

2013

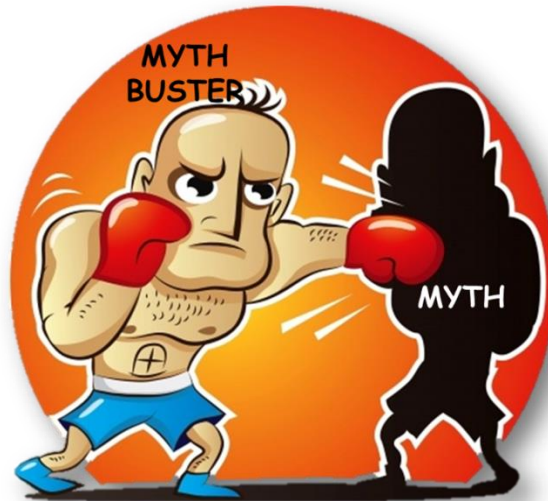
e-GMAT LLC



Krishna

[PRONOUNS – DEBUNKING POPULAR MYTHS]

PRONOUN USAGE – MYTHS & FACTS



Before delving into the article, let us look at some sentences and test our knowledge of pronoun usage.

- a. *The UV radiation emitted by the Sun is carcinogenic and hazardous in ozone-free areas.*
- b. *The UV radiation emitted by the Sun is highly dangerous because **it** has a very low wavelength.*
- c. *A solar flare emitted by the Sun can destroy a communication satellite because scientists estimated that **its** temperature is high enough to accelerate further damage.*

In terms of pronoun usage, which of the above sentence(s) do you think is/are incorrect?

Read on for the answers. 😊

COMMON CONFUSION

Students usually falter with the usage of pronouns because of some existing myths regarding pronouns. Through the next four articles in this series, we will present four such myths and break them down once and for all. After reading these articles, you'll have a much better understanding of correct pronoun usage and be able to identify pronoun errors.

THE UNDERLYING PRINCIPLE

Before we go on to talk about myths, let me reinforce the underlying principle behind pronoun usage.

"A pronoun should have only one Logical Antecedent."

This is the only principle behind pronoun usage.

For instance, there can be multiple nouns in a sentence. But if the pronoun in the sentence logically refers to only one noun, that is, if only one noun makes sense when the pronoun is replaced by it, in that case we have only one logical antecedent for the pronoun. Such a sentence remains logically sound because despite the presence of multiple nouns, the logical meaning is conveyed by replacing the pronoun with only one particular noun. If in a sentence that has multiple nouns a pronoun can be replaced by more than one noun and the sentence gives logical meaning by all such replacements, then we certainly have pronoun ambiguity. In such a case the pronoun seems to have more than one logical antecedent.

PROBLEM SOLVING

With this point in mind, let us now revisit the sentences in the above exercise.

- a. *The UV radiation emitted by the Sun is carcinogenic and hazardous in ozone-free areas.*

There isn't any pronoun used in this sentence and the sentence is correct.

- b. *The UV radiation emitted by the Sun is highly dangerous because it has a very low wavelength.*

There are three nouns in this sentence. "UV radiation", "Sun" and "wavelength".

Now keeping our above mentioned principle in mind, let us see which one among these three can be a logical antecedent.

- i. Is "UV radiation" a logical antecedent of the pronoun "it" in this sentence?

In other words, **does the statement "UV radiation has a very low wavelength" make sense in this context?**

Yes. It does. It is perfectly logical to talk about the wavelength of radiation. The sentence "UV radiation has a very low wavelength and so the UV emitted by the Sun is highly dangerous" makes sense in this context. So "**UV radiation**" is a **logical antecedent of the pronoun "it"**.

- ii. Is “Sun” a logical antecedent of the pronoun “it” in this sentence?
Again, ask yourself the following.
Does the statement “Sun has a very low wavelength” make sense in this context?
No. The statement isn’t logical. The sentence “*Sun has a very low wavelength*” doesn’t make sense at all. So “Sun” isn’t a logical antecedent of the pronoun “it”.
- iii. Is “wavelength” a logical antecedent of the pronoun “it” in this sentence? To answer this question, ask yourself the following.
Does the statement “wavelength has a very low wavelength” make sense in this context?
No. It doesn’t. It isn’t logical at all. So “wavelength” isn’t a logical antecedent of the pronoun “it”.

