**Personal Pronouns**

- A **pronoun** is a word that takes the place of one or more nouns and the words that describe those nouns.

  The most frequently used pronouns are called personal pronouns. The words *she* and *it* in the sentence below are personal pronouns.

  Dana has a favorite folktale, and *she* tells *it* often.

- Pronouns that are used to refer to people or things are called **personal pronouns**.

  Personal pronouns perform different functions in sentences. Some personal pronouns are used as the simple subject. Others are used as the direct or indirect object of a verb. In the example above, the pronoun *she* replaces the noun *Dana*, which is used as the subject. The pronoun *it* replaces the noun *folktale* and is the direct object.

- A **subject pronoun** is a personal pronoun in the nominative case. It is used as a subject.

- An **object pronoun** is a personal pronoun in the objective case. It is used as the direct or indirect object of a verb.

  I will read that fable. [subject pronoun]

  Jesse told *me* about the story. [object pronoun]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personal Pronouns</th>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Used as Subjects</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td></td>
<td><em>we</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>you</td>
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<td><em>you</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>he, she, it</td>
<td></td>
<td><em>they</em></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Used as Objects</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>me</td>
<td></td>
<td><em>us</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>you</td>
<td></td>
<td><em>you</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>him, her, it</td>
<td></td>
<td><em>them</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Exercise 1  Identifying Personal Pronouns
Write each pronoun and label it *subject* or *object*.

1. I read “The Bundle of Sticks,” a fable by Aesop.
2. It taught me the value of cooperation.
3. A man had four sons, and they always fought.
4. They started an argument in the morning and continued it all day.
5. He became impatient and scolded them.
6. They ignored him and continued to argue.
7. He decided to teach the sons a lesson.
8. They needed it.
9. The father was sure this plan would help them.
10. Now I will tell you the end of the fable.

Exercise 2  Using Pronouns in Nominative and Objective Cases
Write a personal pronoun to replace the underlined words.

1. The father asked the sons for a bundle of sticks.
2. The father tied the bundle up with string.
3. The father gave the bundle to the sons.
4. The father said, “Break the bundle.”
5. The boys tried, but the boys were too weak to break the bundle.
6. Then the father untied the bundle.
7. The brothers easily broke the sticks one by one.
8. United, the brothers were strong.
9. The father said, “This lesson has taught my sons.”
10. The sons also realized the importance of cooperation.

Exercise 3  Using Pronouns in Nominative and Objective Cases
For each numbered item, write the correct pronoun in parentheses.

1. George and Maria love stories. (They, Them) especially like fables.
2. Maria wanted to go to the library with George. Could (he, him) go after school?
3. “We can borrow some books of stories by Aesop,” (she, her) said.
4. George said, “Our friends may have checked (they, them) out already.
5. (We, Us) should go to the used bookstore.”
Using Pronouns Correctly

People sometimes confuse pronouns in the nominative and objective cases. They write or say *me* when they should use *I*. They use *we* when they should use *us*. Remember to use a subject pronoun as the subject. Use an object pronoun as the object of a verb.

- *She* owns a collection of fables. [subject]
- He told *her* an amusing fable. [indirect object]
- The fable entertained *us*. [direct object]

Be sure to use a subject pronoun in a compound subject and an object pronoun in a compound object.

- Richard and *I* recited the fable. [not *Richard and me*]
- Jennifer helped Richard and *me*. [not *Richard and I*]

In the first sentence above, *Richard and I* is the compound subject. In the second sentence, *Richard and me* is the compound object of the verb *helped*.

If you’re having trouble deciding which form of the pronoun to use in a compound subject or compound object, try saying the sentence without the noun. *Me recited the fable* does not sound correct. *I recited the fable* sounds—and is—correct.

Whenever the pronoun *I* or *me* is joined with a noun or another pronoun to form a compound subject or object, *I* or *me* should come last.

- Jennifer and *I* enjoy folktales. [not *I and Jennifer*]

In formal writing and speaking, always use a subject pronoun—not an object pronoun—after a linking verb. If the sentence sounds awkward, rearrange the words.

- The winner is *she*. [not *The winner is her*]
- *She* is the winner.
Exercise 4  Using Pronouns in Nominative and Objective Cases

Read the following dialogue between the North Wind and the Sun. Write the correct pronoun for each item.

