


Pronouns and Antecedents



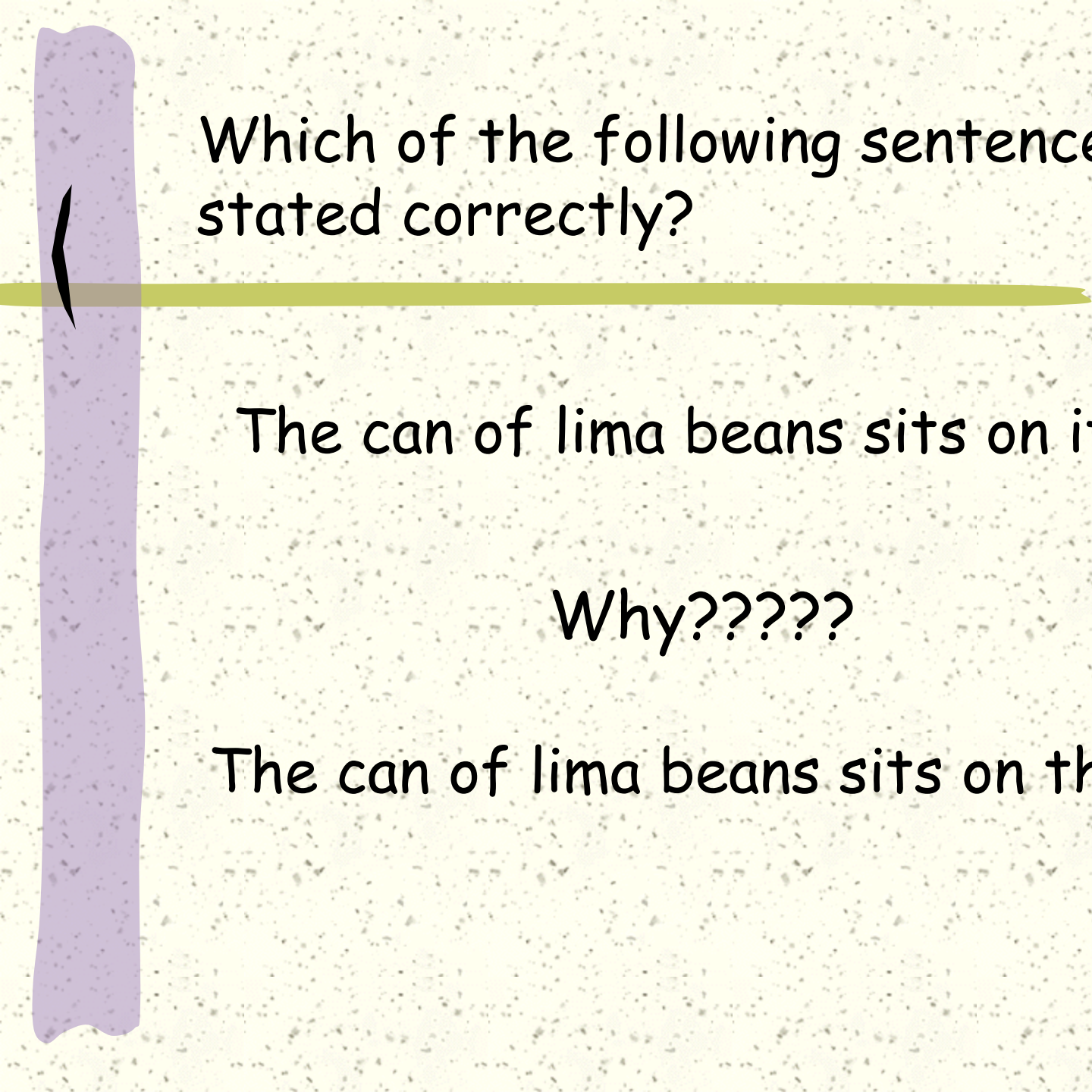
Important Grammar you **NEED**
to Know!

Definitions

Pronoun: a word used to stand for (or take the place of) a noun

Antecedent: the word for which a pronoun stands.

