

# Using Pronouns and Antecedents in Agreement

**Pronouns are words that take the place of nouns. The antecedent of a pronoun is the word to which the pronoun refers. The pronoun and its antecedent agree in gender and number.**

*Jane* called *her* friend.  
*John* called *his* friend.

*Jane* and *her* are both singular and feminine.  
*John* and *his* are both singular and masculine.

The *girls* finished *their* job.  
The *boys* finished *their* job.

The plural pronoun agrees with the plural antecedent.  
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The pronoun is masculine (he, his, him) when the antecedent is masculine, and the feminine (she, her, hers) when the antecedent is feminine, and neutral with the antecedent had no gender association.

**Use a plural pronoun with a compound antecedent joined by *and*.**

*Mary* and *Bill* ran until *they* were exhausted.      The plural pronoun agrees with the plural antecedent.

**Use a singular pronoun to refer to two or more singular antecedents joined by *or* or *nor*, but use a plural pronoun with two or more plural antecedents joined by *or* or *nor*.**

- *Either Ben or Tom* will give *his* presentation today.
- Neither the *juniors nor the seniors* are singing *their* class song.

**Use a pronoun that agrees with the nearer antecedent, when a singular antecedent and a plural antecedent are joined by *or* or *nor*:**

- Either the boy or his *parents* will present *their* idea.
- Either his parents or the *boy* will present *his* idea.

**Use the singular pronoun when a collective noun refers to a group as a single unit, but use a plural pronoun when the collective noun refers to a group's individual members as individuals:**

- The *class* decided *it* wanted to do the project.
- The *class* stayed at *their* desks.

**Use singular pronouns to refer to indefinite pronouns (words like *everybody*, *none*, *nobody*, *someone*) used as antecedents:**

- *Everyone* on the women's team improved *her* time.
- *None* of the committee members had *his or her* own agenda.

**Use the relative pronouns *who*, *whom*, *which*, and *that* with the appropriate antecedents.**

<b><i>Who</i></b> refers to people and animals that have names.	<b><i>Whom</i></b> refers to the object of a verb or preposition.	<b><i>That</i></b> refers to animals, things, and sometimes people.	<b><i>Which</i></b> refers to animals and things.
<i>He</i> is the one <i>who</i> committed the crime.	She saw a <i>woman whom</i> she thought she knew.	The <i>house that</i> is on the right is being demolished.	The biology <i>book, which</i> is on the table, was helpful.

