

Parts of Speech: Noun

You will become better at knowing and using different parts of speech. This activity will sharpen your skills with nouns.

Why are we doing this?

- ◆ Parts of speech (verb, noun, adjective, etc.) are the “tools of the trade” in writing. Not knowing what they are and how to identify and use them is like being a plumber and not knowing what a pipe and a faucet are.
- ◆ As you write in this course, the teacher will talk to you about the verbs, nouns, adjectives, adverbs, and other parts of speech you use in your writing. If you don't know what he's talking about, you won't be able to improve your writing.

When you're finished, you will be able to:

- ◆ Identify a variety of noun types in sentences; create sentences with a variety of nouns.
- ◆ Understand, identify, and correct vague pronoun references.

What you will do:

1. Complete this activity & turn in.
2. Complete & turn in both homework assignments.

Part of speech: NOUN



They always say that a **noun** is a person, place, or thing. But, it's a little more interesting than that.

It's a **noun** if it's:

- ◆ **alive** Julia, Mr. LaPaglia, Fluffy the cat, a tree, an ant
- ◆ **a place** Philadelphia, school, living room, office, Italy
or, something you can:
- ◆ **touch** pencil, desk, fur, computer, Pike's Peak
- ◆ **play** poker, music, soccer, football
- ◆ **imagine** moonlight, morning, invisibility, strength, heat
- ◆ **see or smell** smoke, tornado, clouds, the Moon, odors
- ◆ **feel inside** anger, fear, stress, excitement, passion, love
- ◆ **fight against** evil, corruption, dishonesty, hypocrisy, cruelty
- ◆ **fight for** love, truth, honesty, fairness, justice, kindness

LEARNING PLAN

Most sentences have nouns. Here are some sentences with the nouns identified.

Examples of nouns:

N

N

N

Patrick likes tennis. He plays every weekend.

N

N

N

Both dogs bark at the moon every night.

N

N

N

My sister bought three apples from the store.

N

N

Saint Petersburg is a beautiful city, with many large

N

N

N

N

buildings, bridges, canals, and shops.

N

N

N

N

Fairness, honesty, and consistency are important qualities

N

of any competent athlete.

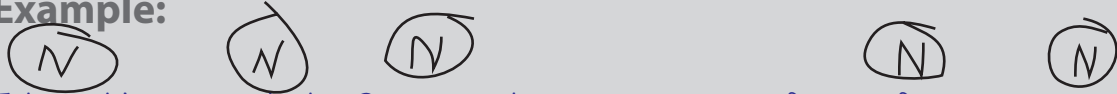
He, she, him, her, it, they, them: These are pronouns, and pronouns are nouns.

Identify nouns:

Instructions:

Read the following sentences. Identify the nouns by putting a little “N” in a circle above each noun.

Example:



Edward loves orchids. Suzanne, however, strives for perfection in music.

1. Cats have fur and sharp claws.
2. Even though my pet rat chewed a hole in my jeans, I still love watching him eat raisins and sniff around for an olive which I hide under the newspaper in his cage.
3. My car needs a lot of work. Oil is leaking from the engine, and the power steering pump squeaks like a crazed mouse in a cheese factory.
4. Henry and Maria bought a big brown house near Wilmington.
5. The cashier put some money in the drawer, and some money in his pockets. He was caught on camera, arrested by the police, and sent to prison in Phoenix.
6. Football is a popular sport in the United States. You can feel the excitement in the crowd at a game; the soft glow of moonlight contrasts with the brilliant plays of the two teams in their battle on the field.
7. Love, fear, and guilt can be powerful emotions. Unfortunately, so is hate. Music and art reflect these emotions. The canvas, the paintbrush, the violin, and the piano are some media through which people express their feelings.
8. It's difficult to tell the sex of a rhinoceros. A woman once asked a zookeeper, "Is that a male or a female rhinoceros?" The zookeeper replied, "That, madam, is a question that should concern only another rhinoceros."

Name: _____ Date Due: _____

English Homework: Identifying nouns

Instructions:

Create ten sentences (5 shorter and 5 longer). Identify each noun by putting an "N" in a circle above each noun.

