



Types of pronouns

Demonstrative pronouns

This, that, these and *those* are known as demonstrative pronouns.

This (singular) and *these* (plural) are used as pronouns:

- To talk about people or things near us:
 - *This* is a good book
 - Whose reports are *these*?
- To introduce people:
 - *This* is Dr. Tarnowskyj
 - *These* are my children Ron and Brick
- To introduce ourselves on the phone:
 - Hello, *this* is Jayne. Can I speak to a doctor?

That (singular) and *those* (plural) are used as pronouns:

- To talk about things that are not near us:
 - What is *that*?
 - *That* is your room
 - *Those* are very expensive
- We also use *that* to refer back to something someone said or did:
 - Should we form a group? / Yes, *that* sounds good
 - I have got a new tutor / *That* is great
 - I am very sad / Why is *that*?

This, these, that and *those* are also used with nouns to show proximity:

- Use *this* or *these* for people/things near us:
 - We have studied *this* course twice
 - Have you enrolled for *these* courses?
- Use *that* and *those* for people/things that are not near us:
 - Who works in *that* school?
 - Who are *those* students?

(Adapted from British Council n.d.)



Possessive pronouns

Yours, mine, theirs, ours, hers, his and *its* are known as possessive pronouns.

Subject	Object	Possessive adjectives	Possessive pronouns
I	Me	My	Mine
You	You	Your	Yours
He	Him	His	His
She	Her	Her	Hers
It	It	Its	Its
We	Us	Our	Ours
They	Them	Their	Theirs

We can use a possessive pronoun instead of a noun phrase:

- Is that Susan's textbook? / No, it is **mine** [my textbook]
- Whose notes are these? / They are **yours** [your notes]

(Adapted from British Council n.d.)

Reflexive pronouns

The following are reflexive pronouns:

Singular	Plural
Myself	Ourselves
Yourself	Yourselves
Himself	Themselves
Herself	
Itself	

Reflexive pronouns are used:

- As a direct object when the object is the same as the subject of the verb:
 - *I* am teaching **myself** to write
 - **You** must train **yourself** to write
- As a direct object with most transitive verbs. The following are the most common:

Amuse	Blame	Cut
Dry	Hurt	Introduce
Kill	Prepare	Enjoy
Satisfy	Help	Teach

- Allow me to introduce **myself**
- They taught **themselves** to play piano



- As an indirect object when the indirect object is the same as the subject of the verb:
 - Would **you** like to help **yourself**?
 - We taught **ourselves** to write
- As the object of a preposition when the object refers to the subject of the clause:
 - The students fended for **themselves**
 - She cooked the meal **herself**
- With the preposition **by** when we want to show that someone did something and/or without any help:
 - She worked it out **by herself**
 - They decorated the room **by themselves**
- To emphasise a person or thing we are referring to:
 - Germaine Greer **herself** gave the keynote speech
- For emphasis, in which case the reflexive pronoun often goes at the end of the clause:
 - I wrote it **myself**
 - She taught it **herself**

(Adapted from British Council n.d.)

Indefinite pronouns

The Indefinite Pronouns are:

Somebody	Someone	Something
Anybody	Anyone	Anything
Nobody	No one	Nothing
Everybody	Everyone	Everything

Indefinite Pronouns are used to refer to people or things without exactly saying who or what they are.

Pronouns ending in **body** or **one** are used for people and pronouns ending in **thing** for things:

- **Everybody** enjoyed the lecture
- I went to class but there was **no one** there
- We could see **everything** from the back of the theatre

We use a singular verb after an indefinite pronoun:

- **Everybody enjoys** his teaching
- **Everything was** perfect

When we refer back to an indefinite pronoun, we normally use a plural noun:

- **Everybody** enjoyed the lecture and **they** applauded

We add an 's to an indefinite pronoun to make it possessive:

- They are reading **somebody's** notes
- Is this **anybody's** concern?



We use **else** after indefinite pronouns to refer to people or things in addition to those already mentioned:

- My closest friends came but **no one else**
- If he cannot come, we will ask **someone else**
- Did she comment on **anything else**?

(Adapted from British Council n.d.)

Interrogative pronouns

Interrogative Pronouns such as **who**, **which** and **what** introduce questions:

- **What** is the tutor's name?
- **Who** can help with my assignment?
- **Which** courses did you enjoy?

Note: **which** is generally used with more specific reference than **what**:

- **Which** questions were difficult to answer? (referring to specific questions)

Interrogative pronouns also act as **determiners**:

- It matters **which question** you answer
- I do not know **whose tutorial** to attend

Like relative pronouns, the interrogative pronouns introduce noun clauses and play a subject role in the clauses they introduce:

- We know **who will be placed in that school for their practicum**
- I already told the counsellor **what I know about the incident**

(Adapted from Fowler, Aaron & Limburg 1995; Quirk & Greenbaum 1993)

References

British Council n.d., *Pronouns*, viewed 22 December 2014,
<<http://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/en/english-grammar/pronouns>>.

Fowler, HR, Aaron, JE & Limburg, K 1995, *The little brown handbook*, 6th edn, Harper Collins, New York.

Quirk, R & Greenbaum, S 1993, *A university grammar of English*, Longman, Essex, England.

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