
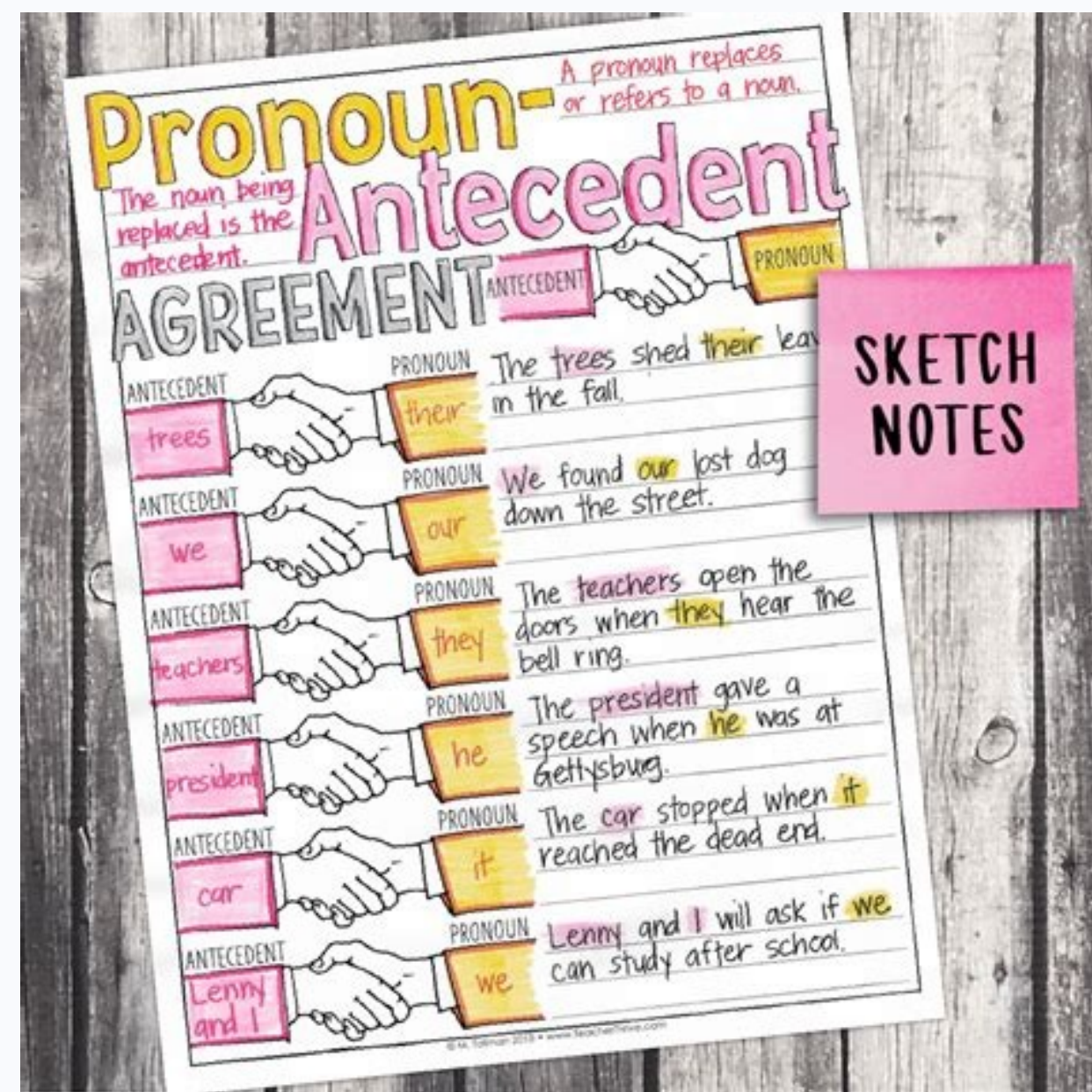


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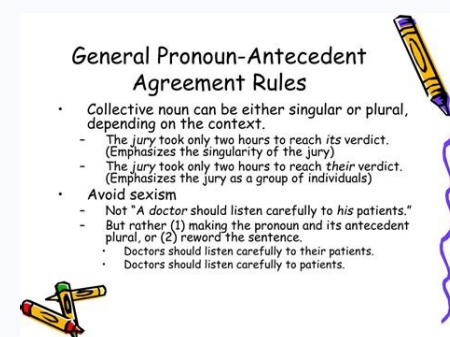
I am not robot!

Pronoun antecedent agreement worksheet

Pronoun-antecedent agreement means choosing a pronoun that matches its antecedent (the earlier noun or noun phrase it refers to) in terms of number, person, and gender.



