

Pronoun-Antecedent Agreement B

- 5t.** Some indefinite pronouns are singular, and some are plural. Other indefinite pronouns can be either singular or plural, depending on their meaning in a sentence.

Singular Indefinite Pronouns

- (1) Use a singular pronoun to refer to these indefinite pronouns:

anybody	either	neither	one
anyone	everybody	nobody	somebody
anything	everyone	no one	someone
each	everything	nothing	something

EXAMPLES **Somebody** will surely volunteer **his or her** time. [*His or her* agrees in number with the antecedent *Somebody* because both are singular. *His or her* agrees in gender because *Somebody* may include both males and females.]

Either of the boys can bring **his** camera. [*His* agrees with the antecedent *Either* in number because both are singular. *His* agrees in gender because the phrase *of the boys* indicates *Either* is masculine.]

EXERCISE A Circle the pronoun or pronoun group in parentheses that agrees with the underlined antecedent in each of the following sentences.

Example 1. Was anyone planning to bring (his or her, *their*) bat and ball to practice? [The antecedent *anyone* agrees with *his or her* in number and gender. *Anyone* is always singular and can refer to both males and females.]

- Far out on the lake, something raised (*their*, *its*) massive head. [Which pronoun agrees with *something* in number and gender?]
- Everyone shivered despite (*his or her*, *their*) coat.
- Has each of the pandas eaten all (*its*, *their*) food?
- One of the girls won first place with (*their*, *her*) science project.
- Will somebody please volunteer to present (*their*, *his or her*) report first?

Plural Indefinite Pronouns

- (2) Use a plural pronoun to refer to these indefinite pronouns:

both	few	many	several
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EXAMPLE **Few** of the storm clouds had any lightning in **them**. [The pronoun *them* agrees with the antecedent *Few* because both are plural.]

EXERCISE B Circle the pronoun or pronoun group in parentheses that agrees with the underlined antecedent in each of the following sentences.

- Example 1.** A few of the shoppers consulted the lists (they, *he or she*) had brought. [*Few* is always plural, so the pronoun that refers to it should be plural, too.]
6. Several of the store's employees greeted (*their, his or her*) customers cheerfully. [Which pronoun agrees with *Several* in number?]
7. Did both of the cashiers get change for (*himself or herself, themselves*)?
8. Many of the purchases rang up at (*its, their*) discounted prices.
9. Have several of these sweaters already had (*their, its*) prices changed?
10. A few of the shoes cannot be sold because (*they, it*) are mismatched.

Singular or Plural Indefinite Pronouns

(3) The following indefinite pronouns may be singular or plural, depending on how they are used in a sentence:

all any more most none some

Look at the phrase that follows the indefinite pronoun. If the noun in that phrase is singular, the pronoun is also singular. If the noun in that phrase is plural, the pronoun is also plural.

EXAMPLES Has **any** of the novel lived up to **its** reputation? [*Any* is singular because it refers to one novel. The singular pronoun *its* agrees in number with *any*.]
 Have **any** of the novels lived up to **their** reputations? [*Any* is plural because it refers to more than one novel. The plural pronoun *their* agrees in number with *any*.]

EXERCISE C Circle the pronoun or pronoun group in parentheses that agrees with the underlined antecedent in each of the following sentences.

- Example 1.** All of the icy freeway was treacherous. (It, *They*) had to be sanded. [*All* is singular because it refers to one freeway. The pronoun that refers to *All* should be singular, too.]
11. Some of the drivers can handle (*their, his or her*) cars well on slick roads. [Does *Some* refer to one thing or many?]
12. None of the open streets had much traffic on (*it, them*).
13. All of the traffic report was dedicated to announcing road closures. (*They, It*) lasted for thirty minutes.
14. Did any of the schools cancel (*their, its*) classes?
15. Will most of the ice melt by the afternoon, or will (*it, they*) last the entire day?