Choose a Pronoun to Match the Antecedent

1. Focus

Explain Choosing a Singular or Plural Pronoun to Match the Antecedent

Say: A pronoun is a word that is used in place of a noun. It refers to a person, place, or thing, but not by name. Listen to this sentence: “James took his book to school.” The word **his** is the pronoun. **His** refers to James; **his book** is James’s book. An antecedent is the word or phrase that the pronoun refers to. In the sentence, “James took his book to school,” the noun **James** is the antecedent. It is the name that the pronoun **his** refers to. When we write, we need to make sure that we use pronouns that match their antecedents. If the antecedent is singular, we need to choose a singular possessive pronoun, such as **my**, **your**, **his**, **her**, or **its**. If the antecedent is plural, we need a plural possessive pronoun, such as **our**, **your**, or **their**. Otherwise, our sentence sounds funny. For example, listen to this sentence: “Sebastian must kick the ball with **their** foot.” What is wrong with that sentence? (Allow responses.) Today I’m going to show you how I pay attention to antecedent and pronoun agreement.

Model Choosing a Singular or Plural Pronoun to Match the Antecedent

Display the modeling text on chart paper or using the interactive whiteboard resources.

1. The goalie is the only player on the field allowed to touch the ball with **his** or **her** hands—and only when inside the penalty box area.
2. The **other players** must kick the ball or tap it with **their** chest, body, or head.

Modeling Text

Ask students to listen for pronouns as you read aloud each sentence.

After sentence 1. Say: In this sentence, the word **goalie** is the antecedent. **Goalie** refers to one person. It is a singular noun. Since the goalie can be male or female, the writer uses the words **his** or **her** to refer to the goalie’s hands. A common mistake that writers make is to use the plural possessive pronoun **their** in place of **his** or **her**. **Their** is a plural possessive pronoun, so it does not match the singular antecedent **goalie**.

After sentence 2. Say: This sentence includes a plural antecedent, **players**, and the possessive pronoun **their**. The phrase **their chest** refers to the “other players.” Choosing the correct possessive pronoun is important for making your writing easy to understand.
2. Rehearse

**Practice Choosing a Singular or Plural Pronoun to Match the Antecedent**

Display the practice text on chart paper or using the interactive whiteboard resources.

Helena kicked the ball hard with Helena’s right foot.
The team was upset with the team’s loss.

**Practice Text**

Ask students to work with a partner to rewrite the sentences replacing the underlined words with possessive pronouns that agree with the antecedents. Each pair of students should write down the sentences and be prepared to read them to the class and explain the word choices made.

**Share Practice Sentences**

Bring students together and invite partners to read aloud their sentences and explain why they chose the pronouns they did. Record students’ sentences and post these as models for students to use as they revise their own procedural text.

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3. Independent Writing and Conferring

**Say:** Today we learned to choose possessive pronouns that agree with their antecedents. If the antecedent is singular, we need a singular pronoun; if the antecedent is plural, our pronoun should be plural.

Ask students to pay attention to antecedent and pronoun agreement as they draft and revise during independent writing time. During conferences, reinforce students’ use of this and other strategies using the prompts on your conferring flip chart.

4. Share

Bring students together. Invite volunteers to read aloud sentences in which they’ve used pronouns and antecedents correctly.

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**Strategies to Support ELs**

**Beginning**

Beginning ELs are not yet ready to focus on this element of word choice. While other students complete the partner practice, or during independent writing time, you may wish to support students’ oral use of singular noun/possessive pronoun agreement. Display a book. **Say:** I have my book. Record the sentence on chart paper and underline the words I and my. Give a book to a male student. **Say:** He has his book. Record the sentence and underline the noun and pronoun. Repeat the process with a female student. Create a subject pronoun/possessive pronoun chart like the one below, and invite students to make up additional sentences using the sentence frame:

[Subject pronoun] ______ have/has [possessive pronoun] ______.

**Intermediate and Advanced**

Before students complete the partner practice, display the following chart to review singular and plural possessive pronouns in the English language. Ask students to compose oral sentences using each pronoun correctly. Use this opportunity to identify areas in which students need additional reinforcement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Singular Possessive Pronouns</th>
<th>Plural Possessive Pronouns</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>my</td>
<td>our</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>your</td>
<td>your</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>his, her, its</td>
<td>their</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Advanced**

Pair ELs with fluent English speakers during the partner activity.