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e-GMAT LLC

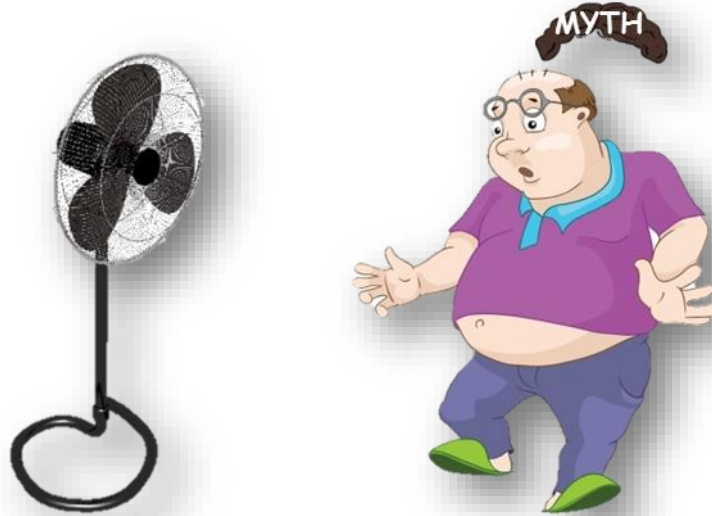


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[PRONOUNS – DEBUNKING MYTH 2]

Hi folks!

Let us now blow away another myth related to pronoun usage.



MYTH 2 *A PRONOUN IN A CLAUSE CANNOT REFER TO A NOUN IN ANOTHER CLAUSE.*

SOURCE OF THIS MYTH

This myth arises when a pronoun logically referring to a noun antecedent lies in a different Independent Clause (IC). Test takers usually tend to think that a pronoun in one IC cannot refer to a noun in another IC, as a single IC denotes a complete idea by itself.

LET'S DEBUNK THIS MYTH

We need to keep in mind that an IC + IC construction is considered as one big IC. (Similarly an IC + DC construction is also a big IC). Therefore a pronoun can refer to a noun in another clause if the two clauses are connected properly.

Simple example 1: *The King of Atlantis is fond of his white tiger, but the citizens are afraid of it.*

Look at the sentence structure below.

- *The King of Atlantis is fond of his white tiger,*
- *but the citizens are afraid of it.*

Observe that this sentence is an IC+IC construction joined by a “Comma + But”.

Here, the pronoun “it” in the second IC unambiguously refers to “white tiger” even though the antecedent is in another clause.

“The citizens are afraid of the white tiger” makes perfect sense in this context and so **“white tiger” is the logical antecedent of the pronoun “it”** even though both of them are in different clauses.



The King of Atlantis is fond of his white tiger, but the citizens are afraid of it.

Note that this doesn't mean that a pronoun always refers to a noun in a different clause.

Observe that the pronoun “his” refers to “King of Atlantis” and both of them are in the same clause.

Consider the following example.

Simple example 2: *The King of Atlantis takes care of his citizens; no wonder he is loved by them.*

The structure of this sentence is as follows:

- *The King of Atlantis takes care of his citizens;*
- *no wonder he is loved by them.*

Observe that here we have two ICs joined by a semicolon.

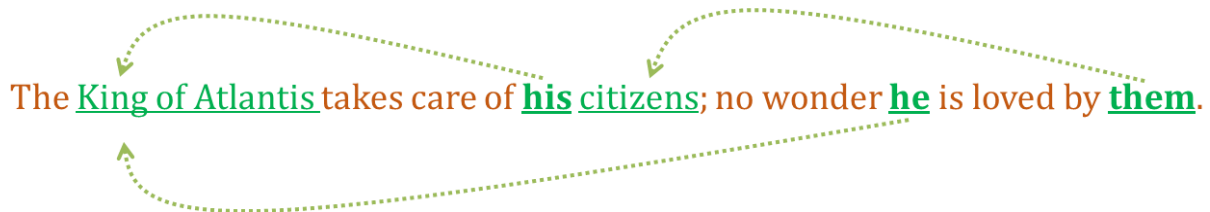
Here in this sentence the pronouns **“his” and “he” can refer only to “King of Atlantis”**.

