Chapter 20

Grammar

Rules of English

People who are new to the English language frequently encounter rules of grammar that cause confusion, and those struggles are to be expected. But even native English users know that most everyone has issues with grammar sometimes. In this chapter, you will have a chance to review all the basic grammar rules. The first two sections address subject and verb issues. The next three sections cover noun cases and a variety of pronoun rules. The final section presents guidelines for using adverbs and adjectives.

20.1 Making Sure Subject and Verbs Agree

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Recognize typical subject/verb agreement.
2. Learn how to match the subject and verb when other words come between them, how to work with compound subjects, how to use titles involving collective subjects, and how to use indefinite subjects.
3. Learn the rules for matching subjects coming after the verb, relative pronouns, gerunds, infinitives, and singular subjects that look plural.

Subjects and verbs must agree in two ways: number (singular or plural) and person (first, second, or third). These two general rules hold through all the different subject/verb guidelines. As a rule, plural subjects end in *-s* and plural verbs do not end in *-s*. In this section, the noun is in **bold** and the verb is in *italic*.

Pairing Verbs with Singular and Plural Subjects

Many sentences have subjects and verbs that appear side by side. The subjects in these sentences are often clearly singular or plural, and they clearly determine the needed verb form.

Situation	Example	Watch Out For
Typical singular subject followed directly by the verb	The US **government** *establishes* national parks on an ongoing basis, such as the six parks formed in Alaska in 1980.	Don't get confused into thinking that a singular subject needs a verb without an *-s*. The plural version would be "governments establish."
Typical plural subject followed directly by the verb	National **parks** *provide* wonderful opportunities for people to commune with nature.	The subject "parks" is plural and it agrees with "provide." The singular version would be "park provides."

Matching Subjects and Verbs That Are Separated by Other Words

When words fall between a subject and verb, the singular/plural state of the subject is sometimes confusing. Always make sure you are matching the verb to the subject and not to one of the words between the two.

Situation	Example	Watch Out For
Words fall between subject and verb	Six national **parks** in Alaska *were formed* in 1980.	Mistaking "Alaska" for the subject would make it seem as if the verb should be "was formed."

Joining Plural Verbs to Compound or Double Subjects

Compound subjects joined by the word "and" are plural since there is more than one of them. Double subjects joined by "or" or "nor" match to a verb based on the status of the subject closest to the verb.

Situation	Example	Watch Out For
Compound subject with plural verb	**Rock and grass** *combine* to make Badlands National Park amazing.	"Rock and grass" is a plural subject formed by two singular words. Don't get confused and use "combines" for the verb because the individual subjects are singular.
Noncompound double subject functioning as a singular subject	Depending on where you look, **rock or grass** *dominates* your view.	Since the subjects are joined by "or," they do not automatically become plural because there are two of them.

Pairing Singular Verbs with Titles and Collective Subjects

Regardless of the singular or plural nature of the words within a title, the title is considered one unit; thus it is a singular noun. Similarly, **collective nouns**[1], such as "committee," function as singular nouns regardless of how many people or things might actually make up the collective noun.

Situation	Example	Watch Out For
Title with singular verb	**Everglades National Park** *preserves* thousands of acres of wetlands.	This title isn't plural just because word "Everglades" is plural. The park is one thing and, therefore, is singular.

1. A noun that includes two or more persons or things but is considered singular because it represents one group or one unit (e.g., audience).

Situation	Example	Watch Out For
Collective subject with singular verb	The **team** *meets* twice a year at Far View Lodge in Mesa Verde National Park.	Although you know that the "team" is made up of more than one person, you must view "team" as a single unit.

Teaming Singular Verbs with Indefinite Subjects

Whether an indefinite subject is singular or plural depends on whether the **indefinite noun**[2] has a singular or plural meaning on its own or based on the rest of the sentence.

Situation	Example	Watch Out For
Indefinite subject with singular meaning on its own	**Each** of the fossils in the Petrified Forest National Park *tells* a story.	Even though there is more than one fossil, the word "each" is always singular. Many indefinite subjects are always singular. Examples include another, anyone, anything, each, everybody, everything, neither, nobody, one, other, and something.
Indefinite subject with singular meaning based on the rest of the sentence	All of **Arizona** *was* once located in a tropical region.	Since "Arizona" is singular, "all" is singular. Some indefinite subjects can be singular or plural. Examples include all, any, more, most, none, some, and such.
Indefinite subject with plural meaning based on the rest of the sentence	All the petrified **trees** in the Petrified Forest National Park *are* millions of years old.	Since "trees" is plural, "all" is plural.
Indefinite subject with plural meaning on its own	**Both** scrubland and rock formations *are* common in desert settings.	Some indefinite subjects are always plural. Examples include both, few, fewer, many, others, several, and they.

2. A noun that can be singular sometimes and plural other times.

Choosing Verbs When the Subject Comes after the Verb

The standard sentence format in English presents the subject before the verb. In reversed sentences, you need to find the subject and then make sure it matches the verb. To find the subject, fill the following blank with the verb and then ask the question of yourself: who or what _____?

Situation	Example	Watch Out For
Subject comes after the verb	Throughout Mammoth Cave National Park *run* **passages** covering over 367 miles.	Who or what runs? The passages do. Even though you might be tempted to think "Mammoth Cave National Park" is the subject, it is not doing the action of the verb. Since "passages" is plural, it must match up to a plural verb.

Deciding If Relative Pronouns Take a Singular or Plural Verb

Relative pronouns[3], such as *who*, *which*, *that*, and *one of*, are singular or plural based on the pronoun's **antecedent**[4]. You have to look at the antecedent of the relative clause to know whether to use a singular or plural verb.

