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Pronouns

The clear-message route





Grammar at a glance

When you want to...	Form to use	Worked example
Refer back clearly	name first, then pronoun	Noor waved. She smiled.
Choose the right role	subject she / object her	She waved. I saw her.
Show ownership	my + noun / mine alone	My pencil is blue. Yours is red.
Remove doubt	repeat the intended noun	The bag hit the box. The box split.

SELECT A ROW TO OPEN ITS LESSON

PRONOUNS

Pronouns need clear references



The route record uses she and her for Lily, and he and him for Sam. Lily holds the red bag. Sam holds the green box. Once a name is clear, a pronoun can help us continue without repeating it every time.

A pronoun can stand in for a noun or noun group. Make sure your reader can tell who or what it means.

USE	EXAMPLE	WHAT TO NOTICE
Repeat the name	Lily has a bag. Lily carries the bag.	The message is clear, but repeats Lily and the bag.
Keep a clear reference	Lily has a bag. She carries it.	She refers to Lily. It refers to the bag. The first sentence introduced both.
Talk about both helpers	Lily and Sam are ready. They carry a box.	They refers to the two named helpers together.

HOW THE PATTERN WORKS

Introduced person	Introduced thing	Introduced pair
Lily to she	the bag to it	Lily and Sam to they

Does they always mean more than one person?

No. They can also refer to one person. In Lily and Sam are ready. They carry a box, the explicitly named pair makes this particular use plural.

YOUR TURN

The record uses he for Sam. “Sam is ready. ___ opens the gate.”

He / It

> Answer • He
> He refers to Sam.

PRONOUNS

Subject and object forms



Lily waves to Sam. Lily performs the waving; Sam is the person she waves to. A pronoun's form depends on its job in the sentence, even when it refers to the same person.

Use she or he when that person does the action. Use her or him after a verb or preposition, as in "Wait for him."

USE	EXAMPLE	WHAT TO NOTICE
Name both people	Lily waves to Sam.	Lily does the action. Sam follows to as the person addressed by the wave.
Choose forms by role	She waves to him.	She is the subject form for Lily; him is the object form for Sam after to.
Reverse the direction	He waves to her.	Now Sam does the action and Lily receives the wave. Changing forms changes the roles.

HOW THE PATTERN WORKS

Who acts?	Action	To whom?
Lily to she	waves	to Sam to to him

Is I always better than me?

No. I is the subject form; me is an object form. I carry the bag and Give the bag to me are both standard. Adding another name does not change the needed role.

YOUR TURN

Sam uses he and him. Fill the gap in "Please wait for ___."

he / him

> Answer • him
> For takes the object form.

PRONOUNS

My and mine, your and yours



The delivery record says the red bag belongs to Lily and the green box belongs to Sam. Holding a parcel alone would not prove ownership; the record supplies that fact. Lily can say my bag or the bag is mine.

Use my, your or their before a noun. Mine, yours and theirs can stand on their own.

USE	EXAMPLE	WHAT TO NOTICE
Keep the noun	Lily says, “This is my bag.”	My goes before bag. It shows the owner but does not stand alone here.
Replace the noun group	Lily says, “This bag is mine.”	Mine stands on its own instead of my bag.
Change the speaker	Sam says to Lily, “This bag is yours.”	Yours still means Lily’s bag because Sam is now speaking to her.

HOW THE PATTERN WORKS

Before a noun	Stands alone	Listener owns it
my bag	mine	yours

Do all ownership words need apostrophes?

No. A noun can use an apostrophe to mark possession, as in Lily’s bag, but the possessive pronouns mine, yours, hers, ours and theirs do not.

YOUR TURN

Complete before the noun: “This is ___ bag.” Refer to the listener.

your / yours

> Answer • your
> Your comes before bag.

PRONOUNS

Repeat a noun when a pronoun is unclear



A note says “The bag was beside the box. It was heavy.” Does it mean the bag or the box? Both are possible. The team must state the intended object, not guess that the nearest noun always wins.

If two things could both be called it, repeat the noun that you mean.

USE	EXAMPLE	WHAT TO NOTICE
Two possible references	The bag was beside the box. It was heavy.	It could refer to either object. The message alone does not settle which.
Make the bag clear	The bag was beside the box. The bag was heavy.	Repeating the noun identifies the bag as the heavy object.
Make the box clear	The bag was beside the box. The box was heavy.	Repeating a different noun changes which object is described.

HOW THE PATTERN WORKS

Possible reference 1	Unclear pronoun	Possible reference 2
the bag	it	the box

Must a pronoun refer to the nearest noun?

No. Context and meaning determine reference. When two candidates remain plausible, the responsible edit is to clarify the intended noun instead of applying a nearest-word rule.

YOUR TURN

“The book was near the bag. It was wet.” What is wet?

Always the bag / The message alone is ambiguous.

> Answer • The message alone is ambiguous.
> Either object could be wet.

ONE LAST CHALLENGE

Whose notebook got wet?

A notebook was beside a bottle. Someone wrote “It got wet.” Rewrite the second sentence so we know the notebook got wet.



A POSSIBLE ANSWER

The notebook got wet.

Repeating notebook settles which object you mean.

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