

Lesson 6: Pronoun Case

Pronoun Cases

Every pronoun has a *case*, which indicates its relationship to a verb or noun. There are four common cases.

Subjective (or *nominative*) pronouns (*I*, *you*, *he*, *she*, *we*, *they*, *who*, etc.) are used primarily as subjects of verbs.

Objective pronouns (*me*, *you*, *him*, *her*, *them*, *whom*, etc.) are used primarily as *objects of verbs*.

Possessive pronouns (*my/mine*, *her/hers*, *their/theirs*, *whose*, etc.) show *attribution or ownership*.

Reflexive pronouns (*myself*, *yourself*, *himself*, *herself*, *themselves*, etc.) show an *object equated with the subject* or show *emphasis*.

Subjective Pronouns

Subjective pronouns are used only as *subjects of verbs* or as *predicate nominatives*.

Subject of real verb: *Jenna and I were the only two at the meeting.*

Subject of implied verb: *My brother is taller than I (am).*

Although the verb isn't written, its meaning is implied.

Predicate nominative: *The winner of the prize was she.*

A *predicate nominative* is a pronoun or noun "linked" to the subject by a linking verb. It takes the *subjective case*.

Example:

Matthew is the new captain of the team.
subject verb predicate nominative

The mountain became a violent volcano.
subject verb predicate nominative

Objective Pronouns

Objective pronouns are used as *objects of verbs* or as *objects of prepositions*.

Object of verb:

My father struggled to raise my brother and me.

Object of preposition: *This should be a great opportunity for you and her.*

When you have a compound phrase like *Tom and me and the coach and them*, deciding the case of the pronoun is easier if you leave out the other part of the phrase.

Sheila and (her or she?) took the cab uptown.

— *She took the cab uptown* not *Her took the cab uptown.*

It was made for you and (me or I?) — *It was made for me* not *It was made for I.*

Possessive Pronouns

Don't use the objective case when you should use the possessive case before a gerund.

Wrong: *I resent you taking the car without asking.*

Right: *I resent your taking the car without asking.*

The object of the verb *resent* is *taking*; the *taking* is what *I resent*, so using the objective pronoun *you* only confuses things. Since it's not *you whom I resent*, the possessive case *your* makes sense.

Reflexive Pronouns

Reflexive pronouns are used in only two ways: to show that a subject and object are the same, as in "I pinched *myself* to make sure I wasn't dreaming," or to emphasize a noun or pronoun, as in "I *myself* would never say such a thing." Never use a reflexive pronoun where an objective pronoun is required. Wrong: The crowd applauded Carl and *myself*. Right: The crowd applauded Carl and *me*.

Worksheet 6: Pronoun Case

Choose the correct pronoun in each sentence below.

1. *The university presented the honor to David and (he/him).*
2. *After the game, we all agreed that no one had played harder than (he/him).*
3. *Justine and (me/I) have always been closest friends.*
4. *There is no point in (our/us) delaying the tests any longer.*
5. *I shall grant immortality to (he/him) who can pull the sword from the stone.*
6. *It seems quite clear that you and (I/me) will have to work together to solve this problem.*
7. *It might be hard for (him and me/he and I) to agree.*
8. *The other cheerleaders and (her/she) needed to practice on the weekend.*
9. *The tabloid media were thrilled about (him/his) making such a fool of himself in public.*
10. *(We/Us) and the other members debated the issue for over 2 hours.*
11. *The owners of the club offered my wife and (me/I) a free bottle of wine with dinner.*
12. *No other runner on the team could outrun (myself/me).*
13. *The teachers were getting tired of (him/his) constantly falling asleep in class.*
14. *The ballpark always held a special attraction for Dave and (I/me).*
15. *Our friends gave a party for Ingrid and (I/me/myself).*
16. *In anticipation of the trip, I bought (me/myself) a nice new suitcase.*