns

Accept appropriate responses.

Page 7 Noun Practice

Exercises 3 & 4: Accept appropriate responses.

Exercise 5

1. N
2. N
3. N
4. -
5. N
6. N
7. N
8. -
9. N
10. N
11. N
12. N
13. N
14. N
15. N
16. N
17. -
18. -
19. N
20. N

Page 9 Capitalization Practice

1. B
2. A
3. B
4. A
5. B
6. A
7. B
8. A
9. B
10. B
11. A
12. B
13. A
14. B
15. A

Page 10 More Capitalization Practice

1. B
2. B
3. B
4. A
5. B

6. A
7. B
8. B
9. B
10. B
11. B
12. A
13. B
14. A
15. A
16. A
17. B
18. B
19. B
20. B

Page 12 Possessives Practice

Exercise 1

1. teachers'
2. country's
3. children's
4. Ross' or Ross's
5. men's
6. cities'
7. dogs'
8. Argus' or Argus's
9. Karla's
10. girls'

Exercise 2

1. A
2. B
3. B
4. A
5. B
6. A
7. A
8. B
9. A
10. A

Page 13 Introduction to Pronouns

Exercise 1

1. her
2. their
3. I, it
4. We
5. you, us
6. That
7. This, my
8. I, she

9. her
10. That, I, it

Exercise 2: Accept appropriate responses.

Page 15 Pronoun-Antecedent Agreement Practice

1. his or her
2. their
3. her
4. her
5. his or her
6. his
7. their
8. his or her
9. their
10. his
11. his or her
12. his or her
13. their
14. her
15. his or her

Page 16 Subject and Object Pronouns

1. I
2. me
3. We
4. she
5. he
6. them
7. they
8. her, us
9. us
10. me

Page 17 More Subject and Object Pronoun Practice

1. We
2. us
3. I
4. him, her
5. we
6. me
7. him, me
8. us
9. me
10. him, her
11. her
12. He, I
13. her, him