

Rule I. All pronouns have _____.

A. An **antecedent** is the word which the pronoun _____.

B. Example: Barbara rode her bike home from school.

The **antecedent** for her is _____ (the person to whom the word 'her' refers).

Rule II. A pronoun agrees with its antecedent in _____ and _____ (3rd person singular)

A. Use a **singular** pronoun to replace a _____ antecedent.

Example: The dog wagged (its, their) tail.

B. Use a **plural** pronoun to replace a _____ antecedent.

Example: The salespeople sold (his, their) own merchandise.

C. Prepositional phrases _____ affect whether a pronoun or its antecedent is singular or plural.

Example: Each of the members gave (his, their) advice to the president. **IT WON'T SOUND RIGHT**, but it makes sense. **Each** is a singular pronoun. We use it with a singular verb (Do I want chocolate or vanilla? Each makes me happy.) Therefore, we need to choose the singular pronoun to go with it when it is an antecedent.

D. Be careful of **indefinite pronouns** when they are antecedents.

Singular Indefinite Pronouns (remember?)

another	each	everything	one
anybody	either	neither	somebody
anyone	everybody	nobody	someone
anything	everyone	no one	something

Example: No one wants to let go of (his, their) own ideas.

Plural Indefinite Pronouns

both few many several

Example: Few of the girls can sell (her, their) tickets by Friday.

These Pronouns Can Be Either Singular or Plural

all any most none some

Example: None of the stores offer (its, their) merchandise at a discount.

None of the building has had (its, their) inspection yet.

E. Look carefully at **compound antecedents** to determine if they are singular or plural.

1. Plural: Jack and Jesse have taken (his, their) vacations already.

2. Singular: The lanterns **or** the **flashlight** needs to have (its, their) batteries checked. (Closer ant.)

F. Use the appropriate gender for masculine and feminine antecedents. When gender is not specified, use either masculine or feminine or both (he or she) —just don't use plural unless you rephrase the sentence with a plural antecedent. Example: Each one of the girls forgot (her, their) coat.

When a speaker addresses a group, (he or she, they) should speak clearly.

Almost everyone likes to have (his or her, their) work praised.

Write an **A** over the antecedent for the pronoun choice in parentheses, then write **S** or **P** next to the number of the sentence to indicate **singular** or **plural**. Finally, circle the pronoun that agrees with its antecedent.

- ___ 1. If anyone cares to leave, (he or she, they) may do so now.
- ___ 2. One of the boys forgot (his, their) lunch.
- ___ 3. All the actresses brought (her, their) scripts.
- ___ 4. Neither of them volunteered (his or her, their) services.
- ___ 5. Neither of the boys did (his, their) homework today.
- ___ 6. Will everyone please serve (himself or herself, themselves)?
- ___ 7. Each of the women did (her, their) best.
- ___ 8. Both Jack and Jill fetched (his or her, their) share of water for the day.
- ___ 9. Every student must do (his or her, their) own work.
- ___ 10. Has everyone completed (his or her, their) project?
- ___ 11. Most of the cargo plane was filled before (its, their) flight.
- ___ 12. Many a person has to work (his or her, their) way through college.
- ___ 13. Has either the boy or the girls brought (his or her, their) own skates with them?
- ___ 14. Helen and Joyce did (her, their) best.
- ___ 15. Each of the men did (his, their) duty.
- ___ 16. Will everyone please open (his or her, their) books to the Foreword?
- ___ 17. Both Marie and Joan dressed up for (her, their) pictures today.
- ___ 18. Each of the NFL stars is responsible for (his, their) conduct in public.
- ___ 19. All the Girl Scouts met (her, their) quota for selling cookies.
- ___ 20. Each of the boys would like (his, their) topic to be chosen.
- ___ 21. One of the girls lost all of (her, their) books.
- ___ 22. I expect everyone to pay (his or her, their) dues on time.
- ___ 23. Whichever of you has (his or her, their) money may settle this account now.
- ___ 24. Many a lonely kid wishes (he or she, they) could find a good friend in middle school.
- ___ 25. A person may conceal (his or her, their) true feelings, but not for very long.
- ___ 26. Will either of the members who brought a friend with (him or her, them) please step forward?
- ___ 27. Every tribe has (its, their) own local customs.
- ___ 28. When everyone minds (his or her, their) own business, life is usually much more pleasant.
- ___ 29. Neither Millie nor Molly will give (her, their) recitals today.
- ___ 30. The search for candidates who have (his or her, their) credentials in good order must continue.