1. North Wind: (I, me) am the strongest power.
2. Sun: How will you show (I, me)?
3. North Wind: You and (I, me) will have a contest.
4. Sun: A traveler is approaching (we, us).
5. North Wind: I see his dog and (he, him).
6. Sun: You or (I, me) must steal his cloak from him.
7. North Wind: The winner will be you or (I, me).
8. Sun: No, (I, me) cannot lose this contest.
9. North Wind: Watch (I, me) closely as I blow the cloak from the traveler.
10. Sun: I will watch (him, he), but I know you will fail.

Exercise 5  Using Pronoun Cases Correctly

Write a personal pronoun to replace each underlined group of words. Label each pronoun subject or object.

1. The North Wind blew fiercely. (He, Him)
2. The traveler resisted the North Wind. (he, him)
3. The North Wind watched the Sun work. (she, her)
4. The man felt the rays of the Sun on his back. (they, them)
5. Before long the man was glad to remove the cloak. (he, him)
6. “Now North Wind and the Sun know who’s more powerful,” said the Sun. (you and I, you and me)
7. The North Wind could not overpower the Sun. (He, Him)
8. However, the Sun and North Wind realized that they both had powers. (she and he, her and him)
9. “This world needs both North Wind and the Sun,” said the Sun. (you and me, you and I)
10. From that point on, the world respected the Sun and North Wind equally. (they, them)

Exercise 6  Writing with Personal Pronouns

Write five sentences. Use at least one of these pronouns in each sentence: I, she, he, we, they, me, her, him, us, them. Use both subject and object pronouns.
11.3 Pronouns and Antecedents

The noun or a group of words that a pronoun refers to is called its **antecedent**.

Albert read “Sleeping Beauty.” **He** found **it** exciting.

Here, the noun **Albert** is the antecedent of the pronoun **He**. “Sleeping Beauty” is the antecedent of the pronoun **it**.

The pronoun must agree with its antecedent in **number** (singular or plural) and **gender**. The gender of a noun may be masculine (male), feminine (female), or neuter (referring to things).

The king and queen were proud of the baby girl, and **they** loved **her** dearly.

In the sentence above, the pronoun **they** agrees with its antecedent, **The king and queen**. The pronoun **her** agrees with its antecedent, **the baby girl**.

The antecedent of a pronoun should be clear.

The parents showed the baby to friends. **They** admired **her**.

In the second sentence above, does the pronoun **they** refer to **parents or friends**? If the antecedent is not clear, it is best to avoid using a pronoun altogether.

**The friends** admired the baby.

Be especially careful when you use the pronoun **they**.

They have many books of folktales at the library. [unclear]

The library has many books of folktales. [clear]
Exercise 7  Identifying Antecedents

The sentences below are about “The White Bear,” a Russian folktale. Write the antecedent of each underlined pronoun.

1. A man lived in the forest. He was very poor.
2. He had many children. He could not feed them.
3. One night the wind blew hard. It shook the walls.
4. The house stood firm. It was well built.
5. The children heard a noise outside. They were afraid.
6. A white bear appeared. The man approached it.
7. The bear asked the man, “Will you give me your youngest daughter?”
8. This was a strange request. The man had never heard anything like it.
9. His daughter was dear to the man. What could he tell her?
10. The man listened to the bear. He wanted to learn what it would offer.

Exercise 8  Using Personal Pronouns

Write the correct pronoun to complete each sentence below. Then write and circle its antecedent.

1. The bear made a promise. ______ promised the family great wealth.
2. The man spoke with his children. He told ______ about the bear’s request.
3. The youngest daughter became worried. The bear’s request frightened ______.
4. The girl listened to her family. They said, “If ______ go, the bear promises ______ will be rich.”
5. Finally the girl told her father and her brothers and sisters, “_______ will go because I love ______.”

Exercise 9  Writing with Personal Pronouns

Read each sentence. Rewrite the sentence, replacing the underlined antecedent with a personal pronoun.

1. Many stories have a wolf as a main character.
2. In one story, three pigs outsmart a wolf.
3. Little Red Riding Hood meets a wolf in another story.
4. Instead of a wolf, Goldilocks meets three bears.
5. Goldilocks ate the porridge before the bears returned.
Some personal pronouns indicate ownership or possession. These pronouns are called possessive pronouns, and they replace the possessive forms of nouns.

A possessive pronoun is a pronoun in the possessive case. It shows who or what has something.

Some possessive pronouns are used before nouns. They replace the name of the person or thing that has something.

