

PRONOUN REFERENCE

► **Pronouns refer to nouns that precede them in a sentence or paragraph; these nouns are called antecedents. In order to make your reader understand what you are trying to say, every one of your pronouns must clearly refer to one noun.**

☹ *Harry, Ron, and Neville were all late for Professor Snape's class; however, he was the only one who received detention. (Who received detention?)*

☺ *Harry, Ron, and Neville were all late for Professor Snape's class; however, Harry was the only one who received detention.*

► **Be careful with implied references! A pronoun must refer to a specific noun, not a word that is implied in the sentence.**

☹ *When he arrives at Hogwarts, Harry feels at home for the first time. They all know his name.*

☺ *When he arrives at Hogwarts, Harry feels at home for the first time. The students and teachers all know his name.*

► **Modifiers such as possessives cannot serve as antecedents. Remember this when you use author's names in the possessive!**

☹ *In R. K. Rowling's Harry Potter series, she describes the struggle between good and evil.*

☺ *In her Harry Potter series, R. K. Rowling describes the struggle between good and evil.*

► **Pronouns such as "this", "that", or "which" can refer to an idea expressed in one or several sentences. However, unless there is only one clear idea stated in the sentence preceding the pronoun, your reader is bound to be confused.**

☹ *Harry followed the tips a previous owner had scribbled in the textbook he was using, and he moved to the top of his Potions class. This made Hermione very angry. (What made Hermione angry? The fact that Harry was cheating or that he was showing her up?)*

☺ *Harry followed the tips a previous owner had scribbled in the textbook he was using, and he moved to the top of his Potions class. His actions made Hermione very angry.*

► Did you like the sample sentences? Get the whole story in R. K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series.