PRONOUN RULES

1. The PRONOUN must agree with its antecedent in person, number, and gender. Antecedent means the word or phrase to which the pronoun refers. Person refers to the speaker (first person: I, we) or to the person to whom you are speaking (second person: you) or to the people about whom we are speaking (third person: they, them, her, him, she, he, it).

Sally (the antecedent) went to HER (HER refers to Sally.) class.
Dan (the antecedent) enjoyed HIS (HIS refers to Dan.) trip.
The actors studied THEIR parts.

2. Pronouns used as subjects (I, you, he, she, it, we, they, who, whoever) are in the NOMINATIVE case (a phrase in English grammar to indicate the subject of a verb).

I rode the bus. He took an English class. They went to school.
It is raining outside. The group and he went to Walnut Creek.

3. Pronouns used AFTER the linking verb (forms of the verb to be such as: am, are, was, were, have been, etc.) are in the nominative case.

The president was SHE. The writer was HE. It is I.

4. Pronouns used as objects (me, you, him, her, it, us, them, whom, whomever) are in the OBJECTIVE case.

The boy saw him. The girls believed us. The patrol rescued them.

5. A pronoun which follows a preposition (words like to, in, for, with) is the OBJECT of that preposition.

He gave the book to HER. She bought it for US. The party was for Marie and ME.

6. Use the OBJECTIVE case for an INDIRECT OBJECT (in grammar, an object that is not affected by the action of the verb).

Mae gave me the book. She sold them tickets. The patrol showed us the correct road.

7. A pronoun which follows THAN or AS can be either subject or object.

Paul is taller THAN HE (than he is).
Sam is as tall AS I (as I am).
She would rather choose Helen THAN ME (than choose me).

8. Pronouns showing ownership use the POSSESSIVE case (my, your, its, his, her, their, our).

That is MY cat. She likes THEIR home. YOUR painting is beautiful.
9. Use the possessive form of the pronoun when showing ownership of gerunds (a verb made into a noun by adding the letters ing).

He announced MY winning the lottery.
When the children visited, the old people enjoyed THEIR singing.

10. The following INDEFINITE pronouns (pronouns that do not specify the identity of their objects) are considered singular: each, everyone, anyone, no one, nobody, everybody, anybody, somebody, someone, any one, another, either and neither.

Everyone brought HER supplies. Did anyone remember HIS camera?

11. The following INDEFINITE pronouns are considered plural: all, several, both, many, few.

BOTH brought THEIR reports. SEVERAL applicants passed THEIR tests.

12. The following INDEFINITE pronouns may be either singular or plural: some, none, most, all, any.

SOME of the pies HAVE been eaten. SOME of that pie HAS been eaten.

13. Use WHO as the nominative (subject) form.

WHO is coming? (She is coming.)
Did you say WHO made the dessert? (He made the dessert.)

14. Use WHOM as the object (objective) form.

For WHOM does the bell toll (ring)? (The bell does toll for HIM.)
WHOM did you appoint? (You did appoint HER.)

15. Use WHOEVER or WHOMEVER as subject or object of the clause following the preposition.

He gave the book to whoever came to get it. (SHE came to get it.)
He gave the book to whomever you sent. (You sent HER.)

16. Use WHAT as an Interrogative Pronoun when asking questions referring only to things.

WHAT do you know about the various cruises?
WHAT are the advantages of jet travel and cruises?

17. Use WHICH as an Interrogative Pronoun when asking questions referring to persons or things and telling one object from another.

WHICH is safer – an airplane or a ship?
WHICH would you rather have – the apple or the orange?

18. Use WHICH as a Relative Pronoun when referring to animals or things.

The dog, WHICH kept me awake, had a loud bark.
The lion paced around his cage, WHICH was secured and locked.