

LESSON 11

Pronouns and Antecedents

A **pronoun** is a word used in place of one or more nouns. For a pronoun to make sense, a reader or listener must know what noun it replaces. The word that a pronoun stands for is called its **antecedent**. The antecedent clarifies the meaning of the pronoun. The pronoun may appear before or after its antecedent. Sometimes the antecedent is in a different sentence.

EXAMPLES

“Someday **I** will be a dancer,” **Debbie Allen** thought. (*Debbie Allen* is the antecedent of *I*.)

The **Tonkinese** is a blend of two breeds of cat, but **it** looks more like a Siamese than a Burmese. (*Tonkinese* is the antecedent of *it*.)

Did you remember to buy the **mushrooms**? Yes, I bought **them** this morning. (*Mushrooms* is the antecedent of *them*.)

EXERCISE 1

Identifying Pronouns and Their Antecedents in Literature

Identify the personal pronouns in the following literature passage. Next to each, write the antecedent of the pronoun.

Walt was born a thousand miles or so down the Yukon, in a trading-post below the Ramparts. After his mother died, his father and he came on up the river, step by step, from camp to camp, till now they are settled down on the Mazy May Creek in the Klondike country. Last year they and several others had spent much toil and time on the Mazy May, and endured great hardships; the creek, in turn, was just beginning to show up its richness and to reward them for their heavy labor. But with the news of their discoveries, strange men began to come and go through the short days and long nights, and many unjust things they did to the men who had worked so long upon the creek.

from “The King of Mazy May,” page 236
Jack London

- | | |
|----------|-----------|
| 1. _____ | 6. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 7. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 8. _____ |
| 4. _____ | 9. _____ |
| 5. _____ | 10. _____ |

EXERCISE 2

Understanding Pronouns and Antecedents

Complete each of the following sentences by supplying a pronoun that agrees with the underlined antecedent.

1. Our class decided to start a newspaper that _____ could print once a week.
2. Suzanne and Eddie offered to cover sports since _____ always go to the games.
3. If there is action in _____, photographs add excitement.
4. Shelby said she would bring _____ camera to the next soccer game.
5. Mr. Thompson, the music teacher, gave Janet a copy of the concert _____ had scheduled for the month.
6. We wanted to have something funny in _____ paper.
7. I could draw cartoons, but Carole's pictures are funnier than _____.
8. Animals and pets would be Phil's area because _____ really interest him.
9. Amy planned to write an article about _____ trip to Canada.
10. Everyone will participate, so the paper will include all of _____.

EXERCISE 3

Understanding Pronouns and Antecedents

Write a sentence using each pair of words as an antecedent and a pronoun. Be sure that the pronoun and its antecedent agree.

1. poets, they

2. people, their

3. Elizabeth, her

4. choice, it

5. me, Victoria

6. scarf, mine

7. Buddy, him

8. house, ours

9. Mr. Kendall, you

10. nature, its

EXERCISE 4

Using Pronouns and Antecedents in Your Writing

Write a short journal entry describing what you did yesterday, without using pronouns. Then rewrite the entry, replacing repeated nouns with pronouns that agree with their antecedents. In the revised entry, underline the pronouns and circle the antecedents. Use your own sheet of paper.