First…Pronouns!

- What is a pronoun?
  - A noun that takes the place of a previously mentioned noun or noun phrase
  - Example #1: Dan said he will have the report done by Friday.
  - Example #2: They bought the old, decrepit house because they thought it had charm.
- Also, keep in mind that the pronoun and its antecedent (noun or other pronoun to which it refers) must ALWAYS agree!

Pronoun/Antecedent Agreement

- Pronouns and their antecedents agree…
  - In the singular and plural
    - A wolf has its own language (“Wolf” and “its” agree)
    - Wolves have their own language. (“Wolves” and “their” agree)
  - In gender (and other instances)
    - the boy and his sister
    - the girl and her brother
    - the garden and its weeds

**Keep in mind that words like his, her, its, their, my, our and your are possessive pronouns**

- Also, agreement must occur when…
  - The antecedent is a generic noun
    - Everybody has to live with himself or herself./People have to live with themselves.
  - Special Cases for Agreement:
    - The pronoun agrees with the nearer of two antecedents joined by or or nor.
      - Did Mark or Gordon lose his enthusiasm?
      - Neither the president nor the senators had announced their decision.
• Agreement with collective nouns as antecedents can be tricky.
  • The choir is writing its own music. (choir=a working unit=singular)
  • The group of students disagree on methods, but they unite on basic aims.
    (students=group behaving as individuals=plural)

Pronoun Clarity

• It is also important to make sure that your reader knows what antecedent the pronoun is being connected to.
  • Example #1: The weight of the pack was manageable, once I became used to it.
    (“it” refers to the weight)
  • Example #2: Large corporations may seem to be more trustworthy than individuals, but that is not true.
    (“that” refers to the sense of the whole first clause)
  • Example #3: Losing weight has become more than a national occupation; it is a national obsession.
    (“it” refers to losing weight)