Examples:

Sasha enjoys music, and she also enjoys playing tennis.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

Part of speech: PRONOUN

A pronoun replaces, or takes the place, of a noun. A pronoun is a type of noun. (“Pronoun” does not mean a noun that has gone pro and is now endorsing athletic shoes.)

Pronouns are one of those sweet mysteries of languages. Really, they’re not absolutely necessary, but if we didn’t use them, for some unknown reason, language would sound quite strange. Here’s a short story that probably sounds OK to you:

Veronica went into her house and put her books down on the table. Elena, her mother, was just leaving to go to work, but stopped and turned to her daughter. “Where were you? You were supposed to be home from school an hour ago!” Veronica replied, “I was at the grocery store picking up the things you asked me for!” She put the plastic grocery bag down on the kitchen table, irritated. Her mother hugged her and said, “I’m sorry! I forgot about the groceries. Thanks for buying them. They are just what I asked for!”

Now, here’s the same story without any pronouns.

Veronica went into Veronica’s house and put Veronica’s books down on the table. Elena, Veronica’s mother, was just leaving to go to work, but stopped and turned to Elena’s daughter. “Where was Veronica? Veronica was supposed to be home from school an hour ago!” Veronica replied, “Veronica was at the grocery store picking up the things Elena asked Veronica for!” Veronica put the plastic grocery bag down on the kitchen table. Veronica’s mother hugged Veronica and said, “Elena is sorry! Elena forgot about the groceries. Thanks for buying the groceries. The groceries are just what Elena asked for!”

Pretty strange, huh? Some would say extremely funny, too—but why? The meaning of the two stories is exactly the same. The second story is a little longer, but only by one line, so the use of pronouns did shorten the story, but not so much that it would seem to justify their use.

Writing is art

But, for some reason that doesn’t seem logical, the first story is much easier to read and just sounds better. It sounds more natural; it flows; it makes sense; it’s easy to understand; it holds your interest (at least a little). Remember, it was created by a writer, also known as an artist. When an artist, in this case, a writer, creates something that you like, you are appreciating art!

Did you ever think of writing as art? It is. People like art of whatever kind because this art appeals to them somehow. Some people think that painting a canvas is the best art, some think that a well-done custom truck paint job is true art, some think that art is in football

strategy, that art is sculpture, landscaping, web pages, fountains, you name it—and last but certainly not least, is the art of writing.

Believe it or not, there is a point to this, and it relates to pronouns. Keep reading.

One of the most important goals of art is for people to understand it. To make sure that people understand your written art you must try to be *clear*. One of the best ways to mess up your writing clarity is to mess up the use of pronouns. Here's an example.

Unclear writing:

Suzanne and Maribel walked into the food court at the mall. “Oh Jesus,” said Suzanne. She sat down and asked “What’s wrong?”

“Over there, naturally, is Steve and his giant goofball brother who both keep staring at me every single time they see me, the airheaded twits.” She turned around to avoid his eyes; he was staring at her.

Steve said to his brother, “Check it out, dude, there she is, fresh from chemistry class, and looking as fine as ever.” He took another big bite out of his burger, glanced at his brother, winked, and smiled a wide smile. He thought that Maribel wasn’t half bad, either, and would look ten times better if she smiled once in a while.

The sad thing about the whole situation is that she actually liked Ruben.

Whoa. Do you see a problem? She, her, she, her, he, his. Huh? Who is “she”? Who is “he”? This paragraph is sick, and the diagnosis is *vague pronoun reference*.

Vague pronoun reference

This is a very common writing error. A “reference” is something that talks about, or “refers” to, something else, sort of like when you put somebody down as a reference on a job application. Every single pronoun has to have a reference. Look at this sentence.

Mike really likes **his** Mustang. **He** washes **it** every week.



