

Pesonnal Pronouns

What would you think if you heard something like this?

One day the doctor asked the doctor's assistant for the doctor's calendar. Then the doctor checked the doctor's calendar to see what appointments the doctor had that day. Then the doctor returned the doctor's calendar to the doctor's assistant for the doctor's assistant to use to schedule the doctor's patients' appointments.

It doesn't sound like we normally speak, does it? That's because this paragraph has no pronouns. We use pronouns to replace nouns to avoid unnecessary repetition.

One day the doctor asked her assistant, James, to hand her the appointment calendar. Then she checked it to see how many appointments she had that day. After that, she returned the calendar to James and asked him to use it to schedule her other patients' appointments. hat sounds a lot better.

Definition: The prefix *pro* means *for* or *in place of*. **Pronouns** stand in for or replace **nouns**. This lesson is about personal pronouns, which **replace nouns** that refer to people or things.

Personal pronouns have:

- **Number:** They are singular or plural.
- **Person:** 1st person is the person speaking,
- 2nd person is the person being spoken to,
- and 3rd person is the person being spoken about. You can look at the chart below for examples.

Cases of personal pronouns

The cases of pronouns tell you how they are being used in a sentence.

Personal Pronouns						
	Subject		Object		Possessive	
	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
1 st Person	I	we	me	us	my, mine	our, ours
2 nd Person	you	you	you	you	your, yours	your, yours
3 rd Person	he, she, it	they	him, her, it	them	his, her, hers, its	their, theirs

Definition: A subject pronoun (also called a *nominative* pronoun) is used as the subject of a sentence or as a subject complement following a linking verb. (The subject of a sentence is the person doing the action in a sentence. A subject complement is a word that renames or gives more information about the subject. A linking verb, such as *is* or *seems*, connects the subject to the subject complement.)

Hint:

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Subject Pronoun as the Subject of a Sentence

A subject pronoun that acts as the subject of a sentence will make sense in the following test sentence: *bit the monster*. The subject pronoun will tell us who is doing the biting.

<i>I bit the monster.</i> <i>You bit the monster.</i>	<i>He bit the monster.</i> <i>She bit the monster.</i>	<i>It bit the monster.</i> <i>We bit the monster.</i>	<i>They bit the monster.</i>
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Hint: Subject Pronoun as a Subject Complement (Renaming the Subject)

Subject pronouns that are used as subject complements to tell us more information about the subject will fit in this test sentence: *The superhero was*. In this test sentence, *superhero* is the subject, and the subject pronoun tells us who the superhero is.

<i>The superhero was I.</i> <i>The superhero was you.</i>	<i>The superhero was he.</i> <i>The superhero was she.</i>	<i>The superhero was it.</i> <i>The superheroes were we.</i>	<i>The superheroes were they.</i>
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(Note that when a subject pronoun is followed by a linking verb, you can say the sentence backwards and it will still make sense: *The superhero was I* ⇒ *I was the superhero*.)

Note: In informal speech, it is now acceptable to say things like "It's me" instead of "It is I," even though it is not technically grammatically correct.

Definition: possessive pronouns show ownership.

There are two sets of possessive pronouns. *My, your, his, her, its, our, your*, and *their* are usually classified as possessive pronouns, but they are more accurately described as possessive adjectives because they always modify nouns.

My pencil fell on the floor, and his pencil ended up on her desk.

The second set of possessive pronouns consists of the words *mine, yours, his, hers, its, ours*, and *theirs*. These pronouns are different from the others because they don't modify nouns. They completely replace the nouns they refer to.

Hey! That's mine, not yours!

Hint:

Note that there are no apostrophes in the possessive pronouns. They are born showing ownership, so it's not necessary to add 's to show ownership. Remember that *it's* is the contraction for *it is* while *its* is the possessive pronoun.

It's a good idea to give your dog its dinner on time!

It's ⇒ *It is a good idea* ... (contraction)

its dinner ⇒ *the dog's dinner* (possessive)

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Examples:

The following exercises will help you gain greater understanding about how personal pronouns work. Choose the best answer to complete each sentence.

1. _____ often reads until late at night.
A. He
B. Alan
C. Mary
D. They
2. _____ is running up and down the stairs.
A. The cat
B. She
C. My brother
D. You
3. _____ is from Ireland.
A. Rory
B. My friend
C. He
D. This souvenir
4. Have _____ got a dog, Mary?
A. Anyone
B. They
C. Someone
D. It
5. We enjoy the roses so much. _____ really liven up the garden.
A. They
B. Its
C. Someone
D. Flowers
6. Melissa isn't an architect; _____ is an engineer.
A. He
B. They
C. It
D. She
7. Are _____ friends or not?
A. He
B. She
C. We
D. It
8. My doctor was born in Germany. _____ teaches language lessons in his spare time.
A. They
B. It
C. She
D. He

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9. All of my teachers are Americans. _____ come from all over the country.
- A. She
B. We
C. They
D. Them
10. Our friends are athletes. All of _____ are either strong, fast, or both.
- A. We
B. They
C. Them
D. You

Answers:

1. A – *He* often reads until late at night.
2. B – *She* is running up and down the stairs.
3. C – *He* is from Ireland.
4. B – Have *they* got a dog, Mary?
5. A – We enjoy the roses so much. *They* really liven up the garden.
6. D – Melissa isn't an architect; *she* is an engineer.
7. C – Are *we* friends or not?
8. D – My doctor was born in Germany. *He* teaches language lessons in his spare time.
9. C – All of my teachers are Americans. *They* come from all over the country.
10. C – Our friends are athletes. All of *them* are either strong, fast, or both.