

The Pronoun in an Incomplete Construction

7j. After *than* and *as* introducing an incomplete construction, use the form of the pronoun that would be correct if the construction were completed.

Notice how pronouns change the meaning of sentences with incomplete constructions.

EXAMPLES Everyone knows that you like Jolene much better than I [like Jolene].

Everyone knows that you like Jolene much better than [you like] **me**.

Did you help Ira as well as **they** [helped Ira]?

Did you help Ira as well as [you helped] **them**?

Exercise 7 Completing Incomplete Constructions and Classifying Pronoun Forms

Beginning with *than* or *as*, write the understood clause for each sentence, using the correct form of the pronoun. Then, tell whether the pronoun in the completed clause is a *subject* or an *object*.

EXAMPLE 1. Did the noise bother you as much as (*she, her*).

1. *as the noise bothered her—object*

or

as she bothered you—subject

1. Justin throws a football better than (*I, me*).
2. The story mystified him as much as (*we, us*).
3. Is your sister older than (*he, him*)?
4. Have they studied as long as (*we, us*)?
5. We have known him longer than (*she, her*).
6. Are you more creative than (*he, him*)?
7. Did you read as much as (*I, me*)?
8. I like René better than (*they, them*).
9. Many people are less fortunate than (*we, us*).
10. Are you as optimistic as (*she, her*)?
11. After winning the city championship, there were no girls happier than (*they, them*).
12. When did you become taller than (*I, me*)?
13. Mary has collected more coins than (*he, him*).

HELP



Some items in Exercise 7 may have more than one correct answer.

SKILLS FOCUS

Use case forms of personal pronouns correctly.

14. Do you like cantaloupe as much as (*she, her*)?
15. This label says the toy is not safe for a child as young as (*he, him*).
16. When you serve dessert, don't serve yourself more than (*he, him*).
17. Can he really play saxophone as well as (*I, me*)?
18. To win the contest, you must do as many sit-ups as (*she, her*).
19. I'm shocked that you gave her a nicer card than (*I, me*)!
20. Daniel doesn't visit his relatives as often as (*she, her*).

Clear Pronoun Reference

7k. A pronoun should refer clearly to its antecedent.

(1) An *ambiguous reference* occurs when any one of two or more words can be a pronoun's antecedent.

- AMBIGUOUS My uncle called my brother after he won the marathon.
[Who won the marathon, my uncle or my brother?]
- CLEAR After my brother won the marathon, my uncle called him.
- CLEAR After my uncle won the marathon, he called my brother.

(2) A *general reference* is the use of a pronoun that refers to a general idea rather than to a specific antecedent.

The pronouns commonly found in general-reference errors are *it, that, this, such,* and *which*.

- GENERAL The ski jumper faces tough competition and a grueling schedule, but she says that doesn't worry her.
- CLEAR The ski jumper faces tough competition and a grueling schedule, but she says these problems don't worry her.

(3) A *weak reference* occurs when a pronoun refers to an antecedent that has been suggested but not expressed.

- WEAK Paul likes many of the photographs I have taken; he thinks I should choose this as my profession.
- CLEAR Paul likes many of the photographs I have taken; he thinks I should choose photography as my profession.

(4) An *indefinite reference* is the use of a pronoun that refers to no particular person or thing and that is unnecessary to the meaning of the sentence.

- INDEFINITE In the book it explains how cells divide.
- CLEAR The book explains how cells divide.

SKILLS FOCUS

Use clear pronoun reference.

Think as a Reader/Writer

Familiar expressions such as *it is raining*, *it seems as though . . .*, and *it's early* are correct even though they contain inexact pronoun references.



Exercise 8 Correcting Inexact Pronoun References

Revise each of the following sentences, correcting each inexact pronoun reference.

- EXAMPLE**
1. Have you ever been physically unable to prepare a meal for yourself? That can be a serious problem.
 1. *Being physically unable to prepare a meal for yourself can be a serious problem.*
 1. Older persons, people with disabilities, and people who are ill sometimes cannot prepare meals for themselves, which is when Meals on Wheels can help.
 2. Meals on Wheels is an organization in which they arrange to have meals delivered to people's homes.
 3. Because it is a nonprofit organization, Meals on Wheels has a limited budget, which is why it relies on volunteers.
 4. Many businesses, churches, clubs, and organizations supply volunteers, and they contribute money.
 5. People who receive services provided by Meals on Wheels usually help to pay for these services, but it's voluntary and based on a person's ability to pay.
 6. In some Meals on Wheels organizations, they offer clients a variety of other services in addition to delivering meals.
 7. Grocery shopping is a service provided to clients by volunteers who purchase and then deliver them.
 8. Some clients depend on volunteers for rides when they have appointments and errands to run.
 9. To lift their spirits, some volunteers regularly call clients on the phone; other volunteers help clients by performing minor home safety repairs.
 10. Volunteers not only provide needed services but also often form personal bonds with their clients; that is why you may want to volunteer at a local Meals on Wheels.