The UV radiation emitted by the Sun is highly dangerous because it has a very low wavelength.



So we have only one logical antecedent of the pronoun “it” in this sentence. So this sentence is correct.

- c. *A solar flare emitted by the Sun can destroy a communication satellite because scientists estimated that its temperature is high enough to accelerate further damage.*

There are four possible antecedents in this sentence. They are “solar flare”, “Sun”, “communication satellite” and “temperature”.

Now following a similar approach as in the previous example

- i. **Does the statement “Solar flare’s temperature is high enough to accelerate further damage to a communication satellite” make sense in this context?**
Yes. It is perfectly logical. So “Solar flare” is a logical antecedent of the pronoun “it”.
- ii. **Does the statement “Sun’s temperature is high enough to accelerate further damage to a communication satellite” make sense in this context?**
Yes! Therefore “Sun” is a logical antecedent of the pronoun “it”.
- iii. **Does the statement “Communication Satellite’s temperature is high enough to accelerate further damage to a communication satellite” make sense in this context?**
Yes. A satellite might have high temperature. It does make sense. So “Communication satellite” is a logical antecedent of the pronoun “it”.
- iv. **Does the statement “Temperature’s temperature is high enough to accelerate further damage to a communication satellite” make sense in this context?**

NO! It is not at all logical to say so. Therefore “temperature” is not a logical antecedent of the pronoun “it”.

*A solar flare emitted by the Sun can destroy a communication satellite because scientists estimated that **its** temperature is high enough to accelerate further damage*

The pronoun “it” in this sentence has more than one logical antecedent. So there **is** pronoun ambiguity in this sentence.

In the above examples, wherever a pronoun is used, we replaced the pronoun with the possible antecedents and checked if the sentences made sense.

If no antecedents make sense, we say there is no logical antecedent to the pronoun.

If more than one antecedent makes sense, we say that there is pronoun ambiguity in the sentence.

IN THE CONTEXT OF GMAT

Pronoun errors are quite often tested on GMAT and GMAT continues to confuse students with these errors. Furthermore pronoun errors are not as deterministic as SV errors or Modifier errors are. Therefore, pronoun error should be used as a last reason to reject an option choice, only after all other deterministic errors have been used in the process of elimination. Such scenarios arise in quite a few difficult questions on the GMAT.

DEBUNKING MYTHS ABOUT PRONOUNS

So now we will look at some of the myths students have regarding the usage of pronouns and will debunk them. Given below in the table are some of the most common myths surrounding pronoun usage and the actual facts associated with them.

MYTH	FACT	Tentative Date of Publishing
<i>A pronoun can refer only to the nearest noun</i>	<i>Long Distance Relationships <u>can</u> work! (Between antecedents and pronouns ☺)</i>	2 nd Oct
<i>A pronoun in a clause cannot refer to a noun in another clause</i>	<i>Love (between antecedent and pronoun) knows no boundaries!</i>	4 th Oct
<i>Antecedent of a pronoun cannot lie in a prepositional phrase</i>	<i>Prepositional Phrases are not black holes! Antecedents <u>can</u> come out of them!!</i>	7 th Oct
<i>Antecedent should always appear before the respective pronoun.</i>	<i>At times the best need not appear first!</i>	9 th Oct

Without wasting any more time let us get started with the popular myths around pronouns and debunk them once and for all.

MYTH 1

A PRONOUN CAN REFER ONLY TO THE NEAREST NOUN.

SOURCE OF THIS MYTH

This myth usually arises when a student somehow confuses pronoun usage with modifier usage. Modifiers usually tend to modify the nearest entity. Remember?

Placement of a modifier is pretty important because a misplaced modifier can end up modifying an entity is not supposed to modify. Hence generally modifiers are placed closer to the entity they are meant to modify. Somehow test takers extend this rule to pronoun usage also, giving way to this myth that pronoun can refer only to the nearest noun.

