Pronoun Rules in English grammar

What is pronoun?

Pronoun is a word used in place of a noun in order to avoid repetition of the latter.

A pronoun is a word used in place of noun and in a sentence pronoun is used to avoid the repetition of a noun.

Kinds of pronoun

- **Personal pronoun**: Pronoun that stands for the three persons *I, We, You, They, He, She, It* etc.
- **Possessive pronoun**: Pronoun that show possession (*Mine, ours, yours, his, here, theirs*).
- **Demonstrative pronoun**: Words used for noun to point out the objects. (*This, that, these, those*, etc.)
- **Relative pronoun**: Words used for nouns to express functions relating to ‘*who, which, that, whose, whom*’ etc.
- **Distributive pronoun**: Words used for individuals or objects referring to them as one at time. *Each, either, neither, every*, none etc.
- **Indefinite pronoun**: Words used for noun in vague and general meaning *Everybody, nobody, somebody, each, other, several, another, either neither*, all etc.
- **Reflexive pronoun**: Words used as a form of Personal pronoun for example *myself, ourselves, himself themselves, yourself* etc.
- **Reciprocal pronoun**: Those Words that are used to point out mutual relationship. *Each other, one another* etc.

Rules of Pronoun

**Rule 1**

When the subject of the verb is the receiver of the action, the action is said to be reflected. Such verbs are used reflexively.

*Acquit, avail, adopt, apply, adjust, absent, amuse, avenge, exert, enjoy, reconcile, resign, revenge, overreach, pride*, etc. are used reflexively.

**For example:**

- He *resigned* himself to his failure. (Correct)
- The former D.M. *acquitted himself* very efficiently. (Place ‘*himself*’ after ‘*acquitted*’)
- They *enjoyed* themselves during summer vacation. (Correct)

**Rule 2**

Some verbs are not used reflexively. *Keep, stop, turn, move, hide, qualify, rest, bathe*, etc. Are not used reflexively.
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For example:

- You should keep **yourself** from bad boys. (Drop ‘yourself’)
- He has qualified **himself** for the post. (Drop ‘himself’)
- He hide **himself** in the bathroom. (Drop ‘himself’) (**Intransitive verb**)
- The thief **hides** money under the carpet. (**Correct**) (**Transitive Verb**)

Rule 3

If a reflexive pronoun preceded by Noun or Pronoun concerned, it cannot act as a subject or object of a verb in the sentence.

For example:

- Myself will see to it that you get your share of the property. (Change ‘myself’ into ‘I’)
- Yourself and he reached there in time. (Change ‘yourself’ into ‘you’)
- I myself like him. (**Correct**)
- Raj will do it for myself and my sister. (Change ‘myself’ into ‘me’)

Rule 4

If complement is a pronoun then, the verb ‘to be’ should be followed by subjective form.

For example:

- It is **me** who have brought you home. (Change ‘me’ into ‘I’)
- Was it **her** who did it for you. (Change ‘her’ into ‘she’)
- It will be **us** who will but a new house. (Change ‘us’ into ‘we’)
- Is it **him** who hates you. (Change ‘him’ into ‘he’)

Rule 5

If in a sentence Verbs and Prepositions are followed by the objective case of pronoun.

For example:

- Between you and **I** John is intelligent. (Change ‘I’ into ‘me’)
- She is teaching Ram and **She**. (Change ‘she’ into ‘her’)

Rule 6

Good manners require that the order of singular pronouns should be second-person, third-person, and first-person (**231**)

But in plural ‘we’ is used before ‘you’ and ‘they’ after ‘you’ (**123**). The letter order will observed while referring to unpleasant acts.

For example:
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- I and you will attend her wedding tomorrow. (Correct use is ‘you’ and ‘I’)
- He and you will share the mangoes. (Use ‘you’ and ‘he’)
- You, Mohan and I will watch movie tonight. (Correct)
- You, we and they are leaving for Mumbai tomorrow. (Use ‘we’, ‘you’ and ‘they’)
- You and I will be punished. (Unpleasant act, use ‘I’ and ‘you’)

Rule 7

Use of possessive adjectives (Possessive cases of the pronoun)

- When two subjects are joined by

As well as, together with, along with, and not, in addition to, like, unlike, with, rather than, except, no less than, nothing but, more than one (noun) the possessive case of the pronoun (possessive adjective) is used in accordance with the first subject.

- When two subjects are joined by

‘Either or, neither nor, not only, also none but.’

The possessive case of pronoun (possessive adjective) is used according to the nearest subject.

- When the pronouns

Each, every, neither, either, anyone, many a, more than one, (possessive adjective) are used as the subject, the possessive case should be third person singular.

They may refer to two or more than two objects or persons.

- When ‘one’ is used as a subject, the possessive case of the possessive case of the pronoun should be according to one. (i.e. one’s)
- When a pronoun is used for more than one noun or pronoun of different persons of different persons, the possessive case is in the form of first-person plural (our) and second person plural (your).

