

## PRONOUNS PRONOUN-ANTECEDENT AGREEMENT & FAULTY REFERENCE

### PART 1: PRONOUN-ANTECEDENT AGREEMENT

A pronoun is usually used as a substitute for a previously stated noun called the antecedent.

I could tell Jack was mad because he punched a hole in my front door.

(He is a pronoun substituting for the noun Jack.)

Pronouns are used when the writer wants to avoid awkward or repetitious use of nouns.

awkward I could tell Jack was mad because Jack punched a hole in my front door. I had borrowed Jack's car without Jack's permission and dented the car's front fender. The fact that Jack had just repaired the front fender from the last time I dented the front fender seemed to add fuel to Jack's anger.

better I could tell Jack was mad because he punched a hole in my front door. I had borrowed his car without his permission and dented the front fender. The fact that Jack had just repaired it from the last time I dented it seemed to add fuel to his anger.

Sometimes, the agreement between the pronoun and the antecedent it is substituting for can be confused. The result is a sentence that lacks clarity.

*he keeps*  
Although the politician makes many promises, ~~they~~ rarely ~~keep~~ those promises.

Not only the pronoun you are using to stand for the antecedent, but the verb, too, needs to be in agreement with the antecedent.

politician--he/she rarely keeps promises  
~~politicians--they rarely keep promises~~

MAKE  
CORRECTIONS

The problems are serious, but it can be solved.

The value a person receives for their dollar these days is going down rapidly.

Remember not to let intervening words or phrases confuse you.

### RULES TO REMEMBER:

1. Use a singular pronoun in referring to a singular antecedent. Use a plural pronoun in referring to a plural antecedent.

The small girl put her spaceship back in the toybox.

The singular pronoun her refers to the singular antecedent girl.

The drivers lost their way because they didn't bring a map with them.

The plural pronouns their, they, and them refer to the plural antecedent drivers.