

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Pronoun Power

A *pronoun* is a word that replaces a noun. The noun or noun phrase that the pronoun refers to or replaces is the *antecedent*. Check out the following sentence:

**George** was racing down the street when **he** crashed and flew off **his** bicycle.

The pronouns *he* and *his* refer to *George*, so the antecedent is *George*.

A pronoun must agree with, or match, its antecedent in:

- ✓ **number** (a singular pronoun replaces a singular noun; a plural pronoun replaces a plural noun)
- ✓ **person** (referring to first, second, or third person)
- ✓ **gender** (*he, him, or his* replaces a masculine noun; *she, her, or hers* replaces a feminine noun)

**There are a few situations that can trip you up if you are not careful. Watch out for:**

**1. Indefinite pronouns (pronouns that refer to unknown people, places, or things) as antecedents**

These words are always replaced by a **singular** pronoun:

*each*    *anybody*    *nothing*    *everyone*  
*either*    *anything*    *someone*    *everybody*  
*neither*    *no one*    *somebody*    *everything*  
*anyone*    *nobody*    *something*

**Examples:**

**Each** girl who danced wore a flower in **her** hair.

**Everyone** should proofread **his or her** work before handing it in.

These words are always replaced by a **plural** pronoun:

*both*    *few*    *many*    *several*

**Examples:**

**Many** are still waiting for **their** lucky break.

**Several** promised me that **they** would be there.

**2. Phrases that come after the antecedent.** Don't let them confuse you! Identify the antecedent and make sure the pronoun agrees with it. For example:

The **collection** of paintings is on display at the museum. **It** will be there until June.  
*It* refers to *collection*, and *collection* is singular.

The soccer **team**, made up of players from all over the state, won **its** final match.  
*Its* refers to *team*, and *team* is singular.

**An activity to test your pronoun power begins on the next page.**

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**Directions:** In each sentence or pair of sentences below, identify the antecedent to which the underlined pronoun refers. We did the first one for you.

1. If you are finished using those colored pencils, please put them back in the box.

antecedent: pencils

2. A few arrived early. They are waiting outside.

antecedent: \_\_\_\_\_

3. "If nobody raises his or her hand, I'm just going to pick someone," said Ms. Davis.

antecedent: \_\_\_\_\_

4. "I moved that pile of papers to your bedroom," said Kendra's mom. "I was tired of looking at it."

antecedent: \_\_\_\_\_

5. I'm hoping that either Sara or Kaylin will share her notes from yesterday with me.

antecedent: \_\_\_\_\_

6. At the beginning of this month, my family bought new juice glasses. Three of them are already broken!

antecedent: \_\_\_\_\_

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**Directions:** Put a check mark next to the sentence or pair of sentences that is grammatically correct.

7. a  Everyone has a right to his or her own opinion.

b  Everyone has a right to their own opinion.

8. a  Where is that can of black beans we bought yesterday? I can't find them.

b  Where is that can of black beans we bought yesterday? I can't find it.

9. a  Neither Aaron nor Travis answered their phone.

b  Neither Aaron nor Travis answered his phone.

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**Directions:** Fill in the blanks with the correct pronouns.

10. There were five boys in the group, each with \_\_\_\_\_ own idea of what the group should do first.

11. If nobody wants these last two cookies, I'm going to eat \_\_\_\_\_.

12. Someone left \_\_\_\_\_ phone on the bus. I'm going to give \_\_\_\_\_ to the driver.