What is a Pronoun?
A pronoun is a word that refers to or takes the place of a noun. The noun being referred to is called the antecedent. The identity of the pronoun is made clear by the antecedent. For example:

The boy said that **he** was tired.

- In this example, the pronoun “he” is referring back to the noun (antecedent) “boy.”

There are many different types of pronouns: **personal**, **possessive**, **reflexive**, **intensive**, **demonstrative**, **interrogative**, **relative**, **indefinite**, and **reciprocal**.

**Personal**

Personal Pronouns are pronouns that refer to a specific person or thing in a sentence and can be divided into two groups: nominative and objective.

- **Nominative personal pronouns** can act as the subject of a sentence (I, you, he, she, it, we, they). For example:
  
  *I* went to the store after work.  
  *You* should not go to class if you are sick.

- **Objective personal pronouns**, on the other hand, act as objects of a sentence (me, you, him, her, it, us, them). For example:
  
  *Alex* came out with *Joe* and *me*.  
  *Melissa* really likes *him*.

**Possessive**

Possessive Pronouns are pronouns that show ownership; in other words, something belongs to someone else (my/mine, your/yours, his/her/hers, its/its, our/ours, their/ theirs). For example:

*That* book is *mine*.  
*Their* shoes are under the bed.

**Reflexive**

Reflexive Pronouns are pronouns that are used to show that the subject of the sentence is receiving the action of the verb (myself, yourself, himself, herself, itself, ourselves, themselves). For example:

*She* can handle the situation *herself*.  
*We* can write the paper *ourselves*.
### Personal Pronouns

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<th>Personal (Nominative)</th>
<th>Personal (Objective)</th>
<th>Possessive</th>
<th>Reflexive</th>
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<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>me</td>
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<td>you</td>
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<td>them</td>
<td>their/theirs</td>
<td>themselves</td>
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**Intensive Pronouns** are pronouns that are used only to place emphasis on the subject and are not essential to the meaning of the sentence. Note: These pronouns look the same as reflexive pronouns, but they act differently in the sentence and are always placed next to the subject that they are emphasizing (myself, yourself, himself, herself, itself, ourselves, themselves). For example:

**You yourself must go to the police station.**
*Here, the pronoun “yourself” is used only to place emphasis on the subject “you” and does not change the meaning of the sentence.*

**Demonstrative Pronouns** are pronouns that are used to identify nouns and answer the question “which one?” (this, that, these, those). For example:

**These are the books that John was talking about.**
*Here, the pronoun “these” identifies which books John was talking about.*

**Interrogative Pronouns** are pronouns that are used only in reference to a question (who, what, which, whom, whose). For example:

**Which one of these pens is yours?**
**Who is that girl?**

⇒ For more information on the uses of who and whom, please refer to the skills page on Commonly Misused Words.

**Relative Pronouns** are pronouns that are used in reference to nouns or other pronouns to relate the subject to the verb (who, that, which, whom, whose, whoever, whichever, whomever, whatever). For example:

**The tickets that Jen bought were inexpensive.**
Here, the pronoun “that” relates the subject “tickets” to the verb “bought.”
**Marc is the student who failed the test.**
**She is the girl whom I think is smart.**
**Indefinite Pronouns** are pronouns that are used in reference to a person or thing that is not specific or not known. Indefinite pronouns are also used to identify a general group of people or things (i.e. everyone, everybody, anyone, anybody, somebody, most, all, each every, some, none, one, few, both, many, several). For example:

*Everybody has to take the Writing Proficiency Examination in order to graduate.*
*All of the seniors were excited for graduation.*

Note: Singular indefinite pronouns must always take singular verbs. For more information on indefinite pronouns, see the skills page on Pronoun Antecedent Agreement.

**Reciprocal Pronouns** are pronouns that are used to refer to a mutual set of people (each other, each other’s, one another, one another’s). For example:

*We need to help one another survive.*
*They had remembered each other’s phone numbers.*

Note: It is also important to be clear when using pronouns. For example: *He really should not do that.* (Who is *he?* What is *that?*)

⇒ For more information, please refer to the skills page on Pronoun Antecedent Agreement.