

Pronoun-Antecedent Agreement D

ANSWER KEY

8t.

Some indefinite pronouns are plural, some are singular, and some may be either.

(1) Use a singular pronoun to refer to *anybody, anyone, anything, each, either, everybody, everyone, everything, neither, nobody, nothing, no one, one, somebody, someone, and something*.

EXAMPLES Has **anyone** lost **his or her** keys?

Each of the recipes calls for wheat as **its** main ingredient.

(2) The following indefinite pronouns are plural: *both, few, many, and several*.

EXAMPLE **Several** of the teachers ordered **their** textbooks early.

(3) The indefinite pronouns *all, any, more, most, none, and some* may be singular or plural, depending on their meaning in a sentence.

EXAMPLES **All** of the money retained **its** value. [*All* refers to the singular noun *money*.]

All of the vases retained **their** value. [*All* refers to the plural noun *vases*.]

EXERCISE On the line provided in each of the following sentences, write a pronoun that agrees with its antecedent. Then, circle the antecedent.

Example 1. Several of the houses lost _____ *their* _____ roofs during the storm.

1. Each of my sisters has _____ her _____ own pogo stick.

2. None of the employees should reveal _____ their _____ password to anyone.

3. Everything the teacher said made sense the moment he said _____ if _____.

4. Both of the astronomical calendars have the same nebula on _____ their _____ covers.

5. Several of the police officers spent _____ their _____ holidays volunteering at the new community center.

6. If you have _____ anything _____ to say during the debate, please say _____ it _____ as succinctly as possible.

7. Neither of my grandmothers has ever revealed _____ her _____ secret for making jambalaya.

8. More of the palm trees have been planted this year because _____ they _____ look so striking along the beach.

9. One of the male interns put _____ his _____ clipboard down to pick up the baby.

10. Most of the radio program was written by Maria, but a few minutes of _____ it _____ were written by Tish.

Pronoun-Antecedent Agreement A

A pronoun usually refers to a noun or another pronoun called its *antecedent*.

- 8q.** A pronoun should agree in number and gender with its antecedent.

EXAMPLES Alicia left **her** book bag on the school bus.

Many people like the **movie** because of **its** special effects.

The **musicians** are practicing for **their** spring concert.

Not every **student** has returned **his or her** permission slip for the field trip.

USAGE

EXERCISE On the line provided in each of the following sentences, write a pronoun that agrees with the antecedent. Then, circle each antecedent.

Example 1. (Paul) loaned Nell his jacket.

- Mary Ellen took her dog for a walk after dinner.
- One of the men bent to pick up his tools.
- Somebody left his/her books on the lawn last night.
- Sean said that he was too tired to come with us to the movies.
- Out of sheer boredom, the cat chased its own tail.
- Stanley went up to his room to do the homework assignment.
- Miranda hung the diploma on the wall of her bedroom.
- Each of the girls on the soccer team received her own jersey yesterday.
- As the sun set, the mountain cast its shadow across the desert.
- Pick up the frying pan and bring it to me, please.
- We stayed awake to watch the film until it was over.
- If your sister gets here after I leave, tell her I left a casserole in the fridge.
- Neither of the boys remembered where his baseball glove was.
- That afternoon Uncle Oliver told us stories about his experiences in Vietnam.
- Either of the men is willing to tell you what he saw at the accident scene.
- Emily Dickinson often gave her poems away as gifts to neighbors.
- Everybody at the office put flowers in his/her cubicle.
- The author of *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* changed his name from Samuel Clemens to Mark Twain.
- Each of the nuns lifted her hand to make the sign of the cross.
- Someone hung his/her wet towel over the shower curtain.

Pronoun-Antecedent Agreement B

81.

Use a singular pronoun to refer to two or more singular antecedents joined by or or nor.

EXAMPLE

Neither Ramona nor Gloria could find her library card.

85.

Use a plural pronoun to refer to two or more antecedents joined by and.

EXAMPLE

Vincent and Jules have learned all of their lines in the play.

USAGE

EXERCISE A On the line provided in each of the following sentences, write a pronoun that agrees with the antecedent or antecedents. Then, circle each antecedent.

Example 1. Every Sunday Maggie and Roger watched _____ their _____ favorite television show.

1. When we're playing tennis, my brother and I never let the other players intimidate

us _____ his _____ tool kit to the bicycle race.

2. Either Jason or Raul will bring _____ they _____ didn't plan to come to the party.

3. Brenda and Caitlin told us that _____ she _____ will need to

work hard.

4. If either Britany or Celine wants to be a successful writer, _____ their _____ resources to buy a birthday present for Jim.

5. Please ask Glendon and Maria if _____ she _____ science fair project is ready yet.

6. Did Lauryn or Marian say if _____ she _____ was going to the mock trial?

7. Karen and I discussed _____ our _____ difference of opinion quite calmly.

8. Frank and Tina would like the class to help _____ them _____ set up their display.

9. Let Kathryn and Michael know in advance if _____ they _____ should bring a dish to the party.

EXERCISE B Each of the following sentences contains an error in pronoun-antecedent agreement. Cross out the error and write the correct pronoun above it. Then, circle each antecedent.

Example 1. Either Denzel or Malcolm will bring ~~their~~ ^{his} soccer ball to the game.

11. Julio and Spikel have brought all of his ^{their} CDs to the dance.

12. Neither Faith nor Deanna knew where their ^{her} bicycle was.

13. Is Melissa or Martina sure ~~they~~ ^{she} won't join us?

14. Let's ask Antonio and Belle if ~~she~~ ^{they} read the article about comets.

15. Does Dutch or Piké have ~~their~~ ^{his} notebook with him?

Pronoun-Antecedent Agreement C

8t.

