



## University Centre Abdelhafid Boussouf E-learning Centre



### English – Level 2

## Lesson 07 Pronouns in English

<b>Pedagogical Staff</b>			
<i>Name</i>	<i>Grade</i>	<i>Institute</i>	<i>E-mail Address</i>
<i>Djalal Mansour</i>	<i>MCB</i>	<i>Letters and Languages</i>	<a href="mailto:Djalal.mansour@centre-univ-mila.dz">Djalal.mansour@centre-univ-mila.dz</a>
<i>Assia Azzoui</i>		<i>Letters and Languages</i>	<a href="mailto:a.azzoui@gmail.com">a.azzoui@gmail.com</a>
<i>Wiam Zemieche</i>		<i>Letters and Languages</i>	<a href="mailto:wiamemma99@gmail.com">wiamemma99@gmail.com</a>

<b>Students Concerned- Semester 06 -</b>			
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### **Objectives of the Lesson**

- This lesson has been designed to provide students the skills they need to refer to themselves and one another, such as “I,” “you,” “he,” or “she.” To create and maintain an inclusive environment, it's important that they don't make assumptions about a person's pronouns.

## Pronouns in English

**Pronouns:** are words that take the place of nouns. We often use them to avoid repeating the nouns that they refer to. Pronouns have different forms for the different ways we use them:

- **Personal pronouns**
- **'it' and 'there' as dummy subjects**
- **Possessive pronouns**
- **Demonstratives**
- **'one' and 'ones'**
- **Pronouns in questions**
- **Reflexive pronouns**
- **Reciprocal pronouns**
- **Indefinite pronouns**
- **Relative pronouns and relative clauses**

### **Pronouns:**

You use pronouns every day. In fact, even if you don't know what pronouns are, you use them—and in this sentence alone, we've now used pronouns four times.

Pronouns are the words you substitute for other nouns when your reader or listener already knows which nouns you're referring to. For example, you might say, "I have a dog. He's brown and white." There's no need to clarify that you're describing your dog in the second sentence because you already mentioned him in the first. But following up "I have a dog" with "brown and white" is grammatically incorrect . . . so with the pronoun "he's," you turn the phrase "brown and white" into a full sentence: He's brown and white.

- **Personal pronouns**

When you think of pronouns, you most likely think of personal pronouns. Personal pronouns are pronouns that refer to specific individuals and groups. Personal pronouns include:

I/me

She/her

He/him

They/them

We/us

You

- **Antecedents**

Remember how we mentioned that in order to use a pronoun, you need to introduce the noun first? That noun has a name: [an antecedent](#).

Antecedents are necessary because pronouns are versatile. Think about it—“it” can refer to a bike, a tree, a car, or a city, and we just used it to refer to something else entirely: pronouns’ versatility. Take a look at these examples to see how antecedents and pronouns work together:

*My family* tests my patience, but I love **them**.

*The sign* was too far away for Jorge to read **it**.

*Danita* said **she** is almost finished with the application.

Antecedents aren’t necessary when the reader/listener knows who or what you’re discussing. Generally, you don’t need an antecedent for pronouns like *I*, *you*, *we*, *our*, and *me*. But because there are no absolutes in grammar, sometimes you **do** need an antecedent in this kind of situation—like when you’re giving a speech where you introduce yourself and your credentials before discussing your achievements.

There are also circumstances where you might not introduce the noun first and instead reveal it after using only pronouns to refer to your subject. You might do this for dramatic or poetic effect in a piece of creative writing.

- **Relative pronouns**

Relative pronouns : are another class of pronouns. They connect relative clauses to independent clauses. Often, they introduce additional information about something mentioned in the sentence. Relative pronouns include these words:

that

what

which

who

whom

Traditionally, **who** refers to people, and **which** and **that** refer to animals or things. Here are a few examples of relative pronouns at work:

- **Demonstrative pronouns**

*That, this, these, and those* are demonstrative pronouns. They take the place of a noun or noun phrase that has already been mentioned or is clear through context, either in written or verbal communication.

- **Reflexive pronouns**

Reflexive pronouns end in **-self** or **-selves**:

Myself

Yourself

Himself

Herself

Itself

Oneself

Ourselves

Yourselves

Themselves

Use a reflexive pronoun when both the subject and object of a verb refer to the same person or thing. Here are a few examples:

**She** checked **herself** out of the hotel thirty minutes before check-out time.

- **Possessive pronouns**

Possessive pronouns are pronouns that show possession. They include the following:

My

Your

Our

Their

His

Her

Its

These can also be called possessive adjectives if they modify a noun in a sentence. Take a look at these examples of possessive adjectives in action:

I crashed **my** bike into a telephone pole.

**Your** house is always decorated so nicely.

This category also includes independent versions of possessive pronouns. These include:

Mine

Yours

Ours

His

Hers

Theirs

Its

When you use an independent possessive pronoun, you drop the noun it's referring to. Here are a few examples:

She forgot her jacket, so I gave her **mine**.

I had no idea whose bid won the auction, then my cousins told me **theirs** did.

Interrogative pronouns

Interrogative pronouns are used in questions. The interrogative pronouns are *who*, *what*, *which*, and *whose*. Here are a few examples of interrogative pronouns at play:

**Who** wants a bag of jelly beans?

**What** is your name?

**Which** movie do you want to watch?

**Whose** jacket is this?



