

You, {*Jack*, *he*} and *I* will still be at work.

Why didn't they invite you and {*John*?
me?
her?

3rd person coordinates usually have the masculine before the feminine, the pronoun before the noun phrase:

He and *she*
She and *another student* } were both elected.

6.4 GENDER enforces a three-way distinction on the 3rd person singular, with masculine, feminine, and nonpersonal forms (5.45ff):

He has hurt *his* hand.

She asked *herself* why *she* had bought *it* when *its* lens was so obviously scratched.

This causes problems, especially when there is no basis for deciding between masculine and feminine, either because the gender is unknown or because it must be inclusive:

Someone is knocking so I'd better go and let *h* . . . ? *in*.
An ambitious player must discipline *h* . . . ? *self*.

Traditionally, the masculine can be used as the unmarked form (2.7) covering male and female reference in such cases, but sensitivity to sexual bias makes many people prefer a cumbersome coordination:

An ambitious player must discipline *himself* or *herself*.

More generally, where an informal disregard for strict number concord is felt tolerable, the gender-neutral plural is used:

Someone has parked *their* car right under the 'No Parking' sign.

NOTE The graphic device *s/he* to embrace *he* and *she* is of limited value since there is no equally convenient objective, possessive, or reflexive form (though full forms are often used, such as *him/her*).

6.5 NUMBER has to be treated separately for each of the three persons of pronouns. With the 3rd person, number is closest in value to that with nouns:

A male *officer* and a woman *officer* interrogated the prisoner but the *officers* disagreed over procedure.

He and *she* interrogated the prisoner but *they* disagreed over procedure.

With the 2nd person, there is a number contrast only in the reflexive pronoun. Compare:

Look at *your* hand, Jack; *you've* cut *yourself*.
Keep *your* voices down, children; *you* must behave *yourselves*.

But, while *you . . . yourselves* is straightforwardly the plural of more than one addressee, each of which might be addressed as *you . . . yourself*, the plural with the 1st person is on quite a different basis. *We* is not the plural of *I* (***We*, that is, *I* and *I* are glad to see *you*) but a pronoun meaning *I* and one or more other people ('*We*, that is, *Jill* and *I*', '*We* the undersigned'). See below, 6.10.

NOTE In archaic style, there is a set of singular 2nd person pronouns *thou* (objective *thee*), *thy* (*self*), *thine*, and a special subjective plural form *ye*.

6.6 CASE in personal pronouns involves a distinction absent from nouns, marking broadly the grammatical roles of subject and object. Compare:

The policeman detained *this young woman*.

He detained *her*.

The woman resisted *the policeman*.

She resisted *him*.

Corresponding to the genitive case in nouns (5.48ff), we have in pronouns the subclass of possessives, treated below in 6.16:

The girl's dog bit *an old man's* ankle.

Her dog bit *his* ankle.

6.7 The choice of subjective and objective forms does not depend solely upon the strict grammatical distinction between subject and object. Rather, usage shows that we are concerned more with subject 'territory' (the pre-verbal part of a clause) in contrast to object 'territory' (the post-verbal part of a clause). In consequence of the latter consideration, it is usual in informal style to find objective forms selected in such instances as the following:

His sister is taller than *him*.

Whoever left the door unlocked, it certainly wasn't *me*.

Many people are uncomfortable about such forms, however, especially in writing, though the subject variants are almost equally objectionable in seeming unnatural. Where an operator can be added, of course, the problem of choice satisfactorily disappears:

His sister is taller than *he* is.

See also 6.11.

NOTE

[a] In contrast with *except* which is always treated as a preposition and therefore followed by the objective case ('Nobody except *her* objected'), there is vacillation over prepositional *but*, many people preferring the subjective form if it is in subject 'territory'. Thus: