

Writing Sentences: Subjective Case (I) vs. Objective Case (Me)

Subjective case: pronouns functioning as subjects (*I, we, you, he, she, they*)

Objective case: pronouns functioning as objects (*me, us, you, him, her, them*)

1. Use the subjective case for subjects and subject complements.

Your ear will generally guide you, but it can be misleading when dealing with compound word groups containing a pronoun.

- Example: Joel ran away from home because his stepfather and *he* had quarreled.
 - In cases such as this, the objective, *him*, is often mistakenly used in place of *he*. Stripping away the remainder of the subject (*his stepfather*) will often reveal the correct word choice.

2. Use the objective case for all direct objects, indirect objects, and objects of prepositions. Compound objects can often be confusing.

- Example: Janice was indignant when she realized that the salesclerk was insulting her mother and *her*.
 - *Her mother and her* is the direct object of the verb *was insulting*. The objective case should be used rather than the subjective. Stripping away *her mother and*, the phrase reads *was insulting her*.

3. Put an appositive and the word to which it refers in the same case.

Appositive: a noun phrase that renames a noun or pronoun. A pronoun used as an appositive has the same function as the word(s) the appositive renames

- Example: The chief strategists, Dr. Bell and *I*, could not agree on a plan.
 - The appositive *Dr. Bell and I* renames the subject *strategists*. Therefore, the subjective case must be used.
- Example: The reporter interviewed only two witnesses, the shopkeeper and *me*.
 - The appositive *the shopkeeper and me* renames the direct object *two witnesses*, so the objective case must be used.

4. When deciding whether *we* or *us* should precede a noun, choose the pronoun that would be appropriate if the noun were omitted.

- Example: *We* tenants would rather fight than move. OR
Us tenants would rather fight than move.
 - Removing tenants, the sentence reads, (*We* or *Us*) *would rather fight than move*. Clearly, *we* should be used as opposed to *us*.