

Using **YOU**, **ONE**, and **THEY** as Impersonal Pronouns

<p>a) <b>One</b> should always be polite.</p> <p>b) How does <b>one</b> get to 5th Ave from here?</p> <p>c) <b>You</b> should always be polite.</p> <p>d) How do <b>you</b> get to 5th Ave from here?</p>	<p>In (a) and (b): <b>ONE</b> means "any person" or "people in general."</p> <p>In (c) and (d): <b>YOU</b> means "any person" or "people in general."</p> <p><b>ONE</b> is more formal than <b>YOU</b>. Impersonal <b>YOU</b>, rather than <b>ONE</b>, is used more frequently in everyday English.</p>
<p>e) <b>One</b> should take care of <b>one's</b> health.</p> <p>f) <b>One</b> should take care of <b>his</b> health.</p> <p>g) <b>One</b> should take care of <b>his or her</b> health.</p>	<p>Notice the pronouns that may be used in the same sentence to refer back to 1:</p> <p>(e) is typical in British usage and formal American usage.      (f) is mostly American usage.      (g) is stylistically awkward.</p>
<p>h) Did Anne lose her job?      Yes. <b>They</b> fired her.</p> <p>i) <b>They</b> mine graphite in Brazil, don't they?      Yes. Brazil is one of the leading graphite producers in the world.</p>	<p><b>THEY</b> is used as an impersonal pronoun in spoken or very informal English to mean "some people or somebody."</p> <p><b>THEY</b> has no stated antecedent. The antecedent is implied: In (h), <b>THEY</b> = the people Ann worked for.</p>

EXERCISES

**PRACTICE (People in General = 1; A Specific Person = 2)**

1. Jim quit his job to start a business. I think **you (1)** need to follow **your (1)** dreams.
2. Jake, if **you (2)** really want my advice, I think **you (2)** should find a new job.
3. Wool requires special handling. If **you ( )** wash wool and hot water, it will shrink. **You ( )** shouldn't throw a wool sweater into a washing machine with **your ( )** cottons.
4. Alex, I told **you ( )** not to wash **your ( )** sweater in hot water. Now look at it. It's ruined!
5. Generosity is its own reward. **You ( )** always get back more than **you ( )** give.
6. Sonia, let's make a deal. If **you ( )** wash the dishes, I'll take out the garbage.
7. The earth's environment is getting worse. **They ( )** say that the ozone layer is being depleted more and more every year.
8. Memory is selective. Often **you ( )** remember only what **you ( )** want to remember. If **you ( )** asked two people to tell **you ( )** about an experience **they ( )** shared, they might tell **you ( )** two different stories.