LET'S DEBUNK THIS MYTH

There is no such thing that a pronoun has to refer to the closest noun. Let us debunk this myth with the help of a few simple examples and then we will substantiate this point with Official examples.

Simple Example 1: *Although the discovery of America was not intentional and Columbus actually believed that he discovered India, it is widely acclaimed as one of the major turning points in Modern History.*

The pronoun “he” unambiguously refers to the noun “Columbus”. So the usage of “he” is correct.

What about the pronoun “it”? Is it used correctly or is there any error in its usage.

In the sentence, what are the possible antecedents for the singular pronoun “it”?

“Discovery, America, India, Modern History”.

Now let us look at the following sentences and see which one of them makes sense.

- a. *The discovery (of America) is widely acclaimed as one of the major turning points in Modern History.*
- b. *America is widely acclaimed as one of the major turning points in Modern History.*

- c. *India is widely acclaimed as one of the major turning points in Modern History.*
- d. *Modern History is widely acclaimed as one of the major turning points in Modern History.*

Does the first sentence make sense in this context?

Yes. It absolutely does.

The discovery (of America) is widely acclaimed as one of the major turning points in Modern History, even though it (the discovery) was unintentional.

This makes perfect sense. Therefore **“discovery” is a logical antecedent of the pronoun “it” even though the antecedent is far away from the pronoun.**

What about the second sentence? Does it make sense in this context?

First of all the sentence *“America is widely acclaimed as one of the major turning points in Modern History”* itself doesn’t make sense! (How can a country be a turning point in History? Events, Actions etc. can be turning points in History, not Countries or other places.)

So it isn’t even logical to say *“America is widely acclaimed as one of the major turning points in Modern History even though the discovery of America was unintentional”*!

Therefore **“America” is not a logical antecedent of the pronoun “it” in this sentence.**

We can reject “India” too on similar reasoning. (Even though “India” is the nearest noun.)

Now what about the fourth sentence?

The sentence itself isn’t logical. First of all History as a whole cannot be a turning point. The major events in a history are considered as its turning points. Moreover the sentence is same as saying “A monkey is one of the most commonly found animal among monkeys”.

Therefore **“Modern History” is not a logical antecedent of the pronoun “it” in this sentence.**

Therefore the pronoun “it” has only one logical antecedent (**discovery**) and the sentence is correct.

*Although the **discovery of America** was not intentional and Columbus actually believed that **he** discovered **India**, **it** is widely acclaimed as one of the major turning points in Modern History.*

This sentence reiterates the fact that the distance between a pronoun and its antecedent doesn't matter as long as there is only one antecedent which is logical".

Please note that this doesn't mean that pronoun cannot refer to a nearer noun. Consider the following example.

Simple Example 2: *Even though there was a chance of attack for the lion, it walked away without harming the deer.*

Here in this sentence, as you can see, the pronoun "it" can logically refer only to the noun "lion". Look at the following two sentences and see which one of them makes sense in this context.

- a. The lion walked away without harming the deer, even though there was a chance of attack for the lion. (Perfect!!)
- b. The deer walked away without harming the deer, even though there was a chance of attack for the lion. (Is this even logical?)

The first sentence makes perfect sense and therefore we can definitely say that **"lion" is a logical antecedent of the pronoun "it"**.

On the other hand, the second sentence isn't even logical. So **"deer" is not the logical antecedent of the pronoun "it"**.

Therefore the pronoun "it" in this sentence has only one logical antecedent (**lion**) and it so happens in this case that the pronoun is referring to the nearest noun.

*Even though there was a chance of attack for the lion, **it** walked away without harming the deer.*

Note that this need not always be the case as we have already seen in Example 1.

Now let us look at a couple of official sentences.

Official Sentence 1: Although Napoleon's army entered Russia with far more supplies than for any previous campaign, **it** had provisions for only twenty-four days.

Here, even though the noun "Napoleon's army" is very far from the pronoun "it", there is no error in the usage. The pronoun "it" can logically refer only to the noun "Napoleon's army" and not "Russia" or "campaign".