Pronoun-antecedent agreement errors Error Correction The box of pencils remained in their place. The box of pencils remained in its place. Each day will bring their own challenges. Each day will bring its own challenges. One should look out for themselves.



One should look out for themselves. One should look out for oneself. NoteFor convenience, examples of agreement between possessive determiners (e.g., "their") and their antecedents are included in this article.

Name: _____

Quiz

Pronoun Exercise I:

Agreement Exercises: Select the correct pronoun in each sentence.

1. An out-of-town student is apt to feel lonely at first because (they, he) knows so few people.
2. If a person asks my opinion, I will tell (them, him) exactly what I think.
3. When anyone approaches the house, (they, he) is sure to be greeted by Fido, the spaniel.
4. Everyone should learn something from (their, his) experience.
5. Each senator from this mountain state was nominally elected by the people but inevitably (they, he) took orders from the mining interest.
6. The church endures (their, its) malcontents with the customary forbearance.
7. Each of these large diamonds had (their, its) home in India.
8. Neither the quiet beach nor the solemn waves can reveal (their, its) secret.
9. The acid atmosphere and erosive wind have (their, its) secret.
10. Everyone is at (their, his) worst in the morning.
11. Of all the English kings, Charles I showed the greatest discretion in collecting (their, his) art treasures but little in governing his subjects.
12. The jury is doing (their, its) best to be fair.
13. When one considers ecology, too often (they, she) consider it someone else's problem.
14. A person must take upon (himself, himself, themselves) the responsibility for improving the air, the land, and the water.
15. A government agency may use (its, their) influence to counter pollution, but no agency can solve the problem alone.

The vast majority of common agreement errors relate to number (singular vs. plural). Examples of some errors and how they can be fixed are shown in the table below. The following sections explain various contexts where mistakes commonly occur. Pronoun-antecedent agreement errors Error Correction The box of pencils remained in their place. The box of pencils remained in its place. Each day will bring their own challenges. Each day will bring its own challenges. One should look out for themselves. One should look out for oneself. NoteFor convenience, examples of agreement between possessive determiners (e.g., "their") and their antecedents are included in this article. Even though these determiners are not pronouns, they are closely related and cause the same kind of confusion. Subject-verb agreement follows many of the same principles but is about the relationship between a verb and its subject rather than a pronoun and its antecedent.

Agreement: Pronoun/Antecedent Name: _____ Period: _____
Notes/Rules

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 said *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
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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.

- Plural:** Jack and Jesse have taken *his*, *their* vacations already.
- Singular:** The lanterns **or** the flashlight needs to have *its*, *their* batteries checked. (Closer **or**!))

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.

The box of pencils remained in its place.


Pronoun-Antecedent Agreement Practice
Name: _____

Exercise 1
Underline the pronouns that agree with their antecedents.

- Nobody brought *their* or *her* jacket.
- Some of the students raised *their* or *her* hands.
- Each of the girls took *their* or *his* turn.
- Either the boys or Cindy will volunteer *their* or *his* time.
- Someone left *their* or *her* gloves.
- Neither Bob or Jack brought *their* or *his* shoes.
- Most of the kids like *their* or *her* teacher.
- Everybody seem ask *their* or *her* parents for permission.
- Many of the teachers drove *their* or *her* cars.
- One of the boys lost *their* or *her* book.
- Somebody should take *their* or *her* hand.
- Nobody dropped *their* or *her* cards.
- Bob and Cindy brought *their* or *his* pencils.
- Maria or Cindy brought *their* or *his* car.

Examples of some errors and how they can be fixed are shown in the table below. The following sections explain various contexts where mistakes commonly occur. Pronoun-antecedent agreement errors Error Correction The box of pencils remained in their place. The box of pencils remained in its place. Each day will bring their own challenges. Each day will bring its own challenges. One should look out for themselves. One should look out for oneself. NoteFor convenience, examples of agreement between possessive determiners (e.g., "their") and their antecedents are included in this article.

Even though these determiners are not pronouns, they are closely related and cause the same kind of confusion. Subject-verb agreement follows many of the same principles but is about the relationship between a verb and its subject rather than a pronoun and its antecedent. Intervening phrase after the antecedent A common cause of agreement errors is the occurrence of a phrase after the antecedent that causes confusion about whether it's singular or plural. This is typically a prepositional phrase with "of" followed by a noun. For example, in the sentence "The price of vegetables rose to their highest level in years," the writer has mistakenly used the plural "their," based on the phrase "of vegetables." The real antecedent is the singular "price," so the correct wording is "its highest level." To avoid this error, consider logically what the antecedent is in each case, rather than just assuming that it's the most recent noun. In the following example, it's clear that the olives, not the jar, are flavorful. The jar of olives had a lot of flavor to them. The jar of olives had a lot of flavor to it. The olives in the jar had a lot of flavor to them. Indefinite pronoun as antecedent Indefinite pronouns are words like "everyone," "each," and "little" that stand in for someone or something nonspecific. Some of these pronouns are always singular, others are always plural, and a few can be either singular or plural, depending on how they're used. There are some common points of confusion regarding these pronouns, which are explained in the table below. Tip Error Correction Indefinite pronouns starting with every- are singular. Everything in the database had their own unique identifying code. Everything in the database had its own unique identifying code. Pronouns like each, either, and neither are singular. Each of the boxes had something in them. Each of the boxes had something in it. Pronouns like both, few, and several are plural.