Situation	Example	Watch Out For
Relative pronoun that is singular	**The Organ**, **which** rises up seven hundred feet, *is* so named for its resemblance to a pipe organ.	The word "organ" is singular and is the antecedent for "which." So the word "which" is also singular. The word "which" is the subject for the relative clause "which rises up seven hundred feet" and, therefore, requires a singular verb (rises).
Relative pronoun that is plural	Arches National Park in Utah offers **sites** that *mesmerize* the most skeptical people.	The word "sites" is plural and is the antecedent for "that." The word "that" is the subject for the relative clause "that mesmerize the most skeptical people." So "that" is plural in this case and requires a plural verb (mesmerize).

Matching Singular Subjects to Gerunds and Infinitives

Gerunds[5] are nouns formed by adding *-ing* to a verb. Gerunds can combine with other words to form gerund phrases, which function as subjects in sentences. Gerund phrases are always considered singular.

3. A pronoun that is singular or plural based on the pronoun's antecedent (e.g., who, that).
4. A noun or pronoun that is represented by a pronoun.
5. Noun form of a verb created by adding *-ing* to the base verb (e.g., laughing).

Infinitives[6] are the "to" forms of verbs, such as *to run* and *to sing*. Infinitives can be joined with other words to form an infinitive phrase. These phrases can serve as the subject of a sentence. Like gerund phrases, infinitive phrases are always singular.

Situation	Example	Watch Out For
Gerund phrase as singular subject	**Veering** off the paths *is* not *recommended* on the steep hills of Acadia National Park.	Don't be fooled by the fact that "paths" is plural. The subject of this sentence is the whole gerund phrase, which is considered to be singular. So a singular verb is needed.
Infinitive phrase as singular subject	**To restore** Acadia National Park after the 1947 fire *was* a Rockefeller family mission.	All words in an infinitive phrase join together to create a singular subject.

Recognizing Singular Subjects That Look Plural and Then Choosing a Verb

Some subjects appear plural when they are actually singular. Some of these same subjects are plural in certain situations, so you have to pay close attention to the whole sentence.

Situation	Example	Watch Out For
Singular subjects that look plural	**Politics** *plays* a part in determining which areas are named as national parks.	Many subjects are or can be singular, but look plural, such as *athletics*, *mathematics*, *mumps*, *physics*, *politics*, *statistics*, and *news*. Take care when matching verbs to these subjects.
Subject that looks plural, and is sometimes singular and sometimes plural	**State and national politics** *sway* Congress during national park designation talks.	Just because words such as "politics" can be singular doesn't mean that they always are. In this case, the adjectives "state and national" clarify that different sources of politics are involved ("state politics" and "national politics"), so "politics" is plural in this case.

6. Noun form of a verb created by adding *to* before the base verb (e.g., to laugh).

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- A typical English sentence has a clear singular or plural subject followed by an equally clear singular or plural verb.
- Take extra care to match subjects and verbs when other words come between them by not using those extra words in your determination.
- Compound subjects always use a plural verb.
- Titles and collective subjects always require singular verbs.
- Indefinite subjects are singular or plural based on their own meaning, the rest of the sentence, or both.
- When a subject comes after the verb, locate the subject by identifying who or what completed the action. Then apply the appropriate subject/verb agreement guideline.
- Use antecedents to decide whether relative pronouns are singular or plural. Then match them to verbs.
- Gerunds and infinitives are always singular and take singular verbs.
- Some subjects look plural whether they are singular or plural. With such subjects, take special care when making sure the subjects and verbs agree.

EXERCISE

1. Write sentences to meet each of the following criteria. For each sentence, be sure that the subjects and verbs agree.

    a. Write a sentence that has words between the subject and verb.
    b. Write a sentence with a compound subject.
    c. Write a sentence that has a title of a song, movie, television show, or national park for a subject.
    d. Write a sentence that has a collective noun for a subject.
    e. Write a sentence that has an indefinite subject (another, anyone, anything, each, everybody, everything, neither, nobody, one, other, or something).
    f. Write a sentence where the subject comes after the verb.
    g. Write a sentence that uses a relative pronoun as a singular subject.
    h. Write a sentence that uses a relative pronoun as a plural subject.
    i. Write a sentence that has a gerund phrase for the subject.
    j. Write a sentence that has an infinitive phrase for the subject.
    k. Write a sentence that has a subject that looks plural but is actually singular.
    l. Write a sentence that has a subject that looks plural and is sometimes singular but is plural in this situation.

20.2 Avoiding General Verb Problems

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Understand the difference between regular verbs and irregular verbs and use both versions correctly.
2. Use verb tenses accurately and completely.
3. Match infinitives and participles to verb tenses.

What if all coffee makers worked the same way, all vehicles had the exact same dashboard setup, and all verbs followed the exact same format? Life would simply be easier all the way around! But we live in a world of variety, and just as you take the needed steps to become familiar with the coffee maker and car you own, you should also take the effort to become familiar with the language you speak. This section presents an overview of common issues that impede the proper use of English verbs. To get ready to understand the possible problems, study the following chart that shows the five main forms of verbs. Notice that for verbs other than *be*, the present tense for all but third-person singular pronouns is the base verb (third-person singular uses the base verb + *-s*). The **present participle**[7] is usually a form of "to be" + the base word + *-ing*, and the past tense and **past participle**[8] follow irregular patterns.

Table 20.1 Five Forms of English Verbs

Base	Present Tense (+ *-s* for Third-Person Singular)	Past Tense	Past Participle (Preceded by Form of "to Have")	Present Participle (Preceded by Form of "to Be")
run	run	ran	run	running
smile	smile	smiled	smiled	smiling
sing	sing	sang	sung	singing
beat	beat	beat	beaten	beating
see	see	saw	seen	seeing

7. A verb form created to indicate continuing action by adding present tense form of "to be" to the base verb + *-ing* (e.g., "We *are laughing*").