Aesop’s fables are famous. His fables are famous.

A fable is a brief tale. Its characters are often animals.

Other possessive pronouns stand alone in a sentence.

This book is yours.

Aesop’s Fables is a favorite of mine.

The chart below shows the singular and plural forms of the two different kinds of possessive pronouns.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Possessive Pronouns</th>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Used Before Nouns</strong></td>
<td>my</td>
<td>our</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>your</td>
<td>your</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>her, his, its</td>
<td>their</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Used Alone</strong></td>
<td>mine</td>
<td>ours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>yours</td>
<td>yours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>hers, his, its</td>
<td>theirs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Possessive pronouns do not contain an apostrophe. Do not confuse the possessive pronoun its with the word it’s. It’s is a contraction, or shortened form, of the words it is: It’s a humorous tale.
Exercise 10  Identifying Kinds of Possessive Pronouns

The sentences below are about a fable. List each possessive pronoun and write whether it stands alone or is used before a noun.

1. A miller, his son, and a mule walked to market.
2. “Ride on its back,” a stranger suggested.
3. The boy got on, and his father walked.
4. A man they knew saw them and said, “You will spoil that son of yours.”
5. The man said, “Will you follow a stranger’s advice or mine?”

Exercise 11  Using Pronouns in the Possessive Case

Write a possessive pronoun to replace each underlined word or phrase.

1. The miller talked to a friend and followed the friend’s advice.
2. The boy walked beside the mule; the man rode on the mule’s back.
3. Next a woman gave the woman’s opinion, and they followed that advice and rode together.
4. The man and the boy’s weight was too great.
5. The mule collapsed, and the man and boy worried about the mule’s health.
6. They carried the mule on the man’s and the boy’s shoulders.
7. The man’s shoulders were tired. He asked the boy, “How do your shoulders feel?”
8. “My shoulders are tired as well,” the boy answered.
9. The man saw that only fools think other people’s opinions are better than the fools’ own.
10. If the miller had followed the miller’s own instincts, the mule would not have collapsed.

Exercise 12  Writing Sentences with Possessive Pronouns

Write a pair of sentences using each phrase. In one sentence of each pair, replace part of the phrase with a possessive pronoun.

SAMPLE  the boy’s bike
ANSWER  The boy’s bike was new. His bike was new.

1. the woman’s idea  4. a girl’s opinion
2. the friends’ words  5. people’s thoughts
3. the mule’s back
11.5 Indefinite Pronouns

- An **indefinite pronoun** does not refer to a particular person, place, thing, or idea.

  Like possessive pronouns, indefinite pronouns can be used alone or with nouns.

  Has **any student** read this Native American folktale?
  Have **any** read “The Voice of the River”?

  When used alone, indefinite pronouns may be singular or plural.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INDEFINITE PRONOUNS</th>
<th>ALWAYS SINGULAR</th>
<th>ALWAYS PLURAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>another</td>
<td>everybody</td>
<td>no one</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>anybody</td>
<td>everyone</td>
<td>nothing</td>
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<td>anyone</td>
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<td>anything</td>
<td>much</td>
<td>somebody</td>
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<td>each</td>
<td>neither</td>
<td>someone</td>
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<td>either</td>
<td>nobody</td>
<td>something</td>
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  When an indefinite pronoun is used as the subject of a sentence, the indefinite pronoun may be singular or plural, depending on the noun that follows. Indefinite pronouns that change their number include **all, any, most, none, and some**.

  **Some** of the people **are** familiar with this folktale. [plural]
  **Most** of this tale **takes** place in Africa. [singular]
  **Most** of the characters **are** animals. [plural]

  Possessive pronouns often have indefinite pronouns as their antecedents. In such cases, the pronouns must agree in number.

  **Many** are happy to share **their** folktales. [plural]
  **Each** must be willing to wait **his** or **her** turn. [singular]
Exercise 13 Using Indefinite Pronouns

For each sentence, write the correct singular or plural indefinite pronoun in parentheses.

1. (Everyone, Many) likes to read an exciting myth.
2. (Each, Many) are originally from Greece.
3. (One, Others) from Greece is about a father and a son.
4. (Anyone, Few) were able to guess the myth’s ending.
5. (All, Anybody) enjoy the myth of Daedalus and Icarus.
6. (Both, One) of the mythical characters live on the island of Crete.
7. Daedalus has artistic talents; (none, nobody) can deny that.
8. (Few, Somebody) match Daedalus’s skill in design.
9. (Some, Each) of these students model their work on his art.
10. (Each, Both) of the characters is interesting.

