Pronoun-Antecedent Agreement

**Pronoun-antecedent agreement:** Pronouns must agree with their *antecedents* in person and number. The *antecedent* is the noun or phrase that a pronoun is replacing.

**Example:** The *girls* found *their* new shoes at the mall. Joe’s *mother* panicked when *she* saw the football tackle.

- The pronouns *anybody, anyone, anything, everybody, everyone, everything, each, nobody, no one, one, somebody, someone,* and *something* are singular; pronouns that refer to them must also be singular. **Example:** *Everyone* needs to take *his or her* books to class.

- If the gender of the pronoun [in this case *each*] is certain, then either *his or her* can be used as appropriate. **Example:** *Each* of the nuns in the abbey devoted *her* life to the Church.

- The following pairs of words — *each (of), every one (of), either (of), neither (of), one (of)* — are always singular, and the pronouns that refer to them must also be singular: **Example:** *Neither* of the boys remembered *his* homework.

**Collective Nouns:** Nouns that refer to a group of people/things but are considered singular because the pronoun refers to the group as a whole and not the people/things in them.

- *Important clarifications* use italics on first or specific words. The *latter* also can be bolded. **Example:** The *class* neglected *its* opportunity to have *its* papers reviewed before turning them in for grading. **Example:** The *flock* of geese flew *its* way to California.
Reflexive Pronouns: Pronouns that reflect directly back to the subject → himself, herself, myself, etc.

Example: *He* is always talking to *himself*.
Example: The *students* completed the homework assignment all by *themselves*.

- Avoid using reflexive pronouns as subjects. They should reflect back to subjects instead.
- *Himself* and *themselves* are inappropriate in college or professional writing. *Themselves* is also inappropriate even in non-gender specific writing.