8. A verb form created to indicate completed action by adding past tense form of "to have" to the conjugated base verb (e.g., "They *had eaten*").

Using Irregular Verbs Correctly

Since the present tense of irregular verbs is almost always the same as the base and since the present participle is almost always a form of "to be" + the base + *-ing*, those two columns are not included in this table. Take note of some underlying patterns in the other three main verb forms for each set of irregular verbs.

Regular Verbs		
Base	**Past Tense**	**Past Participle (Preceded by Form of "to Have")**
accept	accepted	accepted
bump	bumped	bumped
dry	dried	dried
hop	hopped	hopped
observe	observed	observed
print	printed	printed
shrug	shrugged	shrugged
wobble	wobbled	wobbled

Irregular Verbs		
Base	**Past Tense**	**Past Participle (Preceded by Form of "to Have")**
break	broke	broken
bite	bit	bitten
catch	caught	caught
teach	taught	taught
awake	awoke	awoke/awakened
arise	arose	arisen
bear	bore	borne
bring	brought	brought
choose	chose	chosen
come	came	come
***Note that some words have more than one conjugation based on meaning. For example, the sun and lights shine/shone/shone, but when we deal with shoes, we shine/shined/shined.**		

Irregular Verbs		
Base	**Past Tense**	**Past Participle (Preceded by Form of "to Have")**
do	did	done
eat	ate	eaten
fall	fell	fallen
freeze	froze	frozen
get	got	got/gotten
give	gave	given
go	went	gone
run	ran	run
drink	drank	drunk
ring	rang	rung
have	had	had
hear	heard	heard
know	knew	known
lay	laid	laid
lead	led	led
lie	lay	lain
ride	rode	ridden
rise	rose	risen
say	said	said
see	saw	saw
shine*	shone	shone
shine*	shined	shined
take	took	taken
***Note that some words have more than one conjugation based on meaning. For example, the sun and lights shine/shone/shone, but when we deal with shoes, we shine/shined/shined.**		

Check out Table 15.1 "Verb Tenses for the Regular Verb "Look" and the Irregular Verb "Eat"" in Chapter 15 "Sentence Building", Section 15.2 "Choosing Appropriate Verb Tenses" for an overview of how to use these verb forms.

Handling Specific Problematic Verbs

Some verbs are especially problematic either because their meanings are confused or because some of their forms sound alike. Handle these verbs by knowing which ones give you trouble and then focusing on the conjugation of those specific verbs. Some of these most commonly troublesome verbs are in the following table. You need to know two key verb types to read this table: **transitive**[9] (when an object receives the action of the verb; in other words, something is done to something) and **intransitive**[10] (a verb that does not act on an object).

Problematic Verb Set (Base, Past, P. Part.)	Guidelines	Examples
borrow...lend	The verb *borrow* means "to temporarily get from someone else," and *lend* means "to temporarily give to someone else."	I *borrowed* Kyle's backpack since I had *lent* mine to Alice.
borrow, borrowed, borrowed		
lend, lent, lent		
bring...take	The starting point of the action causes the confusion between these two verbs. If you *bring* something, you have to start somewhere else and end up at the common location. If you *take* something, you have to start at the common location and end up somewhere else.	He *brought* his clean life jacket to the river and *took* away a filthy life jacket.
bring, brought, brought		
take, took, taken		
feel...think	The verb *feel* is emotion based and the verb *think* is logic based.	I *feel* excited about the tree-top ride, but I *think* it might cost more than I can afford.
feel, felt, felt		
think, thought, thought		
lay...lie	The verb *lay* is transitive and means "to put," so whenever you put something down, use *lay*. If you could replace the verb with *put* or *place*, you should use *lay*. The verb *lie* means "to rest" or "to tell a falsehood."	I *laid* my sunglasses down on a rock.
lay, laid, laid		I *lay* on the rock myself for twenty minutes.
lie, lay, lain (rest)		The ranger jokingly *lied* about the trail being a short one.

9. A type of verb that acts on a direct object (e.g., "He *hit* the ball").

10. A type of verb that does not take a direct object (e.g., "He *laughs*").

Problematic Verb Set (Base, Past, P. Part.)	Guidelines	Examples
lie, lied, lied (fib)		
learn...teach	The verb *learn* always means to "take in information" and to *teach* always means to "give out information."	I *learned* that Yellowstone was the first national park in the United States. When we go there this summer, I'm going to see what Old Faithful can *teach* me about geysers.
learn, learned, learned		
teach, taught, taught		
raise...rise	The verb *raise* is transitive, so you always have to raise something. The verb *rise* means to "go up" or "get up."	We are planning to *rise* early so that we are ready to start hiking when the sun rises, so *raise* your hand now if you have a problem with that plan.
raise, raised, raised		
rise, rose, risen		
set...sit	The verb *sit* is always intransitive and *set* usually transitive. The most common confusion is when referring to putting something down. Whenever the meaning is *to put*, use *set*.	The squirrel *set* his nut on the ground and *sat* looking at me.
set, set, set		
sit, sat, set		

Adding *-s* and *-es* for the Third Person

Many verbs require the addition of *-s* or *-es* when used in the third-person singular present tense. Although these verbs are slightly different from the present tense form of the verb, they are not considered a separate verb form.

Example

Present tense verb: walk

Present tense verb used in first person: I walk for hours looking at the trees and plants.

Present tense verb used in second person: You walk too quickly for me.

Present tense verb used in third person: He walks around as if he knows where he's going.

Using Verb Tenses Accurately and Completely

Verb tenses allow you to attach timing to sentences you write and say. To make your meaning clear, you need to choose the correct tense for the timing and you need to be sure to include all the needed words for that tense.

