

Lesson 4

# Pronoun-Antecedent Agreement

## Teaching

A pronoun must agree with its antecedent in number, gender, and person. An **antecedent** is the noun or pronoun that a pronoun refers to or replaces.

If the antecedent is singular, use a singular pronoun. If it is plural, use a plural pronoun. Nouns or pronouns joined by *and* are treated as a plural antecedent. If parts of the antecedent are joined by *or* or *nor*, the pronoun agrees with the part nearest to it.

Both the officers and the captain have their names on the ship's newsletter.

Either the officers or the captain has his quarters at the end of this hall.

**With Indefinite Pronouns** Use a singular personal pronoun to refer to a singular **indefinite pronoun**, and a plural personal pronoun to refer to a plural indefinite pronoun.

Each of the ships has its own dock. Many of the ships are loading their supplies.

### Indefinite Pronouns

Always Singular					Always Plural	Singular or Plural	
another	each	everything	no one	someone	both	all	most
anybody	either	much	nothing	something	few	any	none
anyone	everybody	neither	one		many	more	some
anything	everyone	nobody	somebody		several		

If the indefinite pronoun antecedent can be singular or plural, use the meaning of the sentence to determine the number of the indefinite personal pronoun.

Most of the entertainment delighted its audience. (singular)

Most of the entertainers were on their first cruise. (plural)

**Gender and Person** If the antecedent of a singular pronoun could be either feminine or masculine, use the phrase *his or her*. The indefinite pronouns *one*, *everyone*, and *everybody* are in the third person, so pronouns referring to them must be third person also.

### Making Pronouns and Their Antecedents Agree

In each sentence, underline the correct pronoun and its antecedent.

All of the lifeboats have had (its, their) supplies renewed.

1. The captain is French, but (their, his) wife is Italian.
2. They spent (their, his) honeymoon on a cruise ship.
3. The captain and the first mate are on (their, his) first voyage together.
4. Neither the petty officers nor the captain wants (his, their) orders questioned.
5. Many buy (their, his) souvenirs at the harbor store.
6. Some of the food on the buffet was so beautiful that we took (its, their) picture.

# Pronoun-Antecedent Agreement

*More Practice*

## A. Making Pronouns and Antecedents Agree

Underline the pronoun in parentheses that correctly completes each sentence. Also underline the antecedent(s) of the pronoun.

1. Each of the boys enjoyed (his, their) week at the baseball training camp.
2. Some of the swimathon participants arrived with (his or her, their) sponsors.
3. Either Janet or Marjorie left (her, their) calculus book on the windowsill.
4. The chorus honored (its, their) director at a banquet this spring.
5. Most of the antique furniture still had (its, their) original upholstery.
6. Everyone is invited to test (your, his or her, their) ability to climb the wall.
7. The City Council presented (its, their) varying opinions to the media.
8. Either the president or members of Congress will have (his, their ) pictures taken.
9. Several of the delegates tried to resolve (its, his or her, their) conflicting views.
10. Some of the wallpaper in those rooms shows (its, their) age.

## B. Using Pronouns Correctly

In each sentence below, decide whether the pronouns agree with their antecedents. If the sentence is correct, write **Correct** on the line. If it contains a pronoun that does not agree with its antecedent, rewrite the sentence correctly on the line.

1. Some of the crew on the cruise ship traveled far from its homelands.  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. One of the officers has had their license for only a week.  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. In my view, all of the ship lived up to their publicity.  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. A few of the passengers complained about the size of their rooms.  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. One of the women passengers stayed in their room for the first two days.  
\_\_\_\_\_

6. The captain and the officers took his meals with the passengers.  
\_\_\_\_\_

7. Everybody had their chance to sit at the captain's table.  
\_\_\_\_\_

8. Either the captain or the first mate was always at their post on the bridge.  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Lesson 4** **Pronoun-Antecedent Agreement**

*Application*

**A. Making Pronouns and Antecedents Agree in Writing**

Read the following paragraph. Look especially for errors in agreement between pronouns and their antecedents. On the lines below, write the numbers of the sentences with agreement errors. Then write each of those sentences correctly.

**(1)** My parents went on a cruise for his or her thirtieth anniversary. **(2)** Neither one had ever been away from their family for a week. **(3)** My mother tried to get her mother to go along, but she wouldn't. **(4)** The whole family agreed that it was good for them to get away on your own. **(5)** Everyone on the ship got to know my parents and gave them their address. **(6)** My father wanted to swim in the pool, but he had forgotten his swimming trunks. **(7)** They won the shuffleboard tournament for their age group. **(8)** The captain and my father had his picture taken shaking hands. **(9)** My parents liked the captain and crew for its friendliness. **(10)** They said they'd like to go again, but this time with their family.

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**B. Writing with Pronouns**

Have you ever been on a vessel on water or imagined going on such a voyage? Was it a canoe on a slow-moving river, a cruise ship on an ocean, or something in between? Write a description of a voyage you have taken or imagined, including mention of the crew (if only yourself), fellow passengers (if any), and the reason for your trip. Be sure to include at least five personal pronouns with clear antecedents.

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