

# Reading Skill 2

## Pronoun referencing

A pronoun is a word that is used in place of a noun or a noun phrase, often one that has already been mentioned. By using pronouns, one can avoid repeating the name of something or someone over and over again.

### Example 1

In the past, the record industry was not that anxious about a certain amount of copying. For example, the fans of different artists recorded the songs that they performed at open concerts and traded them among one another afterwards.

To find out what a pronoun is referring to, locate the verb to see whether the pronoun is a subject pronoun (e.g. **I / you / we / they / he / she / it**) or an object pronoun (e.g. **me / us / them / him / her / it**). Then within that sentence or in the previous sentence, look for a relevant noun that agrees with the pronoun in number. For example, 'they' is a plural pronoun. With the verb 'performed', the meaning is logical if 'they' refers to 'the artists'. The pronoun 'them', which comes after the verb 'traded', should mean 'the songs recorded', an object previously mentioned.

### Example 2

Exposure to sunlight and pollution can result in wrinkled skin. Looking 10 years older because of that is definitely undesirable or even unacceptable to many. Apply our new product on your face before bed and let your skin repair itself. 90% of users of this product reported improvements in skin texture and skin tone.

Sometimes, writers may use demonstrative pronouns (e.g. **this / that / these / those**) to indicate the thing(s), event(s), or person(s) they are referring to. In this example, 'that' refers to the conclusion of the previous sentence, i.e. the fact of having wrinkled skin due to exposure to sunlight and pollution. On the other hand, demonstrative adjectives may describe something previously mentioned or understood in the context. In this example, 'this product' refers to 'the new product' mentioned in the previous sentence.



## Let's Practice

Find out what/who the underlined words refer to.

### Passage 1

I think all of you have had the experience of talking to newly met people. How do you start a conversation with them? In the UK, people usually start a conversation by talking about the weather. How about you? Would you break the ice by asking your new friend whether he or she has had lunch yet?

1. you = \_\_\_\_\_
3. he = \_\_\_\_\_

2. them = \_\_\_\_\_
4. she = \_\_\_\_\_

### Passage 2

There are many stories about dolphins rescuing people, like protecting people from sharks and helping those drowning to float. In 1982, an eleven-year-old boy was swept into the Indian Ocean by tides. It was a dolphin that helped him fight off sharks that circled him as it swam around him until he was rescued. In fact, in addition to saving humans in dangerous situations, dolphins are also known for interacting with humans in many different ways, such as helping fishermen with their jobs.

5. those = \_\_\_\_\_
7. he = \_\_\_\_\_

6. it = \_\_\_\_\_

### Passage 3

There are more than three hundred night markets in different districts in Taiwan. To attract customers, the hawkers put up colourful shop signs at their stalls, with funny names of the dishes written on them. No doubt these markets are always crowded with people looking for good food.

8. their = \_\_\_\_\_
10. these markets = \_\_\_\_\_

9. them = \_\_\_\_\_