

Indefinite pronoun

A pronoun that does not refer to a specific person or thing

Indefinite pronouns do not refer to specific people or things. So they do not have clear antecedents.

Most indefinite pronouns are singular. A few are plural.

Indefinite Pronouns		
Singular		Plural
another	neither	all
anybody	nobody	both
anyone	no one	few
anything	nothing	many
each	one	several
each other	one another	
either	somebody	
everybody	someone	
everyone	something	
everything		

Writing Tip

To help you remember that indefinite pronouns such as *everybody* and *something* are singular, think of them as two words: *every body* and *some thing*. *Body* and *thing* are singular words.

Activity A Find the indefinite pronouns in these sentences. Write them on your paper.

- 1) Everyone at Wilson High School attended the band concert.
- 2) "I see someone I know," said Angela.
- 3) Angela and Emily waved at each other.
- 4) Many of the songs were familiar.
- 5) Everybody cheered for the band.

An indefinite pronoun can be the antecedent for another pronoun. Use plural possessive pronouns with plural indefinite pronouns. Use singular possessive pronouns with singular indefinite pronouns.

EXAMPLE

Both brought **their** books.

Each of the girls has **her** book.

One of the boys lost **his** book.

When you don't know if the person is male or female, you may use *his* or *her* or you can rewrite the sentence using plural pronouns.

EXAMPLE

Everyone played **his or her** own instrument.

All of the students played **their** own instruments.

Activity B Write the correct pronoun on your paper.

- 1) Everyone should turn in (his or her, their) paper.
- 2) Several gave (his or her, their) parents the newsletter.
- 3) Everyone must take off (his or her, their) shoes.
- 4) Few could identify (his or her, their) bags.
- 5) Someone left (his or her, their) lights on.

Activity C Use each of these pronouns in a sentence. Underline all the pronouns in your sentences. Use two underlines for the indefinite pronouns.

- | | |
|---------------|------------|
| 1) all | 4) each |
| 2) someone | 5) several |
| 3) everything | |

LESSON 6

Review

Find the indefinite pronouns in these sentences. Write them on your paper.

- 1) There is nothing I like more than a good movie.
- 2) Somebody is at the door.
- 3) Is anyone listening to me?
- 4) Neither knows the answer.

Find the pronouns in these paragraphs and write them on your paper. Next to each pronoun, write whether it is *personal*, *relative*, *interrogative*, *indefinite*, or *demonstrative*.

- 5) After school, everyone likes to go to Tony's. Emily enjoys seeing many of her friends who meet there. They think that Tony's has the best French fries in town.

"What can I get you?" asks the waitress.

Emily can't decide between French fries and a milkshake. "I would like a vanilla shake, please," she says.

"Those are great," everyone tells her.

"What did you order, Neeru?" asks Emily.

Neeru points to a picture of an ice cream sundae on the menu and says, "I asked for that."

Nathan asks, "Which of the 25 flavors of ice cream do you like best?"

Neeru tells him that chocolate is her favorite flavor.



Using What You've Learned

Write a set of directions for working together successfully in a group. Use as many indefinite pronouns as you can. Make sure any possessive pronouns agree with their antecedents.

Contraction

Two words made into one by replacing one or more letters with an apostrophe

In Chapter 2, you learned how to use an apostrophe (') to show possession in nouns.

EXAMPLE

Emily's dog

The students' instruments

We also use an apostrophe in a contraction. A **contraction** is two words made into one by leaving out one or more letters. An apostrophe is used in place of the missing letter(s). All of these contractions are made from a pronoun and a verb.

Common Contractions

I'd = I would, I had

who's = who is

I'll = I will

we'll = we will

I'm = I am

we're = we are

I've = I have

we'd = we would, we had

you'll = you will

we've = we have

you're = you are

they'd = they would, they had

you've = you have

they're = they are

he's = he is, he has

they've = they have

she's = she is, she has

that's = that is

it's = it is, it has

what's = what is

let's = let us

Writing Tip

We use contractions in informal writing, such as a friendly letter or a note to a friend. We also use contractions in everyday speaking. But we don't use contractions in formal writing.

Activity A Find the contractions in this paragraph. Write each contraction as two words on your paper.

I'd like to tell you an interesting story about something that's important. It's about the invention of the radio. We'd not have a radio without the invention of the microphone and the Audion tube. You're probably asking, "What's an Audion tube?" Well, I'll tell you. It's a tube that makes electrical impulses louder and sends them through the air. Without Audion tubes, radio would be impossible.

