Case of Personal Pronouns

- Pronouns that are used to refer to persons or things are called **personal** pronouns.

- Personal pronouns have three **cases**, or forms, called **nominative**, **objective**, and **possessive**.

- The case of a personal pronoun depends upon the pronoun’s function in a sentence (whether it is a subject, an object, a complement, or a replacement for a possessive noun).
Case of Personal Pronouns (cont.)

- Study the chart below to recall the case forms of the different personal pronouns.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Singular Pronouns</th>
<th>Plural Pronouns</th>
<th>Function in Sentence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NOMINATIVE</td>
<td>I, you, she, he, it</td>
<td>we, you, they</td>
<td>subject or predicate nominative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OBJECTIVE</td>
<td>me, you, her, him, it</td>
<td>us, you, them</td>
<td>direct object, indirect object, or object of preposition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POSSESSIVE</td>
<td>my, mine, your, yours, her, hers, his, its</td>
<td>our, ours, your, yours, their, theirs</td>
<td>replacement for possessive noun(s)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Lesson 17.1 Case of Personal Pronouns

Exercise 1 Identifying Pronoun Case

Underline each personal pronoun in the sentences below. Then tell what case each is and how it functions in the sentence.

1. We arrived early so that he could see the players shoot practice shots.
   nominative, subject
   nominative, subject

2. Our seats put Dad, him, and me near the half-court line.
   possessive, replacement for possessive noun
   objective, direct object
   objective, direct object

Click the mouse button or press the Space Bar to display the answers.
Underline each personal pronoun in the sentences below. Then tell what case each is and how it functions in the sentence.

3. One player smiled at us as she stopped to tie her shoes.
   - **objective**, object of preposition
   - **nominative**, subject
   - **possessive**, replacement for possessive noun

4. She knew that they would be playing their biggest game of the season that day.
   - **nominative**, subject
   - **nominative**, subject
   - **possessive**, replacement for possessive noun
Underline each personal pronoun in the sentences below. Then tell what case each is and how it functions in the sentence.

5. He held up **his** pennant and waved **it** excitedly at **her**.

- nominative, subject
- possessive, replacement for possessive noun
- objective, direct object
- objective, object of preposition
Case of Personal Pronouns

• Use the following rules to avoid errors with the case of personal pronouns.

1. Use the nominative case for a personal pronoun in a compound subject.

   - Ann and I play tennis.
   - She and I are equally matched.
Case of Personal Pronouns (cont.)

2. Use the objective case for a personal pronoun in a compound object. ▼
   - Ann challenged Juan and her. ▼
   - She talked to Sue and me. ▼

• Hint: When choosing the correct pronoun in a sentence with a compound subject or object, it is helpful to say the sentence to yourself without the conjunction and the other subject or object.
Case of Personal Pronouns (cont.)

3. After a form of the linking verb *be*, use the nominative case of a personal pronoun. 
   
   – The winner was **he**. 
   
   – Ann hoped that it would be **she**. 

   • Today this rule is changing. In informal speech, people often use the objective case after a form of the linking verb *be*; they say *It’s me* or *It was him*. Some authorities even advise using the objective case informally to avoid appearing pretentious. In formal writing, however, always use the nominative case after a verb such as *be*. 

Click the mouse button or press the Space Bar to display the information.
Case of Personal Pronouns (cont.)

4. Do not spell possessive pronouns with apostrophes. ↓
   - This paddle is **yours**. ↓
   - The table is **ours**. ↓

• Remember that *it’s* is a contraction for *it is*. You should not confuse *it’s* with the possessive pronoun *its*. ↓
  - *It’s* my watch that is lying on the dresser. ↓
  - *Its* band must be replaced.
Case of Personal Pronouns (cont.)

5. Use possessive pronouns before gerunds (*-ing* verb forms used as nouns).

- *Your* singing relaxes the baby.
- *He* is amused by *my* talking.
Exercise 2  Choosing the Correct Case Form

For each sentence, underline the correct personal pronoun from each pair in parentheses.