President Lincoln delivered his Gettysburg Address in 1863.



Which of the following sentences is stated correctly?

The can of lima beans sits on its shelf.

Why?????

The can of lima beans sits on their shelf.

Here's Another Example


My biggest problem are the many incomplete homework assignments I need to finish.

My biggest problem is the many incomplete homework assignments I need to finish.

Rule #1

A phrase or a clause between the subject and verb DOES NOT CHANGE the number of the antecedent.

If you get confused, try taking the phrase or clause out of the sentence.



Are the following sentences correct? Why or why not?

Each of the bikes has new tires.

Everyone wants to eat her dessert before dinner.

Rule #2

Singular indefinite pronoun antecedents
must be used with singular pronouns

Plural indefinite pronoun antecedents
must be used with plural pronouns

Singular Indefinite Pronouns

Each

Either

Neither

One

No one

Nobody

Nothing

Anyone

Anybody

Anything

Someone

Somebody


Something

Everyone

Everybody

Everything

Plural Indefinite Pronouns



Several

Few

Both

Many

Some of the sugar fell out of its bag.

All of the jewelry has lost its glow.

Sugar and jewelry are UNCOUNTABLE; therefore, it needs to be used with a singular pronoun. (its)

Some of the marbles fell out of their bag.

All of the jewels have lost their glow.

Marbles and jewels are COUNTABLE; therefore, it needs to be used with a plural pronoun. (their)

What is the difference between the sentences above?

Singular OR Plural Pronouns

Some

Any

None

All

Most

If the object of the preposition is singular, use a singular pronoun.

If the object of preposition is plural, use a plural pronoun.

Which sentence is correct?

- The student grabbed their books and happily left school on Friday.
- The student grabbed his books and happily left school on Friday.
- The bully picked on his victim so much that they did not care who told on them.
- A teen should never cheat in school, lie to their parents, or bully their friends.

More Mistakes with Number

- All pronouns must match in number to their antecedent.
- Ex. The student thought their shirt was appropriate for school, but the teachers didn't think so.
- Ex. The puppy thought they could sleep on the couch, but the owners had other ideas.

Can we see what is wrong with the sentences below?

Each girl wants to look beautiful on their prom night.
(Each is singular; their is plural.)

Each girl wants to look beautiful on her prom night.

If people want to stay healthy, you must eat well and watch your waistline.

(People is third person; you and your are second person.)

If people want to stay healthy, they must eat well and watch their waistlines.

Rule #3: Compound Subjects

Jones and Smith made their presentation.

Compound subjects joined by AND always use a plural pronoun.

Rule #4: Compound Subjects

Neither the director nor the actors did their jobs.

Neither the actors nor the director did his or her job.

If a compound subject is joined by OR/NOR , the pronoun needs to agree with the antecedent closest to the pronoun. (The pronoun you are trying to figure out!)

So what should be used here?

Either Ryan or Wesley is/are here.

Neither the boys nor the girls is/are here.

Neither the boys nor their mother are/is here.

Neither the mother nor her sons are/is here.



What do you notice about the following sentences?

The jury read its verdict.

The jury gave their opinions on the case.


Rule #5: Collective Nouns (group, jury, crowd, team, etc.)

Singular: the jury is acting as one unit.

The jury read its verdict.

The jury gave their opinions on
the case.

Plural: the jury members are acting as twelve
individuals.



Here's Some More!

The team lost its biggest game.

The football team put on their uniforms.

The newly married couple is happy.

A couple of people were late for the wedding.

Rule #6: Plural Form Subjects

Plural form subjects with a singular meaning take a singular pronoun. (news, measles, mumps, physics, etc.)

The news has lost much of its sting two days later.

Measles is contagious.

Mathematics is my easiest class.

Rule #7: Every or Many a

Every or many a before a noun or a series of nouns requires a singular pronoun.

Every cow, pig, and horse
had lost its life in the fire.

Many a girl wishes she could sing
like Taylor Swift.