

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).

Person	Subjective Case		Objective Case		Possessive Case		Reflexive Form	
	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
First	I	we	me	us	my, mine	our, ours	myself	ourselves
Second	you	you	you	you	your, yours	your, yours	yourself	yourselves
Third	he she it	they	him her it	them	his her, hers its	their, theirs	himself herself itself	themselves

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.)