Remember that a contraction has an apostrophe to stand for missing letters. Find the contractions in these sentences and write them on your paper. Then rewrite each contraction as two words.

- 1) You've probably heard people talk about yoga. It's something people have been doing for three thousand years. If you took a yoga class, you'd find that yoga is more than exercise. Its benefits are for the mind and body. The yoga student's first job is to learn how to breathe.

"I've always known how to breathe," you'll probably respond. But complete yoga breathing is very different from regular breathing.

Write this paragraph but make each contraction two words.

- 2) What do you know about Robert Frost? He's one of America's most famous poets. If you've read "The Road Not Taken," you'll know why he's so popular. President John F. Kennedy asked Frost to read a poem at his inauguration. What's the name of the poem Frost read? Its title is "The Gift Outright." During his lifetime, Robert Frost won the Pulitzer Prize for poetry four times.

Writing Project



Using What You Know About Antecedents

When you write, you often use pronouns to replace nouns. Make sure that it is clear to your reader what the antecedent of each pronoun is.

In this writing activity, you will practice using pronouns. Read this sentence.

Brenda's favorite activity is riding her bike.

What is the pronoun in this sentence?

What noun does the pronoun replace?

(The possessive pronoun *her* replaces the possessive noun *Brenda's*. *Brenda's* is the antecedent of *her*.)

Read the following story and identify the antecedents of these pronouns: *I, she, them, herself, me, we*. Does the writer make it clear what the antecedents are?

The Day I Met Mary

By Emily Watson

When I was twelve, I moved to Lewisdale, Maryland. On the first day of junior high school, I walked to the bus stop. Mary was standing with a group of other kids from the neighborhood. She walked away from them and introduced herself to me. We sat together on the bus and talked. From that day until now we have been good friends.

Write a paragraph that tells about how you met one of your friends. After you finish, list all the pronouns and write their antecedents. If any of the antecedents seem unclear, revise your paragraph to correct the problem. Then make another list of the pronouns and have a classmate read your paragraph. Ask the classmate to identify the antecedent of each pronoun on the list.

WORD BANK

antecedent

compound

personal

pronoun

compound relative
pronoun

contraction

demonstrative
pronounfirst-person
pronoun

indefinite pronoun

interrogative
pronounpersonal pronoun
pronoun

relative pronoun

second-person
pronounthird-person
pronoun

Part A On a sheet of paper, write the correct word or words from the Word Bank to complete each sentence.

- 1) A _____ is two words made into one by replacing one or more letters with an apostrophe.
- 2) An _____ asks a question.
- 3) A _____ is a pronoun such as *whoever*, *whomever*, *whichever*, and *whatever*.
- 4) A _____ refers to the person who is speaking.
- 5) A _____ refers to a person or thing.
- 6) An _____ does not refer to a specific person or thing.
- 7) A _____ refers to the person or thing being talked about.
- 8) A _____ combines a singular personal pronoun and *-self* or a plural personal pronoun and *-selves*.
- 9) An _____ is the noun that the pronoun replaces.
- 10) A _____ points out a particular person or thing.
- 11) A _____ refers to the person who is spoken to.
- 12) A _____ is a word that replaces a noun.
- 13) A _____ is a pronoun such as *who*, *whom*, *whose*, *which*, *that*, and *what*.

Part B Write the pronouns in these sentences on your paper. Write the antecedent next to each pronoun.

- 14) Nathan said he called Emily.
- 15) Angela was glad she went to the game.
- 16) Michelle left her notebook here.
- 17) Mrs. Benson likes students who ask questions.
- 18) Emily played a song she really likes.

Part C Write the pronouns in these sentences on your paper. Next to each pronoun, write whether it is *personal*, *relative*, *interrogative*, *demonstrative*, or *indefinite*.

- 19) I don't like people who interrupt.
- 20) That is one of my pet peeves.
- 21) Everybody in the class likes math because it challenges them.
- 22) What are some of the classes that you enjoy?

Part D Write the correct pronoun for each sentence on your paper.

- 23) Armando went to see a trainer (whom, what) he had met through a friend.
- 24) "I want to make (my, mine) arms stronger," he said.
- 25) Looking at the machines, Armando asked, "What do (this, these) do?"
- 26) "(This, Those) works your triceps," said the trainer, pointing to a machine.
- 27) People (which, who) exercise want to stay fit and feel healthy.
- 28) Everyone wants to look (his or her, their) best.

Part E On your paper, write each contraction as two words.

- 29) I'll let you know when we're ready to go.
- 30) That's the only route they've taken.

Test-Taking Tip

When studying for a test, review any tests or quizzes you took earlier that cover the same information.