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.