

5 Correction of Common Errors (Pronouns)

1. (a) One should love his country. (Incorrect)

One should love one's country. (Correct)

(b) One must do her work. (Incorrect)

One must do one's work. (Correct)

(c) One must do their duty. (Incorrect)

One must do one's duty. (Correct)

Note: If 'one' is the subject in a sentence, 'his', 'her', 'our', 'your' or 'their' is not used. Only 'one' is used with an 's'.

2. (a) He had myself gone there. (Incorrect)

He had himself gone there. (Correct)

(b) Myself will do it. (Incorrect)

I will do it. (Correct)

or

I myself will do it. (Correct)

Note: Relative pronouns such as 'myself', 'yourself', 'itself', etc. are not used as subjects.

3. (a) I and you have done the work efficiently. (Incorrect)

You and I have done the work efficiently. (Correct)

(b) He and you went there. (Incorrect)

You and he went there. (Correct)

(c) I and he liked it. (Incorrect)

He and I liked it. (Correct)

(d) Tom, I and you ate sweets. (Incorrect)

You, Tom and I ate sweets. (Correct)

Note: Always keep in mind the 'Rule of 231' while using the pronouns of the first person, second person, and the third person. This rule applies when something good has been done in the sentence.

4. (a) He and I are at fault. (Incorrect)

I and he are at fault. (Correct)

(b) You, Dick and I have committed theft. (Incorrect)

I, you and Dick have committed theft. (Correct)

Note: Here, keep in mind the 'Rule of 123'. This rule applies when something bad has been done in the sentence.

5. (a) These two boys help one another.

These two boys help each other. (Correct)

(b) These three boys help each other.

These three boys help one another. (Correct)

Note: 'Each other' is used when there are two persons or things whereas 'one another' is

used when there are three or more than three persons or things.

6. (a) Any of these two girls is your sister. (Incorrect)

Either of these two girls is your sister. (Correct)

(b) Either of the five boys will do it. (Incorrect)

Any of the five boys will do it. (Correct)

Note: 'Either of' is used for one of the two persons or things whereas 'any of' is used for three or more than three persons or things.

7. (a) Neither of the six can succeed. (Incorrect)

None of the six can succeed. (Correct)

(b) None of the two girls is very tall. (Incorrect)

Neither of the two girls is very tall. (Correct)

Note: 'Neither of' means not any of the two whereas 'none of' is used for three or more than three persons or things. It means 'not any of them'.

8. (a) Let you and I try. (Incorrect)

Let you and me try. (Correct)

(b) The principal wants to see you and I. (Incorrect)

The principal wants to see you and me. (Correct)

Note: The objective case of 'I' is 'me'.

9. (a) Tom is older than me. (Incorrect)

Tom is older than I. (Correct)

(b) Sita is taller than him. (Incorrect)

Sita is taller than he. (Correct)

(c) Lucy found more mushrooms than we did. (Incorrect)

Lucy found more mushrooms than I did. (Correct)

Note: In informal English, we often use object pronouns (we, him, her, us, them) after than. In a more formal style, subject pronouns (I, He, etc.) are considered more correct.

10. (a) The climate of India is hotter than England. (Incorrect)

The climate of India is hotter than that of England. (Correct)

or

The climate of India is hotter than the climate of England. (Correct)

(b) The streets of Karachi are wider than Mumbai. (Incorrect)

The streets of Karachi are wider than those of Mumbai. (Correct)

Note: Here, the Indian climate has to be compared with the English climate, not with England. Similarly, the streets of Karachi are to be compared with the streets of Mumbai, not with Mumbai.

11. (a) Your's truly. (Incorrect)

Yours truly. (Correct)

(b) Your's is the best painting in the school. (Incorrect)

Yours (= your painting) is the best painting in the school. (Correct)

Note: 'Yours' is never written as 'your's'.

12. (a) Your pen is better than that of mine. (Incorrect)

Your pen is better than mine. (Correct)

(b) My book is cheaper than that of yours. (Incorrect)

My book is cheaper than yours. (Correct)

Note: Here, 'mine' means 'my pen' and 'yours' means 'your book'. So, 'that of mine/yours' is absolutely incorrect'.

13. (a) He absented from the class. (Incorrect)

He absented himself from the class. (Correct)

(b) I will avail of this opportunity. (Incorrect)

I will avail myself of this opportunity. (Correct)

(c) Ramesh acquitted well in the debate. (Incorrect)

Ramesh acquitted himself well in the debate. (Correct)

(d) Smart people sometimes over-reach. (Incorrect)

Smart people sometimes over-reach themselves. (Correct)

(e) I will avenge on my enemies. (Incorrect)

I will avenge myself on my enemies. (Correct)

(f) You would have passed your exams if you had applied. (Incorrect)

You had applied yourself. (Correct)

(g) In order to be successful he would have to exert. (Incorrect)

In order to be successful he would have to exert himself. (Correct)

(h) After leaving college, he set up as a freelance photographer. (Incorrect)

After leaving college, he set himself up as a freelance photographer. (Correct)

(i) Let us enjoy. (Incorrect)

Let us enjoy ourselves. (Correct)

Note: The following verbs are generally followed by the reflexive pronouns; as, absent, acquit, avail, avenge, apply, exert, over-reach, set, enjoy.