1. When Marisa offered to help me with my report on a famous athlete, (she/her) and (I/me) chose Satchel Paige, one of the greatest baseball pitchers of all time.

2. It was (he/him) who became one of the first African Americans in the American League.

3. (He/Him) and Jackie Robinson were among the first African American athletes to play for major-league teams.
Exercise 2  Choosing the Correct Case Form (cont.)

For each sentence, underline the correct personal pronoun from each pair in parentheses.

4. What impressed Marisa and (I/me) is that Paige never gave up.

5. To (she/her) and (I/me), Paige and his fellow African American players are true heroes.
Close

Write sentences using pronouns of all three cases. Exchange papers with a partner and identify the case of each pronoun in your partner’s sentences.
Pronouns After *Than* and *As*

- In elliptical adverb clauses using *than* and *as*, choose the case of the pronoun that you would use if the missing words were fully expressed.
  - You finished the puzzle faster than *he*. [The nominative pronoun *he* is the subject of the complete adverb clause *than he finished the puzzle*.]
  - The movie frightened John as much as *them*. [The objective pronoun *them* is the direct object of the complete adverb clause *as much as *it frightened them*.]
Some sentences can be completed with either a nominative or an objective pronoun, depending on the meaning intended.

- Tony angered Dana more than I [angered her].
- Tony angered Dana more than [he angered me].
In informal speech, people often use the objective rather than the nominative form in sentences, such as *My sister is six years younger than me*. In your writing, however, you should be careful to use the correct case.
Exercise 5 Using the Correct Pronoun After *Than* and *As*

Each sentence contains an italicized word or group of words. Give the correct pronoun to substitute for the words in italics.

1. Mother polar bears seem to take parenting more seriously than *some other animals*. they

2. Few animals provide as much parental care as *mother polar bears*. they

3. Nothing is as important to polar bear cubs as *their mother*. she

4. The mother polar bear needs to care for herself as well as *the cubs*. them

5. After one-and-a-half years, the cubs will be as independent as *their mother*. she
Close

Write five sentences using the correct pronoun case following *than* and *as*. Exchange your work with a partner and discuss and correct any errors you find.
Who and Whom in Questions and Subordinate Clauses

• Use the nominative pronoun who for subjects. ▼
  - Who called this morning? [Who is the subject of the verb called.] ▼
  - Tell us who is in charge here. [Who is the subject of the noun clause who is in charge here.]
Who and *Whom* in Questions and Subordinate Clauses (cont.)

- Use the objective pronoun *whom* for the direct or indirect object of a verb or verbal or for the object of a preposition.

  - *Whom* are you telling? [*Whom* is the direct object of the verb *are telling.*]
  
  - *Whom* did she want to tell? [*Whom* is the direct object of the verbal *to tell.*]
  
  - *To whom* did you give the report? [*Whom* is the object of the preposition *to.*]
Who and *Whom* in Questions and Subordinate Clauses  (cont.)

- Jaime asked her *whom* she had seen at the party. [*Whom* is the direct object of the verb *had seen* in the noun clause *whom she had seen at the party.*] 

- Bette Bao Lord is a writer about *whom* I know very little. [*Whom* is the object of the preposition *about* in the adjective clause *about whom I know very little.*]
Who and Whom in Questions and Subordinate Clauses (cont.)

- When a question contains an interrupting expression, such as *do you think*, it helps to omit the interrupting phrase to determine whether or not to use *who* or *whom*.

  - **Who** do you think gave the best oral report? [Think: *Who gave the best oral report? Who is the subject of the verb gave.*] ❯

  - **Whom** do you think you are asking? [Think: *Whom are you asking? Whom is the direct object of the verb are asking.*]
Who and Whom in Questions and Subordinate Clauses (cont.)

- When speaking informally, people often use who instead of whom in sentences such as Who are you calling? In writing and in formal speech, you should distinguish between who and whom.
Exercise 6  Choosing *Who* or *Whom*

For each sentence in the following paragraph, underline the correct pronoun from the pair in parentheses.