It is not logical to say that “Although Napoleon’s army entered Russia with more supplies, Russia had provisions for only twenty four days”.

How do the supplies with Napoleon’s army matter to Russia?

The amount of provisions with Russia are independent of what Napoleon’s army has.

Similarly, it is not logical to say that “Although Napoleon’s army entered Russia with more supplies, campaign had provisions for only twenty-four days.” (A campaign cannot have provisions. Note that in the context of this sentence, a campaign is a military mission and provisions are supplies for survival.)

However, it is logical to say that “...Napoleon's army had provisions for only twenty-four days.”

Although Napoleon's army entered Russia with far more supplies than for any previous campaign, it had provisions for only twenty-four days.

Therefore there is only one logical antecedent of the pronoun “it” in this sentence and the sentence is correct (even though the antecedent is far away from the pronoun).

Official Sentence 2: Because an oversupply of computer chips has sent prices plunging, the manufacturer has announced that it will cut production by closing its factories for two days a month.

Here both the pronouns “it” and “its” can refer only to the noun “manufacturer”, even though the noun “production” is nearer to the pronouns.

Because an oversupply of computer chips has sent prices plunging, the manufacturer has announced that it will cut production by closing its factories for two days a month.

(Observe that except for “manufacturer”, no other noun makes sense to be referred to by “it” or “its” in the context of the sentence.)

SUMMARY

To summarize, wherever a pronoun is used, we replace the pronoun with the possible antecedents and check if the sentences made sense.

If no antecedents make sense, we say there is no logical antecedent to the pronoun.

If more than one antecedent makes sense, we say that there is a pronoun ambiguity in the sentence.

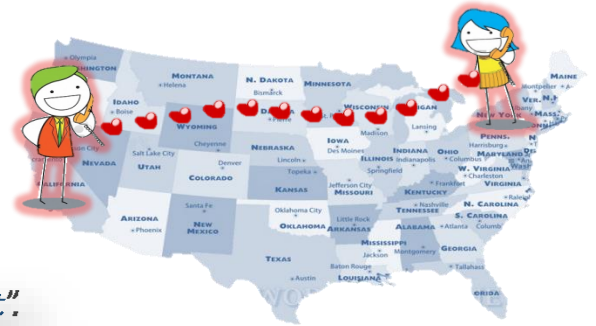
TAKEAWAY

We have now successfully debunked a myth.

“Long Distance Relationships CAN work”.
(Noun-Pronoun relationships) 😊

The antecedent can be faraway.

“A pronoun should have only one Logical Antecedent”.



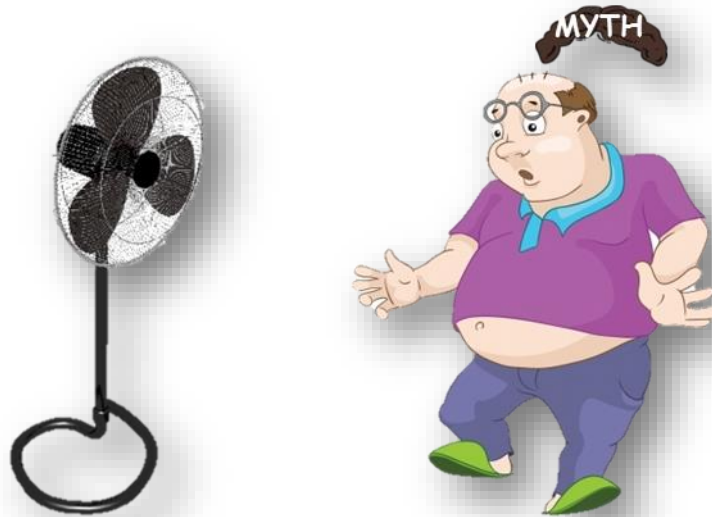
EXERCISE QUESTION

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.

Banana corp., which is aware of the fact that it has a high likelihood of producing faults, continues to use the new Flexi Mixie Screen.

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.

