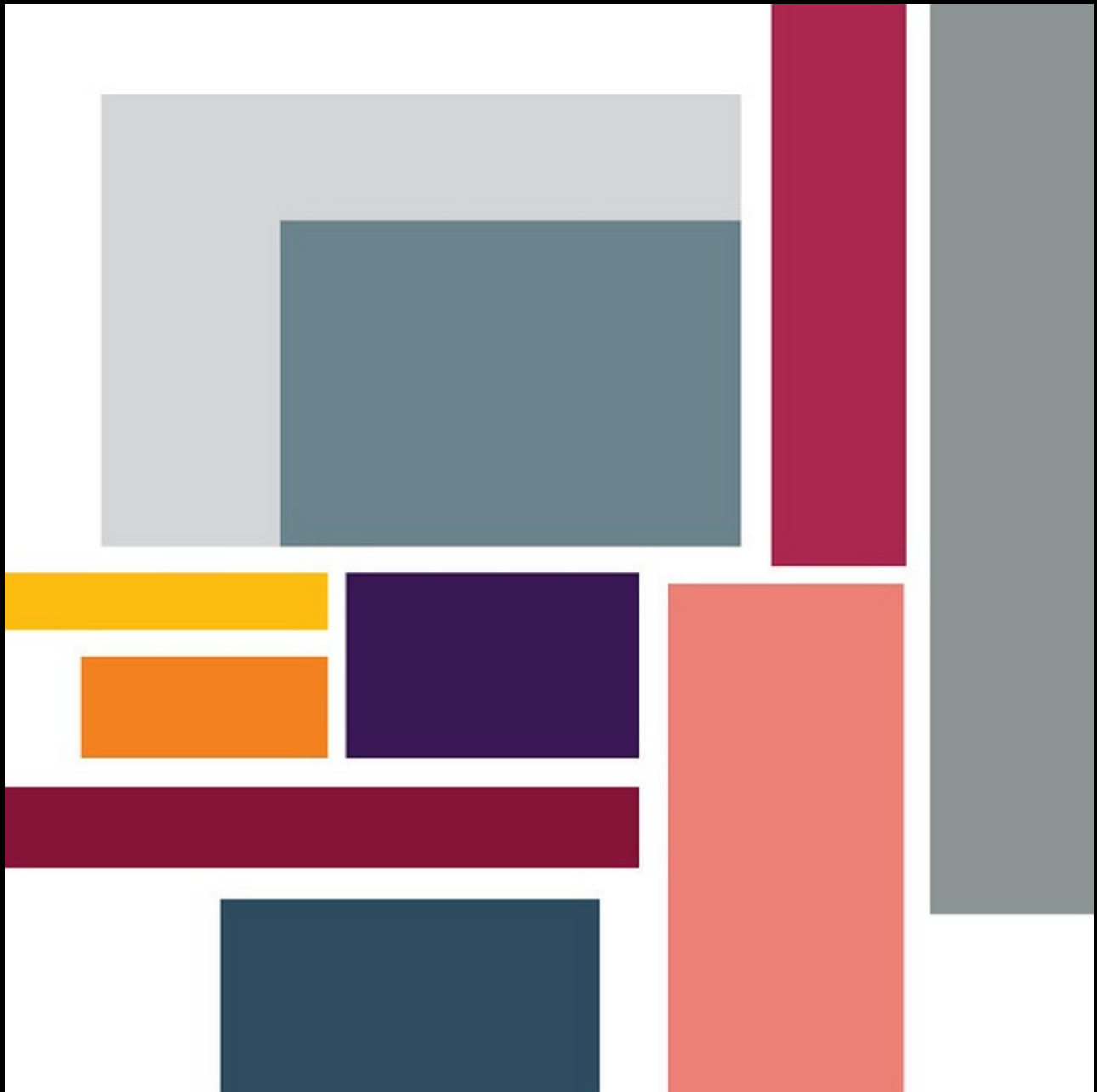


# Pronoun Case



**Case** refers to whether a pronoun is used as a **subject** or an **object**.

A subject is:

- 1) The person/thing that is the main focus of the sentence.

OR:

- 2) The person/thing performing the action described in the sentence.

In the following sentences, the subject is in bold:

1. **Jonah** read the book.  
(Who read the book? Jonah)
2. **The coat** is more attractive than warm.  
(What is more attractive than it is warm? The coat)
3. Having caught the flu, **Sarah and Ansel** had to stay home from school.  
(Who caught the flu? Sarah and Ansel)

All subjects can be replaced by **subject pronouns**:

<b>I</b>	<b>We</b>
<b>You (s.)</b>	<b>You (pl.)</b>
<b>S/he, It, One</b>	<b>They</b>

If we replace our subjects in the above sentences with pronouns, they become:

1. **Jonah** read the book.  
→ **He** read the book.
2. **The coat** is more attractive than warm.  
→ **It** is more attractive than warm.
3. Having caught the flu, **Sarah and Ansel** had to stay home from school.  
→ Having caught the flu, **they** had to stay home from school.

An **object** is the person or thing that receives an action. In the following sentences, the object is in bold.

1. Jonah read **the book**.  
(What was read? The book)
2. Akil threw **the basketballs** across the court.  
(What did Akil throw? The basketballs)
3. Serena waved to **Sam and me** from the parking lot.  
(To whom did Serena wave? Sam and me)

All objects can be replaced by **object pronouns**:

<b>Me</b>	<b>We</b>
<b>You (s.)</b>	<b>You (pl.)</b>
<b>Her/Him, It, One</b>	<b>Them</b>

If we replace the objects in the above sentences with object pronouns, they become:

1. Jonah read **the book**.  
→ Jonah read **it**.
2. Akil threw the basketballs across the court.  
→ Akil threw **them** across the basketball court.
3. Serena waved to **Sam and me** from the parking lot.  
→ Serena waved to **us** from the other side of the parking lot.

Notice that proper names (*Jonah, Serena, Sam, Akil, Sarah*) can be either subjects or objects, but pronouns can generally be only one or the other. The only exception is *you*, which takes the same form as both subject and object.

For example, in the sentence *Katie threw the ball to Michael*, *Katie* is the subject and *Michael* is the object. Both are proper names. We can rewrite the sentence several ways to include pronouns:

- **She** threw the ball to James. (*Katie* replaced with object pronoun)
- Mary threw the ball to **him**. (*Michael* replaced with subject pronoun)
- **She** threw the ball to **him**. (*Katie* replaced with subject pronoun and *Michael* with object pronoun)

What we cannot do, however, is the following:

- **Her** threw the ball to Michael.
- Katie threw the ball to **he**.
- **Her** threw the ball to **he**.

When pronouns are used incorrectly with singular subjects or objects, as in the above sentences, the error is usually pretty easy to spot. Most people clearly would not say, *My little brother always wants to play with I*, or *Him went to the store for some milk*. When the subject or object is plural, however, people tend not to be so sure.