

Name: _____ Date: _____

Answer Key: Invisible Architects: A College Pronoun Paradox Quiz

Sophisticated syntactical analysis requires students to deconstruct pronoun-antecedent ambiguity and case-marking nuances within complex academic and legal prose.

1. In the following excerpt from a Victorian legal text—'The beneficiary shall lose their right if they fail to disclose the debt'—analyze the usage of 'their' and 'they.' This represents:

Answer: B) The use of the epicene 'they' to denote a generic singular antecedent.

Modern and historical linguistics recognize the epicene (singular) 'they' as a tool for singular antecedents of unspecified or generic gender, a common strategy in legal and formal writing to ensure inclusivity and clarity.

2. Select the option that correctly satisfies the prescriptive requirements of case in this formal academic construction: 'The board of directors invited the researchers, _____ and his colleague, to present the findings.'

Answer: B) him

Since the pronoun is an appositive to the direct object 'researchers,' it must be in the objective case ('him').

3. In the sentence 'Whosoever logic dictates should lead must be chosen,' the word 'Whosoever' is used incorrectly because it serves as the object of the verb 'dictates.'

Answer: B) False

False. 'Whosoever' is the subject of the verb 'should lead' within the relative clause; 'logic dictates' is a parenthetical insertion that does not change the case of the subject pronoun.

4. Identify the functional shift of the pronoun 'that' in this philosophical proposition: 'That which constitutes the essence of the thing is that.'

Answer: A) The first is a relative pronoun; the second is a demonstrative pronoun.

The first 'that' introduces the relative clause ('that which'), while the second 'that' functions as a demonstrative pronoun acting as a predicate nominative.

5. Which indefinite pronoun must be used to maintain formal concord in this sentence? 'Neither of the complex ideologies _____ lost its influence over the post-modern landscape.'

Answer: B) has

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The indefinite pronoun 'neither' is singular; therefore, it requires the singular verb 'has,' regardless of the plural noun in the prepositional phrase.

6. Reflexive pronouns like 'myself' can be used as subjects in formal academic writing if the author wishes to sound more authoritative (e.g., 'Myself and my colleagues conducted the study').

Answer: B) False

False. Reflexive pronouns require an antecedent in the same clause to which they refer back. They cannot function as grammatical subjects.

7. Analyze the pronoun 'it' in the following sentence: 'It is essential that the theory be tested.' This is an example of:

Answer: B) An expletive or dummy pronoun.

In this context, 'it' is an expletive (or pleonastic) pronoun serving as a syntactic filler for the subject position without having a literal antecedent.

8. In the comparison 'The results surprised the junior researchers more than _____,' which pronoun completes the sentence to indicate the results surprised the junior researchers more than they surprised the senior lead?

Answer: B) him

The objective case 'him' is required because the pronoun is the object of the implied verb: 'more than [they surprised] him.'

9. Which sentence demonstrates the most precise use of a relative pronoun in a non-restrictive clause?

Answer: B) The manuscript, which was found in the attic, changed history.

In formal English, 'which' is preferred for non-restrictive clauses (set off by commas), whereas 'that' is used for restrictive clauses.

10. In the phrase 'A friend of mine,' 'mine' is classified as a double possessive (or post-genitive) because it follows the preposition 'of.'

Answer: A) True

True. This idiolectal feature of English combines a possessive pronoun with the preposition 'of' to indicate a specific relationship of belonging.