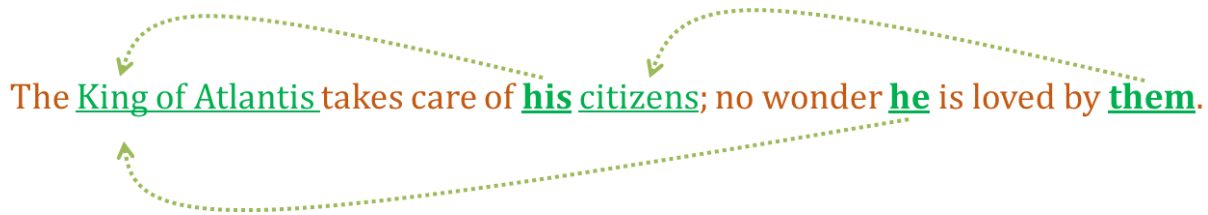
Here in this sentence the pronouns **“his” and “he” can refer only to “King of Atlantis”**.

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)

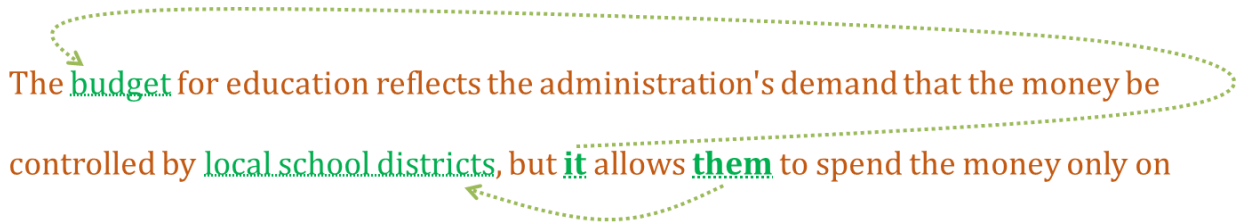
There is only one logical antecedent (local school districts) of the pronoun “them”.

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

- a. Budget allows school districts to spend money only on teachers.
- b. Education allows school districts to spend money only on teachers.
- c. Demand allows school districts to spend money only on teachers.
- d. 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***
 - *is moving rapidly,*
- *is known as "standing waves."*

The pronoun “them” is referring to “crests and troughs” which is in a different clause altogether. (Note that the other possible nouns do not make logical sense as antecedents).

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."

Therefore we can again say that the positions of the antecedent and pronoun do not matter as long as the reference is unique and logical.

Summary: To summarize, wherever a pronoun is used, we replace the pronoun with the possible antecedents and check if the sentence makes sense.

If no antecedents make sense, we say that there is no logical antecedent to the pronoun.

If more than one antecedent makes sense, we say that there is pronoun ambiguity in the sentence.

TAKEAWAY

“Love knows no boundaries”.

(“Pronoun Love” and “Clause Boundaries”)

The antecedent can be in another clause.

“A pronoun should have only one Logical Antecedent”.



EXERCISE QUESTION

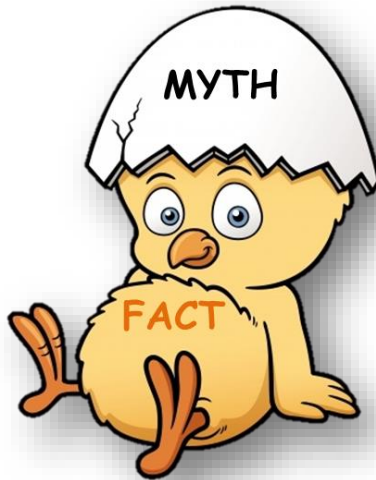
Try this exercise question to see how well you understand pronoun usage.

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.*

Let us continue our series of articles. Now we will crack open another myth.



MYTH 3

ANTECEDENT OF A PRONOUN CANNOT LIE IN A PREPOSITIONAL PHRASE.

SOURCE OF THIS MYTH

This myth seems to have its origins in the rule that the subject of a sentence cannot lie inside a prepositional phrase. Test takers mistakenly extend this rule to pronoun usage.

