

## What Are Personal and Possessive Pronouns?

A **personal pronoun** refers to a specific person or thing by indicating the person speaking (first person), the person being addressed (second person), or any other person or thing being discussed (third person). Personal pronouns can also be singular or plural. Personal pronouns are divided by either **nominative** (subject) case or **objective** (object) case. In subject use, the pronoun usually comes before the verb and replaces the main noun of the sentence. For objective use, the pronoun comes after the main action verb of the sentence or after a preposition—by me, for us, against them.

Nominative Case		
	Singular	Plural
First person	I	we
Second person	you	you
Third person	he, she, it	they

### Examples:

Mason and **I** helped repair the car. (singular)

**She** and **I** are going to the movies. (singular)

**He** played volleyball this morning. (singular)

**They** are buying some groceries for the picnic. (plural)

Object Case		
	Singular	Plural
First person	me	us
Second person	you	you
Third person	him, her, it	them

### Examples:

Vince, are you going with Elayne and **me**? (singular)

Mrs. Wong told us to collect **her** old magazines. (singular)

The problem was too hard for **them** to solve. (plural)

A **possessive pronoun** takes the place of a possessive form of a noun. Possessive pronouns can also be singular and plural.

	Singular	Plural
Before Nouns	my, your, his, her, its	our, your, their
Used Alone	mine, yours, his, hers, its	ours, yours, theirs

**NOTE:** Student writers often have errors in possessive pronoun usage due to confusion about the use of the apostrophe (') in relation to possession use. An apostrophe is used with a noun to show possession, but is NOT used with a pronoun to show possession. Apostrophes used with pronouns become contractions (pronoun + verb). Study the following examples to see the difference. This specific error is the reason contractions are not used in business or formal academic writing.

**Examples:**

The **dog** was chewing **its** bone in the rain. (possessive pronoun)

The bone **it's** chewing is wet. (contraction—it is)

**Sharon's** cooking was delicious! (possessive noun)

Sharon's cooking roast beef and potatoes for dinner. (contraction—Sharon is)

Later in the course we will be studying more about the proper grammatical use of pronouns. For right now, you need to know whether to use a **singular** or **plural** subject, object, or pronoun.

**FROM *WHITE FANG* BY JACK LONDON**

This was **his** one trouble in the running of the pack; but **she** had other troubles. On **her** other side ran a gaunt old wolf, grizzled and marked with the scars of many battles. **He** ran always on **her** right side. The fact that **he** had but one eye, and that the left eye, might account for this. **He**, also, was addicted to crowding **her**, to veering toward **her** till **his** scarred muzzle touched **her** body, or shoulder, or neck. As with the running mate on the left, **she** repelled these attentions with **her** teeth; but when both bestowed **their** attentions at the same time **she** was roughly jostled, being compelled, with quick snaps to either side, to drive both lovers away and at the same time to maintain **her** forward leap with the pack and see the way of **her** feet before **her**. At such times **her** running mates flashed **their** teeth and growled threateningly across at each other. **They** might have fought, but even wooing and **its** rivalry waited upon the more pressing hunger-need of the pack.



Gray wolf—January 2003—US Fish and Wildlife Service