Pronoun Revision Methods

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Eight Methods of Pronoun Revision

For many sentences, two or more pronoun revision methods should be used together in order to repair a single pronoun error.

1. Change the pronoun.
2. Use a noun.
3. Change the antecedent.
4. Delete the pronoun.
5. Change the order.
6. Add a word(s).
7. Add visuals or sounds.
8. Check all of the words.
1. Change the Pronoun

An incorrect **pronoun** can be revised by changing it to a correct pronoun form. This task can be accomplished by carefully reading a sentence, by comparing each pronoun with its **antecedent**, and by reviewing the rules of pronoun usage.

**Wrong:**

- **Everybody** likes to read messages from **their** family.

**Revision:**

- **Everybody** likes to read messages from **his/her** family.
2. Use a Noun

An incorrect or unclear pronoun can be revised by analyzing the sentence in order to find a correct antecedent, and then by changing the pronoun to a noun that conveys a similar idea as the antecedent.

Wrong:
➢ The classrooms contain computers, maps, and overhead projectors for faculty members to use; they can help to make online presentations more interesting.

Revision:
 ✓ The classrooms contain computers, maps, and overhead projectors for faculty members to use. Faculty can help to make online presentations more interesting.
3. Change the Antecedent

An incorrect pronoun can be revised by changing its antecedent.

Wrong:
- Everybody likes to read messages from their family.

Revision:
- Everybody likes to read messages from his/her family.

Wrong:
- If a student has a college degree, they will get a good job.

Revision:
- If students have college degrees, they will get good jobs.
4. Delete the Pronoun

Delete any incorrect pronouns and then (if necessary) make other appropriate revisions so the sentence makes sense.

Wrong:
- Everyone enjoyed writing their essays.

Revisions:
- Everyone enjoyed writing essays.
- Everyone enjoyed writing an essay.
- The students enjoyed writing essays.
5. Change the Order

Changing the order of words in a sentence sometimes can improve the clarity and correctness of a pronoun.

Wrong:
- They noticed that it had been painted bright red, so the drivers could easily see the sign.

Revision:
- The drivers noticed that the sign had been painted bright red, so they could easily see it.
6. Add a word(s)

Add a *word* or *words* that explain the meaning of the pronoun.

**Wrong:**
- This *is* great!

**Revisions:**
- This *room* is great!
- This *experience* is great!
- This *section of your paper* is great!
7. Add Visuals or Sounds

Hand or face gestures, the tone of a speaker’s voice, arrows, and other visuals or sounds can clarify the meaning of a pronoun.

Wrong:
- This is great!

Revisions:
- This is great!
  
In the picture, the speaker’s hand is waving at the room. This gesture explains to an audience what the word “this” means.

- This is great!
  
The arrow is a visual aid that explains what the word “this” means. Applause can emphasize the “great” idea.
8. Check All of the Words

After revising a **pronoun** and/or its **antecedent**, check all of the **other words** in the sentence to ensure correctness and consistency.

**Wrong:**

- If *a student* has a college degree, *they* will get a good job.

**Partially revised pronoun/antecedent error:**

- If *students* has a college degree, *they* will get a good job.

**Complete revision:**

- If *students have* college degrees, *they* will get good *jobs*.
More Information

The Writing Center at the Community College of Rhode Island has more online resources.
Contact Information

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