For example:-

- Each boy and each teacher is requires to bring their luggage. (Use ‘his’ in place of their)
- One should do his duty sincerely. (Use ‘One’s’ in place of his)
- Neither the students nor the teacher was playing in their proper uniform. (Use ‘his’ in place of their)
- Reena as well as her children has returned to their home. (Use ‘her’ for their)
- Only you and I have brought your books. (Use ‘our’ for your)
- You and he completed their work. (Use ‘your’ in place of ‘their’)
- Have you, he and I received their letters? (Use ‘your’ in place of ‘their’)
- Neither of two brothers has brought their bedding. (Use ‘his’ for ‘their’)
- Each one of us is doing our duty properly. (Use ‘his’ in place of ‘our’)
- Everyone should do one’s duty. (Use ‘his’ in place of ‘one’s’)

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• My sister along with her friends is doing her job at Delhi. (Correct)

**Rule 8**

A noun or pronoun in the possessive case should not be used sometimes with the nouns such as – ‘Separation, leave, excuse, mention, report, pardon, sight, favour.’

For example:-

• Your separation is very painful to me. (Say ‘separation from you’)
• At his sight the robbers fled. (Say ‘At the sight of him’)
• I beg your favour, please. (favour of / from you)
• She did make mention of you. (Correct ‘your mention’ is wrong)

**Rule 9**

*Either, neither, each other*’ are used in speaking of two persons or things.

*‘Anyone, none, one other*’ are use while referring to more than two persons or things.

For example:-

• Indians should never fight with each other. (Use ‘one another’ in place of ‘each other’)
• Anyone of his eyes is defective. (‘Either’ in place of ‘anyone’)
• None of his arms was wounded in the accident. (Use ‘neither’ for ‘none’)
• Either of his four sons has sold his property after his death. (Use ‘anyone’ for ‘either’)

**Rule 10**

While writing questions tag the subject and verb must be according to the main sentence.

For example:-

• Our teacher is intelligent, isn’t it? (Use ‘isn’t he?’)
• The boys are not going on a picnic, are they? (Correct)
• They went to Delhi yesterday, isn’t it? (Use ‘didn’t they’)
• She comes here daily, does she? (Use ‘doesn’t she?’)
• She will help me, won’t she? (Correct)
• I am late, aren’t I? (Aren’t is not correct)
• I am not late, am I? (Correct)
• He is seldom late, is he? (Correct)
• We need not worry, need we? (Correct)
• I used to write poetry, didn’t I? (Correct)
• We have a book, don’t we? (Correct)
• You have taken food, haven’t you? (Correct)
• **Imperative Sentence**
• Don’t close the room, will you? (Correct)
• Close the room, won’t you/will you? (Correct)
• Let them stay here, will they? (Correct)
Let us play, shall we? (Correct)

Indefinite pronouns

- Everything is settled, isn’t it? (Correct)
- Nothing is settled, Is it? (Correct)
- None of your friends lie her, do they? (Correct)
- Few students are working hard, are they? (Correct)
- Everybody can speak English, can’t they? (Correct)
- No one can speak English, can they? (Correct)
- One of/all of/most of you will go there, won’t you? (Correct)
- One of/most of/all of them will go there, shan’t we? (Correct)
- On of/most of/all of them will go there, won’t they? (Correct)

Note:
The negative statements having words such as ‘hardly, seldom, barely, scarcely’ are followed by ordinary question tag. (Affirmative)

With ‘everybody, everyone, somebody, someone, nobody, no one, anybody, none, neither, either. ‘They’ is used in question tag.

Rule 11

‘Both’ should be followed by ‘and’ and not by ‘as well as’.

Negative is avoided with Both.

For example:-

- Both you as well as my brother are going to attend her marriage tomorrow. (Use ‘and’ in place of ‘as well as’)
- Both of them are not going there. (Incorrect)
- Neither of them is going there. (Correct)

Rule 12

‘Which’ is used in place of ‘Who’ when we are referring to a choice between two or more than two things or persons.

For example:-

- Of the two sisters who is the more intelligent. (Use ‘which’ in place of ‘who’)
- Who is your father in the crow? (Use ‘which’ in place of ‘who’)
- Who is better of the two dancers in our society? (Place ‘the’ before better and change ‘who’ into ‘which’)

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Rule 13

Possessive case - We don’t use *noun* after possessive case of a pronoun.

**For example:**

- This book is mine - This is *my* book.
- This shirt is yours - This is *your* shirt.
- *Our* is a populous country. (Say ‘*Ours*’)

Rule 14

The relative pronoun should be expressed according to its relation with the verb of the adjective clause. ‘*Who*’ is used as a subject of a verb of adjective clause and ‘*whose*’, is used as an object of a verb of adjective clause.

**For example:**

- He was talking of the women who, he said, he met in American. (Use ‘*whom*’ in place of ‘*who*’)
- She is the kind of lady whom, everybody knows, is intelligent. (Use ‘*who*’ in place of ‘*whom*’)

Rule 15

The use of ‘*But*’ as a relative pronoun.

**For example:**

- There was none but wept. (Who did not weep)
- There is no country but is corrupt. (Which is not corrupt)

Rule 16

The use of the ‘*same*’ as a pronoun is wrong.

**For example:**

- I shall give you a book and the same is very useful. (Say ‘*it*’ for the ‘*same*’)
- He bought a house and is living in the same. (Say ‘*it*’ for the ‘*same*’)

Rule 17

‘*What*’ is used without an antecedent and it refers to things only.

**For example:**

- It is incredible what she said.
- I don’t believe in the words what she uttered. (Use ‘*which*/’*that*’ in place of ‘*what*’)

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- I don’t believe in what you say. (Correct)
- I know which you say. (Say ‘what’)