

every pronoun points at a noun, every opening phrase describes the next one

What these questions look like

- the same shape as the rest of this domain: a passage of roughly 25 to 150 words with its own blank, and the conventions stem word for word
- the four options are usually **four pronouns**, or four spellings of one word, or four ways of starting the same main clause
- nothing about the passage's argument matters. What matters is which noun the blank has to line up with
- these sit among the **fastest** questions on the section. Answering them in well under the 71 second average is what funds the slow ones
- there is no negative marking, so a pronoun question is answered even when two options survive the elimination

Which noun does it point to?



one root with three siblings at a single level, the nouns already named that a pronoun could be pointing back to; only one of them matches in number and makes sense

The pronoun rule, in three moves

- name the antecedent**: say out loud which noun the pronoun stands in for. If you cannot name it, the option is already wrong
- match the number**: a singular noun takes it, this, that; a plural noun takes they, these, those
- match the job**: a pronoun doing the acting takes the subject form, a pronoun being acted on takes the object form
- a pronoun with two possible antecedents is ambiguous, and an option that leaves the reference unclear is never the answer
- the verb sitting right after the blank often gives the number away for free: has demands a singular pronoun, have a plural one

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The spellings that are really one question



- its is possessive, it's is it is. A possessive pronoun **never** takes an apostrophe, not one of them
- their is possessive, there is a place, they're is they are
- whose is possessive, who's is who is
- your is possessive, you're is you are
- when all four options are spellings of the same sound, this is the entire question. Decide what the slot needs, then spell it

Read the four options first. What kind of thing are they?

four different pronouns

Agreement question
name the noun, then match number

four spellings of one sound

Apostrophe question
decide possessive or short form

four ways to start the main clause

Modifier question
ask what the opening phrase describes