

Subject and Object Pronouns

What is a pronoun?

A pronoun is a word that takes the place of a **noun** or a **noun phrase**.

Examples of **nouns** are: Lisa, Frank, Australia, girl, book, happiness

Examples of **noun phrases** are: the girl, a book, that big dog

For example, here is a sentence with **nouns**:

- **Lisa** likes **Frank**.

With pronouns, this becomes:

- **She** likes **him**.

Here is a sentence with **noun phrases**:

- **The girl** bought **a book**.

With pronouns, this becomes:

- **She** bought **it**.

What is a subject pronoun?

A **subject pronoun** tells us who or what does the action.

For example:

- **You** play tennis. → **you** is the **subject pronoun**.
- **She** likes him. → **she** is the **subject pronoun**.

What is an object pronoun?

A **object pronoun** tells us who or what receives the action.

For example:

- George called **me**. → **me** is the **object pronoun**.
- She likes **him**. → **him** is the **object pronoun**.

What are the subject pronouns in English?

Person	Subject pronoun	Example
1st person singular	I	I play basketball.
2nd person singular/plural	you	You are funny.
3rd person singular masculine	he	He likes music.
3rd person singular feminine	she	She is working.
3rd person singular non-human	it	It is hot today.
1st person plural	we	We are eating.
3rd person plural	they	They went home.

What are the object pronouns in English?

Person	Object pronoun	Example
1st person singular	me	She helped me .
2nd person singular/plural	you	I saw you .
3rd person singular masculine	him	We heard him .
3rd person singular feminine	her	I love her .
3rd person singular non-human	it	Lisa fixed it .
1st person plural	us	They invited us .
3rd person plural	them	George thanked them .

! In English we use the same pronouns for direct and indirect objects.

For example:

- George called **me**. → **me** is the **direct object**.
- George gave **me** the book. → **me** is the **indirect object**

Notes:

I/me: We always use these to refer to ourselves in English. We do not use our own name to talk about ourselves.

For example:

- My name is Max. I am a teacher.

NOT:

- ~~My name is Max. Max is a teacher.~~

you: We only have one way to say **you** in English. It can be singular or plural. In other words, it can be used to talk to one person or to more than one person.

he/him: We use these for men, boys and male animals, e.g. John, the man.

she/her: We use these for women, girls and female animals, e.g. Anna, the woman. We also sometimes use it for boats and ships.

it: We use this for things, situations, ideas, and animals when we do not know the sex or the sex is not important. We also often use **it** as a dummy subject, for example: It is raining.

we/us: We use these when we talk about ourselves and another person or other people, e.g. Anna and I/me, my friends and I/me, you and I/me.

they/them: We use these for more than one person, animal or thing, e.g. Anna and John, my friends, the dogs, those books.

! Common mistakes !

1. Using **me** instead of **I** in compound subjects.

For example:

- John and I went to the party.

NOT:

- ~~Me and John went to the party.~~

2. Using **I** instead of **me** in compound objects.

For example:

- She helps my brother and me.

NOT:

- ~~She helps my brother and I.~~

Note: Number 1 is common in informal speech in some regional varieties of English.

Number 2 is common in informal speech in most varieties of English. Many people would therefore not consider these mistakes, but rather nonstandard structures.