Similarly the pronoun **“them” can refer only to “citizens”**.

There are no other possible antecedents for these pronouns.

Moreover the pronoun usage makes perfect sense in this sentence.

Therefore there is no error in the pronoun usage.



The King of Atlantis takes care of his citizens; no wonder he is loved by them.

The thing to be noted here in this sentence is that the pronoun “them” and its antecedent “citizens” are in different clauses. Similarly the pronoun “he” and its antecedent “King of Atlantis” are in different clauses.

However, the pronoun “his” and its antecedent “King of Atlantis” are in the same clause.

So this example should serve as proof to the fact that the pronoun and its antecedent can be in same or different clauses. The position of the antecedent doesn’t matter as long as it is logical.

Now let us look at a couple of official sentences.

Official Sentence 1: *The budget for education reflects the administration's demand that the money be controlled by local school districts, but it allows them to spend the money only on teachers, not on books, computers, or other materials or activities.*

The structure of the sentence is as follows:

- *The budget for education reflects the administration's demand*
 - *that the money be controlled by local school districts,*
- *but it allows them to spend the money only on teachers, not on books, computers, or other materials or activities.*

Observe that the first clause is an IC and the second clause is a DC as it starts with the dependent marker “that”. Together this IC+DC = IC.

Now the third clause is an IC joined to the previous IC with “Comma + But”.

This is an officially correct sentence. (GMAT PREP)

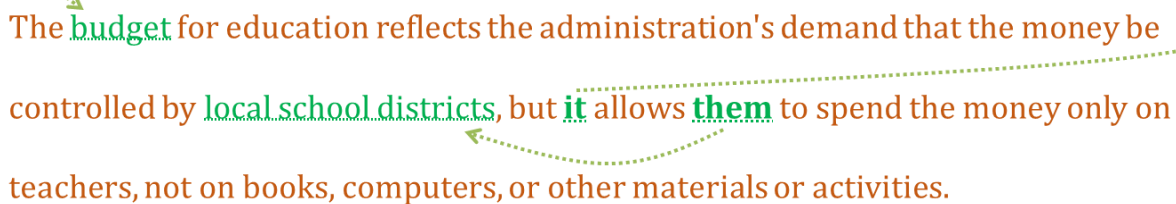
There is only one logical antecedent (local school districts) of the pronoun “them”.

However there are four possible antecedents (budget, education, demand and money) for the pronoun “it”. Now consider the following sentences.

- Budget allows school districts to spend money only on teachers.
- Education allows school districts to spend money only on teachers.
- Demand allows school districts to spend money only on teachers.
- Money allows school districts to spend money only on teachers.

As you can see, only sentence (a) makes sense in this context.

Hence there is **only one logical antecedent (budget) for the pronoun “it”** and the sentence is correct.



The **budget** for education reflects the administration's demand that the money be controlled by **local school districts**, but **it** allows **them** to spend the money only on teachers, not on books, computers, or other materials or activities.

Observe that both the pronouns have their antecedents in another clause.

Let us look at another official sentence.

Official Sentence 2: *The peaks of a mountain range, acting like rocks in a streambed, produce ripples in the air flowing over them; the resulting flow pattern, with crests and troughs that remain stationary although the air that forms **them** is moving rapidly, is known as "standing waves."*

This is an officially correct sentence. (OG12 #95) The structure of the sentence is as follows.

- The peaks of a mountain range, acting like rocks in a streambed, produce ripples in the air flowing over them;*
- the resulting flow pattern, with crests and troughs*
 - that remain stationary*
 - although the air*
 - that forms **them***

EXERCISE QUESTION

Try this exercise question to see how well you understand pronoun usage.

Identify the possible antecedents for the pronoun and check if the pronoun usage is correct or not.

We will provide the OA after we get some responses.

- *Every student must put more effort while studying it because if a student doesn't have a good grasp on the concept of fractions, they will face difficulty in understanding Algebra.*