Verb Tenses	Timing of Action	Additional Words and Endings Needed to Complete Verb	Examples
Simple present	Taking place right now	None	I hike.
			You hike.
			She hikes.
Simple past	Started and finished in the past	Add *-ed* to verb.	I hiked.
			You hiked.
			She hiked.
Simple future	Will take place after now	Add *will* or *shall* to the present-tense verb	I will hike.
			You will hike.
			She will hike.

Verb Tenses	Timing of Action	Additional Words and Endings Needed to Complete Verb	Examples
Present **progressive**[11]	Taking place right now and will continue to take place	Add *am*, *is*, or *are* to the verb + *-ing*	I am hiking
			You are hiking.
			He is hiking.
Past progressive	Took place in the past at the same time that another action took place	Add *was* or *were* to the verb + *-ing*	I was hiking.
			You were hiking.
			He was hiking.
Future progressive	Will take place in the future and will continue on indefinitely	Add *will be* or *shall be* to the verb + *-ing*	I will be hiking.
			You will be hiking.
			He will be hiking.
Present perfect	Happened at an indefinite time in the past or started in the past and continues now	Add *has* or *have* to the past participle of the verb (usually *-ed*)	I have hiked this trail before. (in the past)
			I have hiked this trail since I was five years old. (in the past and continues)
Past perfect	Took place before some other past action	Add *had* to the past participle of the verb (usually *-ed*)	By the time I saw Jenny, I had hiked past the food station.
Future perfect	Will take place some time in the future before some other action	Add *will have* to the past participle of the verb (usually *-ed*)	I will have hiked for two hours before you even wake up.
Present perfect progressive	Began in the past, continues now, and might continue into the future	Add *has* or *have been* to the verb + *ing*	I have been hiking for a while.

11. Shows continuing action.

Verb Tenses	Timing of Action	Additional Words and Endings Needed to Complete Verb	Examples
Past perfect progressive	Took place on an ongoing basis in the past and was completed before another past action	Add *had been* to the verb + *-ing*	You had been walking for an hour when you saw the swans.
Future perfect progressive	Takes place in the future on an ongoing basis	Add *will have been* to the verb + *-ing*	They will have been hiking once a week by then.

Matching Infinitives and Participles to Verb Tenses

Verbals are words formed from verbs that function as other parts of speech. One type of verbals, gerunds (laughing, eating), always function as nouns (e.g., "*Laughing* is good for you"). Present, past, and present perfect participles are verbals that function as adjectives (e.g., "The sound of *laughing* children always cheered him up," "The sight of the *broken* tricycle left in the rain made him gloomy"). Infinitives (to laugh, to have eaten) are another main type of verbals that function as nouns, adjectives, or adverbs. When using any of these verbals, make sure you match the tense of the verb in the sentence.

Infinitives

When the action of the infinitive takes place after or at the same time as the action of the main verb, use the present tense:

We plan *to camp* in the National Redwood Forest this week.

When the action of the infinitive takes place before the action of the main verb, present the infinitive in **perfect tense**[12]:

We planned *to have been camping* in the National Redwood Forest last week.

Participle Phrases

Participle phrases can begin with the present participle, past participle, or present perfect participle.

12. Shows action that took place before some other action.

The present participle is the correct choice when the action of the participle is happening at the same time as the action of the main verb:

Resulting in large openings called goosepen scars, fire ravages redwood trees without killing them.

When the action of the participle takes place before the action of the main verb, you can use either a past participle or a present perfect participle:

Scarred by a fire years ago, the large redwood tree still stands tall and awesome. (past participle in participle phrase)

Having posed for several pictures inside the redwood trunk, we climbed out and previewed the shots.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- The present and past participles of regular verbs are formed by adding *-ing* and *-ed* to the base verb. Irregular verbs do not follow a set pattern, so you have to fix them in your mind so you use them correctly.
- Verbs have twelve tenses that indicate different timings. Due to the complexity of the complete set of tenses, you simply have to memorize the uses for the different tenses and the methods of constructing each.
- You should match both infinitives and participle phrases to the main verb in a sentence.

EXERCISES

1. Write a set of three sentences each using one of the verbs *go*, *went*, and *gone*.
2. Write a sentence using the verb *freeze* in present progressive tense.
3. Write a sentence using the verb *ride* in past perfect progressive tense.
4. Write a sentence using the verb *lie* in simple future tense.
5. Write a sentence using the verb *learn* in past perfect tense.
6. Write three sentences using each of the following verbs as gerunds, infinitives, and participle phrases. Identify the part of speech in each case.
    a. love
    b. kick
    c. play
    d. eat
    e. drive

20.3 Choosing the Correct Pronoun and Noun Cases

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Recognize pronoun cases.
2. Recognize noun cases.
3. Learn tips for handling pronoun case situations that confuse you.

One feature that is easier in English than in many other languages is **noun cases**[13]. While other languages have changes for the objective case as well as changes based on gender, English nouns do not change form except for the formation of plurals and possessives.

Pronouns in English, on the other hand, have different forms for the subjective, possessive, and objective cases. The subjective case refers to words as they are used in the subject position, while the possessive and objective cases designate words that are used in the possessive and object positions, respectively. Study the following table for an overview of the noun and pronoun cases.

	Subjective Case	Possessive Case	Objective Case
Nouns			
Singular			
	car	car's	car
	Jordy	Jordy's	Jordy
Plural			
	apples	apples'	apples
	children	children's	children
Pronouns			
Singular			
First person	I	my mine	me
Second person	you	your yours	you

13. The designation of a noun as a subject, object, or possessive.

	Subjective Case	Possessive Case	Objective Case
Third person	he	his	him
	she	her, hers	her
	it	its	it
Plural			
First person	we	our, ours	us
Second person	you	your, yours	you
Third person	they	their, theirs	them
Indefinite Pronouns[14]			
	anybody	anybody's	anybody
	everybody	everybody's	everybody
	someone	someone's	someone
Relative and **Interrogative Pronouns**[15]			
	that		that
	which		which
	who	whose	whom
	whoever	whoever's (slang)	whomever

Tips for Avoiding Pronoun Case Problems

- If you have trouble choosing between "I" and "me" in compound subject and object situations, remove the other subject or object, and try "I" or "me" alone.