In this sentence, the pronouns have a clear reference. Look at the pronouns, highlighted in yellow. It’s clear that “his” and “He” are referring to Mike, right?

vocabulary: **NOUN**

clarity

The state of being clear and easy to understand, sort of how “purity” is the state of being pure, and “honesty” is the state of being honest. “Clarity” is a noun, and “clear” is an adjective. You always want your writing to have clarity.

vocabulary: **ADJECTIVE**

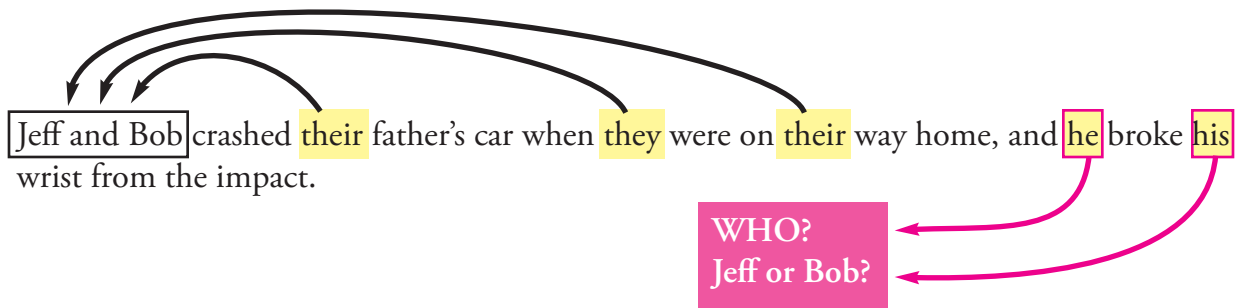
vague

Not clear; difficult to figure out because nothing specific is stated.

Here’s a vague definition of a dog: an animal with fur that sometimes makes noise. (Couldn’t that describe a mouse, too? What about barking, tail wagging, or chasing cats?)

Here’s a vague promise: I’ll pay you back the money I owe you soon if I can. (How much money? When is “soon”? What do you mean, “If I can”?)

Right. Also, take a look at “it”, which is also a pronoun. It’s clear that “it” refers to the Mustang. So far, everything is rosy. But, let’s write a sentence with a vague pronoun reference:



See the problem? Who is “he” and “his”? This is a classic example of a vague pronoun reference. (Yes, this example was obvious, but they’re not always so obvious.) Here’s how to fix vague pronoun references.

How to fix vague pronoun references

Here’s the secret: read what you write and change what doesn’t sound right. There. That was the secret.

Carefully re-read what you wrote to be sure it makes sense. If it doesn’t sound right to you, change it so it sounds better and is clear. Keep an eye out for pronouns that have vague references and change what you write as needed so that your writing has maximum clarity.

Here are some more examples of vague pronoun references. It should be clear to you what the problem is in each sentence: (To fix the sentences like this, just make up what’s right. Here are some examples of how to fix sentences with vague pronoun references.)

- ◆ Joe threw the cell phone on the glass table, breaking it.
Fixed: Joe threw the cell phone on the glass table, breaking the table.
- ◆ I hate going over to Charlina’s house. It usually ends up that Charlina will start screaming back and forth with her stepmom. The worst part is that she usually deserves being screamed at.
Fixed: I hate going over to Charlina’s house. It usually ends up that Charlina will start screaming back and forth with her stepmom. The worst part is that Charlina usually deserves being screamed at.
- ◆ Ben’s got problems, dude. His car’s oil pan started leaking and leaked like a gallon of oil all over his dad’s garage and all under the cabinets where his stuff is. His dad says he’s going to have to get it taken care of. Man, was he ticked off.
Fixed: (You do it!)

Let's take another look at the dialogue on page 8, which has several vague pronoun references that aren't so clear.

Now it's your turn. With your pen or pencil, circle what you feel are the vague pronoun references in the story.

Suzanne and Maribel walked into the food court at the mall. "Oh Jesus," said Suzanne. She sat down and asked "What's wrong?"

"Over there, naturally, is Steve and his giant goofball brother who both keep staring at me every single time they see me, the airheaded twits." She turned around to avoid his eyes; he was staring at her.

Steve said to his brother, "Check it out, dude, there she is, fresh from chemistry class, and looking as fine as ever." He took another big bite out of his burger, glanced at his brother, winked, and smiled a wide smile. He thought that Maribel wasn't half bad, either, and would look ten times better if she smiled once in a while.

The sad thing about the whole situation is that she actually liked Ruben.

Use the above paragraph, with the words you circled, to complete the homework on page 11.