LET'S DEBUNK THIS MYTH

We know that a subject cannot lie inside a prepositional phrase. However, a pronoun can refer to any noun in the sentence as long as the reference is unique and logical. Let us now look at some examples.

Simple example 1: *King George is the ruler of the largest empire, **its** size as large as a continent.*

What are the possible antecedents for the pronoun “its” in the above sentence?

“empire, continent”.

Now consider the following sentences and see which of them make sense in the context of the given sentence.

- a. King George is the ruler of the largest empire, the empire's size as large as a continent. (Makes perfect sense.)
- b. King George is the ruler of the largest empire, the continent's size as large as a continent. (This sentence doesn't sound logical. Why does a continent come into the picture all of a sudden?)

As you can see only "empire" is the logical antecedent of the pronoun "its" in the above sentence.

Therefore **the pronoun "its" unambiguously refers to "empire"**

*King George is the ruler of the largest **empire**, **its** size as large as a continent.*

Now notice carefully that "empire" is in a prepositional phrase. (The ruler of the largest empire).

This example illustrates that a pronoun can refer to a noun inside a prepositional phrase.

However, this need not always be the case. Consider the following example.

Simple example 2: *The tail of a monkey has more muscles in **it** than that of any other animal.*

In this sentence, "tail", "monkey" and "animal" are the possible antecedents to the pronoun "it".

However, **the pronoun "it" refers to "tail"** and not "monkey" or "animal" ("it" cannot refer to "monkey" because "The tail of a monkey has more muscles in monkey" doesn't make sense. We can rule out "animal" on a similar reasoning.)

*The **tail** of a monkey has more muscles in **it** than that of any other animal.*

Observe that in this case, the pronoun "it" refers to the head of the noun phrase (tail of a monkey) and not the noun inside the prepositional phrase.

Now let us look at an Official sentence.

Official Sentence: *The intricate structure of the compound insect eye, with its hundreds of miniature eyes called ommatidia, helps explain why scientists have assumed that **it** evolved independently of the vertebrate eye. (OG13 #07)*

This is an official sentence.

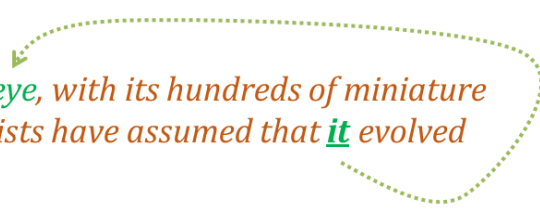
The possible antecedents of the pronoun “it” are “intricate structure, compound insect eye, and vertebrate eye”

Now consider the following sentences.

- a. The intricate structure of the compound insect eye helps explain why scientists have assumed that the intricate structure evolved independently of the vertebrate eye. (Something doesn’t sound right here. It’s like saying “The mileage of cars increased over the years independent of the bicycle”. We are basically saying that the property of one thing has developed independent of a different thing altogether. It makes more sense to say “a thing developed independent of another thing”, not its property.)
- b. The intricate structure of the compound insect eye helps explain why scientists have assumed that the compound insect eye evolved independently of the vertebrate eye. (This makes perfect sense).
- c. The intricate structure of the compound insect eye helps explain why scientists have assumed that the vertebrate eye evolved independently of the vertebrate eye. (This is not even logical).

So **there is only one logical antecedent (compound insect eye) for the pronoun “it” in this sentence.**

*The intricate structure of the compound insect eye, with its hundreds of miniature eyes called ommatidia, helps explain why scientists have assumed that **it** evolved independently of the vertebrate eye.*



Therefore the sentence is correct.

Once again, note that the pronoun refers to the noun (compound insect eye) inside a prepositional phrase.

SUMMARY

To summarize, wherever a pronoun is used, we replace the pronoun with the possible antecedents and check if the sentences make sense.

If no antecedents make sense, we say there is no logical antecedent to the pronoun.

If more than one antecedent makes sense, we say that there is pronoun ambiguity in the sentence.

TAKEAWAY



“Prepositional phrases are not black holes.
Antecedents can come out of them”.

The antecedent can be inside a prepositional phrase.

“A pronoun should have only one Logical Antecedent”.