  Example: Which of these two choices are correct?

  At Bryce Canyon, Carol took thirty pictures of Anna and I.

  OR

  At Bryce Canyon, Carol took thirty pictures of Anna and me.

  Test: At Bryce Canyon, Carol took thirty pictures of (I, me).

14. A pronoun that can be singular or plural.
15. A pronoun that is used to ask a question.

Result: Since the correct choice alone is “me,” the correct choice within the compound object is also “me”—At Bryce Canyon, Carol took thirty pictures of Anna and me.

- If you are confused about whether to use *who* or *whom* in a dependent clause, try isolating the clause that includes *who* or *whom*. Then reword the clause as a sentence and substitute a personal pronoun (subjective case: he, she, they; objective case: him, her, them) for *who* or *whom*. If *he*, *she*, or *they* sounds right, use *who*. If *him*, *her*, or *them* sounds right, use *whom*.

  Example: I don’t know (who, whom) to ask about where to stay at the Grand Tetons.

  Test: Possible rewording—I don’t know if I should ask (he, she, they, him, her, them).

  Result: Since *him*, *her*, or *them* are the choices that work, the correct choice in the first sentence is *whom*—I don’t know whom to ask about where to stay at the Grand Tetons.

- If you are confused about whether to use *who* or *whom* at the beginning of a sentence, think of an answer for the sentence using a personal pronoun. Then mimic the case of the answer pronoun in the original sentence.

  Example 1: (Who, Whom) is getting up at sunrise to watch the sun come up over these magnificent trees?

  Test: They will get up.

  Result: Since *they* is subjective case, you should use *who*, which is also subjective case.

  Example 2: (Who, Whom) did you ask to watch the fire?

  Test: I asked her to watch the fire.

  Result: Since *her* is objective case, you should use *whom*, which is also objective case.

- In casual usage, some words are sometimes left out, thus requiring a pronoun to do extra work. If you are confused about which pronoun case to use in these situations, think about how the sentence would be written if it were totally complete. Considering the whole sentence meaning should help clarify the pronoun choice.

  Example 1: Harry likes camping more than (her, she).

Test: Harry likes camping more than she (likes camping).

Result: The pronoun *she* is the subject of the assumed verb *likes*. So subjective case is needed.

Example 2: Harry likes camping more than (her, she).

Test: Harry likes camping more than (he likes) her.

Result: The pronoun *her* is the object of the assumed verb *likes*. So objective case is needed.

- If you are unsure whether to use *we* and *us* before a noun or noun phrase, say the sentence without the noun or noun phrase in place. Whichever pronoun works without the noun or noun phrase is also the correct pronoun to use with the noun.

  Example 1: Even (us, we) people who like our creature comforts fall in love with nature when viewing the Grand Tetons.

  Test: Even we fall in love with nature when viewing the Grand Tetons.

  Result: Once *people who like our creature comforts* is dropped out, it becomes clear that the pronoun needs to be subjective case.

  Example 2: Don't wait for (us, we) creature-comfort people to come up with a plan.

  Test: Don't wait for us to come up with a plan.

  Result: Once *creature-comfort people* is dropped, it becomes clear that the pronoun needs to be objective case.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- The correct pronoun choice changes based on the usage in the sentence because pronouns have subjective, objective, and possessive cases.
- In English, nouns are the same in the subjective and objective case. So all you have to know to write a noun correctly is whether it is singular or plural and possessive or not.
- You can memorize tips and clues to help you remember pronoun case issues with which you struggle.

EXERCISE

1. Choose the correct pronoun for each sentence. Then, for each choice, indicate whether it is subjective, objective, or possessive case.

    a. I don't know (her, she).
    b. (Us, We) girls are meeting at 7:00 p.m.
    c. (Who, Whom) do you think will show up first?
    d. That car is (theirs, their's).
    e. We aren't sure (who, whom) got here first.
    f. (Its, It's) about time we clear the air.
    g. The jacket fits him better than (I, me).

20.4 Making Pronouns and Antecedents Agree

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Understand the different types of pronouns.
2. Recognize pronoun antecedents.
3. Make sure pronouns and antecedents are relatively close together and match in person, number, gender, and human versus nonhuman state.

Pronouns can be somewhat confusing, but they can help make your use of language smoother and more compact. For example, if your name were Pete Rando, you could write, "Pete Rando is going back to wait to go back to Pete Rando's camper until Pete Rando's friends have seen the sunset at the Grand Canyon." Or you could say, "I'm going to wait to go back to my camper until my friends have seen the sunset at the Grand Canyon." A first step in understanding how and when to use pronouns properly is having an overall picture of pronouns. Study the following table for an overview of the different types of pronouns. Note that some pronouns, such as possessive pronouns and interrogative pronouns, show up on more than one list.

Demonstrative pronouns[16]	Refer to things	that these this those		**This** trail is the longest one.
Indefinite pronouns	Refer to nonspecific people or things	**Singular:** anybody anyone	**Singular or plural:** all	Do you know **anyone** who has hiked to the bottom of the Grand Canyon?

