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Pronoun-Antecedent Agreement

What Is Pronoun-Antecedent Agreement?

A pronoun is a word (*he, she, it, they*) that takes the place of a noun. An antecedent is the word the pronoun refers to or replaces. In a sentence, the antecedent comes before the pronoun. A pronoun must agree with its antecedent in person, number, and gender.

Common Rules To Follow For Agreement:

1. Two singular objects connected by *and* require a plural pronoun.

Ex: Julie and Mike have chosen their costumes for the party.

2. Words such as *both, several, and many* are plural and require plural pronouns.

Ex: Both of my cats ate their food.

3. The following words, when used as subjects, are always singular and must have singular pronouns:

Ex: Either of the boys will loan you his book.

Ex: Each of the girls brought her sleeping bag.

4. A pronoun must agree with its antecedent, not with the object of a prepositional phrase.

Ex: One of the boys kicked his book.

5. Company names always require singular pronouns.

Ex: MacFrugal's will soon have all of its spring clothes on sale.

6. Two singular subjects connected by the conjunction *or* require a singular pronoun.

Ex: Gloria or Lisa has promised to lend me her bike.

7. If one of the subjects joined by *or* or *nor* is singular and the other plural, the pronoun agrees with the closer word.

Ex: Either the dog or the cats lost their tray.

Ex: Neither the cats nor the dog lost its toy.

8. Collective nouns (*army, class, family*) take a singular pronoun when the noun refers to the group as a whole and a plural pronoun when the noun refers to the individual members of the group.

Ex of unit: The band marched its most intricate formation.

Ex of individual: The band found their seats in the bleachers.

Remember:

A pronoun must agree with its antecedent in person, number, and gender.