

Personal Pronoun: Use and Rules

1. A pronoun should clearly refer the noun it stands for.

When it is not obvious to which antecedent a pronoun refers, the sentence should be corrected. This can be done either by repeating the noun, or by rewriting the sentence to make the meaning clear.

Examples:

- (1) My friend was there with her aunt. She was wearing a red saree. (Incorrect)
(2) My friend was there with her aunt. My friend was wearing a red saree. (Correct)

or

My friend, wearing a red saree, was there with her aunt. (Correct)

2. A noun or pronoun which forms part of a prepositional phrase is said to be the object of the preposition. Personal pronouns in the objective case are used as objects of prepositions.

Examples:

1. Please give the copy to him.
2. They went with her.

The underlined pronouns are the objects of the prepositions to, with

3. The possessive adjectives must agree with their antecedents.

Examples:

1. The boy obeys his father.
2. The girl likes her mother.
3. The bird sat on its nest.

4. Possessive adjectives used with gerunds:

When a gerund is preceded by a personal pronoun, the pronoun must be in the form of a possessive adjective.

Examples:

1. The girl said that **her** writing had improved.
2. The boy entertained the guests with his singing. In the above examples, the gerunds are underlined, and the possessive adjectives are printed in bold type.

5. The possessive form of a personal pronoun which is called as a possessive pronoun, can be used in the place of a noun.

Examples:

1. He did not bring his briefcase, but I brought mine 2. Because I forgot my pen, she lent me hers. In the above sentences, the possessive pronouns are underlined.

6. Pronoun follows Let: When a pronoun follows "let", we use the objective form of the pronoun.

We should not use subjective form after 'let'.

1. Let you and I decide the matter once for all. (Incorrect)
Let you and me decide the matter once for all. (Correct)

7. Different person pronouns with the same verb: If pronouns of different persons are used with the same verb in a sentence, they should be placed in following sequence:

- (i) If all the pronouns are in singular form then the good manners demand that second person pronoun should come first and then the third person. The first person should take the last position, ie., 2 + 3 + 1.

Examples:

- (a) You, he and I are partners.
(b) He and I are good friends.

- (ii) If pronouns are in plural forms then the sequence should be 1+2+3, it means the first person plural pronoun is followed by second and third person plural pronouns.

Examples:

- (a) We and you cannot live together.
(b) We, you and they can purchase that complex.
- (iii) Sometimes the sentence have some apologetic sense or negative sense or sense of some errors committed etc, in such sentence the good manners demand; to accept the guilt first by the speaker that means by the first person. In such case the sequence should be 1 + 2 + 3.

Examples:

- (a) I and you are responsible for the loss.
(b) You and he spoiled the party.

8. If a pronoun refers to more than one noun or pronoun of different persons, it must be of the first person plural in case, nouns or pronouns are first and second person and if nouns or pronouns referred by the pronoun are second and third person it must be second person plural. In case of nouns or pronouns of first and third person, the pronoun must be first person plural.

- II + II ----- Person plural
II + III ----- II Person plural
III + I ----- I Person plural

Examples:

- (a) You and I have done our job.
(b) You and he have completed your job.

9. If a collective noun is used as a unit denoting a unitary action as a whole, the pronoun used is singular and in neutral gender.

Examples:

- (a) The crew revolted and murdered its captain.
(b) After three days, the jury gave its verdict.
If the collective noun denotes separation or division, the pronoun used is plural.

Example: The jury were divided in their opinions.

10. When two or more nouns are joined by 'and' the pronoun used would be plural.

Example: Ram and Mohan went to their school.
if both the nouns joined by and denotes the same person, the pronoun used would be singular
Example: The collector and magistrate is negligent in his duty.

11. When two singular nouns are joined by and preceded by each or every, the pronoun used would be singular.

Example: Every teacher and every boy was in his room.

12. Singular pronoun and singular verb is used with; Each, Either and Neither.

Examples:

- (a) Each of the students is ready to do his duty.
(b) Neither of them gets his turn.

13. Singular pronoun is used when two or more singular nouns are joined by 'or', 'Either.....or', 'Neither.....nor'.

Example: Either Ramesh or Ganesh lost his purse. But if one noun is plural, then the pronoun should be plural and plural noun should be placed near the verb

Example: Either the principal or the teachers failed in their duty.

Reflexive Pronouns: Rules

1. When pronouns are combined, the reflexive will take either the first person or, when there is no first person, the second person.

Examples:

- (a) Ram, and I have deceived ourselves about purchasing a house.
(b) You and Ram have ruined yourselves

2. Transitive verbs take object with them. Such commonly used verbs are avail, absent, enjoy, resign, apply, revenge, exert etc.

Examples:

- (a) I absented myself from the office.
(b) I revenged myself upon her.

3. Verbs when used intransitively don't need an object. Such commonly used verbs are: keep, break, set, bathe, make, stop, steal, qualify, move, open, draw, rest, roll, burst, hide, feed, gather etc. These verbs are commonly used intransitively. Example:

- (a) He kept away from the function.