16. One of four pronouns (that, these, this, those) that points out an intended referent (e.g., that house, where the pronoun *that* points out which house).

		everybody everyone everything nothing one someone somebody	any more most none some	
		Plural: both few many		
Interrogative pronouns	Are used in questions	that what whatever which whichever		**Who** wants to sign up to ride the mules down into the Grand Canyon?

		who whoever whom whose		
Personal pronouns[17]	Refer to people or things	**Subjective case:** he I it she they we you	**Objective case:** her him it me them us you	If **you** ask Alicia, **she** will tell **you** that **I** am too chicken to ride the mules even though none of **them** has ever gone over the edge.
		Possessive case: his her(s) its		

17. A pronoun that refers to people or things (e.g., I, me, it).

		my mine our(s) their(s) your(s)	
Possessive pronouns	Show ownership without using an apostrophe	his her(s) its my mine our(s) their(s) your(s)	Regardless of the expense, a helicopter ride is **my** choice for seeing the Grand Canyon.
Reciprocal pronouns[18]	Refer to separate parts of a plural antecedent	each other one another	The mules calmly follow **each other** all the way up and down.

18. Either of the pronoun pairs *each other* or *one another*, which are used to refer to separate parts of a plural antecedent.

Reflexive[19] and **intensive pronouns**[20]	End in *-self* or *-selves*. Reflexive pronouns are needed for a sentence to make sense, and intensive pronouns are optional within a sentence	herself himself itself myself oneself ourselves themselves yourself yourselves	The guides **themselves** put their lives in the hands, or rather hooves, of the mules every day.
Relative pronouns	Show how dependent clause relates to a noun	that what whatever which whichever who whoever whom	As long as I get to see the Grand Canyon from a vantage point other than the edge, I am happy to choose **whichever** option you want.

19. A pronoun that ends in *-self* or *-selves* and is necessary for a sentence to make sense.
20. A pronoun that ends in *-self* or *-selves* and is not necessary for a sentence to make sense.

		whomever whose	

Another step in properly using pronouns is to recognize a pronoun's antecedent, which is the noun or pronoun to which a pronoun refers, and make sure the pronoun and antecedent match in number, person, gender, and human versus nonhuman state. Also, to make the antecedent-pronoun match clear, the pronoun should follow relatively soon after the antecedent, and no other possible antecedent should fall between the antecedent and the pronoun.

Antecedent Situations	Example in a Sentence	Pronoun Antecedent Guidelines
Compound antecedents	**Joey and Hannah** spent the weekend with **their** parents at the Grand Teton National Park.	As an antecedent, "Joey and Hannah" is plural, non-gender-specific, human, and third person, so the pronoun must match. Hence *their* works, but, for example, *our*, *his*, *her*, and *them* would not work.
Indefinite pronouns that act as an antecedent for other pronouns	**Some** of the moose left **their** footprints in our campsite.	Since "of the moose" is a nonessential phrase, the antecedent for *their* is *some*. The pronoun *some* can be singular or plural, so it agrees with *their*, which is plural.
Collective noun antecedents	The **Teton Range** is quite regal as **it** protrudes upwards nearly seven thousand feet.	*Teton Range* is a collective noun and, therefore, is considered single (multiple mountains within the range, but only one range). It is nonhuman, so it agrees with *it*. Collective nouns are sometimes an exception to the *human versus nonhuman* guideline since a noun, such as "crew" or "audience," can match to the pronoun *its*.
Antecedents and gender-	**Everyone** should make	Years ago, acceptable writing included using male pronouns to refer to all unknown- or

Antecedent Situations	Example in a Sentence	Pronoun Antecedent Guidelines
biased pronouns	**his or her** own choice about hike lengths.	collective-gender antecedents. Today such usage is considered sexist (see Chapter 16 "Sentence Style", Section 16.5 "Avoiding Sexist and Offensive Language"). Some people opt to use *their* with singular antecedents instead of using *his or her*. Such usage should never be used in formal writing because it is technically incorrect since *everyone* is singular and *their* is plural.
Ambiguous antecedents	**Ambiguous:** The trails wind high into the mountains where they seem to disappear into the sky.	When a pronoun antecedent is unclear, such as in this situation where readers do not know if the trails or the mountains seem to disappear into the sky, you should reword the sentence by either (1) eliminating or (2) moving the pronoun (and probably other words).
		Example #1: The trails wind high into the mountains where the trails seem to disappear into the sky.
		Example #2: High in the mountains, the trails wind as they seem to disappear into the sky.
Vague or implied antecedents	**Vague or implied:** The Grand Teton park wetland trails go past areas where deer, elk, and moose are often seen, so it should be a lot of fun.	The antecedent of *it* is not clear because the writer used a shortcut. Instead of referring to any of the nouns that preceded it in the sentence, *it* refers to an unstated antecedent, such as *the experience* or *the hike*. A better way to write the sentence: The Grand Teton park wetland trails go past areas where deer, elk, and moose are often seen, so the hike should be a lot of fun.
Antecedents in previous sentences	**The Grand Teton National Park** was formed in 1929. In 1950, **it** was sort of re-formed when additional	Antecedents should be present within the same sentence unless the flow of the sentences is such that the antecedent/pronoun connection is very clear.

Antecedent Situations	Example in a Sentence	Pronoun Antecedent Guidelines
	land was added.	

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Take care to use these eight types of pronouns correctly: demonstrative, indefinite, interrogative, personal, possessive, reciprocal, reflexive/intensive, and relative.
- For every pronoun, you should be able to easily identify a matching antecedent.
- As a rule, a pronoun's antecedent should be nearby, in the same sentence, and matching in person, number, gender, and human versus nonhuman state.

EXERCISE

1. For each sentence, fill in the blank with an appropriate pronoun(s) and circle the antecedent.

    a. Everybody heard us sing _____ version.
    b. The pit crew did _____ job like clockwork.
    c. A small child should not be left to fend for _____.
    d. Beagles and Labradors often show off _____ natural hunting tendencies.
    e. Allie and Bethany are planning to help _____ with their projects.
    f. Ask each student to upload _____ papers into the drop box.
    g. Anyone can get _____ transcripts by filling out the proper form.