14. (a) He qualified himself as a teacher. (Incorrect)

He qualified as a teacher. (Correct)

(b) We will hide ourselves in the garden. (Incorrect)

We will hide in the garden. (Correct)

(c) They begin to make themselves merry. (Incorrect)

They begin to make merry. (Correct)

(d) Have you enlisted yourself in the army? (Incorrect)

Have you enlisted in the army? (Correct)

(e) He kept himself away from the meeting. (Incorrect)

He kept away from the meeting. (Correct)

(f) He bathes himself every morning. (Incorrect)

He bathes every morning. (Correct)

(g) He finally managed to break himself free from his attacker. (Incorrect)

He finally managed to break free from his attacker. (Correct)

(h) He dashed himself off to keep an appointment. (Incorrect)

He dashed off to keep an appointment. (Correct)

(i) The politician moved himself quickly to dispel the rumours. (Incorrect)

The politician moved quickly to dispel the rumours. (Correct)

(j) He drew himself a circle in the sand with a stick. (Incorrect)

He drew a circle in the sand with a stick. (Correct)

(k) He won't rest himself until he finds her. (Incorrect)

He won't rest until he finds her. (Correct)

(l) The ball rolled itself down the hill. (Incorrect)

The ball rolled down the hill. (Correct)

(m) He burst himself into the room without knocking. (Incorrect)

He burst into the room without knocking. (Correct)

(n) They have a large family to feed themselves. (Incorrect)

They have a large family to feed. (Correct)

Note: The following verbs are not followed by reflexive pronouns; as, break, bathe, dash, keep, move, make, spread, draw, rest, roll, enlist, burst, hide, feed, qualify.

15. (a) Every teacher and every student should do their duty. (Incorrect)

Every teacher and every student should do his duty. (Correct)

Note: When two singular nouns joined by 'and' are preceded by each or every, the pronoun will be singular.

16. (a) Either you or he should do their duty. (Incorrect)

Either you or he should do his duty. (Correct)

(b) Either the master or his servants failed to do his duty. (Incorrect)

Either the master or his servants failed to do their duty. (Correct)

Note: The pronoun is singular when two singular noun are joined by 'either-or' or 'neither-nor'. The pronoun comes according to the noun nearest to the verb. The pronoun is plural when a singular noun and a plural noun are joined. But in such cases, the singular noun is placed first.

17. Nobody can accomplish this task but I. (Incorrect)

Nobody can accomplish this task but me. (Correct)

Note: When a pronoun is used as the object of a verb or preposition, it must be in the objective form.

18. It is me. (Incorrect)

It is I. (Correct)

Note: The expression 'It is me' is the American English. When a pronoun is the complement of the verb 'to be', it must be in the nominative case.

19. It is I who is to blame. (Incorrect)

It is I who am to blame. (Correct)

Note: The relative pronoun always agrees with its antecedent in number, gender and person.

20. (a) Only those students should apply for the post who have passed their B.A. Examination. (Incorrect)

Only those students who have passed the B.A. Examination should apply for the post. (Correct)

(b) This is Rama's house who is a fast friend of mine. (Incorrect)

This is the house of Rama who is a fast friend of mine. (Correct)

Note: A noun or pronoun in the possessive case should not be used as the antecedent of a relative pronoun.

21. The child who fell into the river was saved. (Incorrect)

The child that fell into the river was saved. (Correct)

Note: 'That' should be used after a noun whose gender is doubtful.

22. No student who shirks work can get a good position. (Incorrect)

No student that shirks work can get a good position. (Correct)

Note: 'That' should be used after the negative.

23. Such students who burn the mid-night oil are always successful. (Incorrect)

Such students as burn the mid-night oil are always successful. (Correct)

Note: 'As' as a relative pronoun is used after 'such' or 'same'.

24. (a) There was none but did not weep. (Incorrect)

There was none but wept. (Correct)

(b) There was none but did not laugh. (Incorrect)

There was none but laughed. (Correct)

Note: 'But' as a relative pronoun means 'who did not' or 'which did not'.

25. Who is more intelligent, Shyam or Sunder? (Incorrect)

Which is more intelligent, Shyam or Sunder? (Correct)

Note: 'Which' is used for selection even with persons.

26. (a) Whom, do you think, has stolen the book? (Incorrect)

Who, do you think, has stolen the book? (Correct)

(b) This is Sachin Tendulkar whom, they say is the best cricketer in India. (Incorrect)

This is Sachin Tendulkar who, they say, is the best cricketer in India. (Correct)

Note: 'Who' is used in the nominative case whereas 'whom' is used in the objective case.

27. Who are you speaking to? (Incorrect)

Whom are you speaking to? (Correct)

Note: A pronoun governed by a preposition must be in the objective case.

28. I object to you saying that. (Incorrect)

I object to your saying that. (Correct)

29. My ideas are different from you. (Incorrect)

My ideas are different from yours. (Correct)

30. Now I take your leave. (Incorrect)

Now I take leave of you. (Correct)

31. Whose lives near you house? (Incorrect)

Who lives near your house? (Correct)

32. The jury were divided in its opinion. (Incorrect)

The jury were divided in their opinions. (Correct)

33. All which glitters is not gold. (Incorrect)

All that glitters is not gold. (Correct)

34. He made your mention. (Incorrect)

He made a mention of you. (Correct)