Pronouns – Subjective/Objective

1. A pronoun is a word used in place of a noun. That noun is called the antecedent of the pronoun. Read this sentence:

   Noun       pronoun       pronoun
   The carpenter forgot to take his hammer when he left.

   Carpenter is the antecedent of his and he. Observe how awkward our language would be without pronouns:

   The carpenter forgot to take the carpenter’s hammer when the carpenter left.

2. The personal pronoun indicates the person speaking (first person), the person spoken to (second person), or the person, place, or thing spoken about (third person).

3. Notice carefully that personal pronouns are identified as to person, case, number, and gender; however, gender applies only in the third person, singular. He is masculine, she is feminine, and it is neuter. Learn the following personal pronoun chart.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Case</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Subjective</td>
<td>Objective</td>
<td>Possessive</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S I</td>
<td>First Person</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>me</td>
<td>my, mine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N G</td>
<td>Second Person</td>
<td>you</td>
<td>you</td>
<td>your, yours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U L</td>
<td>Third Person</td>
<td>he, she, it</td>
<td>him, her, it</td>
<td>her, hers, his, its</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Pronoun Case

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>First Person</th>
<th>we</th>
<th>us</th>
<th>our, ours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>P</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>Second Person</td>
<td>you</td>
<td>you</td>
<td>your, yours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>Third Person</td>
<td>they</td>
<td>them</td>
<td>their, theirs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>Interrogative</td>
<td>who</td>
<td>whom</td>
<td>whose</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Problems of Pronoun Case

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Used as Subjects</th>
<th>Used as Objects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(subjective or nominative case)</td>
<td>(objective case)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Singular (refers to one)</th>
<th></th>
<th>Plural (more than one)</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>me</td>
<td>we</td>
<td>us</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>you</td>
<td>you</td>
<td>you</td>
<td>you</td>
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<tr>
<td>he</td>
<td>him</td>
<td>she</td>
<td>her</td>
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<tr>
<td>she</td>
<td>her</td>
<td>it</td>
<td>it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>it</td>
<td></td>
<td>they</td>
<td>them</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1. **Subjective Case**

Pronouns in the **subjective case** are **subjects** (the "who" or "what") of the verb.

   e.g., *He and I* saw Laura yesterday.
   "who" of the sentence

**Note:** The subjective case is often called the nominative case.

2. **Objective Case**

Pronouns in the **objective case** are the **objects** (receivers of action) of the verb.

   e.g., Laura saw *him* and *me* yesterday.
   receivers of ACTION of "seeing"

**HINTS**

1. Pronoun before *verb* = Subjective Case

   e.g., *He* and *she* went out the door.

2. Pronoun after a *linking verb* = Subjective Case

   is, are, was
   were, etc. ..... 

   e.g., *It is* she. *It is* I.

3. Pronoun following a *comparison* using "than" or "as" = Subjective case

   e.g., Don Nelson is more handsome *than* he.

* **BUT**

   When first noun or pronoun is objective, pronouns following
"than" or "as" = objective case.

    e.g., That shirt fits him better than her.
    him = objective pronoun
    her = objective case
4. Pronoun after an action verb = objective case
    e.g., Iris watched Jess and her leave the library.
5. Pronoun after a preposition = objective case
    to around, etc.

        in
        on
        over

    e.g., Moira gave the reading test to Susan and me.

**An important exception:** In answer to the question "Who is it?" or "Who's there?" you might, of course, give your name: "Mike" or "It's Joan." But what if you use a pronoun instead? Then should you say "It's me" or "It is I"?

"It is I" is preferred by many careful speakers and writers. But so many educated people use the me form in this situation that "It's me" has also become an accepted form in standard English, one you need not hesitate to use. Remember, however, that though It's me is a standard usage, It's her, It's us, and It's them are not.

**EXERCISES** (Answer key follows)

**Exercise 1**

Circle the forms in parentheses appropriate in standard English.

1. (Him, He) and Frank caught the most fish.

2. Carlo looked for Larry and (her, she) at the party.

3. You and (me, I) had better go.
4. Grace invited both Betsy and (me, I).
5. The Kaplans and (us, we) are going in our car.
6. The waitress brought Glen and (me, I) the wrong orders.
7. Mr. Voss drives Tim and (her, she) to school on Mondays.
8. Why don’t you sit between (her, she) and (me, I).
9. The books belong to (them, they) and (us, we).
10. The man asked (her, she) and David several questions after the program.
11. Mrs. Neilsen was worried about you and (them, they).
12. Between you and (me, I), we think he’s a fraud.
13. Neither (them, they) nor (us, we) were ready at six.
14. Do you blame Spence and (me, I) for leaving?
15. Either (her, she) or (him, he) broke a record.

**Exercise 2**

Circle the forms in parentheses appropriate in standard English.

1. Everyone expected Margaret and (I, me) to be nervous.
2. Wasn’t it strange for (she, her) and Fred to complain?
3. My birthday gift from Gene and (he, him) came yesterday.
4. You and (he, him) must have just missed each other.
5. Either George or (she, her) will meet you at the train.
6. Mr. Grimski lets Bob and (I, me) use his power mower.
7. Dale should give either you or (l, me) one of the pictures.
8. Wait for Helen and (he, him).
9. My uncle and (he, him) own the corner drugstore.
10. The drugstore belongs to my uncle and (he, him).
11. Either Miriam or (she, her) could play the heroine.
12. Pat and (he, him) will come.
13. Dan brought sandwiches for you and (they, them).
14. He said that the Hawkeyes and (we, us) will play again soon.
15. Mike and (we, us) can help.

