Me, Myself, and I

A simple way to use the right pronouns

# Subject or object?

The whole English-speaking world seems to be confused these days as to what pronoun to use when using multiple pronouns in a sentence. For example,

*Me and him went to the movies*. Is this correct? If not, why not? If it is, why is it?

If you said it is not correct, but don’t know why, then you’re halfway there. Wouldn’t it be nice to have a foolproof way of knowing what pronoun to use when, and to stun everyone around you with your grammatical erudition? No? Okay forget it, then!

But seriously, it is all very simple. And yes, it has to do with whether the pronoun is the *subject* or the *object* of the sentence. In the above sentence, the pronouns are the *subjects* of the sentence. The simple rule for pronouns is:

Subject Object Possessive Reflexive

I / we me / us my / mine myself

you you your / yours yourself

he him his himself

she her hers / her herself

they (sing. & pl.) them theirs / their themself

we us ours / our ourselves

tt it its itself

one one one’s oneself

Right. So would the above sentence be: *I and he went to the movies*? Almost, except that there is this politeness in English that puts others before you, so swap around the subjects: *He and I went to the movies*. There you go. What did you see?

But what if you don’t know whether the pronouns are the subjects or the objects of the sentence? Do you just give up and use the reflexive form of the pronoun: *Myself and he went to the movies*? You sure here that a lot these days. There is no reason to use the reflexive form myself here; “I” is perfectly good as a subject pronoun.

# Try it one at a time

The other thing you can do to help you decide which pronoun to use is to use each pronoun on its own. That makes things pretty clear most of the time:

*Me went to the movies* or *I went to the movies*?

*He went to the movies*? or *Him went to the movies*?

For the most part, you don’t even really need to know if the pronouns are subjects or objects of the sentence if you have a reasonable grasp of the English language, since *me went to the movies* or *him went to the movies* sounds like fingernails on a blackboard (if you know what that sounds like). Or what about this one:

*She and I’s favorite food is Vietnamese*.

*She and I’s*? Hint: there is no such word as “I’s.” Don’t use it. Bad, bad, bad. So Let’s see: using the one-at-a-time rule:

*She’s favorite food is Vietnamese*? Or: *Her favorite food is Vietnamese*? Her: it’s a possessive pronoun.

*I’s favorite food is Vietnamese*? Or: *My favorite food is Vietnamese*? My: again, it’s a possessive.

So the whole thing would be: *Her and my favorite food is Vietnamese*? Sound strange? Well, it’s correct!

# Other examples

She gave the assignment to he/him and I/me. (Correct answer? She gave the assignment to *him* and *me*.

I myself don’t really care about it. (Correct answer? The addition of *myself* is unnecessary, though sometimes people use it for emphasis.)