LESSON TWO: THE PRONOUN

A pronoun is a word that takes the place of a noun. We use pronouns to refer to persons, places, things, or ideas without having to rename them. For example:

My uncle likes the roller coaster. It doesn't scare him.
(The pronoun "it" takes the place of the noun "roller coaster")
(The pronoun "him" takes the place of the noun "uncle")

The noun that a pronoun replaces is called the antecedent. In the above sentence, the noun "uncle" is the antecedent to the pronoun "him," and the noun "roller coaster" is the antecedent to the pronoun "it."

Sometimes the antecedent is not stated in the sentence. For example:

Give me the book.

or

Has anybody seen a blue sweater?

EXERCISE EIGHT: Identify the antecedents of the pronouns in BOLD.

1. Elsie planted the tomatoes so that she would have them for salads.

2. Mr. Peters hired Jane because he knew that Jane was well qualified.

3. Uncle Al bought two tickets for Jimmy and gave them to him for his birthday.

4. The astronauts described how they opened their capsule.

5. That story was so amazing that it will be told for years. (TRICKY!)

6. When he makes a long distance call, Jim speaks for only a few minutes. (TRICKY!)

7. Will the treasurer give her report?

8. As the steamboat rounded the bend, black smoke poured
from its smokestack.

Like nouns, pronouns fall into several categories. The following charts and exercises will introduce you to the various kinds of pronouns.

**PERSONAL PRONOUNS**

Personal pronouns are the most common pronouns. They refer to (1) the person speaking, (2) the person spoken to, and (3) the person, place, or thing spoken about. Personal pronouns also have number (singular or plural). Finally, personal pronouns have gender (masculine, feminine, neuter)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>First Person</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(person speaking)</td>
<td>I, me, my, mine</td>
<td>we, us, our, ours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Second Person</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(person spoken to)</td>
<td>you, your, yours</td>
<td>you, your, yours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Third Person</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(person, place, etc.</td>
<td>he, him, his</td>
<td>they, them, their, theirs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>spoken about)</td>
<td>she, her, hers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>it, its</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**EXERCISE NINE:** Underline the personal pronouns in the following sentences; then, circle the antecedents and label the person above the pronoun.

1. Betsy has just written her first story.

2. The explorers sailed their ship across the Pacific.

3. Where are you going, Bob?

4. The champion skater always performed on his newest skates.

5. The woman washed her car every week.

6. The actors practiced their parts at rehearsal.
7. A large sheepdog buries its bones behind the barn.

DEMONSTRATIVE PRONOUNS

Demonstrative pronouns point out specific persons, places, or things. There are two singular and two plural demonstrative pronouns.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>this</td>
<td>these</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>that</td>
<td>those</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

"This" and "these" refer to something nearby; "that" and "those" refer to something farther away. Demonstrative pronouns generally come at the beginning of the sentence with their antecedents appearing somewhere later in the same sentence. For example:

That has always been my favorite movie.

Once in a while, the demonstrative pronoun will come after its antecedent. For example:

Of all her stories, those are my favorite.

EXERCISE TEN: Underline the demonstrative pronouns in the following sentences, then circle the antecedents.

1. This is the computer I hope to get for Christmas.
2. My uncle plays the bassoon; this is very difficult to play!
3. That seems to be the shortest route to the village.
4. She said those are the most interesting fossils.
5. Of all his excuses, these are the poorest.
6. Isn't that a Georgia O'Keeffe painting?
7. Yes, these are the oldest tombstones in Lexington's cemetery.

8. This has been the happiest day of my life.

**INTERROGATIVE PRONOUNS**

To interrogate means to "ask questions." An interrogative pronoun is used to begin a question. All five interrogative pronouns begin with "w."

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>what</th>
<th>which</th>
<th>who</th>
<th>whom</th>
<th>whose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Some interrogative pronouns have antecedents, and some don't. For example:

Here is the refund check; **what** shall I do with it?

**Who** is the *pole-vaulter* with the perfect record?

**Whom** does Carrie want to see in the office?

**Which** is the shortest *way* to the city?

**EXERCISE ELEVEN:** Underline the interrogative pronouns in the following sentences. Circle the 5 antecedents.

1. Whom did you send for yesterday?

2. That is beautiful. Whose is it?

3. She has two calculators. Which would you prefer to borrow?

4. Who is the actor with the high-pitched voice?

5. What is her occupation?

6. What should I say when I meet the Senator?

7. Which of the states has the largest population?
8. With whom did you leave your telephone number?

9. Samantha has four CD's by the Beatles. Which is the best?

10. Who is coming to the party?

**INDEFINITE PRONOUNS**

An indefinite pronoun is a pronoun that does not refer to a specific person, place, thing, or idea. There are many indefinite pronouns, and they give us trouble!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Plural</th>
<th>Singular or Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>another</td>
<td>much</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>anybody</td>
<td>neither</td>
<td>both</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>anyone</td>
<td>nobody</td>
<td>few</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>anything</td>
<td>no one</td>
<td>many</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>each</td>
<td>nothing</td>
<td>others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>either</td>
<td>one</td>
<td>several</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>everybody</td>
<td>other</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>everyone</td>
<td>somebody</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>everything</td>
<td>someone</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>little</td>
<td>something</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sometimes indefinite pronouns have antecedents, but most often they do not. For example:

- **Both** of the *artists* use watercolors.
- **Everything** is ready for the trip.

**EXERCISE TWELVE:** Underline the indefinite pronouns. Circle the 6 antecedents.

1. Few in the class knew what nation colonized Angola.

2. Has everyone already had lunch?

3. Many of these insects burrow into the soil.

4. Neither cared for the concert, but both complimented the bandleader.

5. His excuse is that everyone arrived late.

6. In the field grew poison ivy and poison sumac; both can cause rashes.
7. Most can learn to use parallel bars after practicing for a while.

8. Our family knew none of their guests.

9. Most of the people I know would like to play the piano.
10. All of the poodles have been carefully trained.

**REVIEW EXERCISE:** Underline the pronouns and circle the antecedent.

1. What was so strange about the ride?

2. Someone wrote a song about Mrs. Ayotte.

3. That is not the curious thing, however.

4. I think the test was very difficult.

5. Long ago, a train rolled into town, but no one got off.

6. Who will go with the baby to the park?

7. The gloves are mine.

8. Which is the house for sale?

9. Tony said these are the world's smallest birds.

10. Albert Einstein devoted his life to science.

11. Years later many thought Mark had been guilty.

12. Those are the books Molly read last summer.

13. Who came into the store late?

14. Everything in the window is on sale.
15. The book on the table is mine.

EXERCISE THIRTEEN: COMPOSING

1. Write a complete sentence that contains a first person singular personal pronoun.

2. Write a complete sentence that contains a third person plural personal pronoun.

3. Write a complete sentence that uses the personal pronoun "he" with the antecedent "coach."

4. Write a question that begins with an interrogative pronoun.

5. Write a complete sentence that contains a demonstrative pronoun with the antecedent "zoo."

6. Write a complete sentence that contains the indefinite pronoun "all."

7. Write a complete sentence that contains the indefinite pronoun "both" with the antecedent "boys."
8. Write a complete sentence that contains the indefinite pronoun "nothing."

9. Write a complete sentence that contains a personal pronoun and a proper noun as its antecedent.

10. Write a complete sentence with two personal pronouns.