Exercise 3
Substitute appropriate pronouns (he, she, we, they) for the words in bold print.

1. After all, it wasn’t Harold who did all the complaining.
2. Wasn’t it Ruth who promised to wake us in time?
3. That could have been Felix tiptoeing across the roof.
4. Was it Mrs. Murphy or Mr. Murphy who invited you?
5. It was the committee members themselves who changed the rule.
6. Are you sure that was Jill and her sister getting on the ferry?
7. The only ones who passed the test were Elmer and you.
8. No, it wasn’t our family who called the manager.
9. "Which of those boys is Gerald’s brother?" "That’s Gerald’s brother standing beside the barbecue pit.
10. What made you think it was the Smiths who gave us the puppies?

Exercise 4
Substitute the forms in parentheses appropriate in standard English.

1. After the meeting (we, us) girls are going to the movies.
2. (Them, Those) are just like the ones Lee bought.
3. Suppose you men let (we, us) experts cook the wieners.
4. Why can’t (we, us) three ride with Bruce?
5. These are all right, but (them, those) are cracked.
6. Dad thinks that (we, us) men ought to demand our rights.
7. Next week (we, us) freshmen are in charge of the program.
8. No, the blue ones are Ed’s, and (them, those) are yours.
9. Five of (we, us) boys can help handle the job.
10. Mr. Kranz promised (we, us) girls that he’d be at the game.
11. Do you expect (we, us) four to do the work alone?
12. (Them, Those) are cheaper, aren’t they?

**Exercise 5**

Substitute standard pronoun forms for the nouns in bold print.

1. Victor and **Carmen** danced the tango for us.
2. Miss Gish gave Lois and **Pete** permission to work together.
3. **Penny** and I helped them with the wallpapering.
4. Couldn’t Ray and **Dick** change the tire for you?
5. Most of those records belong to Ken or **Ross**.
6. Why didn’t you or **Owen** pinch-hit for Art?
7. **Bob** and Adele tied for first place again.
8. We’re saving the trading stamps for Vito and **Roma**.
9. When have you or Miriam ever been on time?
10. Luckily, no one but Dan and Phoebe had heard me.
11. Were they expecting Gerda and Wilmer to come so early?
12. Simon and his brother are the best swimmers in our troop.
13. The officer told Boris and Edsel to move along.
14. You could probably borrow a wrench from Al or his cousin.
15. The Philpotts and our family used to be neighbours.

Exercise 6

Read each of the following sentences, and decide which of the pronoun forms in parentheses is the right one to use in that spot.

1. Was it Gladys or (he, him) who lost the turtle?
2. I think it was (she, her).
3. If I were (she, her), I wouldn’t say a word about it.
4. Is that (him, he) talking to the butcher?
5. No, the man at the check-out counter is (he, him).
6. It must have been (they, them) who stampeded the buffaloes.
7. If you knew it was George and (he, him), why did you accuse Stan and (I, me)?
8. It was probably Harvey and (she, her) who sent the telegram.
9. I just can’t believe it was (he, him) who copied your answers.
10. Why did you say it was (we, us) who made all that noise?
11. The only ones who play pinochle are you and (I, me).
12. Well, if it wasn’t (he, him) who told you, it must have been (she, her).

Exercise 7 - REVIEW
In each of the following sentences there is a nonstandard pronoun form. Circle the error and correct.

1. Clyde and me were the first to sign up.
2. Between you and I, he’s not much of an actor.
3. A neighbour told Bob and she, and they told Harold.
4. The only ones who want to go by bus are you and him.
5. Her and Ray found the kitten hiding under the rosebush.
6. They sent some extra tickets for you and he.
7. Sam wanted Bernice and I to play Monopoly with him.
8. If you were us, would you refuse?
9. Everyone got a copy except Davy and she.
10. What were you and them laughing about?
11. Was it her who washed your red socks with the white shirts?
12. The Berrys and us are taking the same plane.
13. Then it must have been them who called.
14. He acted as though he didn’t trust Tom and I.
15. I thought Stan and him were going fishing with you two.

**ANSWER KEY**

**Exercise 1**

1. He  
6. me  
11. them

2. her  
7. her  
12. me

3. I  
8. her, me  
13. they, we

4. me  
9. them, us  
14. me

5. we  
10. her  
15. she, he

**Exercise 2**

1. me  
6. me  
11. she
2. her 7. me 12. he
3. him 8. him 13. them
4. he 9. he 14. we
5. she 10. him 15. we

Exercise 3
1. he 5. they 9. he
2. she 6. she 10. they
3. he 7. he
4. she, he 8. we

Exercise 4
1. we 5. those 9. us
2. Those 6. we 10. us
3. us 7. we 11. us
4. we 8. those 12. Those

Exercise 5
1. she 6. he 11. him
2. him 7. He, she 12. He
3. She 8. her 13. him
4. he 9. she 14. him
5. him 10. she 15. we

Exercise 6
1. he 5. he 9. he
2. she  
3. she  
4. he  
5. Her - She  
6. they  
7. he, me  
8. she  
9. she - her  
10. we  
11. I  
12. he, she  

**Exercise 7**

1. me - I  
2. I - me  
3. she - her  
4. him - he  
5. Her - She  
6. he - him  
7. I - me  
8. us - we  
9. she - her  
10. them - they  
11. her - she  
12. us - we  
13. them - they  
14. I - me  
15. him - he