(Correct)

He kept himself away from the function. (Incorrect)

4. The indefinite pronoun one has its own reflexive form.

One must have faith in oneself.

Emphatic Pronouns

The Emphatic pronouns (such as myself, yourself, herself, ourselves, themselves) consist of a personal pronoun plus self or selves. The Emphatic pronoun is used to emphasize a noun. It is possible (but rather unusual) for an emphatic pronoun to precede the noun it refers to. (Myself, I don't believe a word she says.) Usually Emphatic pronoun is placed after the noun it refers.

Examples:

- (a) I myself solved this question.
(b) She herself found the solution.

Reciprocal Pronouns

'Each other' and 'one another' are only two Reciprocal Pronouns. These are always used objectively.

As per traditional theory each other is used for two and one another for more than two.

Example: For you and I are foreigners to one another.

Aldous Huxley

Reciprocal pronouns can also take possessive forms.

Examples:

- (a) They both borrowed each other's ideas.
(b) The students in this lab often use one another's equipment.

Relative Pronouns

Who

Who is used as the subject of a verb, **whom** is used as the object of a verb or the object of a preposition, and **whose** is used as an adjective denoting possession. The relative pronouns **who**, **whom** and **whose** generally refer only to persons, and are used either in defining or non-defining relative clauses. **Who** refers to the subject of the sentence, **whom** refers to the object of a verb or a preposition, while **whose** refers the possession and it is used as adjective.

In the following examples, **who** introduces the defining relative clause **who secures the highest marks** and the non-defining relative clause **who is learning Russian**.

Examples:

- (a) The child who secures the highest marks will receive a trophy.
(b) My brother, who is learning Russian, wants to travel to Kazakhstan.

In these examples, **who** has the antecedents **child** and **brother**, and acts as the subject of the verbs **secures** and **is learning**.

Whom

In the following examples, **whom** introduces the defining relative clause **whom we visited** and the non-defining relative clause **whom we will meet tomorrow**.

Examples:

- (a) The girl whom we visited is her sister.
(b) Mr. Francis, whom we will meet tomorrow, will be our guide.

In these examples, **whom** has the antecedents **sister** and **Mr Francis**, and acts as the object of the verbs **visited** and **will meet**.

In the following examples, **to whom** introduces the defining relative clause **to whom you gave your umbrella** and the non-defining relative clause **to whom we send a birthday card every year**.

Examples:

- (a) The girl to whom you gave your umbrella lives near my house.
(b) His aunt, to whom we send a birthday card every year, is ninety-eight years old now.

In these examples, **whom** has the antecedents **girl** and **aunt**, and is the object of the preposition **to**.

Whose

In the following examples, **whose** introduces the defining relative clause **whose house was sold** and the non-defining relative clause **whose family lives in America**.

Examples:

- (a) The man whose house was sold will leave this town.
(b) My brother, whose family lives in America, will visit us for a few days.

In these examples, **whose** has the antecedents **man** and **brother**, and modifies the nouns **house** and **family**. In the case of **whose**, it should be noted that it is the antecedent which must be a person; the noun being modified may be a person or a thing.

That

As a relative pronoun, **that** can refer to either persons or things. The relative pronoun **that** is generally used only in defining relative clauses.

Examples:

- (a) The girls that were here yesterday will return in a week.
(b) The bag that was on the steps belongs to our tenant.
- In these examples, **that** has the antecedents **girls** and **bag**, and introduces the defining relative clauses **that were here yesterday** and **that was on the steps**. Here, **that** acts as the subject of the verbs **were** and **was**.

1. **That** can be used for living and non-living nouns, for singular as well as plurals.

Examples:

- (a) I have lost the book that you gave me.
(b) He that is content is happy.

2. **No preposition is used before that**, if any preposition is required to be used, it is used in ending position.

Examples:

- (a) We know the hotel that she lives in.
(b) This is the lady that I told you about.

3. In a sentence after the following words that is generally used **All, any, anybody, anything, much, nothing, little, somebody, no one, none, the same + noun + that, the only noun that etc.**

Examples:

- (a) All that glitters is not gold.
(b) There was none that didn't support the cause.

4. After interrogative pronoun-'who' and 'what' that is used.

Examples:

- (a) What is it that you can't solve.
(b) Who was there that you were talking with.

Which

It is important to note that when used as a relative pronoun, **which** refers only to things, when used as an adjective or interrogative pronoun, **which** can refer to either persons or things



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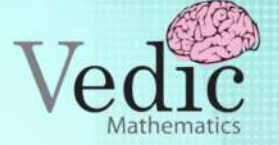
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Example: The book which I purchased last week is very useful.

Preferring 'that' to 'who' or 'which':

1. That is preferably used after Superlative degree instead of who or which.

Example: He is the most eloquent speaker that I have ever heard.

2. After two antecedents one referring a person and the other referring an animal or a thing, use that, instead of who or which.

Example: The boy and his dog that entered the temple were caught by the people.

3. After 'same' or 'such' use 'as' or 'that' not 'who' or 'which'.

Example: This is the same fellow that came yesterday also.

