

ENGLISH

Grammar: Pronouns



Demonstrative and Possessive Pronouns

Demonstrative Pronouns

We know that 'demonstrate' means to show. Therefore, **demonstrative pronouns** are those that show us the nouns or point towards them.

The four demonstrative pronouns in English are **this**, **that**, **these** and **those**.

- Like other pronouns, they too are used to replace nouns.
- Demonstrative pronouns represent nouns which are already mentioned before or are to be understood from context.

Let us look at an example.

This is my favourite.

The noun which stands for the pronoun '**This**' in the above sentence is unclear to us. It can only be clarified if

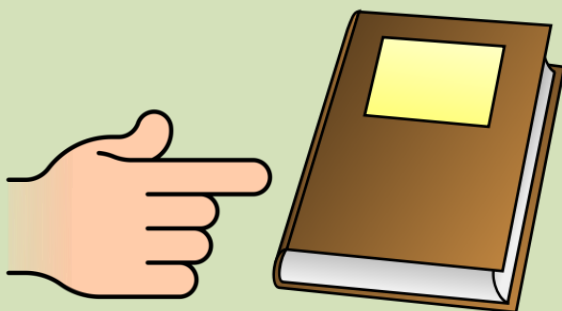
- There is an antecedent in the preceding sentence.

Can you see this book? **This** is my favourite.

Here it becomes clear that the pronoun '**This**' stands for '**book**'.

Or

- The speaker points towards the noun.



This is my favourite.

- Demonstrative pronouns such as '**that**' and '**those**' refer to nouns which are far from the speaker either in time or in distance.
- '**This**' and '**these**' refer to nouns which are close to the speaker either in time or in distance.
- '**This**' and '**that**' stand for singular nouns.
- '**These**' and '**those**' stand for plural nouns.

| Demonstrative Pronouns | Near | Far |
|------------------------|-------|-------|
| Singular | This | That |
| Plural | These | Those |

- A demonstrative pronoun can represent an entire noun phrase.

The stew that she made looks delicious.

That looks delicious.

Let us look at a few more examples:

- Your negligence is a cause of great concern to us. **This** is not acceptable.
- Are **these** your new pet puppies?
- **Those** are the tombs of ancient kings.
- You need not worry about the safety of your employees Mr Sharma. **That** is our responsibility.



Possessive Pronouns

- Possessive pronouns are used to show ownership or possession of nouns to pronouns.
- Pronouns like **mine**, **yours**, **his**, **hers** and **its** are known as singular possessive pronouns.
- Pronouns like **theirs** and **ours** are known as plural possessive pronouns.

The black sneakers are his.



In the above example, the possessive pronoun '**his**' states to whom '**the sneakers**' belong.

- Possessive pronouns are different from possessive adjectives because they do not qualify the noun.

Possessive Adjective

This is her house.

Possessive Pronoun

This house is hers.

- One should never use apostrophes with possessive pronouns to show possession.

The house is their's.



The house is theirs.



Personal Pronouns

What is a Personal Pronoun?

Previously, we have learnt that a **pronoun** is a word used in place of a **noun** which has already been used in a sentence. A **personal pronoun** is used primarily to refer to a specific person, thing or idea. It is used to refer to the first, second or third person in a sentence.

First, Second and Third Person Pronouns

Personal pronouns can be categorised as **first**, **second** or **third person pronouns**.

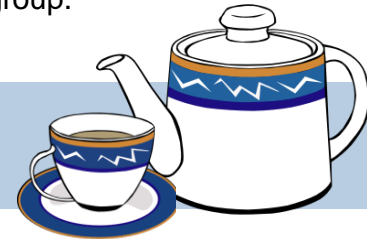
- A **first person pronoun** is used by the speaker to refer to himself or herself.
- It can also be used to refer to the group the speaker is a part of.
- **I, me, us, our, myself, ourselves** are first person pronouns.

- David interjected, "**I** have an idea! Why don't **we** all go to the movies?"
- Tina asked, "Can **I** have another one?"
- The team exclaimed, "Victory is **ours**!"



- A **second person pronoun** is used by the speaker to refer to the person he or she is directly talking to.
- It can be used to address a particular person or an entire group.
- **You, yourself** are examples of second person pronouns.

- Can **I** serve **you** some tea?
- **You** are all equally important to **me**.



- A **third person pronoun** is used by the speaker to refer to the person he or she is not directly addressing.
- **He, she, it, they, him, her** are examples of third person pronouns.

- Greta invited her friends today. **She** is looking forward to meeting **them**.
- Subramaniam has a beautiful voice. **He** practises singing every day.
- The dog held the bone securely in its mouth. **It** was afraid of the bigger dogs.
- The team members exhibited great team spirit. **They** brought home laurels.



Singular and Plural Personal Pronouns

| | | |
|---------------|-------------|--------|
| First Person | Singular | Plural |
| | I | We |
| Second Person | Singular | Plural |
| | You | You |
| Third Person | Singular | Plural |
| | He, she, it | They |

Nominative and Objective Pronouns

According to the role they play in the sentence, pronouns can be categorised as nominative pronouns or objective pronouns.

- A **nominative pronoun** is the **subject** of the verb.
- An **objective pronoun** is the **object** of the verb.

