

The Grammar Outlaw
Wanted DEAD OR ALIVE
FOR
Unclear Pronouns



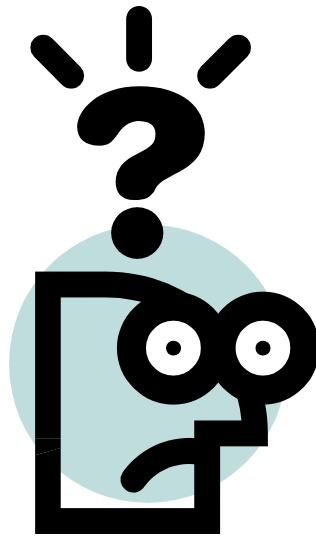
The Grammar Crime:

Unclear pronoun reference makes sentences confusing, vague, and difficult to understand. Example:

**Both Isabel and Barbara
loved her children.**

Are they Isabel's children?

Are they Barbara's children?



To fix the sentence, we must identify the pronoun and the antecedent.

- A **pronoun** refers to a noun.
- An **antecedent** is the noun to which the pronoun refers.
- In our example, the pronoun is her. The antecedent is either Isabel or Barbara.

From the sentence we cannot tell whose children they are. Because we cannot tell which of the nouns is the antecedent, this sentence is an unclear pronoun reference outlaw.

Fixed:

**Both Isabel and Barbara loved
Isabel's children.**

Question:

**How do we catch unclear
pronoun reference
outlaws?**

The clues:

Find the pronoun and replace it with the antecedent. If the pronoun reference is clear, the sentence should make sense.

Outlaw:

Mike and Trevor liked his dog.

The pronoun: **his**

The antecedent: **Mike** or **Trevor**?

The Fix:

Replace the pronoun with the antecedent:

Mike and Trevor liked **Mike's** dog.

To catch the Grammar Outlaw:

Next time you're revising, editing, or proofreading, check over your sentences to make sure your pronouns **CLEARLY** refer to their antecedents.

