Writing Sentences: Pronoun Reference

- Pronoun: a substitute for a noun
- Antecedent: the word to which a pronoun refers
  - Example: After Andrew intercepted the ball, he kicked it as hard as he could.
    - *Andrew is the antecedent of the pronoun he, and it is the pronoun of ball.*

1. Avoid ambiguous or remote pronoun reference.
   - Ambiguous reference occurs when the pronoun could refer to two possible antecedents.
     - Example: When Gloria set the pitcher on the glass-topped table, it broke.
       - Whether it refers to the pitcher or the table is unclear.

2. Generally, avoid broad reference of this, that, which, and it.
   - For clarity, these pronouns should refer to specific antecedents rather than to whole ideas or sentences.
     - Example: More and more often, especially in large cities, we are finding ourselves victims of serious crimes. We learn to accept this with minor gripes and groans.
       - *This broadly refers to the acceptance of being the victim of a serious crime.*

3. Do not use a pronoun to refer to an implied antecedent.
   - A pronoun should refer to a specific antecedent, not to a word that is implied but not present in the sentence.
     - Example: After braiding Ann's hair, Sue decorated them with ribbons.
       - The pronoun *them* refers to Ann's braids, which is not a term used in the sentence.

4. Avoid the indefinite use of they, it, and you.
   - *They* should always refer to a specific antecedent.
   - *It* should also not be used indefinitely.
   - *You* is only acceptable in informal contexts.
     - Example: Ms. Pickersgill's *Guide to Etiquette* stipulates that *you* should not arrive at a party too early or leave too late.
       - In this formal sentence, *you* is not acceptable and could be replaced with a guest or one.

5. To refer to persons, use who, whom, or whose.
   - *Who, whom, and whose* are reserved for references to humans, while that and which refer to animals. Therefore, it is impolite to use which and that in reference to people.