1. *(Who/Whom)* do you think the Greeks honored as the goddess of agriculture?  
2. Hades, *(who/whom)* ruled the underworld, admired Persephone, the daughter of Demeter, and he kidnapped her.  
3. Persephone, *(who/whom)* Hades made queen of the underworld, could not escape.  
4. Demeter, *(who/whom)* had grown angry at the loss of her daughter, refused to allow any crops to grow.  
5. Hades was persuaded by Zeus, *(who/whom)* the gods must obey, to let Persephone return for part of each year so that the crops would grow.

Click the mouse button or press the Space Bar to display the answers.
Exercise 7  Using *Who* or *Whom* in Sentences

Fill in the correct word, *who* or *whom*, to complete each sentence.

1. Reuben and his older sister, Lara, *who* is a college professor, visited several Pueblo villages in Arizona and New Mexico last summer.

2. Reuben, for *whom* the trip was a dream fulfilled, had saved money to pay his way.

3. He had been interested in these Native Americans, *whom* many others also admire, for a long time.
Exercise 7 Using *Who* or *Whom* in Sentences (cont.)

Fill in the correct word, *who* or *whom*, to complete each sentence.

4. His sister, **whom** he had begged to take him on this trip, studies Native Americans.

5. The Pueblo, **who** are an ancient people, actually consist of several groups, each speaking a different language.

Click the mouse button or press the Space Bar to display the answers.
Close

Go over your responses to a few of the exercises and volunteer to explain your choices to the class.
Pronoun-Antecedent Agreement

• An antecedent is the word or group of words to which a pronoun refers or that a pronoun replaces. All pronouns must agree with their antecedents in number, gender, and person.
Agreement in Number and Gender

• A pronoun must agree with its antecedent in number (singular or plural) and gender (masculine, feminine, or neuter).

• The antecedent of a pronoun may be a noun, another pronoun, or a phrase or clause acting as a noun.

• In the examples on the following slides, the pronouns appear in boldface type, and their antecedents appear in boldface italic type.
Agreement in Person

• A pronoun must agree in person with its antecedent.

• Do not use the second-person pronoun you to refer to an antecedent in the third person.

• Use either an appropriate third-person pronoun or a suitable noun.
Agreement in Person (cont.)

- **POOR** Richard and Clara are going to a store where you can buy brand-name clothing at reasonable prices.

- **BETTER** Richard and Clara are going to a store where *they* can buy brand-name clothing at reasonable prices.

- **BETTER** Richard and Clara are going to a store where *shoppers* can buy brand-name clothing at reasonable prices.
Agreement in Person (cont.)

- When the antecedent of a pronoun is another pronoun, the two pronouns should agree in person. Avoid shifting pronouns unnecessarily, as from *they to you*, or *one to you*. ↓

- **POOR** They spent several days in Rome, where you could sense history along every street. ↓

- **BETTER** They spent several days in Rome, where *they* could sense history along every street.
Agreement in Person (cont.)

- **POOR**  I learned that you cannot see all of Rome in two days. ↓

- **BETTER**  I learned that I cannot see all of Rome in two days. ↓

- **POOR**  If one reads newspapers, you will understand current events. ↓

- **BETTER**  If one reads newspapers, one will understand current events. ↓

- **BETTER**  If you read newspapers, you will understand current events.
Complete the following sentences by replacing each blank with an appropriate possessive pronoun. Then underline the antecedent of each pronoun that you supply.

1. Like any poet who understands his or her life and times, Pablo Neruda touched deep emotional chords.
2. At the age of twelve, he met Gabriela Mistral, a famous Chilean poet, who introduced him to some of her favorite authors.
3. Both Neruda and Mistral have been honored for their achievements; both poets won the Nobel Prize for Literature.
4. When I read Neruda’s beautiful verses about the forests and glaciers of southern Chile, I renewed my vow to visit Chile someday.
5. My brother and I want to take a trip to Isla Negra; our intention is to visit the house in which Pablo Neruda lived for many years.
In each of the following sentences, find each personal pronoun and its antecedent. (Some sentences have more than one personal pronoun.) Then revise the sentence in one or more ways to correct the problem or problems in pronoun-antecedent agreement.

