

Pronouns

Personal Pronouns

Introduction to Pronouns

A pronoun is **any word that can be used in place of a noun**.

For example:

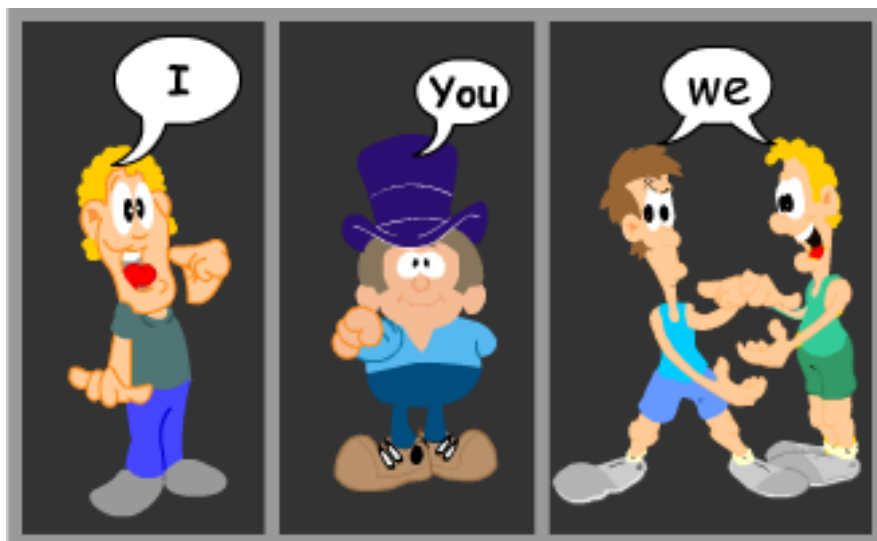
Johnny runs fast. **He** has won an Olympic gold.

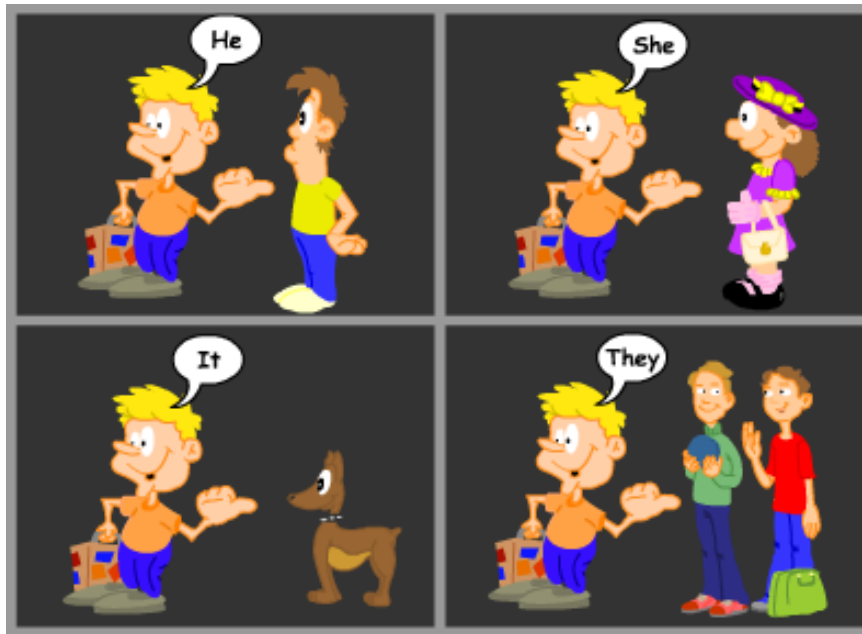
(Here, 'Johnny' is a noun and 'he' is a pronoun. This pronoun is used in place of the noun 'Johnny'.)

There are different categories of pronouns. Let us begin with one of them—the personal pronoun.

Personal Pronouns

These pronouns refer to one of the three persons of English. The persons in English language are classified as first person, second person and third person. The first person refers to the person or persons speaking. The second person refers to the person or persons being spoken to. The third person refers to the person or persons being spoken of.





Each of these personal pronouns functions as the subject of a sentence.

I am working right now.

(Here, the first person singular pronoun is used.)

You are invited to the party.

(Here, the second person singular pronoun is used.)

He is a naughty boy.

(Here, the third person singular masculine pronoun is used.)

She is a funny girl.

(Here, the third person singular feminine pronoun is used.)

It is my book.

(Here, the third person singular neuter pronoun is used.)

We are listening to some old songs.

(Here, the first person plural pronoun is used.)

You all must come for dinner sometime.

(Here, the second person plural pronoun is used.)

They are dancing in the rain.

(Here, the third person plural pronoun is used.)

We saw how personal pronouns can be the subjects of sentences. Personal pronouns can also be the objects of sentences. The following table lists the different forms of the personal pronouns when they are the objects of sentences:

	First Person	Second Person	Third Person
Singular	Me	You	Him, Her, It
Plural	Us	You	Them

Rajat is talking to **me**.

(Here, the first person singular pronoun is used.)

Shefali is calling **you**.

(Here, the second person singular pronoun is used.)

Pintu is screaming at **him**.

(Here, the third person singular masculine pronoun is used.)

Rita is watching **her**.

(Here, the third person singular feminine pronoun is used.)

Take **it** from the shelf.

(Here, the third person singular neuter pronoun is used.)

The company has called **us** for the interview.

(Here, the first person plural pronoun is used.)

The principal has suspended both of **you**.

(Here, the second person plural pronoun is used.)

The car left **them** far behind.

(Here, the third person plural pronoun is used.)

Possessive Pronouns

The personal pronouns are also used for **showing ownership or possession**. The following table lists their forms when they show possession:

	First Person	Second Person	Third Person
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Singular	Mine	Yours	His, Hers
Plural	Ours	Yours	Theirs



That phone is **yours**.

