

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Answer Key: Complex Antecedents Clear Pronouns Grade 12 Quiz

Go beyond basic agreement to analyze existential 'it', distance-based ambiguity, and the nuances of vogueish syntax in professional discourse.

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**1. In the sentence 'The committee, having debated the ideological implications of the charter for hours, finally reached its decision,' what is the primary function of the pronoun 'its'?**

**Answer:** B) To treat the collective noun as a singular unit of agency

In high-level academic writing, collective nouns like 'committee' take singular pronouns when acting as a unified body, maintaining formal consistency.

**2. Choose the pronoun that maintains formal case and clarity: 'The architect was convinced that it was \_\_\_\_, the lead engineers, who bore the ultimate responsibility for the structural failure.'**

**Answer:** C) they

This requires the subjective case 'they' because it follows the linking verb 'was' (predicate nominative), a hallmark of advanced formal syntax.

**3. True or False: In the sentence 'It is often argued that philosophy is dead,' the word 'it' is an expletive (or dummy) pronoun because it lacks a specific nominal antecedent.**

**Answer:** A) True

Expletive pronouns function as syntactic fillers to allow the actual subject (the clause 'that philosophy is dead') to be shifted for emphasis.

**4. Identify the error in pronoun-antecedent agreement in this complex scenario: 'Neither the legal counsel nor the executive board members admitted that \_\_\_\_ had overlooked the discrepancy.'**

**Answer:** B) they

When using 'neither/nor' with subjects of different numbers, the pronoun must agree with the closer antecedent ('executive board members'), which is plural.

**5. Complete the sentence using the most precise relative pronoun for formal analysis: 'The methodology \_\_\_\_ the researchers utilized was inherently flawed due to selection bias.'**

**Answer:** B) that

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'That' is the standard restrictive relative pronoun in American English for essential clauses that define the noun.

**6. True or False: The use of the singular 'they' is now widely accepted in various formal style guides (such as APA and MLA) when the gender of the antecedent is unknown or irrelevant.**

**Answer:** A) True

Nineteenth-century prescriptive rules have evolved; major modern style guides recognize 'they' as a singular gender-neutral pronoun for clarity and inclusivity.

**7. In the sentence 'The dichotomy between the protagonist's desires and his duties creates a tension that resolves \_\_\_ only in the final act,' which reflexive pronoun is required?**

**Answer:** C) itself

The antecedent is 'tension' (singular/inanimate), requiring the reflexive 'itself' to show the action reflecting back on the subject.

**8. Select the correct interrogative pronoun for this high-level query: '\_\_\_ of the three proposed economic theories do you believe most accurately models current inflation?'**

**Answer:** B) Which

'Which' is used when choosing from a specific, limited set, whereas 'what' is used for an open-ended range of possibilities.

**9. Evaluate the following: 'The mentor told the student that he was destined for greatness.' Why is this pronoun use considered 'weak' in advanced composition?**

**Answer:** B) The antecedent is ambiguous, as 'he' could refer to the mentor or the student

At the 12th-grade level, students must identify 'ambiguous reference' where a pronoun has two potential noun antecedents, necessitating a rewrite for clarity.

**10. True or False: In the phrase 'Each of the participants brought their own equipment,' the pronoun 'their' is technically incorrect under 'traditional' prescriptive grammar rules.**

**Answer:** A) True

Traditionally, 'each' is a singular indefinite pronoun requiring a singular possessive (his or her); however, modern usage is shifting toward 'their'.