

Use of Nouns

RULES AND EXAMPLES

1. When two or more singular nouns are connected by 'either or'; 'neither nor'; and 'or', the pronoun used is singular.

Either Rohan or Sohan will give their bike. (Incorrect)

Either Rohan or Sohan will give his book. (Correct)

2. When a singular and a plural noun are joined by 'or', 'nor', the pronoun must be plural.

Either the student or his teachers failed in his duty. (Incorrect)

Either the student or his teachers failed in their duty. (Correct)

3. 'Whose' is used for living persons and 'which' for lifeless objects?

Which novel did you select?

Whose photograph is lying there?

4. 'Each other' is used when there are two subjects or objects and 'one another' when there are more than two.

Ram and Sita loved each other.

Those five students, who are sitting there, love one another.

5. Some nouns always take a singular verb.

Scenery, advice, information, machinery, stationery, furniture, abuse, fuel, rice, gram, issue, bedding, repair, news, mischief, poetry, business, economics, physics, mathematics, classic, ethics, athletics, innings, gallows.

(A) The scenery of Kashmir are enchanting. (Correct use- is)

(A) He has given advices. (Correct use- advice)

6. Some nouns are singular in meaning, but they are used as plural nouns and always take a plural verb.

Cattle, gentry, vermin, peasantry, artillery, people, clergy, company, police.

(A) The cattle is grazing in the ground. (correct use- are)

(B) Police has controlled the situation. (correct use- have)

7. Some nouns are always used in a plural form and always take a plural verb.

Trousers, scissors, spectacles, stockings, shorts, measles, goods, alms, premises, thanks, tidings, annals, chattels, etc.

(A) Where is my trousers? (correct use- are)

(B) Where are my trousers? Correct

(A) Spectacles is a costly item. (correct use- are)

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8. There are some nouns that indicate length, measure, money, weight or number. When they are preceded by a numeral, they remain unchanged in form.

Foot, meter, pair, score, dozen, head, year, hundred, thousand, million.

(A) It is a five – years degree course. (correct use- year)

(A) I have seven dozens of shoes. (correct use- dozen)

9. Collective nouns such as jury, public, team, committee, government, audience, orchestra, company, etc. are used both as singular and plural. It depends on the usage.

(A) The jury was divided in their opinion. (correct use- were)

(A) The team have not arrived yet. (correct use- has)

10. People are often confused or they commit mistakes in the use of certain nouns.

(A) Lectururship is wrong; lectureship is correct.

(B) Freeship is wrong; free – studentship is correct.

(C) Boarding is wrong; boarding house is correct.

(D) Family members is wrong; members of the family is correct.

(E) English teacher is wrong; the teacher of English is correct.

(F) Cousin – brother or sister is wrong; only cousin is correct.

(G) Wages means punishments when used in the singular.

Ex- The wages of sin is death.

(H) It also means charges for the labour when used in the plural sense.

Ex- The wages of daily workers have been raised.

11. A pronoun must agree with its antecedent in person, number and gender.

Ex- Every student must bring his luggage.

All students must do their homework.

Each of the boys must carry his own bag.

12. While using ‘everybody’ ‘everyone’, ‘anybody’, and ‘each’ the pronoun of the masculine or the feminine gender is used according to the context.

I shall be happy to help each of the boys in this practice.

But when the sex is not mentioned, we use the pronoun of the masculine gender.

Anyone can qualify this exam if he tries.

Each of the six boys in the class has finished their tasks. (Incorrect)

Each of the six boys in the class has finished his task. (Correct)

13. The pronoun ‘one’ must be followed by ‘one’s’.

One must finish his homework in time. (Incorrect)

One must finish one’s homework in time. (Correct)

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14. Enjoy, apply, resign, acquit, drive, exert, avail, pride, absent, etc., when used as transitive verbs, always take a reflexive pronoun after them. When 'self' is added to 'my', 'your', 'him', 'her', and 'it', and 'selves' to our and them – they are known as reflexive pronouns.

He absented from the meeting.

He absented himself from the meeting.

15. 'Who' denotes the subject and 'whom' is used for the object?

who : It's the subject of a verb—e.g., Who gave you that book?

It's a predicate nominative (a noun in the predicate that renames or refers to the sentence's subject)—e.g., This is who I am.

Whom is an objective pronoun, which is a pronoun that receives the action of a verb. It also has two main uses:

It is the object of a verb—e.g., Whom should I call?

It is the object of a preposition—e.g., From whom did you get this information?

16. When a pronoun stands for a collective noun, it must be in the singular number and in the neuter gender if the collective noun is viewed as a whole. But if it gives an idea of different entities, plural pronoun is used.

The jury gave 'its' verdict.

Here the 'jury' gives the idea of one whole.

If the collective noun conveys the idea of separate individuals comprising the whole, the pronoun standing for it must be plural.

The jury were divided in their opinions.

in this sentence, the 'jury' gives the idea of several individuals.

17. If pronouns of different persons are to be used together in a sentence, the serial order of persons should be as follows;

second person (2) + third (3) + first person (1) in normal sentences. But when mistake or fault is expressed in the sentence, the order should be; first person (1) + second person (2) + third person (3).

RULE-231

You, he and I have finished the work. (Normal idea)

I, you and he are to blame. (here Confession of guilt is expressed, it's a negative idea, hence order is 123)

18. 'Some' is used in affirmative sentences to express quantity or degree. 'Any' is uses in negative or interrogative sentences.

I shall buy some apples.

I shall not buy any apples.

Have you bought any apples?

But 'some' may be correctly used in interrogative sentences which are, in fact, requests.

Will you please give me some water?

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19. Use of elder, older.

'Elder' is used for persons of same family.

'Older' refers to persons as well as things and is followed by 'than'.

Rohan is elder than all other boys of this area. (Incorrect)

Rohan is older than all other boys of this area. (Correct)

Sabu is my older brother. (Incorrect)

Sabu is my elder brother. (Correct)

20. Normally 'than' is used in the comparative degree, but with words like superior, inferior, senior, junior, prior, anterior, posterior and prefer 'to' is used.

Sara is junior than Neeta. (Incorrect)

Sara is junior to Neeta. (Correct)

I prefer reading than walking. (Incorrect)

I prefer reading to walking. (Correct)

21. When a comparison is made by using a comparative followed by 'than', the word 'other' must exclude the thing compared from the class of things with which it is compared.

He is better than any man. (Incorrect)

He is better than any other man. (Correct)

'Any man' includes the man himself and thus the sentences will be awkward.

22. In some cases, the comparison is subtle and must be given proper attention.

Ex- The climate of Delhi is better than Mumbai. (Incorrect)

Here the comparison should be between the climate of Delhi and the climate of Mumbai.

The climate of Delhi is better than the climate of Mumbai. (Correct)

Or, the climate of Ranchi is better than that of Gaya. (Correct) (Here, 'That of' means 'the climate of')

If the traits are in plural, it will be 'those of'.

The products of Reliance are better than those of Suzuki.

The scenery of Kashmir is better than Shimla. (Incorrect)

The scenery of Kashmir is better than that of Shimla. (Correct)

23. When 'as well as', 'along with', 'together with', 'no less than', 'in addition to' and 'not' and 'with' join two subjects, the verb will be used according to the first subject.

Ram, as well as his five friends, are going. (Incorrect)

Ram, as well as his five friends, is going. (Correct)

The teacher, along with the students, were dancing. (Incorrect)

The teacher, along with the students, was going. (Correct)

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