Some indefinite pronouns are plural, some are singular, and some may be either.

(1) Use a singular pronoun to refer to *anybody*, *anyone*, *anything*, *each*, *either*, *everybody*, *everyone*, *everything*, *neither*, *nobody*, *nothing*, *no one*, *one*, *somebody*, *someone*, and *something*.

EXAMPLES Each of the boys likes his new uniform.

Has everybody in the club paid his or her dues?

(2) The following indefinite pronouns are plural: *both*, *few*, *many*, and *several*.

EXAMPLE Few of the explorers became lost on their way out of the cave.

(3) The indefinite pronouns *all*, *any*, *more*, *most*, *none*, and *some* may be singular or plural, depending on their meaning in a sentence.

EXAMPLES Most of the forest has already been cut down, hasn't it? [*Most* refers to the singular noun *forest*.]

Most of the trees have already been cut down, haven't they? [*Most* refers to the plural noun *trees*.]

EXERCISE Each of the following sentences contains an error in pronoun-antecedent agreement. Draw a line through each incorrect pronoun, and write the correct form above it. Then, circle the antecedent.

Example 1 Each of the cats has their own special hiding place.

- Some of the CDs have lost its jewel cases.
- Few of the women's soccer team enjoyed her stay in Helsinki.
- Either of the brothers is willing to bring their baseball glove to the game.
- Hasn't anybody announced their intentions yet?
- Many of the reporters do his or her own research.
- All of the rosebushes in the garden have thorns on it.
- Everyone in the class is aware of their responsibility to bring a note from home.
- Someone on the swimming team left their goggles by the side of the pool.
- Several of the boys joined the military after he graduated from high school.
- Some of the people in the audience got the joke, and it laughed heartily.

Pronoun-Antecedent Agreement E

8u. Either a singular or a plural pronoun may be used to refer to a collective noun, depending on the meaning of the sentence.

A collective noun is singular when it refers to the group as a unit and plural when it refers to the individual parts or members of the group.

SINGULAR The band made its debut in November 1999.

PLURAL The band happily signed autographs for their fans.

USAGE

EXERCISE A In each of the following sentences, circle the antecedent for the pronouns in parentheses. Then, underline the pronoun that agrees with the antecedent.

Example 1. After hearing all the evidence, the jury made its (its, their) decision quickly.

1. The thundering herd left a wide swath of flattened grass in its (its, their) wake.
2. As the team entered the lobby, the fans began to ask for its, (their, their) autographs.
3. After debating all of its, (their, their) options, the commission issued its report.
4. The readership of the newspaper were not shy about making its, (their, their) opinions known.
5. The jury would not agree among itself, (themselves) what to order for lunch.
6. During the intermission, the ensemble turned its, (their) instruments.
7. The majority of the class took its, (their) work home last night.
8. The Fantasy Society voted The Lord of the Rings (its, their) choice for Book of the Century.
9. The cast of the play took its, (their) curtain calls one at a time.
10. The crowd voted with its, (their) feet and left the debate early.

EXERCISE B On the line provided in each of the following sentences, write a pronoun that agrees with its antecedent. Then, circle the antecedent.

Example 1. The class agreed to hold _____ its _____ annual party next month.

11. The troupe of actors looked good in their _____ costumes.
12. The entire staff lined up in the parking lot to have its _____ picture taken.
13. The committee cannot even agree among themselves _____.
14. After a fierce battle, the platoon took its _____ position at the top of the ridge.
15. After winning, the team posed for photographs with show/its _____ ecstatic fans.

Pronoun-Antecedent Agreement F

8v. An expression of an amount may take a singular or plural pronoun, depending on how the expression is used.

SINGULAR I paid **twenty dollars** for these skates. I thought **it** was a reasonable price.

PLURAL I have **twenty dollars**, but one of **them** has been torn in half.

8w. Some nouns that are plural in form take singular pronouns.

SINGULAR I have good **news**. Would you like to hear **it**?

PLURAL Where are the **scissors**? Oh, here **they** are.

EXERCISE A In each of the following sentences, circle the antecedent for the pronouns in parentheses. Then, underline the pronoun in parentheses that agrees with the antecedent.

Example 1. Jerrold enjoyed studying (genetics) because (it, they) combined biology and chemistry.

- If I make (fifty dollars) from the carwash this weekend, I can use (it, them) to put a down payment on a bicycle.
- After Luther oiled the (shears, ~~it~~, they) were ready to use again.
- Michiko poured the (molasses) and watched (it, them) cover the bottom of the pan.
- Now that you've heard the (news) do you think (it, they) will affect how you vote?
- If you want to go to the (Olympics), you have to train for (it, them).
- Sue had (three dollars) in her wallet, but now one of (it, them) is missing.
- Vera dropped the (pliers) in the grass and then spent an hour looking for (it, them).
- (Mathematics) was more than an interest for Leora; (it, they) became a passion.
- Roxanne decided not to wear her (shorts) because (it, they) had become threadbare.
- He had only (seventy-five cents); would (it, they) be enough to pay for the juice?

EXERCISE B Each of the following sentences contains an error in pronoun-antecedent agreement. Cross out each incorrectly used pronoun, and write the correct pronoun above it. Then, circle the antecedent.

Example 1. Please put the (scissors) back when you are finished with ~~it~~.
them

- Francesca decided to take (civics) because she could fit ~~them~~ into her schedule.
it
- Malik has lost his (eyeglasses); he needs ~~it~~ for basketball.
them
- Take the (binoculars) out of ~~it~~ case, please.
their
- Did you hear the (news)? Could ~~they~~ be any worse?
it
- Of all the (pants) you could have worn, ~~that~~ could be the worst.
those