

Grade 6 Playlist: Shifts in Pronoun Numbers and Person

Aligns with CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.6.1.C

- Recognize and correct inappropriate shifts in pronoun number and person.

Welcome

There are many kinds of pronouns. Many pronoun errors happen when a writer shifts to an inappropriate pronoun midway through a sentence. This playlist will focus on intensive pronouns. Writers use intensive pronouns for emphasis. For example, consider the following sentence: *I myself did all the work.* Notice the emphasis?

Objectives

In this playlist, students will learn and practice how to:

- recognize and correct inappropriate shifts in pronoun number and person.

Review

This chart lists all the pronouns covered in previous playlists.

| | | First Person | Second Person | Third Person | Interrogative |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------|--------------|---------------|---|-----------------------|
| Subjective (Nominative) Case | <i>Singular</i> | I | you | he she it | who what which |
| | <i>Plural</i> | we | you | they | who what which |
| Objective Case | <i>Singular</i> | me | you | him her it | whom what which |
| | <i>Plural</i> | us | you | them | whom what which |
| Possessive Case | <i>Singular</i> | mine | yours | his hers its | whose |
| | <i>Plural</i> | ours | yours | theirs | whose |
| Reflexive / Intensive | <i>Singular</i> | myself | yourself | himself herself itself oneself | N/A |
| | <i>Plural</i> | ourselves | yourselves | themselves | N/A |



Key Terms

- A **pronoun** is a word that takes the place of a noun or another pronoun.

Pronouns can be classified by **number** and **person**:

- Number:
 - A singular pronoun refers to only one thing.
 - A **plural pronoun** refers to more than one thing.
- Person:
 - A **first-person pronoun** refers to the speaker or writer of a sentence.
 - A **second-person pronoun** refers to the person or people being addressed.
 - A **third-person pronoun** refers to people or things that are not speaking, writing, or being addressed.

Exploring the Standard

To use pronouns correctly and appropriately, follow these rules:

1. A pronoun and the word or phrase it replaces must match in number and person.

| | |
|--------------------|---|
| Incorrect: | If you begin as a child, most people can learn to speak a second language fairly quickly. By the time they grow up, I'm fluent. |
| Problem: | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The sentence may be making a claim about people in general. In this case, the antecedent of each pronoun is most people: a third-person, plural noun phrase. However, neither you nor I (in I'm) is a third-person, plural pronoun. 2. Alternatively, the entire sentence may be intended to address one or more readers (you). In this case, only second-person pronouns are appropriate. |
| Solution 1: | If they begin as children, most people can learn to speak a second language fairly quickly. By the time they grow up, they're fluent. |
| Solution 2: | If you begin as a child, you can learn to speak a second language fairly quickly. By the time you grow up, you're fluent. |



2. A subjective pronoun must replace a subject, an objective pronoun must replace an object, and a possessive pronoun must replace a possessive.

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| Incorrect: | Between you and I , Julie is a better drummer than me . My hands cannot move as quickly as her . |
| Problem: | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The first sentence begins with a prepositional phrase: <i>Between you and I</i>. Therefore, the pronouns in this phrase are objects of the preposition <i>between</i>. <i>You</i> is an objective pronoun, but <i>I</i> is subjective. 2. The first sentence ends with a comparison: The complete meaning is <i>Julie is a better drummer than I am</i>. The pronoun me is objective; I is the appropriate subject of the verb <i>am</i>. 3. The second sentence includes a comparison between possessive phrases: The complete meaning is <i>My hands cannot move as quickly as her hands</i>. By itself, her is an objective pronoun; the possessive form is hers. |
| Solution: | Between you and me , Julie is a better drummer than I . My hands cannot move as quickly as hers . |

3. A male pronoun (*he, him, his, himself*) refers to a male person; it may also refer to a male animal. A female pronoun (*she, her, hers, herself*) refers to a female person; it may also refer to a female animal. The pronoun *it* refers to nonhuman things; it may also refer to nonhuman animals.

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| Incorrect: | I told my brother that she needed to get itself to the store before he closed. |
| Problem: | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The speaker is referring to <i>my brother</i>, a male person. Therefore, only male pronouns (such as he and himself) should refer to <i>my brother</i>. 2. <i>The store</i> is a place, not a person. Therefore, only nonhuman pronouns (such as it and itself) should refer to <i>the store</i>. |
| Solution: | I told my brother that he needed to get himself to the store before it closed. |



Watch!

For a quick review of pronoun shifts, check out this video:

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=le1bm-IKF_4

Practice!

Practice using pronouns correctly by completing these activities:

- http://www.eduplace.com/kids/hme/6_8/grammar/gr6/launcher.html?qid=0606
- http://dscweb.daltonstate.edu/writing-lab/writing-lab-practice-exercises/pronoun_agreement_1.htm

Applying the Standard

Review the information here:

<http://www.uno.edu/lrc/writingcenter/documents/SHIFTS-PRONOUNS.pdf>

Then, write a short story that includes five to eight examples of pronoun shifts. Have someone else read the story and check the shifts in pronouns.



Self-Check: L.6.1.C

1. Read the following sentences, which have an inappropriate pronoun shift:

I am happy with my new school. You have a lot of freedom to choose your own classes.

Which of the following choices **best** corrects the pronoun shift?

- A. I am happy with my new school. There is a lot of freedom to choose your own classes.
- B. I am happy with my new school. I have a lot of freedom to choose my own classes.
- C. I am happy with my new school. We have a lot of freedom to choose our own classes.
- D. I am happy with my new school. It has a lot of freedom to choose its own classes.

2. Read the following sentences, which have an inappropriate pronoun shift:

An ostrich is an unusual bird because it cannot fly. However, their powerful legs allow them to run very fast.

Which choice BEST corrects the pronoun shift?

- A. An ostrich is an unusual bird because it cannot fly. However, its powerful legs allow it to run very fast.
- B. An ostrich is an unusual bird because it cannot fly. However, his powerful legs allow them to run very fast.
- C. An ostrich is an unusual bird because it cannot fly. However, its powerful legs allow them to run very fast.
- D. An ostrich is an unusual bird because it cannot fly. However, his powerful legs allow him to run very fast.

3. Read the following sentence:

We walk to school in the morning by myself.

Which sentence fixes the use of pronoun number and person?

- A. They walk to school in the morning by myself.
- B. They walk to school in the morning by himself.
- C. We walk to school in the morning by ourselves.
- D. We walk to school in the morning by themselves.

4. Which of the following sentences uses pronouns correctly?

- A. We love watching the sunset, but they can take some time to happen.
- B. The young birds were small, so its forceful cries provided a type of protection.
- C. Every girl in the group must have a ticket, or she will be unable to see the play.
- D. All the coaches forgot her keys, so they couldn't unlock the supply shed.

