Indefinite Pronouns

Objectives

In this mini-lesson, students will:

- Determine the purpose of indefinite pronouns.
- Identify indefinite pronouns in sentences.
- Use indefinite pronouns in sentences.

Preparation

Materials Needed

- Chart paper and markers
- Indefinite Pronouns (BLM 9)
- Interactive whiteboard resources

1. Focus

Explain Indefinite Pronouns

Say: Personal pronouns, such as she, you, and they, refer to specific people, places, or things. When a writer does not want to refer to a specific person, place, or thing, he or she uses an indefinite pronoun. Some examples of indefinite pronouns are anybody, anyone, anything, no one, all, everybody, someone, and something. Write indefinite pronoun examples on chart paper and hang it in the room.

Say: I’m going to share a few sentences from a historical fiction story I wrote that include indefinite pronouns.

Model Using Indefinite Pronouns

Display the modeling text on chart paper or using the interactive whiteboard resources. Read the text aloud to students.

1. Irma and Jane moved to Hollywood in 1925, but only one would become famous.
2. Out of all the movie stars, people loved Irma the most.

Modeling Text

After sentence 1. Say: I use indefinite pronouns in my writing when I don’t want or need to refer to a specific person, place, or thing. In the first sentence, I used the indefinite pronoun one. It tells the reader that one person would become famous, but not which one. Not naming a specific person helps me build suspense, because you don’t know which woman I mean. Underline one.

After sentence 2. Say: Then I used the indefinite pronoun all in the second sentence. All refers to a whole group of people; in this case, movie stars. But I don’t tell you specific names. Not having to list a lot of names or give a long description makes my writing flow better.
2. Rehearse

Practice Using Indefinite Pronouns

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

Ask students to form pairs. Invite pairs to think of an indefinite pronoun that completes each sentence. Tell students that more than one pronoun may fit in each sentence. (Students do not need to copy sentences.)

1. ______ said that Irma was a great actress.
2. Jane made a total of four movies; ______ are very good.
3. But after a while, ______ of the movie studios would hire Jane.

Practice Text

If your class includes English learners or other students who need support, use “Strategies to Support ELs.”

Share Sentences with Indefinite Pronouns

Invite pairs to share their results. Discuss their responses. Ask the following questions:
- What indefinite pronoun did you choose?
- Why did you choose that pronoun?
- What other pronoun could you have chosen? How would it change the meaning of the sentence?

3. Independent Writing and Conferring

Say: Remember to use indefinite pronouns in your historical fiction when you don’t want or need to refer to a specific person, place, or thing. Some indefinite pronouns are singular and some are plural, and some change number depending on the context of the sentence, so make sure you use correct pronoun/verb agreement.

If you would like to give students additional practice using indefinite pronouns, have them complete BLM 9.

4. Share

Bring students together. Invite volunteers to share their answers to BLM 9. Provide corrective feedback as necessary.

Strategies to Support ELs

Beginning
The rules on indefinite pronouns might overwhelm beginning ELs. While other students work in pairs, you might offer extra practice with identifying and using personal pronouns. Write the following sentences on chart paper. Use pantomime to express the meaning of the sentences. Model drawing a line between the noun in the first sentence and the pronoun in the second sentence. Invite students to draw the line in the other sentences.

Mrs. Roberts is a teacher. I am a teacher.
Anya is a student. She is a student.
Jake plays soccer. He plays soccer.

Intermediate and Advanced
Pair ELs with fluent English speakers during the practice activity. Give students a short list of indefinite pronouns to choose from to complete the sentences, such as some, none, nobody, everyone.