*THERE, THEIR, THEY’RE*

**THERE—used in existential propositions (There is / There are) to describe a state of existence or being, in which case “there” is a dummy subject.  Also, “there” is used to point to something.**

*Example: Look over there!*or, *There is no such thing as perfection.*

**THEIR—possessive pronoun, used to show that more than one person possesses something.**

            *Example: They gave their money to the cashier*.

**THEY’RE—is a contraction meaning “They are.”**

            *Example: They’re going to the movies later.*

*ITS, IT’S*

**ITS—is the possessive form of “It.”  If “It” owns something, use “Its.”**

*Example: The dog is chasing its tail.*

**IT’S—is a contraction meaning “It is.”**

*Example: It’s raining outside.*

*YOUR, YOU’RE*

**YOUR—is the possessive form of “You.”  If the “You” that you are talking about actually owns something, use “Your.”**

*Example: Give me your money.*

**YOU’RE—is a contraction meaning “You are.”**

*Example: You’re not going to give him your money, are you?*

*6 COMMA RULES*:

1.  **FANBOYS (For, And, Nor, But, Or, Yet, So)—always put a comma before a conjunction unless you are listing only 2 things or actions in a row.**

            *EXAMPLE: I like to eat pizza and play soccer.*

2.  **Use a comma to separate 3 or more items in a series.**

*EXAMPLE:  I like pizza, soccer, and ice cream.*

*\*\*You can also use commas for 3 or more adjectives in a series.*

*EXAMPLE: The band plays loud, hard, trendy music.*

3.  **Use a comma to separate an introductory expression from an independent clause.**

*EXAMPLE: After the Super Bowl, I paid my friend fifty bucks because I lost a bet.*

4. **Use commas to surround the name of a person you are talking to directly.**

*EXAMPLE:  There is such a thing, Mike, as Bigfoot.*

5.**Use commas to surround extra information (nonessentials) that you add into a sentence.  This is information that you could take out of the sentence without affecting its completeness.**

*EXAMPLE:  That shirt over there, which has white stripes, is dirty.*

6.  **Use commas to surround words that interrupt the flow of a sentence.**

*EXAMPLE:  I like pizza.  My wife, however, hates it.*

***PRONOUN TABLE*:**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | ***SUBJECT*** | ***OBJECT*** | ***SUBJECT*** | ***OBJECT*** |
|  | **(Singular)** | **(Singular)** | **(Plural)** | **(Plural)** |
| **1st person** | **I** | **Me** | **We** | **Us** |
| **2nd person** | **You** | **You** | **You** | **You** |
| **3rd person** | **He/she/it** | **Him/her/it** | **They** | **Them** |

Things to look out for in determining the use of a Subject pronoun vs. an Object pronoun:

\*Prepositions (to, from, between)—Prepositions only take Objects.

\*If a sentence includes 2 Subjects separated by the conjunction “or,” the second Subject takes control of the verb and pronoun.  Always ignore the first Subject.  Pretend the Subject closest to the verb is the only one that exists in the sentence:

--Susan or the students ***make***cupcakes when ***their***class is going to celebrate a birthday in class.

--The students or Susan ***makes***cupcakes when ***her*** class is going to celebrate a birthday in class.

**Also, remember the following rule for pronouns**: NEVER USE “THEIR” AS A POSSESSIVE PRONOUN IF THE SUBJECT OF THE SENTENCE IS SINGULAR (I, He, She, It [and “It” includes any person, place, or thing]).  Instead, use “His,” “Her,” or “Its” for singular subjects.

***DEPENDENT CLAUSE/INDEPENDENT CLAUSE***

\*\*Dependent clauses consist of a Subject & Predicate, but they do not form complete sentences.  Independent clauses consist of a Subject & Predicate, and they do form complete sentences.

            When Jim decided to go to the store, *he got in his car and turned the key*.

                                  ( DEPENDENT CLAUSE )                                         (*INDEPENDENT CLAUSE*)

***SUBJECT-VERB AGREEMENT***

When you have a plural Subject, you must use a plural form of the verb that the Subject performs:

*EXAMPLE: The students make cupcakes.*

When you have a singular Subject, you must use a singular form of the verb that the Subject performs:

*EXAMPLE: Susan makes cupcakes.*

\*\*Remember that you usually only  ***–s***to the end of singular verbs in the 3rd person (that is, for *he/she/it*).

***COMMA SPLICE***

If you try to fuse two Independent Clauses together without using a conjunction (and/but/or), you commit a grammatical error called the “Comma Splice.”

*COMMA SPLICE*:  Susan loves cupcakes, she hates cake.

*CORRECTION*:  Susan loves cupcakes, but she hates cake.

***DANGLING MODIFIER***

A dangling modifier is part of a clause that causes confusion because vital words are missing from the sentence.  Such sentences read like nonsense.

            EXAMPLES:  **I found a dollar jogging around the block.**

                                                A dollar was jogging around the block?

                                    *CORRECTION: I found a dollar while jogging around the block.*

                                    **While driving, my dog hangs its head out of the car window.**

                                                My dog was driving the car?

*CORRECTION: While I am driving, my dog hangs its head out of the car window.*

**I bought a shirt with silver buttons.**

I paid for the shirt in silver buttons?

*CORRECTION:  I bought a shirt that has silver buttons.*

Thanks to literary critic and grammarian M.A. Brown (<http://www.mabrown.org/>)