

**INSTRUCTOR:** "Pronouns: An Overview."

A pronoun is a word that takes the place of a noun. Some pronouns that can be used in place of the noun professor are she, her, and hers. Some pronouns that can be used in place of the noun waiter are he, him, and his. Some pronouns that can be used in place of the noun dancers are they, them, and their. Some pronouns that can be used in place of the noun cookie are it and its.

We typically use pronouns to avoid repeating the same noun multiple times. Professor Nordquist-Sheehan said Professor Nordquist-Sheehan would post the grades after Professor Nordquist-Sheehan corrected the exams during Professor Nordquist-Sheehan's office hours. Obviously this sentence needs some work.

Professor Nordquist-Sheehan said she would post the grades after she corrected the exams during her office hours. Sounds better, right?

Problems with pronouns usually occur in three areas-- agreement, case, and reference. When we talk about pronoun-antecedent agreement, we are talking about the pronoun matching up with its antecedent-- the noun it is replacing.

If an antecedent is singular, the pronoun must be singular. Jordan drove her new car home. If the antecedent is plural, the pronoun must be plural. The children opened their presents.

When we talk about pronoun case, we are talking about the pronoun being in the proper form for its role in the sentence. If the pronoun is being used as a subject in a sentence, it must be in the subjective case. The subjective pronouns are I, we, he, she, it, and they. I knew the train would be late.

If the pronoun is being used as the object of a verb, meaning that it receives the action, it must be in the objective case. The objective pronouns are me, us, him, her, and them. The parking attendant gave us directions.

Objective pronouns also follow prepositions, such as of, with, and under. George will ride home with me.

When we talk about pronoun reference, we are talking about the pronoun clearly referring to its antecedent-- the noun it is replacing. That actor may seem young now, but he began his career at age nine.

We'll go into more detail about these pronoun trouble spots in separate lessons. For now, remember, avoiding pronoun problems in your writing will make you a stronger, clearer writer.