(Here, the second person singular pronoun is used.)

That yellow painted house is **his**.

(Here, the third person singular masculine pronoun is used.)

That idea was **hers**.

(Here, the third person singular feminine pronoun is used.)



These passports are **yours**.

(Here, the second person plural pronoun is used.)

At the end of the day, the award-winning performance was **theirs**.

(Here, the third person plural pronoun is used.)

The personal pronouns have other forms for showing ownership or possession.

	First Person	Second Person	Third Person
Singular	My	Your	His, Her, Its
Plural	Our	Your	Their

A noun comes immediately after these possessives. Hence, these possessives are classified as **possessive adjectives**.

My book is lying on the table.

Your phone is with the teacher.

His house is painted yellow.

Her parents are out of town.

Do you know the child's name? Yes, I do know **its** name.

Our country is making great progress.

Your passports are lying with the judge.

Their performance was liked by all.

Remember: A noun does not immediately follow a possessive pronoun while a possessive adjective always comes before a noun.

Reflexive, Emphatic and Indefinite Pronouns

Reflexive Pronouns

A reflexive pronoun is used **when the action performed by a subject is to be reflected on the subject itself**. The following table shows the different forms of reflexive pronouns:

	First Person	Second Person	Third Person
Singular	Myself	Yourself	Himself, Herself, Itself
Plural	Ourselves	Yourselves	Themselves

I was talking to **myself**.

(Here, the first person singular pronoun is used.)

You always think of **yourself**.

(Here, the second person singular pronoun is used.)

Dharam has hurt **himself**.

(Here, the third person singular masculine pronoun is used.)

Ritu is looking at **herself** in the mirror.

(Here, the third person singular feminine pronoun is used.)

The dog hid **itself** under the bed.

(Here, the third person singular neuter pronoun is used.)

We blamed **ourselves** for the loss.

(Here, the first person plural pronoun is used.)

You have put **yourselves** in a difficult situation.

(Here, the second person plural pronoun is used.)

They kept **themselves** busy all day.

(Here, the third person plural pronoun is used.)

Emphatic Pronouns

When a reflexive pronoun is used for emphasis, it is termed as an emphatic pronoun.

I **myself** saw her throw it out of the window.

(Here, the first person singular pronoun is used.)

You **yourself** are responsible for the shameful defeat.

(Here, the second person singular pronoun is used.)

He came and took the boy **himself**.

(Here, the third person singular masculine pronoun is used.)

She received the guests **herself**.

(Here, the third person singular feminine pronoun is used.)

The city **itself** is quite polluted.

(Here, the third person singular neuter pronoun is used.)

We cooked the dinner **ourselves**.

(Here, the first person plural pronoun is used.)

You **yourselves** said so.

(Here, the second person plural pronoun is used.)

They surrendered their loot **themselves**.

(Here, the third person plural pronoun is used.)

Indefinite Pronouns

An indefinite pronoun **points to general persons, places or things**.

Anyone can do that.

Did **anybody** see the actress?

One should look before leaping.

Someone has left the door open.

Somebody has stolen my jacket.

Some say that hay should be made while the sun shines.

Interrogative and Relative Pronouns

Interrogative Pronouns

An interrogative pronoun is **used for asking questions**.

What is your name?

What is hidden under the picture?

(‘What’ is used for indicating the non-living.)

Which is Shyam’s house?

Which of these boys is the culprit?

(‘Which’ is used for indicating both the living and the non-living.)

Who are those people?

Who wants to go to the circus?

(‘Who’ is used for indicating humans.)

Whom are you talking to?

Whom do you wish to see?

('Whom' is used for indicating humans.)

When 'what' and 'which' are used with some noun to ask a question, they are called **interrogative adjectives**.

What kind of organism is it?

Which shirt do you want to wear?

Remember: *A noun does not immediately follow an interrogative pronoun, while an interrogative adjective always comes before a noun.*

Relative Pronouns

A relative pronoun **points to some noun going before it**.

He is the man **who** came to my house yesterday.

('Who' is used for indicating humans.)

She is the new president **whom** everyone loves to hate.

('Whom' is used for indicating humans.)

She is the girl **whose** photo was in the paper.

('Whose' is used for indicating ownership.)

This was the watch **which** I lost in the museum.

('Which' is used for indicating the non-living and animals.)

He is boy **that** won the Math Olympiad.

('That' is used for indicating both the living and the non-living.)

Demonstrative and Distributive Pronouns

Demonstrative Pronouns

A demonstrative pronoun **points to some noun going after it.**



That is a banana.

('That' points to the object 'a banana'.)

These are good apples.

('These' points to the object 'apples'.)



When 'this', 'that', 'these' and 'those' are used with some noun, they are referred to as **demonstrative adjectives**.

That house is mine

(Ask the question 'which house?' and you get the answer 'that'.)

Keerti gave me **this** pen.

(Ask the question 'which pen?' and you get the answer 'this'.)

I can solve **these** puzzles.

(Ask the question 'which puzzles?' and you get the answer 'these'.)

Those boys were playing in the park.

(Ask the question 'which boys?' and you get the answer 'those'.)

Remember: A noun does not immediately follow a demonstrative pronoun, while a demonstrative adjective always comes before a noun.

Distributive Pronouns

A distributive pronoun **points to persons, places or things one at a time.**

Each of the students has done it.

Either of you has done it.

Neither of them has done it.

When 'each', 'either' and 'neither' are used along with some noun, they are called **adjectives of number**.

Each man has to speak for himself.

There is greenery on **either** side of the lake.

Neither problem has been solved.

Remember: *A noun does not immediately follow a distributive pronoun.*