Both of them did a good job at the tasks he was assigned. Both of them did a good job at the tasks they were assigned. Pronouns like all, any, none, and some are singular or plural depending on whether they refer to countable or uncountable quantities. If any of the water spilled on the ground, they were cleaned up quickly. We don't have any of those shoes left. They sold out yesterday. We don't have any of those shoes left. They sold out yesterday. TipConsult our full list of singular and plural indefinite pronouns if you're ever uncertain. Antecedents joined by a conjunction When there isn't a single antecedent but a series of two or more joined by a conjunction, the rules vary depending on which conjunction is used. Antecedents joined by "and" When the antecedents are joined by and, the pronoun should always be plural. Don't use a pronoun referring to only one of the antecedents or an individual pronoun for each of them; just use a plural pronoun (i.e., a form of "they"). Marcel and Gemma would like you to go and see her later. Marcel and Gemma would like you to go and see him and her later. Marcel and Gemma would like you to go and see them later. Antecedents joined by "or" or "nor" When the antecedents are joined by or or nor, the pronoun normally agrees with the antecedent closest to it.

This sometimes results in awkward sentences that it's better to rephrase. For example, when one antecedent is plural and the other singular, it reads better to put the plural one last: Neither the windows nor the door were looking their best. Neither the windows nor the door was looking its best. Neither the door nor the windows were looking their best.

When the antecedents differ in gender, the sentence will read poorly unless you use the singular "they" or rephrase entirely: I don't know if either Marcel or Gemma has received her gift. I don't know if either Marcel or Gemma has received his or her gift. I don't know if either Marcel or Gemma has received their gift. I don't know if Marcel has received his gift, or Gemma hers, "Every" and "Many a(n)" Antecedents preceded by the determiners "every" or "many a(n)" are always singular. Many a house I visited had something that put me off them. Many a house I visited had something that put me off it. This is true even when the antecedent consists of a series of nouns joined by "and."

Every desk, closet, and bookcase had their surfaces thoroughly dusted before the inspection. Every desk, closet, and bookcase had its surfaces thoroughly dusted before the inspection. Note that this doesn't apply to the use of "many" without "a" or "an"; used in this way, it creates a plural antecedent. Many houses I visited had faults that put me off them. Many of the houses I visited had faults that put me off them. "A number of" vs. "the number of" A number of is a phrase that's placed before a plural noun to mean "several" or "a few." It's used similarly to "a lot." An antecedent that begins with this phrase is considered plural. The number of is different. It literally refers to the specific number (quantity) of something. Because of this, it's singular. Example: "A number of" in a sentenceA number of buildings fell in on themselves. The number of unemployed people is rising faster than its usual rate. Collective nouns Collective nouns are words like "team" that refer to a group of people or things but are normally singular in terms of how they're used. In most style guides for US English, it's recommended to treat these nouns as singular, which means they are referred to with a singular pronoun. If you do treat them as plural (which is more common in UK English), make sure that both the verb and the pronoun are plural. The essential thing is not to use a plural verb form with a singular pronoun, or vice versa. The board have its own questions for the president. The board has their own questions for the president. The board has their own questions for the president. The board have their own questions for the president. Other singular antecedents that look plural Besides collective nouns, there are many nouns and noun phrases in English that are plural in appearance but normally treated as singular in practice. Some common examples are: Titles of books, movies, songs, poems, etc.

(e.g., Twelve Angry Men, "Good Times") Names of fields of study (e.g., politics, physics) When you refer back to these terms using a pronoun, it should therefore be a singular one. Examples: Singular antecedents that look pluralThe Woodlanders is a great novel by Thomas Hardy. I read it last summer. Economics is a popular field of study at this university. I considered taking it myself. Impersonal nouns The impersonal pronouns one and oneself are used to make generalizations that apply to all people. They are often used to make observations about human nature or recommendations about how people should behave. They are considered very formal. People often make pronoun-antecedent agreement errors with "one," beginning a sentence with "one" but later switching to a form of "they," "he," "she," or "you." Consistency is important; if you start with "one," continue using a form of "one." If this seems repetitive or overly formal, rephrase the sentence. One should always take time for themselves. One should always take time for yourself.

