Pronoun Case

The form a pronoun takes depends on how the pronoun functions in a sentence, and pronouns can serve a number of different functions in sentences. This handout discusses four particular uses of pronouns:

- **subjective case**, when a pronoun serves as a subject of a verb;
- **objective case**, when a pronoun serves as the object of a verb or a preposition;
- **possessive case**, when a pronoun serves to illustrate "ownership";
- **reflexive form**, when a pronoun refers to a preceding noun or pronoun (see the chart below).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Person</th>
<th>Subjective Case</th>
<th>Objective Case</th>
<th>Possessive Case</th>
<th>Reflexive Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Singular</td>
<td>Plural</td>
<td>Singular</td>
<td>Plural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>we</td>
<td>me</td>
<td>us</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second</td>
<td>you</td>
<td>you</td>
<td>you</td>
<td>you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third</td>
<td>he, she, it</td>
<td>they</td>
<td>him, her, it</td>
<td>them</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Subjective Case:**

Use the **subjective** case when the pronoun is the subject of the sentence: *He and I are going to Europe next year.*

Formal usage requires the use of the **subjective** case in the sentences below, even though the meaning is not affected by pronoun choice:

- *She is more aggressive than I.*  ("than I am")
- *Aristotle is not so often quoted as they.*  ("as they are")

Use the **subjective** case of the pronoun for the subject complements and for the complement of the verb to be:

- *It was I who made that statement, and I shall stand by it.*
- *It is she who proposes the amendment.*

**Objective Case:**

Use the **objective** case when the pronoun is the object of a verb:

- *Kevin likes both her and me, so we three get along well.*

Use the **objective** case of the pronoun as subject or object of an infinitive:
He ordered Lisa and me to leave the room. (pronoun subject of to leave)
I wish to see either you or him in my office by 8:00. (object of to see)
Use the **objective** case of the pronoun when the pronoun is object of the preposition:
The letter will be sent to both you and her.
You must choose between her and me.

Use the **objective** case when the pronoun is object of a gerund or participle:
My giving her the job was, I know, a mistake. (object of the gerund giving)
Leaving us in the car, he went into the store. (object of the participle leaving)

**Possessive Case:**
Use the possessive case of the pronoun before gerunds.
I approve your making this decision early.
Our going at this time will not upset your plans, I hope.

**Reflexive Case:**
Use the reflexive form of the pronoun when the pronoun refers to a preceding noun or
pronoun in the sentence:
Jane enjoyed herself at the party.
We expected ourselves to graduate with honors.

This form may also be used for emphasis:
The mayor himself wrote us a note.

**Appropriate Case:**
After "than" or "as," use the pronoun case **that fits the sense of the sentence**. Some
sentences have implied (not stated) elements; the meaning is affected by the pronoun
choice in these sentences.
She enjoys opera more than I. ("more than I do")
She admires him as much as me. ("as much as she admires me")

In compound constructions, use the **appropriate** case.
Jim and she played golf. (means: Jim played golf. She did, too.)
Clara may ask you or me about it. (means: Clara may ask you about it. Or she may
ask me).

In appositives, use the case that is **appropriate** for the element the appositive refers to:
Two clerks, Bruce and I, were promoted. (the appositive identifies a subject.)
Sarah Miles promoted two clerks, Bruce and me. (here, it identifies an object.)