20.5 Using Relative Pronouns and Clauses

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Recognize noun and adjective clauses that begin with relative pronouns.
2. Use appropriate relative pronouns in noun and adjective clauses.

Noun clauses can serve as subjects or objects and often begin with one of these relative pronouns: *that*, *what*, *whatever*, *which*, *whichever*, *who*, *whoever*, *whom*, *whomever*, *whose*. Logically, you should use subjective case pronouns in noun clauses that function as subjects and objective case pronouns in noun clauses that function as objects. See Chapter 20 "Grammar", Section 20.3 "Choosing the Correct Pronoun and Noun Cases" for a review of pronoun cases.

Examples

Subjective Case Example: Joshua Tree National Park, **which is in California**, is named after a tree that is actually a member of the lily family.

Objective Case Example: A Joshua tree looks like neither its relative, the lily, nor the biblical figure, Joshua, **whom the tree is said to be named after**.

Adjective clauses modify nouns and pronouns that usually immediately precede the clauses. Adjective clauses often begin with these relative pronouns: *that*, *which*, *who*, *whom*, *whose*.

Example

The Mohave and the Colorado are the two deserts **that meet in Joshua Tree National Park**.

Often adjective clauses leave the relative pronoun implied, as in the following example: I couldn't get the stain out of the pants **(that)** I wore to the party.

For more on how to punctuate clauses properly, see Chapter 18 "Punctuation", Section 18.1 "Using Commas Properly".

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Many noun clauses begin with these relative pronouns: *that*, *what*, *whatever*, *which*, *whichever*, *who*, *whoever*, *whom*, *whomever*, *whose*.
- Noun clauses that begin with relative pronouns can serve as subjects or objects and require subject and object pronouns, respectively.
- Many adjective clauses begin with these relative pronouns: *that*, *which*, *who*, *whom*, *whose*.

EXERCISE

1. Complete these steps for the following sentences:
    - Use one of these relative pronouns to fill in each of the following blanks: *that*, *what*, *whatever*, *which*, *whichever*, *who*, *whoever*, *whom*, *whomever*, *whose*.
    - Determine whether the clause that each relative pronoun introduces is a noun clause or an adjective clause.
    - For each noun clause, indicate whether it is subjective or objective case.

    a. The swimmer _____ won the race had been sick all last week.
    b. Caley, _____the coach thought would win her race, defaulted in the first lap.
    c. The dog _____ ate your hot dog is behind the hose.
    d. The boy _____ you saw is my brother.

20.6 Using Adverbs and Adjectives

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Use general adverbs and adjectives correctly.
2. Use comparatives and superlatives correctly.
3. Recognize how incorrect usage of adverbs and adjectives can result in double negatives.
4. Learn the correct use of *good* and *well* and *bad* and *badly*.

Many adverbs and adjectives are paired with slight changes in spelling (usually adverbs are formed by adding *-ly* to the adjective). A few adverbs and adjectives have the same spelling (like **best**, **fast**, **late**, **straight**, **low**, and **daily**), so it is only their use that differentiates them.

Table 20.2 Common Adverb and Adjective Pairs

Adjectives	Adverbs
bad	badly
beautiful	beautifully
quick	quickly
quiet	quietly
slow	slowly
soft	softly
sudden	suddenly

Using Adverbs to Modify Verbs, Adjectives, and Adverbs

Adverbs tell *when*, *how*, *why*, *where*, *under what condition*, *to what degree*, *how often*, and *how much*. Many adverbs end in *-ly*, but certainly not all them. Adverbs modify verbs, adjectives, and other adverbs. In the following sentences, the adverbs are in **bold** font and the words they modify are in *italic* font.

1. About a quarter million bats *leave* Carlsbad Caverns **nightly**.

When do they leave? nightly; modifies a verb

2. The bats *flew* **above** our heads.

   Where did they fly? above; modifies a verb

3. The bats are **incredibly** *dense*.

   To what degree are they dense? incredibly; modifies an adjective

4. Each little bat can *change* directions **amazingly fast**!

   How do they change directions? fast; modifies a verb

   AND To what degree do they change directions fast? amazingly; modifies an adverb

Using Adjectives to Modify Nouns and Pronouns

Adjectives modify nouns and pronouns and answer the questions *what kind? how many?* and *which one?* In the following sentences, the adjectives are in **bold** font and the words they modify are in *italic* font.

1. It takes **crazy** *people* to go to a cave at 4:00 a.m. to wait for the bats to leave!

   What kind of people? crazy ones; modifies a noun

2. A **few** *bats* seemed to circle above as the rest flew off.

   How many bats? a few; modifies a noun

3. **That** *one* almost got in my hair.

   Which one? that one; modifies a pronoun

Using Comparatives and Superlatives

Most adjectives and adverbs have three levels of intensity. The lowest level is the base, or positive, level, such as *tall*. The second level is the **comparative**[21] level (*taller*), and the top level is the **superlative**[22] level (*tallest*). You use the base, or positive, level when you are talking about only one thing. You use the comparative level when you are comparing two things. The superlative level allows you to compare three or more things.

21. A word used to compare two things (e.g., taller, better).

22. A word used to compare three or more things (e.g., tallest, best).

With short adjectives, the comparative and superlative are typically formed by adding *-er* and *-est*, respectively. If an adjective has three or more syllables, use the words *more* or *less* (comparative) and *most* or *least* (superlative) in front of the adjectives instead of adding suffixes. When you are unsure whether to add the suffix or a word, look up the word.

Table 20.3 Sample Comparative and Superlative Adjectives

Formed with *-er* and *-est*		
big	bigger	biggest
old	older	oldest
wise	wiser	wisest
Formed by Using *More* or *Less* and *Most* or *Least*		
ambitious	more ambitious	least ambitious
generous	less generous	least generous
simplistic	more simplistic	most simplistic

With adverbs, only a few of the shorter words form superlatives by adding the *-er* or *-est* suffixes. Rather, most of them use the addition of *more* or *less* and *most* or *least*.