One should always take time for oneself. People should always take time for themselves. You should always take time for yourself. Agreement with the singular "they" The singular "they" refers to the use of the traditionally plural pronouns and determiners they, them, their, theirs, and themselves in a singular sense. This is a way of referring to individuals in a gender-neutral way, and it's widely recommended by modern style guides. This has some implications for pronoun-antecedent agreement. For example, the sentence "Everyone has their own ideas about politics" would once have been seen as wrong, because "everyone" is singular. A phrasing like "his or her own ideas" would have been needed instead. Now, the use of "their" is seen as correct by most language authorities. This simplifies the issue of agreement when referring to people, because there's no need to worry about whether an indefinite pronoun is singular or plural; "they" can be used for both. But you still need to make a distinction between singular "it" and plural "they" when referring to things other than people. Worksheet: Pronoun-antecedent agreement You can test your understanding of pronoun-antecedent agreement using the worksheet below. Fill in the missing pronoun or determiner in each sentence, paying close attention to the antecedent. The meaning of these hints is so clear that _____ is hard to miss.

A house of cards must be constructed carefully so that _____ doesn't collapse under _____ own weight. One should always believe in _____. The meaning of these hints is so obvious that it is hard to miss. The singular pronoun "it" refers back to the singular antecedent "meaning." "They" would be incorrect because the antecedent is "meaning," not "hints," as well as because the singular verb form "is" follows it. Mary Shelley began writing Frankenstein in 1816, when she was just 18 years old. The singular feminine pronoun "she" is used to refer to the antecedent "Mary Shelley." Either of these plans could solve the issue by itself. The singular reflexive pronoun "itself" is used to refer back to the antecedent "either." An antecedent introduced by "either" is always singular; "itself" refers to one plan or the other, not both at the same time. A house of cards must be constructed carefully so that it doesn't collapse under its own weight. The pronoun "it" and the possessive determiner "its" both refer back to the antecedent "house," so they're both singular. It would be wrong to use the plural "they" and "their" because the thing being referred to is the house itself, not the cards it's made up of.

One should always believe in oneself. The reflexive impersonal pronoun "oneself" is used to refer to the same generic person indicated by "one." It would be wrong to write the third-person "themselves," because it doesn't match the impersonal "one." Frequently asked questions What is pronoun-antecedent agreement? Pronoun-antecedent agreement refers to the use of a pronoun that matches its antecedent in number, person, and gender. The antecedent is the person or thing that the pronoun refers back to. For example, in the sentence "David came by; he was looking for you," the personal pronoun "he" agrees with its antecedent "David" because it is: Singular: David is one person Third-person: David is not the person speaking or being spoken to Masculine: David is a man An agreement error occurs when the pronoun doesn't match the antecedent in one of these ways—most commonly in number. For example, "Some men came by; he was looking for you" doesn't make sense because the singular "he" doesn't match the plural "men." The plural "they" is needed instead. What is the definition of a pronoun? A pronoun is a word that stands in for a noun. Like nouns, pronouns refer to people, things, concepts, or places. Most sentences contain at least one noun or pronoun. A pronoun can serve as the subject or object in a sentence, and it will usually refer back (or sometimes forward) to an antecedent—the noun that the pronoun stands in for. Pronouns are used to avoid the need to repeat the same nouns over and over. What is a personal pronoun? Personal pronouns are words like "he," "me," and "yourselves" that refer to the person you're addressing, to other people or things, or to yourself. Like other pronouns, they usually stand in for previously mentioned nouns (antecedents). They are called "personal" not because they always refer to people (e.g., "it" doesn't) but because they indicate grammatical person (first, second, or third person). Personal pronouns also change their forms based on number, gender, and grammatical role in a sentence.

We strongly encourage students to use sources in their work. You can cite our article (APA Style) or take a deep dive into the articles below. This Scribbr article Caulfield, J. (2023, February 22). Pronoun-Antecedent Agreement | Examples & Tips. Scribbr. Retrieved October 12, 2023, from Sources Aarts, B. (2011). Oxford modern English grammar. Oxford University Press. Butterfield, J.

(Ed.). (2015). Fowler's dictionary of modern English usage (4th ed.). Oxford University Press. Show all sources (3) Garner, B. A. (2016). Garner's modern English usage (4th ed.). Oxford University Press. Pronouns must be selected to agree (singular vs plural) with their antecedents (the nouns they replace), so it is important to understand which words any pronoun in a sentence refers to. In these worksheets, students identify which words (nouns or pronouns) in a sentence a highlighted pronoun refers to.