Pronoun – Antecedent Agreement

VOCABULARY

Number
The number of things referred to or included in a word. If there’s only a number of one—a book—this word is singular. If there’s more than one—the books—the number is plural. Likewise for pronouns: “It is singular; “They” is plural.

Antecedent
The noun which a pronoun substitutes for or refers to.

THE RULE
1. A pronoun must agree in number with its antecedent.
2. Indefinite pronouns are singular (everything, everyone, everybody, anybody, anyone, anything, each, either, neither, nobody, no one, nothing, somebody, someone, and something take singular verbs and thus, must have singular pronouns as substitutes).

PRACTICE Fixing Pronoun – Antecedent Agreement

Error: Every student enjoys their spring break when they have no homework.
Correction: Every student enjoys her spring break when she has no homework.
Correction: All students enjoy their spring breaks when they have no homework.

Error: Everyone at Cedarville complains about how the wind ruins their hair.
Correction: Everyone at Cedarville complains about how the wind ruins his hair.
Correction: Cedarville students complain about how the wind ruins their hair.