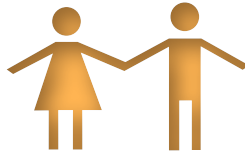


# HANDS-ON GRAMMAR: PRONOUN MINI LESSONS

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## LESSON 1: PRONOUNS: GENDER IMPACT

### Overview and Tips for Classroom Implementation

My high school students were always surprised when I explained how gender pronouns functioned in Standard English. This mini lesson is designed to increase student awareness of gender and language through the study of pronouns.

### Step-by-Step Lesson Instructions

#### Step One

Have the students select a character from this list:  
*Cowboy, teacher, rock star, nurse, doctor, or lawyer.*

Once the students have selected a character, have them write a story about the character. Give the students 20 minutes to draft a 1-2 paragraph narrative story about the selected character.

#### Step Two

Divide the students into pairs. With the student's partner, instruct the students to circle the pronouns that are used to describe the selected character. Ask the students to answer the following questions:

- What is the gender of the character?
- How do you know the gender of the character (indicated what pronouns were assigned)?

#### Step Three

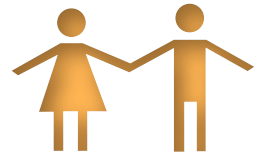
Ask the students to share the answers to the questions in Step Two as part of a large group discussion. Discuss with the students how pronouns can impact the reader's assumptions about a text. You can make a table with the characters like the one below and tally the students' gender assignment.

### Additional Tips

The following resource offers tips for avoiding gender biased language in writing.  
<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/608/01/>

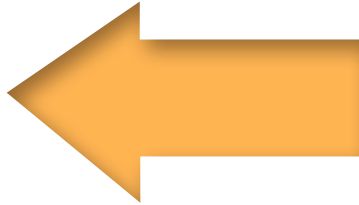
# FIGURE 1

PRONOUNS & GENDER



CHARACTER	PRONOUNS ASSOCIATED WITH THE CHARACTER	MALE OR FEMALE
Cowboy		
Teacher		
Rock Star		
Nurse		
Doctor		
Lawyer		

## LESSON 2: MORE PRONOUN PRACTICE



### **Overview and Tips for Classroom Implementation**

Students often forget to identify the antecedent when using pronouns in writing. As a result, the reader can become easily confused when the pronoun does not have an easily understood referent.

### **Step-by-Step Lesson Instructions**

**Step One** Review with students the relationship between pronouns and antecedents.

- Pronouns take the place of a noun and refer to the noun for which it replaces.

The correct pronouns must be used so that the reader clearly understands which noun your pronouns refer to.

**Step Two** You can either make copies of figure 2 or display it on an overhead projector. The students can work in pairs or the class can work through the activity as whole group instruction.

**Step Three** Have the students read the passage in figure 2. The students will notice that pronouns are missing in the passage. Instruct the students to insert appropriate pronouns, where they are missing. Once the pronouns are inserted, instruct the students to identify the antecedent for each pronoun.

### **Additional Tips**

It is helpful to color code the pronouns and the antecedent so that these are more obvious to the student.

## FIGURE 2

### PRONOUN PRACTICE



Susan decided that \_\_\_\_\_ needed some special ingredients for the dinner that \_\_\_\_\_ was making for \_\_\_\_\_ family. \_\_\_\_\_ grabbed her purse and headed to the grocery store. At the grocery store, \_\_\_\_\_ noticed that it was very crowded. Many customers were walking down the aisles and filling \_\_\_\_\_ carts with groceries. Since Susan was in a hurry, \_\_\_\_\_ decided to grab a basket, instead of a cart and dashed down one of the aisles.

## LESSON 3 : PRONOUNS : POSSESSIVE



### Overview and Tips for Classroom Implementation

A pronoun used to demonstrate possession is called a possessive pronoun. Students are often confused when to use the masculine, feminine or neuter form of possessive pronouns in Standard English. This lesson allows students to practice with the different possessive pronouns.

### Step-by-Step Lesson Instructions

**Step One** Review the possessive pronouns with the students:  
*mine, yours, his, hers, its, ours, yours, and theirs*

As illustrated in the following examples, possessive pronouns demonstrate relationships:

- *It is mine.*

First person pronoun, mine, refers to the speaker.

- *No, it is not yours.*

Second person pronoun, yours, refers to the person being spoken to (you).

- *Maybe it is hers.*

Third person pronoun, hers, refers to the person being spoken about (she).

- *I know its behavior seems odd.*

Third person pronoun, its, refers to an object, not a person.

**Step Two** Once you have reviewed possessive pronouns with the students, ask the students to create sentences like those in your examples. The students can work in pairs to create the sentences. It should take about five minutes for the students to create sample sentences for each of the possessive pronouns.

**Step Three** Instruct the students to select three of the sample sentences that they created. Next, the students will illustrate the relationship of each possessive pronoun.  
*Give the students about 10 minutes to complete these steps.*

### Additional Tips

When the students illustrate the possessive pronoun relationships, they can do so in a variety of formats. I have successfully used all of the following:

- *Bring large butcher block paper and tape it to a wall in the classroom. The students can create their illustrations on large butcher block paper.*
- *Distribute card stock and have one sample possessive pronoun on each paper.*
- *If you have access to computers in your classroom, use a drawing program for the students to create the possessive pronoun illustrations digitally.*