1. A person who is good at making pottery may like to test their skills by learning to make *raku*, a kind of Japanese earthenware.

People who are good at making pottery may like to test their skills by learning to make *raku*, a kind of Japanese earthenware.
Exercise 9 Making Pronouns and Antecedents Agree (cont.)

In each of the following sentences, find each personal pronoun and its antecedent. (Some sentences have more than one personal pronoun.) Then revise the sentence in one or more ways to correct the problem or problems in pronoun-antecedent agreement.

2. For centuries a handful of Japanese *raku* artists have been perfecting his craft and passing it down from generation to generation.

   For centuries a handful of Japanese *raku* artists have been perfecting their craft and passing it down from generation to generation.
Exercise 9  Making Pronouns and Antecedents Agree (cont.)

In each of the following sentences, find each personal pronoun and its antecedent. (Some sentences have more than one personal pronoun.) Then revise the sentence in one or more ways to correct the problem or problems in pronoun-antecedent agreement.

3. Students who wish to learn to make *raku* will find that the art tests his patience, for the ceramics often break.

   Students who wish to learn to make *raku* will find that the art tests their patience, for the ceramics often break.
Exercise 9  Making Pronouns and Antecedents Agree (cont.)

In each of the following sentences, find each personal pronoun and its antecedent. (Some sentences have more than one personal pronoun.) Then revise the sentence in one or more ways to correct the problem or problems in pronoun-antecedent agreement.

4. The potter throws their raku bowls, dries them and paints them with glaze, and then fires them one by one in a kiln until they are red hot.

   The potter throws his or her *raku* bowls, dries them and paints them with glaze, and then fires them one by one in a kiln until they are red hot.
In each of the following sentences, find each personal pronoun and its antecedent. (Some sentences have more than one personal pronoun.) Then revise the sentence in one or more ways to correct the problem or problems in pronoun-antecedent agreement.

5. A raku expert may also take their glowing pots from the kiln and throw them into cold water to crack the glaze, but in the process their pots often shatter.

Raku experts may also take their glowing pots from the kiln and throw them into cold water to crack the glaze, but in the process their pots often shatter.
Correct each of the following items, eliminating the inappropriate use of *you* by substituting a third-person pronoun or a suitable noun or nouns. You may also have to change other words.

1. The ancient Greeks ate only two meals a day. You ate in midmorning and then again at sunset.
   The ancient Greeks ate only two meals a day. They ate in midmorning and then again at sunset.

2. Men and women in ancient Greece wore tunics. They wore a brown one for work, but you wore a bleached one for special occasions.
   Men and women in ancient Greece wore tunics. They wore a brown one for work, but they wore a bleached one for special occasions.
Correct each of the following items, eliminating the inappropriate use of *you* by substituting a third-person pronoun or a suitable noun or nouns. You may also have to change other words.

3. There were three social classes in Athens, where you might be a citizen, an enslaved person, or a resident alien.

There were three social classes in Athens, where a person might be a citizen, an enslaved person, or a resident alien.
Exercise 10 Making Pronouns and Antecedents Agree (cont.)

Correct each of the following items, eliminating the inappropriate use of *you* by substituting a third-person pronoun or a suitable noun or nouns. You may also have to change other words.

4. The women in ancient Greece led a more restricted life than the men did. You spent a great deal of your time in the home.

The women in ancient Greece led a more restricted life than the men did. They spent a great deal of their time in the home.
Correct each of the following items, eliminating the inappropriate use of *you* by substituting a third-person pronoun or a suitable noun or nouns. You may also have to change other words.

5. Children in the city of Athens attended school, where you learned to wrestle, handle weapons, sing, read, and write.

Children in the city of Athens attended school, where they learned to wrestle, handle weapons, sing, read, and write.
Agreement with Indefinite Pronoun Antecedents (cont.)

