



A: Dictation Passage¹

Read through the dictation passage. Note any words, capitalizations, or matters of punctuation that require special attention.

I had a friend. From that day on, things went better. Cobaydra brought my food almost every day, and I looked forward to sitting with him and eating. He made me go with him when the men went hunting, so I had more to do. I also became familiar with the projects and pastimes of the men. Hunting was fun, particularly with Cobaydra to run the trails with me.

5-Minute Mechanics

In the same way that verbs must agree in number (singular or plural) with the subject of a sentence, pronouns must also agree in number with their antecedents. Most of the time, this isn't too difficult:

Jason carefully placed *his* model on the shelf.

Grandma and Grandpa spent *their* anniversary trip in San Diego.

It is easy to run into agreement problems, however, when you need to use singular pronoun that could refer to either a boy or a girl. For example:

A child should visit _____ dentist by the time _____ is three years old.

You could use *his* and *he* in the blank above, but what if the child is a little girl? It is very easy to be tempted to write:

A child should visit **their** dentist by the time **they** are three years old.

...but what's the problem? *They* is a plural pronoun, and the word *child* is singular. Unfortunately, English does not have a gender-non-specific singular pronoun. If it is important that the gender of the subject remain neutral, rewrite the subject to make it plural:

1. Bruchko, p. 99.

Children should visit **their** dentist by the time **they** are three years old.

Complete the following with pronouns that agree in number, or rewrite the sentence so a pronoun will agree with the subject.

1. A conscientious swimmer will rinse the chlorine out of _____ suit after practice.

2. Dan and Maggie ate _____ popsicles on the porch.

3. If your child is struggling to understand fractions, bring _____ to the tutoring session on Friday.

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