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## Teaching Pronouns

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Pronouns are words that take the place of common and proper nouns in a sentence. No matter how simple this seems, getting students to understand and be able to apply this knowledge is not always so easy. Here are a few fun ideas for teaching pronouns in the classroom that are sure to keep your students actively engaged.

### Pronouns List

When introducing any of the activities, have a readily available list, similar to the one below, of pronouns for students to use as a reference.

Personal	Possessive	Relative	Reflexive
<p>Personal pronouns are used in place of a common or proper noun.</p> <p><b>Example:</b> <i>He</i> is not staying.</p>  <p>I me he she it him her you we they them</p>	<p>Possessives show ownership.</p> <p><b>Example:</b> This is <i>his</i> book.</p> <p>his hers its yours ours theirs</p> 	<p>A relative pronoun links two pronouns into one complete thought or statement.</p> <p><b>Example:</b> <i>Bob</i> is the man <i>who</i> built this house.</p>  <p>who whose that which whoever whichever whatever whom what</p>	<p>Reflexives are used when the object of the sentence is the same as its subject. Each personal pronoun has its own reflexive pronoun.</p> <p><b>Example:</b> <i>I</i> did not want to hurt <i>myself</i>.</p> <p>myself yourself himself herself ourselves themselves</p> 



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## Classroom Activities

### Activity 1: Pronoun Substitution

*Materials:* Various objects (balls, blocks, books, games), pictures of proper nouns (famous people, places, and things), sentence strips, writing instruments (pens, pencils, markers, crayons), and chart paper or notebook paper.

1. Place objects and pictures around the room where students can easily see them.
2. Number each object/picture and have a sentence strip for each object/picture that either describes or begins a story about the object/picture. For example, with a soccer ball you might write on the sentence strip, "Michael likes to kick the soccer ball."
3. Have students rewrite the sentence using the appropriate pronouns. For example, "He likes to kick it."
4. After all students have a chance to write several sentences/paragraphs using appropriate pronouns, allow some time for them to share and identify aloud the pronouns they have on their papers.

#### *Extension Activities:*

- For older students, or after students are beginning to master pronouns, have students use the sentences as a writing prompt and continue writing a paragraph or essay using appropriate nouns and pronouns.
- Put items in bins around the room and set up "stations" so that students are able to move around the room and write.
- If you have access to a SMART® Board or Promethean® Board, simply display the objects/pictures and sentences on the board.



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## Activity 2: Pronoun Find

*Materials:* Photographs and/or pictures cut out from magazines, writing paper, and pencils, pens, or markers.

1. Allow students to choose several pictures and/or photographs. Have them write one sentence describing the photograph/picture using nouns and one picture describing the same photograph/picture using pronouns.
2. Have students pair up and read their sentences aloud to each other. Have them tell each other the pronouns that can replace the nouns.

*Extension Activities:*

- For older or more advanced students, have them write paragraphs or essays using the same format as the sentences.
- Have students discuss when it is appropriate to use pronouns. For example, you would not use a pronoun to begin a story or paragraph because the reader would not know to whom the writer is referring.

## Activity 3: Pronoun Identification

*Materials:* A piece of writing to read aloud that uses many pronouns.

1. For a fun way to review pronouns, read aloud to the whole class from a book or magazine.
2. Instruct students to clap their hands every time they hear you say a pronoun.

*Extension Activity:*

- For older or more advanced students, choose a different action for each type of pronoun. For example, clap for personal pronouns, snap for possessive pronouns, stomp for relative pronouns, and wave for reflexive pronouns.

### Related Handy Handouts®:

[294 – Parts of Speech](#)

[233 – Teaching the Fundamentals of Grammar and Syntax at Home](#)

### Resources

Burgess, R. (2000). *Laughing Lessons: 149 2/3 ways to make teaching and learning fun*. Minneapolis, MN: Free Spirit.

Tate, M. (2005). *Worksheets don't build dendrites*. Thousand Oaks, CA.

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