Pronouns
A pronoun stands in for or refers to a noun in a sentence. Pronouns (he, they, it, etc.) must refer to a specific noun or group of nouns. Vague pronoun reference occurs when a pronoun could refer to two possible antecedents.

E.g., When Gloria set the pitcher on the glass-topped table, *it* broke.

To clarify that *it* refers to *the pitcher*, reword the sentence to eliminate any ambiguities.

E.g., The pitcher broke when Gloria set it on the table.

Shifts in pronouns
Because a pronoun refers to or takes the place of a noun, you have to use the correct pronoun so that your reader clearly understands the noun to which your pronoun refers.

Therefore, pronouns should:

Agree in number
If the pronoun takes the place of a singular noun, you must use a singular pronoun.

*Note:* everybody, anybody, anyone, each, neither, nobody, someone are all singular and, therefore, take a singular pronoun.

Agree in person
When writing in the first person (I), do not switch to the second person (you) or third person (he, she, it, they).

Making pronouns and antecedents agree
Many pronouns have antecedents, nouns or pronouns to which they refer. A pronoun and its antecedent agree when they are both either singular or plural.

Singular: Anna finished her homework.
Plural: The students finished their homework.

When a plural pronoun mistakenly refers to a singular pronoun, you can fix this error by:

1. Replacing the plural pronoun with *he* or *she*
2. Making the antecedent plural
3. Rewriting the sentence so that no problem of agreement exists