What

Relative pronouns **what** is used without antecedents. When used as a relative pronoun, **what** has the meaning thing or things that.

Example: What you say is not true.

1. The antecedent of a relative pronoun should not be in possessive case:

Example: These are chairman's instructions that must be followed. (Incorrect)

It is an incorrect structure. These sentences should have been written as following:

These are the instructions of the chairman that must be followed. (Correct)

2. The relative pronoun should be of same number and person as its antecedent. It means the verb should agree with the number and person of the antecedent.

Examples:

- (a) The girl who was late was fined.
- (b) The girls who were late were fined.

Distributive pronouns.

Each, Either and Neither are classified as Distributive Pronouns. They denote person or thing one at a time. These pronouns always treated as singular and take singular verbs.

Examples:

- (a) Each of the students gets a prize.
- (b) Either of the two will win the race.
- (c) Every one of the students was happy.
- (d) Each of the two students received a medal.

Each can be used of two or more persons or things and is normally used of small number. Every is not normally used of very small numbers. Each can be used for more than two when the number is usually definite. Both take a singular verb

Who / Whom

Who Whom in relative clauses : A frequent source of trouble is sentences of this type:

Examples:

- (a) The person who (or whom?) we thought was guilty proved to be innocent.
- (b) The man who (or whom?) we feared we had injured proved to be unharmed.

The temptation is always to use whom, presumably because it is felt that the word is the object of thought and feared (or whatever verb takes their place in other sentences); but it is not. In the first sentence, it is the subject of was guilty, hence **who** is correct, and in the second, the object of had injured hence **whom** is required.



If there is any doubt, a useful test is to substitute the personal pronoun he or him; if he would be used, the correct relative is who; if him, it is whom.

Examples:

- (a) We thought he was guilty. (therefore who)
- (b) We feared we had injured him. (therefore whom)
- (c) We thought him to be guilty. (therefore whom)

A similar difficulty may arise with questions:

Example: Who (not whom) do you think we saw? because it is the object of saw.

Whom is never indirect object: Whom is not used as an indirect object. we do not say the boy whom I gave the book. or ask whom did you give the book? It must be to whom (or the preposition may be placed at the end).

The verb after who: Who is the same number and person as its antecedent, and takes its verb accordingly:

Example: It is I who am to blame.

Practice Questions

Directions (Q. Nos. 1 - 20) Read each sentence to find out whether there is any error in it. The error, if any, will be in one part of the sentence, the number of the part is the answer. If there is no error, the answer is (5).

1. She lent me (1)/ some money with the condition (2)/ that I should return (3)/ the same within a month. (4)/ No error (5)
2. he teacher instructed (1)/ the peon to let (2)/ the students and I (3)/ go into the office of Principal. (4)/ No error (5)
3. The candidate (1)/ being a commerce graduate (2)/ she is eligible (3)/ for the post of accountant. (4)/ No error (5)
4. In all circumstances (1)/I have (2)/ helped him (3)/and he knows. (4)/ No error (5)
5. I don't appreciate (1)/him who laugh (2)/ at others without (3)/ any reason. (4)/ No error (5)
6. You and myself (1)/ will enjoy the function(2)/ arranged in honour of (3)/ the new Principal. (4)/ No error (5)
7. He asked for (1)/ permission to go to the cinema (2)/ but his mother (3)/ did not give. (4)/ No error (5)
8. Government departments should (1)/ share information with (2)/ one another so that (3)/ they records are up-to-date. (4)/ No error (5)
9. If a software company (1)/ sends its employees abroad (2)/ to work for a foreign client, they (3) /pays them a daily allowance. (4)/ No error (5)



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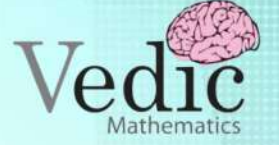
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10. Banks which do not (1)/ meet its priority sector (2)/ targets are required to (3) /pay high penalties. (4)/ No error (5)

11. There were (1)/ five active workers (2)/ and three lazy one (3)/ in the factory. (4)/ No error (5)

12. There is none (1)/ who can (2)/support you (3)/ in this crucial period. (4)/ No error (5)

13. Any of the (1)/ two photos which reflect (2)/ the natural beauty of Kashmir (3)/ is worth seeing. (4)/ No error (5)

14. The guests (1)/ whom we were talking (2)/about have arrived (3) /are my relatives. (4)/ No error (5)

15. He introduced (1)/ to the chairman as (2)/ the President of the (3)/ workers association. (4)/ No error (5)

16. As a student (1)/ of arts (2)/ you are much better (3)/ than him. (4)/ No error (5)

17. He hates everybody (1)/ and everything who(2)/reminds him (3)/ of his blunder. (4)/ No error (5)

18. Whomever (1)/ does not come in time (2)/ will not be allowed (3)/ to mark his presence. (4)/ No error (5)

19. The six partners (1)/ are at daggers drawn (2)/ so they do not talk (3)/ to each other. (4)/ No error (5)

20. If someone has (1)/completed (2)/ the work (3)/ he may leave. (4)/ No error (5)

