

VIU Grammar and Punctuation Study Guide 1: Pronouns

Pronouns are words that can “stand-in” for **nouns**.

A pronoun may act	- as a subject	(for example	I, he or they)
	- as an object	(for example	me, her or them)
or	- as a possessive	(for example	mine, its or theirs)

1. As a Subject:

I, you, he / she / it, we, you, they

a) Use a subject pronoun when it replaces a subject noun in a sentence:

*e.g. Karen is attending college this year. **She** is attending college this year.*

Note: Don't be surprised if this next example sounds awkward –

*e.g. Who threw the ball through the window? It was **he**.*

b) when it is a subject complement (is the equivalent of the subject noun):

*e.g. The runner on the far right was **he**.*

c) when it is inserted as a detail or details about the subject noun:

*e.g. Two teachers – Shiona and Isobel – are preparing the lab materials for biology.
They are preparing the lab materials for biology.*

Let's take another example:

“The boy travelled with friends.”

In this sentence, "the boy" is performing the action (travelling) - the subject is "the boy." If you want to use a pronoun to replace this subject, we need to think of which of the pronouns would make sense here:

I, we, you, he/she, it, or they?

Read the sentence and instead of saying “the boy,” try replacing the subject with one of the pronouns. In this example, a good subject pronoun would be “he.”

The sentence becomes “He travelled with friends.”

Hints for selecting the correct pronoun to use in a sentence:

- **Rewrite** the sentence in your head, replacing the subject with a pronoun.
 - The first person to leave was **I**. **I** was the first person to leave.
- **Add in** the missing, but understood, verb to complete the sentence after **than** or **as**.
 - No one enjoys a party more than **he**. No one enjoys a party more than **he (does)**.

2. As an Object:

me, you, him / her / it, us, you, them

Use an object pronoun when a word is the object of a verb or a preposition:

- a) Verbs are usually action words (help, took, selected, gave).

*They were able to help **him**. We took **them** to the movie.*
*I selected Bill and **her**. Sara gave the papers to Mary and **me**.*

Hint: If you are unsure of which pronoun to use, use it by itself in the sentence. For example, **Sara gave the papers to I**. This doesn't sound correct.

- b) Prepositions are connecting words, such as: *for, at, about, to, before, by, with, of*.

*Activists are always talking about **it**. I decided to line up behind **her**.*

In our first example, “The boy travelled with friends.” - The object is “**friends**.”

Object pronouns have their own list of words that can be used to replace repetitive nouns. This list includes:

me, you, him, her, it, us, and them

Again, try finding the appropriate object pronoun to replace “friends” from our original example. You could try saying:

“The boy travelled with **them**” or “The boy traveled with **us**.”

Each pronoun could be correct as long as you continue speaking in the same person.

- “I” becomes “me,”
- “You” stays as “you”
- “he” becomes “him”
- “she” becomes “her”
- “it” stays as “it”
- “they” becomes “them”

Now it’s your turn. Do the following exercises and check your answers with those at the end to see how you are doing.

A: Using subject pronouns: Replace the underlined word(s) with an appropriate subject pronoun.

1. Mary and Bill will meet at the theatre.
2. Karen, Becky and I are heading to the soccer game.
3. As the dog began to chew the bone, the dog grew restless.
4. Terry and Jim will probably arrive by noon.
5. Carl is waiting for Emil and Lynn.

B. Using object pronouns. Replace the underlined word(s) with an appropriate object pronoun.

1. Carl is waiting for Emil and John.
2. Carl is waiting for Emil and John.
3. Carl is waiting for Emil, John and me.
4. Carl is waiting for myself.
5. Carl is waiting for Lynn.

C: Using object pronouns. Correct the pronoun *if* it is used improperly. Replace it with the correct object pronoun.

1. Lynn is writing a poem to me.
2. Are you voting for Sharon or I?
3. They still need money from Paul and yourself.
4. The teachers told they and me to work in a group together.
5. Finally the sun shone on Raymond, Steve and Brendan.

Answers for Pronoun Exercises

A: Using subject pronouns

1. She
2. We
3. it
4. They
5. He

B: Using object pronouns

6. him
7. them
8. us
9. me
10. her

C: Using object pronouns

1. correct
2. me
3. you
4. us
5. them