Do whatever you need to do to choose the pronoun that agrees with its antecedent. MANY correct answers will sound incorrect, and vice versa, but you can't even count on that. Be sure you can explain your reasoning in connection with one or more of the rules in your notes.

- ___ 1. Groucho and Chico and Harpo were up to (his, their) usual antics in a movie called *A Night at the Opera*.
- ___ 2. In the Marx Brothers' movies, either Groucho or Chico swindles (his, their) way across the screen.
- ___ 3. Groucho's ridiculous eyebrows and foxy slouch have (its, their) place in comic history.
- ___ 4. His shoddy frock and mobile cigar have also brought (its, their) share of laughs.
- ___ 5. Chico, in his outgrown jacket, or Harpo, in his oversized raincoat, has (his, their) own comic style.
- ___ 6. In the original comedy team, Groucho and Chico and Harpo were joined by Zeppo, a fourth brother, who worked with (him, them).
- ___ 7. In a classic Marx Brothers' scene, Chico and Groucho argue about a contract which (he, they) literally tear apart.
- ___ 8. Harpo's shrill whistle and strange sign language are interpreted by Chico, who understands (it, them).
- ___ 9. Neither reality nor reason has (its, their) place in Marx Brothers comedy.
- ___ 10. Either outrageous action or zany dialogue makes (its, their) criticism of "polite society."
- ___ 11. The three rascals and several ship's servants and a huge trunk share a humorous scene in which (it, they) are squeezed into a tiny stateroom.
- ___ 12. Groucho's greasepaint moustache and Harpo's curly pink hair bring snickers by (itself, themselves).
- ___ 13. In my school either the teacher or one of the students will dress up in a Marx Brothers costume every year to make (his or her, their) mark on the school comedy scene.
- ___ 14. Each of the brothers would finally find (his, their) own niche in the annals of classic film.
- ___ 15. Unfortunately, every year either my brothers or my neighbor will try to solidify (his, their) own reputation in the neighborhood by attempting a Marx Brothers stunt.

Underline the antecedent for each pronoun choice, and then circle the pronoun that agrees with its antecedent.

1. Did everyone in the play remember (his, their) lines?
2. If anyone finds a glasses case, will (he, they) please deliver it to the Lost and Found Office.
3. Neither of the boys could find (his, their) way without a compass.
4. Every student in our class had (his, their) picture taken for the Chronicle.
5. In our section of woodland, every bird builds (its, their) own nest except the catbird.
6. Dan has always admired a person who can keep (his, their) head in an emergency.
7. If you have finished either of those magazines, will you lend (it, them) to me?
8. Every member of our family has (his, their) favorite television comedian.
9. The committee has disagreed about (its, their) next move.
10. Each of the groups will have (its, their) convention here.
11. That package of clothes is heavy, so don't lift (it, them).
12. If any one of the sisters needs a ride to church, (she, they) can call me.
13. Kathryn and Alex are concerned about (her, their) welfare in this course.
14. Did Sam or Chris want (his, their) hair cut?
15. Somebody left (his, their) trash on the road.
16. At the end of the movies, each of the couples cleared up (its, their) misunderstanding.
17. The Washington team was optimistic; (they, it) took advantage of every break.
18. When a person is in trouble, (they, he) may resort to anything.
19. The new style of hats is supposed to be popular, but I don't like (them, it).
20. One has to live with (oneself, themselves), so always be sure to choose the correct pronoun!