

Name: _____ Date: _____

Answer Key: Profound Pronouns: A Propose-an-Antecedent Prose Quiz for College

Can you navigate the nuance of distal deictics and singular they? Analyze complex antecedent-pronoun relationships in scholarly and literary contexts.

1. In the sentence, 'The committee has reaching its decision, though members remain divided on their individual justifications,' which term best describes the use of 'their'?

Answer: A) Anaphoric reference to a collective noun treated as plural

In this context, while 'committee' is a collective noun often treated as singular, the reference to 'members' shifts the focus to the individuals, necessitating a plural pronoun for agreement with the plural component.

2. Choose the correct pronoun to complete the formal academic sentence: 'The researcher and the primary stakeholder argued over ___ roles in the upcoming clinical trial.'

Answer: C) their

Because the sentence identifies two distinct entities (the researcher and the stakeholder) performing an action together, the plural possessive 'their' is the standard formal choice.

3. In the sentence 'Whom shall I say is calling?', the pronoun 'Whom' is used correctly according to traditional prescriptive grammar.

Answer: B) False

The pronoun serves as the subject of the verb phrase 'is calling' within the subordinate clause; therefore, the subjective case 'Who' is required, not the objective 'Whom'.

4. Identify the function of 'it' in the weather-related idiom: 'It appears to be raining.'

Answer: C) Expletive (or dummy) pronoun

The pronoun 'it' here is a pleonastic or 'dummy' subject; it fulfills the syntactical requirement for a subject without referring to a specific noun or antecedent.

5. Complete the sentence with the appropriate relative pronoun: 'The architect, _____ the board had previously rejected, submitted a revolutionary skyline design.'

Answer: B) whom

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The relative pronoun is the object of the verb 'rejected' (the board rejected him/her), making the objective case 'whom' correct in formal writing.

6. The use of the 'singular they' is strictly a modern colloquialism and has no historical precedent in English literature before the 21st century.

Answer: B) False

The singular 'they' has been used for centuries by canonical authors (such as Chaucer, Shakespeare, and Austen) when the gender of the antecedent is unknown or irrelevant.

7. Which of the following contains an ambiguous pronoun reference?

Answer: A) After the diplomat met with the spy, he vanished into the fog.

The pronoun 'he' is ambiguous because it could refer to either the 'diplomat' or the 'spy,' making the sentence unclear to the reader.

8. Select the correct reflexive pronoun: 'In the sociopolitical treatise, the author argues that a society cannot sustain _____ without civic engagement.'

Answer: C) itself

'Society' is a collective, inanimate noun treated as singular here, so the reflexive 'itself' is the grammatically appropriate choice.

9. In the phrase 'Neither of the candidates has conceded ____ defeat,' which pronoun maintains formal agreement?

Answer: B) his or her

In traditional formal grammar, 'neither' is singular; 'his or her' matches the singular number of the antecedent, whereas 'their' is often used in less formal or evolving styles.

10. The pronoun 'this' in the sentence 'This is the reality of the situation' is behaving as a demonstrative pronoun rather than a demonstrative adjective.

Answer: A) True

In this sentence, 'this' stands alone as the subject of the verb 'is,' functioning as a pronoun. If it were an adjective, it would precede a noun (e.g., 'This reality is...').