

Name _____

Date _____

Pronoun Shift

Definition

Pronoun shift is an error that occurs when a writer inconsistently changes from one pronoun type or perspective to another within a sentence or paragraph. This shift creates confusion about who or what is being referenced and disrupts the logical flow of ideas.

Example

Type	Corrected Example	Consistency Maintained
Person	"When someone studies hard, they will earn good grades."	Maintains third person
Number	"Students should always bring their textbooks to class."	Maintains plural throughout
Tense	"If you work hard, you will succeed."	Maintains second person and consistent tense

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Part 1: Multiple Choice Questions

Identify the sentence with NO pronoun shift error.

1. a) When a Viking shipbuilder constructed a longship, you needed to select the right wood type.
b) When Viking shipbuilders constructed longships, they needed to select the right wood type.
c) When a Viking shipbuilder constructed a longship, they needed to select the right wood type.
d) When Viking shipbuilders constructed longships, one needed to select the right wood type.

2. a) If someone wants to understand Viking naval technology, you must study their unique shipbuilding methods.
b) If someone wants to understand Viking naval technology, they must study their unique shipbuilding methods.
c) If you want to understand Viking naval technology, you must study their unique shipbuilding methods.
d) If people want to understand Viking naval technology, he must study their unique shipbuilding methods.

3. a) The Vikings were excellent navigators because you understood the stars.
b) The Vikings were excellent navigators because they understood the stars.
c) A Viking was an excellent navigator because they understood the stars.
d) Vikings were excellent navigators because one understood the stars.

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Part 2: Fill in the Blank

Rewrite each sentence to correct the pronoun shift error. Use consistent pronouns throughout.

1. When a Viking captain navigated the North Atlantic, you needed special knowledge of ocean currents.

Correct version:

2. If someone wanted to join a Viking crew, they had to prove yourself worthy.

Correct version:

3. Viking shipwrights carefully selected oak trees for their vessels because you needed strong, flexible wood.

Correct version:

4. The clinker-built design allowed the ship to flex in rough seas, which helps them withstand powerful waves.

Correct version:

5. In Viking society, if you were a skilled shipbuilder, one could achieve high status.

Correct version:

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Pronoun Shift – Answer Key

Part 1: Multiple Choice Questions

1. b) 2. b) 3. b) 4. c) 5. c)

Part 2: Fill in the Blank

1. When a Viking captain navigated the North Atlantic, he/she needed special knowledge of ocean currents.

OR: When Viking captains navigated the North Atlantic, they needed special knowledge of ocean currents.

2. If someone wanted to join a Viking crew, he/she had to prove himself/herself worthy.

OR: If people wanted to join a Viking crew, they had to prove themselves worthy.

3. Viking shipwrights carefully selected oak trees for their vessels because they needed strong, flexible wood.

4. The clinker-built design allowed the ship to flex in rough seas, which helped it withstand powerful waves.

OR: The clinker-built design allowed ships to flex in rough seas, which helped them withstand powerful waves.

5. In Viking society, if you were a skilled shipbuilder, you could achieve high status.

OR: In Viking society, skilled shipbuilders could achieve high status.