

KS3 English Quiz - Standard English 02 (Questions)

In standard English, you should "keep your pronouns consistent". For example, it would be wrong to say "the children collected HIS prizes". What you ought to say is "the children collected THEIR prizes".

In English, pronouns should agree with number, person and gender. So, for example, "I", "me", "my" and "mine" go together. If someone wrote "I went to the office to collect our books", you would know that the books belong to the speaker and to another person, either someone who has already been mentioned, or to you, as the person being addressed. If someone wrote "She went to the office to collect his books", you would know that the books are not hers. Similarly, someone might ask, "You went to the office to collect my books?" and, again, the speaker and the owner of the books are not the same person. Pronouns thus help us to keep straight who is doing what.

The pronoun "they" is typically considered plural and is thus used to refer to more than one person. You might have learned in fact that this is the only accurate use of the term, but that is not correct. "They", "their" and "them" have been used for a very long time in English when the gender of the person being referred to is unknown. In the more recent past, many writers began using masculine pronouns to refer to unknown persons, followed later by the rather clumsy "he or she", "him or her". The only other gender-free singular pronoun English has is "it", which cannot be used for a person. So, although some people will call this incorrect, it is fine to say or write: "When the customer arrives, give them a refund" if you do not know whether the customer is male or female. This usage is referred to as the "singular they" to emphasise that it still agrees in number with the noun it replaces. Remember that you can sometimes also alter the "unknown" noun to agree with the plural "they": "If any customers come, give them a leaflet". (This wouldn't be a good idea with the refund, however!)

Play this quiz to practise your pronoun skills.

1. Choose the correct pronoun in the following sentence.
Students should take passports to the exam.
 hers
 his
 their
 theirs

2. Choose the correct pronoun in the following sentence.
Tell John to take passport to the exam too.
 he's
 his
 theirs
 there

3. Choose the correct pronoun in the following sentence.
The student should take passport to the exam.
 his/her
 his/hers
 their's
 theirs

4. Choose the correct pronoun in the following sentence.
All candidates must write names on the paper.
 his/her
 his/hers
 their
 theirs

5. Choose the correct pronoun in the following sentence.
The candidate must write name on the paper.
 his/her
 his/hers
 your
 theirs

6. Choose the correct pronoun in the following sentence.
The dog ran quickly to master.
 it
 its
 its'
 it's

7. Choose the correct pronoun in the following sentence.

The dogs ran quickly to master.

- its
- it's
- their
- theirs

8. Choose the correct pronoun in the following sentence.

The twins are bringing photograph to show us.

- his/her
- his/hers
- their
- theirs

9. Choose the correct pronoun in the following sentence.

Every family should show entry ticket.

- its
- it's
- their
- theirs

10. Choose the correct pronoun in the following sentence.

Each person should show entry ticket.

- his/her
- his/hers
- their's
- theirs

KS3 English Quiz - Standard English 02 (Answers)

1. Choose the correct pronoun in the following sentence.
Students should take passports to the exam.
- hers
 his
 their
 theirs

"Students" is a plural noun, so the appropriate pronoun is "their" and not "his"

2. Choose the correct pronoun in the following sentence.
Tell John to take passport to the exam too.
- he's
 his
 theirs
 there

John is one person, so "his" is correct

3. Choose the correct pronoun in the following sentence.
The student should take passport to the exam.
- his/her
 his/hers
 their's
 theirs

"Student" is singular, so use "his or her". "Their" is also generally considered correct to use for a singular, non-gendered pronoun, although not everyone agrees that this is grammatical usage

4. Choose the correct pronoun in the following sentence.
All candidates must write names on the paper.
- his/her
 his/hers
 their
 theirs

There is more than one candidate so use "their"

5. Choose the correct pronoun in the following sentence.
The candidate must write name on the paper.
- his/her
 his/hers
 your
 theirs

"His or her" is fine. "Their" is also generally considered fine as a singular pronoun of unknown gender

6. Choose the correct pronoun in the following sentence.
The dog ran quickly to master.
- it
 its
 its'
 it's

"It's" is short for "it is" and it would be wrong to use it in this sentence. You might use "he" or "she" instead

7. Choose the correct pronoun in the following sentence.
The dogs ran quickly to master.
- its
 it's
 their
 theirs

More than one dog all belonging to one master means that you should use "their"

8. Choose the correct pronoun in the following sentence.
The twins are bringing photograph to show us.
- his/her
 his/hers
 their
 theirs

More than one person jointly owning the photograph makes "their" the correct pronoun

9. Choose the correct pronoun in the following sentence.
Every family should show entry ticket.
- its
 it's
 their
 theirs

"Family" is a singular noun and therefore "its" is correct

10. Choose the correct pronoun in the following sentence.
Each person should show entry ticket.
- his/her
 his/hers
 their's
 theirs

You could also say "All people should show THEIR entry ticket" because "people" is plural.