In general, use a singular personal pronoun when the antecedent is a singular indefinite pronoun, and use a plural personal pronoun when the antecedent is a plural indefinite pronoun.

- *Neither* of the men wants to drive *his* car to work.
- *Each* of the girls rides *her* bicycle to school.
- *Several* of the neighbors make *their* commute by train.
Agreement with Indefinite Pronoun Antecedents (cont.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indefinite Pronouns</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Always Singular</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>each, either, nobody</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>everyone, everybody</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no one, nothing, anyone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>anything, someone, somebody</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Always Plural</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>several others, few</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>both, many</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Singular or Plural</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>some, all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>any, most</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Agreement with Indefinite Pronoun Antecedents (cont.)

• Note that the number of the personal pronouns is not affected by the plural nouns in the prepositional phrases—of the men, of the girls.

• The personal pronouns *his* and *her* are singular because *neither* and *each*, their antecedents, are singular.

• When speaking, however, people often use the plural pronoun *their* in such sentences.
Agreement with Indefinite Pronoun Antecedents (cont.)

- **INFORMAL** *Neither* of the men drove *their* cars to work. 

- Use gender-neutral wording when no gender is specified. 

- *Everyone* should ride *his or her* bicycle to school. 

- If you find the sentence above a bit awkward, the best solution may be to reword the sentence.
Agreement with Indefinite Pronoun Antecedents (cont.)

• You might replace the singular indefinite pronoun with a plural one or with an appropriate noun, or you might omit the personal pronoun altogether.
  
  – *All* should ride *their* bicycles to school.
  
  – *All* students should ride *their* bicycles to school.

  – *Everyone* should ride a bicycle to school. [no pronoun]

Click the mouse button or press the Space Bar to display the information.
Lesson 5

Click the mouse button or press the Space Bar to display the answers.

Exercise 11 Making Pronouns Agree with Indefinite Pronoun Antecedents

Complete each sentence, using the correct singular or plural personal pronoun.

1. Nearly all of the audiences in eighteenth-century Europe selected opera as ______ first choice of contemporary music.

2. Most of the European composers in the 1700s used Italian librettos, or poetic text, in ______ music.

3. Each of the writers used language and melody to give ______ characters depth.

Click the mouse button or press the Space Bar to display the answers.
Exercise 11  Making Pronouns Agree with Indefinite Pronoun Antecedents (cont.)

Complete each sentence, using the correct singular or plural personal pronoun.

4. One of the male playwrights introduced comic situations in _______ operas.

5. Each of Goldoni’s characters stated _______ point of view at the end of each comic act.

Click the mouse button or press the Space Bar to display the answers.
Many of the societies in Africa are known for the splendor of its sculptures.

Very few of the traditional African sculptors made their figures and masks from stone; most used wood, ivory, clay, and different metals.

Exercise 12  Making Pronouns Agree with Indefinite Pronoun Antecedents

Write correct for each sentence that is correct. Then revise each incorrect sentence to make it correct. Most sentences can be revised in several ways.

1. Many of the societies in Africa are known for the splendor of its sculptures.
   Many of the societies in Africa are known for the splendor of their sculptures.

2. Very few of the traditional African sculptors made their figures and masks from stone; most used wood, ivory, clay, and different metals.
   correct
Write *correct* for each sentence that is correct. Then revise each incorrect sentence to make it correct. Most sentences can be revised in several ways.

3. Practically all of the sculptures in an African society played its own prominent role in the life of the people.

Practically all of the sculptures in an African society played their own prominent role in the life of the people.

4. All of the households of the Ijo people of Nigeria had a statue of their guardian spirit.

All of the households of the Ijo people of Nigeria had a statue of their guardian spirit.
Exercise 12  Making Pronouns Agree with Indefinite Pronoun Antecedents (cont.)

Write *correct* for each sentence that is correct. Then revise each incorrect sentence to make it correct. Most sentences can be revised in several ways.

5. All of the children of the Teke people of the Congo River valley would be protected by his own spirit figure.

All of the children of the Teke people of the Congo River valley would be protected by their own spirit figure.