Table 20.4 Sample Comparative and Superlative Adverbs

Formed with *-er* and *-est*		
early	earlier	earliest
fast	faster	fastest
late	later	latest
Formed by Using *More* or *Less* and *Most* or *Least*		
happily	more happily	most happily
neatly	more neatly	most neatly
quickly	more quickly	most quickly

Some adjectives and adverbs form superlatives in irregular patterns instead of using the *-er* or *-est* suffixes or adding *more* or *less* and *most* or *least*.

Table 20.5 Sample Adjectives That Form Superlatives Using Irregular Patterns

good	better	best
bad	worse	worst
far	farther	farthest
many	more	most

Table 20.6 Sample Adverbs That Form Superlatives Using Irregular Patterns

badly	worse	worst
little	less	least
much	more	most
well	better	best

Avoiding Double Negatives

One negative word changes the meaning of a sentence to mean the opposite of what the sentence would mean without the negative word. Two negative words, on the other hand, cancel each other out, resulting in a double negative that returns the sentence to its original meaning. Because of the potential for confusion, double negatives are discouraged.

Example

Example of a sentence with one negative word: I have **never** been to Crater Lake National Park.

Meaning: Crater Lake is a place I have **not** visited.

Example of a sentence with two negative words: I have **not never** been to Crater Lake National Park.

Meaning: I have been to Crater Lake National Park.

Using *Good* and *Well* and *Bad* and *Badly* Correctly

Two sets of adverbs and adjectives that are often used erroneously are *good* and *well* and *bad* and *badly*. The problem people usually have with these two words is that the adverb forms (*well* and *badly*) are often used in place of the adjective forms (*good* and *bad*) or vice versa. In addition, *well* can be used as an adjective meaning "healthy." If you have problems with these two sets of words, it could help to keep the following chart taped to your computer until you change your habits with these words.

Situations	Correct Examples	Explanation
The word *well* is typically used as an adverb.	I wasn't feeling very **well** on the day we first drove through Theodore Roosevelt National Park.	The words *very* and *well* are both adverbs. The word *very* modifies *well*, and *well* modifies *feeling*.
Sometimes forms of the verbs *feel*, *be*, and *look* can be used to describe a person's health. In such cases, the word *well* can serve as an adjective that means "healthy" and refers back to the noun.	Watching buffalo roam always makes me feel strong and **well**.	The word *well* is used as an adjective just like *strong*. Both words modify *me*. The four sentences with *well* refer to physical health.
	I am **well**.	
	I feel **well**.	
	I'm feeling **well**.	
	The buffaloes looked **well**.	
	I am **good**.	The four sentences with *good* refer to emotional state but not physical health.
	I feel **good**.	
	I'm feeling **good**.	
	The buffalo looked **good** with the cliffs behind them.	

Situations	Correct Examples	Explanation
The word *good* is an adjective. It is never used as an adverb.	A trip through Theodore Roosevelt National Park is a **good** chance to see herds of buffalo in their natural state.	The word *good* is an adjective modifying *chance*.
People often make statements such as "I run real good." In reality, "real good" is never a really good combination of words!	I run really **well**.	In the first sentence, the word *really* is an adverb modifying another adverb. Since adjectives modify neither adverbs nor adjectives, you cannot use the combination *real well* or *real good*.
	My running is a really **good** example of my ability to dedicate myself to an activity.	In the second sentence, *really* is an adverb modifying *good*, which is an adjective that is modifying *example*.
The word *bad* is an adjective.	That's a **bad** picture of me with the buffalo since I look like I am afraid for my life.	The adjective *bad* modifies the noun *picture*.
Sometimes a sentence seems like it should take the adverb *badly* when it actually needs the adjective *bad*. The linking verbs *be*, *feel*, *look*, and *sound* can all be followed by the adjective *bad*.	I am **bad** when it comes to being on time.	Each of these sentences uses *bad* correctly since their verbs are linking verbs.
	I felt **bad** about missing the first herd of buffalo.	
	The land looks **bad**, but the buffalo seem to be able to find food.	
	Buffalo might sound **bad**, but	

Situations	Correct Examples	Explanation
	they are really calm animals.	
The word *badly* is an adverb.	I chose **badly** when I walked between a mother buffalo and her baby.	The adverb *badly* modifies the verb *chose*. The adverb *badly* usually answers the question *how?*, as it does in this case—How did I choose? (badly)

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- The key to using adverbs and adjectives correctly is paying attention to standard adverb and adjective rules, such as the fact that adverbs modify verbs, adjectives, and other adverbs and adjectives modify only nouns and pronouns.
- The comparatives and superlatives of most one- and two-syllable adjectives are formed by adding *-er* and *-est*. For adjectives with three or more syllables, the words *more*, *less*, *most*, and *least* are used with the adjective. Some smaller adverbs form comparatives and superlatives by adding *-er* and *-est*, but most of the comparative and superlatives of adverbs are formed by using the words *more*, *less*, *most*, and *least* with the adverbs. Some adjectives and some adverbs have irregularly formed comparatives and superlatives that you simply must learn, such as *good*, *better*, and *best*.
- Double negatives within a sentence reverse the negative state and turn the negative connotation into a positive one.
- It is wise to pay close attention to the guidelines for using the adverbs and adjectives *good*, *well*, *bad*, and *badly* since their use is both irregular and somewhat ambiguous.

EXERCISE

1. Use each of the following words in a sentence and identify the usage as *adjective* or *adverb*:

    a. beautiful
    b. quietly
    c. low
    d. luckily
    e. sweetly
    f. better
    g. finest
    h. never
    i. good
    j. well
    k. bad
    l. badly