- He was arrested for his involvement in the abduction. (Nominative)
- The office called me. (Objective)
- She was the wife of the celebrated novelist. (Nominative)
- He ate it. (Objective)



| Nominative | Objective |
|------------|-----------|
| I | Me |
| You | You |
| He | Him |
| She | Her |
| It | It |
| They | Them |
| We | Us |

Gender of Pronouns

Pronouns can be divided into three categories according to the genders of the nouns they represent.

- **Masculine gender pronoun:** He, his, him, himself
- **Feminine gender pronoun:** She, her, hers, herself
- **Neutral gender pronoun:** It, itself

He is my best friend.
Radha invited her home.
The assassin kept it on the table.



Reflexive, Emphatic, Interrogative and Relative Pronouns

Reflexive Pronouns

The term **reflexive** can be split into two parts—‘**re-**’ (the prefix which means ‘**back**’) and ‘**flex**’ (the root which means ‘**bend**’).

- A **reflexive pronoun** is a pronoun that ‘bends back’ to its antecedent*. In other words, it is used to refer to the **object** when it is the same as the **subject**.
- Pronouns like ‘**myself**’, ‘**yourself**’, ‘**herself**’, ‘**himself**’, ‘**ourselves**’ and ‘**themselves**’ are known as reflexive pronouns.

SUBJECT/ANTECEDENT
Mrs De Winter

VERB
hurt

REFLEXIVE PRONOUN
herself.

In the above example, we see that the noun ‘**Mrs De Winter**’ and the pronoun ‘**herself**’ refer to the same person. Both are the subject and the object of the verb ‘**hurt**’. The pronoun ‘**herself**’ bends back to the antecedent ‘**Mrs De Winter**’. Hence, ‘**herself**’ is a **reflexive pronoun**.

Let us look at a few more examples.

- The vain prince admired **himself** in the mirror.
- “Do I need one more pair of shoes?” Kavita asked **herself**.
- Good students have the power to motivate **themselves**.
- A narcissist is a person who loves **himself**.
- I cannot lie to **myself**.



An antecedent* is the noun which the pronoun replaces.

Emphatic Pronouns

- Pronouns like '**myself**', '**himself**', '**herself**', '**itself**', '**themselves**' and '**ourselves**' can also be **emphatic pronouns**. Functionally, however, emphatic pronouns are different from reflexive pronouns.
- While reflexive pronouns are used to refer to the antecedent, emphatic pronouns are used to **lay emphasis on the antecedent**.

SUBJECT/ANTECEDENT

Mrs Dalloway

said she would buy the flowers

EMPHATIC PRONOUN

herself.

In the above example, '**Mrs Dalloway**' is the antecedent of the pronoun herself. In this sentence, 'herself' functions as a word which lays emphasis on its antecedent.

Let us look at a few more examples.

- Margaret **herself** was the forger of the documents.
- The weapon **itself** was missing.
- The judge **herself** was found embroiled in the controversy.
- The detective **himself** was confounded by the crime.



Singular and Plural Reflexive/Emphatic Pronouns

| Singular | Plural |
|--------------------------|------------|
| Myself | Ourselves |
| Yourself | Yourselves |
| Himself, herself, itself | Themselves |

Interrogative Pronouns

We know that the term 'interrogate' means to ask questions. **Interrogative pronouns** are those which are used for forming questions.

| | | |
|---------|----------|-----------|
| Who | Whom | Whose |
| Which | What | Whichever |
| Whoever | Whomever | Whatever |

Let us look at a few examples.

- **Who** ran the fastest?
- **Which** door should be opened?
- **What** is the time?
- **Whose** cat is this?
- **Whom** shall we go to?



- **Whoever** told her she could sing?
- **Whatever** is she reading?
- **Whomever** is he marrying?
- **Whichever** is the correct answer to that question?



Relative Pronouns

- Relative pronouns help us refer back to the antecedent.
- Although they may look like interrogative pronouns, their functions are completely different.

The warrior who was wounded fought bravely.

In this sentence, the pronoun '**who**' refers to the antecedent '**The warrior**'.

- Relative pronouns are also used to join parts of sentences.

The man

+

whom you met

+

is my father.

Usage of Relative Pronouns

| | |
|----------------------------|--|
| <p>Who and Whom</p> | <p>Both pronouns are used to refer to people. They can also be used to refer to animals.</p> <p>Who – used for referring to the subject</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>This is the writer who wrote 'The Grapes of Wrath'.</i> (the writer is the one who 'wrote'; 'the writer' is the subject) <p>Whom – used for referring to the object</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>The man whom I thought highly of turned out to be a fraud.</i> (I thought of the 'man'; 'the man' is the object) |
| <p>Whose</p> | <p>The relative pronoun 'whose' is used to refer to people who possess something.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>This is the uncle whose house I live in.</i> (The pronoun 'whose' refers to the uncle who owns the house) |
| <p>Which</p> | <p>The relative pronoun 'which' is used to refer to objects or animals.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>The dog which the Fitzgeralds abandoned used to be their pet.</i> (The pronoun 'which' refers to the dog) |
| <p>That</p> | <p>That is used to refer to people, objects and animals.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>The hand that rocks the cradle rules the world.</i> (The pronoun 'that' refers to 'the hand') |