

## THE PRONOUN

**The pronoun substitutes for the noun** (as its derivation from Latin **pro** meaning ‘for’ and **nomen** meaning ‘name’ indicates). Like the noun, it designates a person, place or thing; but, unlike the noun, it designates without supplying the name.

The following sentence exemplifies the difference: - *He butters parsnips.*

The pronoun *he* designates someone but does not supply his name; the noun *parsnips* designates and names as well.

Usually the pronoun refers to a word that names the person, place or thing being discussed. Such a word is called an antecedent.

- *Jukes has no problems because he has no mind.*

Here the pronoun *he* has for its antecedent the noun *Jukes*; the noun establishes the identity of the person whom the pronoun merely designates.

### KINDS OF PRONOUNS

If it were not for the substitutions that the pronouns make possible, repetitious and awkward sentences, rife with distorted meanings, would be inevitable. Consider the following sentences, the first of which employs and the second of which avoids pronouns:

- *When Slimane looked at his wives and listened to their cackling, he wondered about polygamy.*

- *When Slimane looked at the wives of Slimane and listened to the cackling of the wives of Slimane, Slimane wondered about polygamy.*

Depending on the kinds of substitutions they effect, pronouns are generally divided into eight classes: **personal, demonstrative, indefinite, relative, interrogative, numerical, reciprocal, reflective.**

### THE PERSONAL PRONOUN

Indicates **the speaker (first person), the person spoken to (second person), or the person, place, or thing spoken about (third person).**

The declension of the personal pronoun (the forms it takes to show different relations) follows:

<u>First Person</u> (Masculine and Feminine)			<u>Second Person</u> (Masculine and Feminine)		
	Singular	Plural		Singular	Plural
Nominative	I	we	Nominative	you	you
Possessive	my or mine	our or ours	Possessive	your or yours	your or yours
Objective	me	us	Objective	you	you

### Third Person

	Singular			Plural
	Masculine	Feminine	Neuter	
Nominative	he	she	it	they
Possessive	his	her or hers	its	their or theirs
Objective	him	her	it	them

### THE DEMONSTRATIVE PRONOUN

(This, that, these and those) - It points out a person or thing specifically:

- **This (that)** is the forest primeval.      - **These (those)** were the happy days.

Note: When the demonstrative is followed by a noun which it limits or restricts, it is classified as an adjective: - **This forest is primeval.**      - **Those days were happy.**

### THE INDEFINITE PRONOUN

It refers to persons or things generally rather than specifically. Often the antecedents are understood but not stated.

- I know **something**.      - **Somebody** loves me.      - **One** must done his duty.

The following list includes the indefinite pronouns most commonly employed:

all - another - any - anybody - anyone - anything - both - each - each one - each other - either - everybody - everyone - everything - few - least - many - more - most - much - neither - none - no one - nobody - nothing - nought - one - one another - oneself - other - several - some - somebody - someone - something .

### THE RELATIVE PRONOUN

It plays two parts at once: **pronoun** and **connective**. As a pronoun it acts as subject or object in a subordinate part of the sentence. As a connective it joins the subordinate to a more important part of the sentence: - *It was a silence **that** could be heard.*

The relative pronoun *that* acts as the subject of one group of words ( *that could be heard* ) and at the same time joins it to a more important group ( *It was a silence* ) by referring or relating back to the noun *silence*.

The noun *silence* is the antecedent of the relative pronoun.

- *He saw the man **who** was invisible.*

The relative pronoun *who* connects two parts of the sentence by relating back to its antecedent *man*, and acts as the subject of one part (*who was invisible*).

- *She is the woman **whom** I heard.*

Here, *whom* connects two parts of the sentence by relating back to its antecedent *woman*, and acts as the object of one part (*whom I heard*).

In the following declension, note that only *who* has different case forms, and that *which*, *that* and *what* have no distinctive possessive forms:

#### Singular and Plural

Nominative	Possessive	Objective
who	whose	whom
which	of which	which
that	of that	that
what	of what	what

Several **compound relative pronouns** are in general use. They are formed by adding *ever* and *soever* to the simple forms *who*, *which* and *what*:

#### Singular and Plural

Nominative	Possessive	Objective
whoever	whosoever	whomever
whichever	of whichever	whichever
whatever	of whatever	whatever
whosoever	whosoesoever	whomsoever
whichsoever	of whichsoever	whichsoever
whatsoever	of whatsoever	whatsoever

**Who** refers to either a masculine or a feminine antecedent:

- *The man who smiles* or *The woman who smiles*.

**Which** refers to things (or animals) only: *The bed which broke*, *The dog which snarled*.

**That** refers to masculine, feminine or neuter antecedents:

*The man or woman that smiles*, *The bed that broke*.

The compound relative pronouns frequently include their own antecedents:

- **Whoever** writes must sweat. **Whoever** in the preceding sentence equals 'the one who'—the antecedent being self-contained.

**What**, too, though simple in form, is compound in meaning, since it equals 'that which': - **What** is to be will be.

## THE INTERROGATIVE PRONOUN

It helps ask a question.

– **Who** will go with me to Ireland ?

- **Who** of you, without taking thought, can add to his stature one cubit ?

### Singular and Plural

Nominative	Possessive	Objective
who	whose	whom
which	of which	which
what	of what	what

Note that only *who* changes the form to show case.

### THE NUMERICAL PRONOUN

It definitely cites a number, either a **cardinal number** (one, two, three, etc.) or ordinal number (first, second, third, etc.). They are pronouns when they take the place of an understood noun:

- *The opposing team cut him off and **one** of them tackled him—the **eleventh** to try.*

### THE RECIPROCAL PRONOUNS

They represent two or more persons or things interactive—interchanging the action denoted by the verb: - *They cheat **each other**.* - *They cheat **one another**.*

Note: Some excessively careful people use *each other* when two people are involved and *one another* when more than two. But the distinction is generally disregarded, even by meticulous writers.

### THE REFLEXIVE AND THE INTENSIVE PRONOUN

They are formed by adding (*-self*) or (*-selves*) to the personal pronouns.

**Singular:** myself      yourself      himself      herself      itself

**Plural:**      ourselves      yourselves      themselves

Their usage, however, varies.

The **reflexive** pronoun is used as **object**, referring to the same person as the subject:

- *He loves **himself**.*

Here, *himself*, the reflexive pronoun which is the object, and *he*, the personal pronoun which is the subject, refer to the same person.

The subject acts on itself—the action reflecting back upon the subject.

The reflexive may also follow a linking verb: - *I feel **myself** again.*

The **intensive** pronoun is used simply **to emphasize**:

- *The people **themselves** sinned.*      - *They sinned **themselves**.*

This intensive pronoun is appositive with the noun or pronoun to which it refers.