Let us debunk the final myth in this series of fact revealing articles! ☺



MYTH 4

ANTECEDENT SHOULD ALWAYS APPEAR BEFORE THE RESPECTIVE PRONOUN.

SOURCE OF THIS MYTH

This could have emerged from a misinterpretation of the word “antecedent” (which literally means something that comes before).

LET’S DEBUNK THIS MYTH

Once again, we need to keep in mind that the only underlying principle behind pronoun usage is that “There should be a unique noun to which the pronoun can refer and the reference should be logical.” The position of the noun doesn’t matter. (Even though we call it an antecedent).

Simple Example 1: *Although **it** is a big firm, ABC Corporation rarely recruits from top colleges.*

Observe there is only one possible antecedent “ABC Corporation” for the pronoun “it”.

Therefore **the pronoun “it” unambiguously refers to “ABC Corporation”**, even though the pronoun “it” appears before the noun “ABC Corporation”.

Simple Example 2: *Despite the excitement in **his** life, Sherlock Holmes retired to the Sussex Downs to take up beekeeping.*

Observe that there is only one singular masculine noun in this sentence.

Therefore **the pronoun “his” refers to the noun “Sherlock Holmes”** and the sentence is grammatically correct, even though the pronoun “his” comes before the antecedent “Sherlock Holmes”.

This is because the only underlying principle (as we have seen already) in pronoun usage is *“A pronoun should have only one Logical Antecedent.”* The position of the antecedent is irrelevant.

Official Sentence 1: ***His** studies of ice-polished rocks in his Alpine homeland, far outside the range of present-day glaciers, led Louis Agassiz in 1837 to propose the concept of an age in which great ice sheets existed in what are now temperate areas.* (OG13 #72)

This is an official sentence where the pronoun precedes the antecedent. **The pronoun “his” properly and unambiguously refers to the noun “Louis Agassiz”.**

This sentence once again reiterates that the placement of antecedent doesn’t matter and that the underlying principle of pronoun usage is *“A pronoun should have only one Logical Antecedent.”*

Official Sentence 2: *As **its** sales of computer products have surpassed those of measuring instruments, the company has become increasingly willing to compete for the mass market sales **it** would in the past have conceded to rivals.* (OG12 #07)

This is a correct official sentence. **The pronoun “its” unambiguously refers to the noun “company”.** (Observe that there are no other singular nouns in the sentence).

FACT TO BE NOTED



“Sometimes the best need not appear first!”
The antecedent need not appear first.

“A pronoun should have only one Logical Antecedent.”

TAKEAWAYS

We have now reached the end of this long series of myth debunking articles. Let us now recap the gist of this whole series.





Take Away

A pronoun should have only one logical antecedent.

1. A pronoun **can** refer to a faraway noun.
2. A pronoun **can** refer to a noun in another clause.
3. A pronoun **can** refer to a noun inside a prepositional phrase.
4. A pronoun **can** appear before an antecedent.

I hope this article helps you guys in understanding the meaning of a sentence quickly and without any ambiguity.

Cheers!! 😊

Krishna

P.S: We'll soon come up with an article which presents [a framework to evaluate the usage of pronouns in a sentence.](#)

EXERCISE

In each of the following sentences, try to identify if the pronoun usage is correct and the possible logical antecedent(s) for each pronoun.

- i. *Once they had seen the report from the medical examiner, the investigators had no doubt that the body recovered from the river was that of the man who had attempted to escape from the state prison.*
- ii. *The gyrfalcon has survived a close brush with extinction; its numbers are now five times greater than when the use of DDT was sharply restricted in the 1970s*
- iii. *The White Tiger of the Snow Capped Everest Mountain prefers to stay inside caves because **it** has inadequate fur to protect itself from the freezing climate of the Himalayan region.*
- iv. *The White Tiger is nicknamed "the Lightning" because **it** moves very quickly.*

- v. *The increase in the vulnerability of an average user to malicious attacks didn't escape the notice of Computer Security Experts who say that it might be due to the onset of the much feared intelligent virus "AvaNova", the IQ of which exceeds 170.*