

## LEARNING ABOUT PRONOUNS

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### *What are pronouns?*

A noun is someone or something's name. Here's a reminder.

**Boy**  
**Girl**  
**Bike**  
**Guitar**

*(Animated so the noun appears after the picture.)*

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However, we don't always repeat the noun every time. It would end up sounding silly, like this.

**Mary-Jane** came to school with her **guitar**.  
The teacher asked **Mary-Jane** to play her **guitar**.  
**Mary-Jane** went out the front and played her **guitar**.  
The class thought **Mary-Jane** was a very good player of the **guitar**.  
They all clapped **Mary-Jane** and her **guitar**.  
**Mary-Jane** took her **guitar** and went back to her seat.

*Images first of girl and guitar – after every sentence, the same picture is repeated – with the words 'Repetitive!' and 'Boring!' added*

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This sounds pretty boring. That's why pronouns are so useful. A pronoun is a word that stands in for a noun. Like this.

### *Pic of Mary-Jane and guitar*

*(On one side 'Mary-Jane' (noun) and 'guitar' (noun) - on the other 'she'/'her' and 'it')*

In the sentences earlier, we can substitute 'she' (or 'her') for Mary-Jane and 'it' for the guitar. This keeps the sentences from getting too clogged up.

Mary-Jane came to school with her guitar. The teacher asked **her** to play **it**. **She** went out the front and played **it**. The class thought **she** was a very good guitar player. **They** all clapped **her**. **She** took **it** and went back to her seat.

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It is a bit like a public sign. On public toilets, we see

***Symbol of male and female figures***

There is no way a sign could name every person who comes in. The symbol shows 'all men' and 'all women' (who might want to come in).

A pronoun is the same. It is a symbol for something else. So

***Pic of Mary-Jane***

***Pic of female figure***

***Pic of Billy***

***Pic of male figure***

HINT: Pronouns make a distinction between male (he) and female (she) and between singular (he or she) and plural (they).

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You will have noticed that 'she' and 'her' both refer to 'Mary-Jane'. That's because grammar makes a distinction between pronouns that come before the verb (which show who *does the action*) and those that come after the verb (which show who *receives the action, or has the action done to them*). For example

**She** rode her bike. *She* is the 'doer' of the action (*she rode it*).

***Pic of girl on bike (show arrow indicating forward, near girl)***

But

The bike hit **her**. *Her* is the 'receiver' of the action (*it fell on her*).

***Pic of with bike on top of her (show arrow pointing to girl)***

HINT: To find out which one, put the pronoun in front of the verb. So 'She rode' sounds right. But 'Her rode' sounds silly.

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These two types are called

**SUBJECT PRONOUNS**

***(the doer pronouns)***

**OBJECT PRONOUNS**

***(the receiver pronouns)***

Here they are.

<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>SINGULAR</b>	<b>OBJECT</b>	<b>SINGULAR</b>
	I		me
	you		you
	he, she, it		him, her,
	<b>PLURAL</b>		<b>PLURAL</b>
	we		us
	you		you
	they		them

RULE: Although one or two of these are the same word (you/you and it/it) the others are distinct and cannot be swapped about. You **must always use a subject pronoun in front of the verb** and **an object pronoun after the verb**.

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### ***Set the scene for your use of a pronoun***

Although pronouns are excellent value, you must be careful that you let the reader know who or what they refer to. The usual practice is to start with a sentence containing the noun, such as

#### ***Image of kangaroo***

There was a kangaroo in the paddock.

*Then* use the pronoun.

There was a kangaroo in the paddock. **It** hopped into the garden. **It** sniffed the flowers. **It** ate the grass. Then **it** heard and noise and jumped over the fence. I last saw **it** heading back into the bush.

This way there is no confusion about what 'it' refers to.

HINT: Begin with the noun – and *then* use the pronoun (which substitutes for the noun). Do not use any pronoun *before* you have introduced the noun. If you use another noun, go through the same process again. If there is any chance of confusion, repeat the noun itself to make things clear.

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### ***The problem of confusion***

Avoid mixing up different nouns and pronouns. This for example is a classic joke about confusing pronouns:

**There's the hammer and there is the nail.  
When I nod my head, hit it.**

***Pic of two people, one with a hammer and nail.***

The problem here is that 'it' could refer to the nail or the head.

HINT: If there are two or more nouns (before a pronoun) – make sure the reader knows which one 'it' (or any pronoun) refers to. In the example above, adding 'hit the nail' would avoid any confusion.

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There are two other types of pronoun which you should understand. One is called a

### POSSESSIVE PRONOUN

These are pronouns that indicate who owns (or possesses) something. Here are two examples:

That is **your** book. The book is **yours**.  
(The pronoun tells us that 'you' own it.)

Mary is **his** mother. (The pronoun tells us that 'he' owns her.)

HINT: Begin with the noun – and *then* use the pronoun (which substitutes for the noun). If there is any chance of confusion, repeat the noun to make things clear.

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Here is a list of possessive pronouns:

<b>SINGULAR</b>		<b>PLURAL</b>	
	mine		ours
	yours		yours
	his, hers, its		Theirs

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The last type of pronoun which you should understand is called an

### EMPHATIC PRONOUN

These are pronouns that refer back to the person directly, *emphasising* who is involved. Here are two examples:

I will go **myself**. (The pronoun emphasises that it is 'I' doing the action.)

They have decided to build it **themselves**.  
(The pronoun repeats or emphasises that 'they' will do the action.)

HINT: All emphatic pronouns end in 'self' or 'selves'. They always refer back to the **subject pronoun** coming in the same sentence immediately before them.

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Here is a list of emphatic pronouns:

<b><i>SINGULAR</i></b>		<b><i>PLURAL</i></b>	
	myself		ourselves
	yourself		yourselves
	himself, herself, itself		themselves