Exercise 14 Using Indefinite Pronouns

Write the word or words in parentheses that correctly complete each sentence.

1. Most of the people (praises, praise) Daedalus’s ideas for the huge palace.
2. Few know (his, their) craft as well as Daedalus.
3. No one (is, are) more pleased than King Minos.
4. Although many try, no one (escapes, escape) the king’s maze.
5. Everything (changes, change) when Daedalus tells the secret.
6. At last someone finds (his or her, their) way out.
7. Some of the readers (knows, know) the rest of the story: the king forbids Daedalus to leave.
8. Something (takes, take) shape in Daedalus’s skilled hands—wax wings for himself and Icarus.
9. Both (plans, plan) an escape across the sea.
10. Each puts on (his, their) pair of waxy wings.
11. At first everything (goes, go) well for the pair.
12. Several (sees, see) them flying in the sky.
13. One (flies, fly) too close to the sun; the wax melts, and he plunges to his death.
14. Which one (lands, land) safely in Sicily?
15. When someone tries to do the impossible, disaster can strike (him or her, them.)
**UNIT 11**

**Grammar Review**

**Pronouns**

In “The Wise Old Woman,” a Japanese folktale, a young lord banishes everyone over seventy-one years of age from his village. A farmer disobeys the ruler and hides his mother. In the following passage, the ruler discovers that the old woman has saved the village. The passage has been annotated to show some of the pronouns covered in this unit.

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**Literature Model**

*from The Wise Old Woman*  
*Japanese Folktale*  
*Retold by Yoshiko Uchida*

The young farmer was amazed at his mother’s wisdom. “You are far wiser than any of the wise men of the village,” he said, and he hurried to tell the young lord how to complete Lord Higa’s third demand.

When the lord heard the answer, he was greatly impressed. “Surely a young man like you cannot be wiser than all my wise men,” he said. “Tell me honestly, who has helped you solve all these difficult problems?”

The young farmer could not lie. “My lord,” he began slowly, “for the past two years I have broken the law of the land. I have kept my aged mother hidden beneath the floor of my house, and it is she who solved each of your problems and saved the village from Lord Higa.”

He trembled as he spoke, for he feared the lord’s displeasure and rage. Surely now the soldiers would be called to throw him into the dark dungeon.

(continued)
Review: Exercise 1  Using Personal Pronouns as Subjects and Objects

Read the following dialogue. For each item, write the correct pronoun.

1. The Ruler: (I, Me) declare that all old people are useless.
2. Farmer: The other villagers and (I, me) do not agree with you.
3. The Ruler: What can you tell (I, me) to change my mind?
4. Farmer: It is my old mother who saved this village. You do not know (she, her), but (her, she) is wise.
5. The Ruler: Perhaps I was wrong. Let it be known to all old people. (Me, I) declare (they, them) are welcome in the land.

Review: Exercise 2  Making Pronouns and Antecedents Agree

Write the correct pronoun to complete the second sentence in each pair.

SAMPLE  The young farmer’s mother was not troubled by Lord Higa’s tasks. _______ knew how to complete them.

ANSWER  She

1. The problems hadn’t been solved by the wise men. _______ were bewildered.
2. The farmer told the lord that he had hidden his mother. “It is _______ who saved the village,” he said.
3. The young farmer was frightened. He thought the soldiers would throw _______ into the dungeon.
4. The young lord looked thoughtful. He said, “_______ have been wrong.”
5. The ruler had thought that old people were useless. At last _______ realized that they should be honored.
Grammar Review

**Review: Exercise 3** Identifying Personal Pronouns as Subjects or Objects

Write each pronoun and label it *subject* or *object*.

1. Aesop is famous. He wrote many fables. 
2. He was a Greek writer who lived in the sixth century B.C.
3. People admire him.
4. A girl told me that Aesop's fables are fun to read.
5. I asked her to name a favorite fable.
6. She named "The Fox and the Mouse."
7. Because Aesop's stories are often about animals, children especially enjoy them.
8. Roman and medieval writers collected them.
9. We read Aesop's fables that were collected by Phaedrus.
10. You can find them in many anthologies.

**Review: Exercise 4** Using Personal Pronouns as Compound Subjects and Objects

Write pronouns to replace the underlined words.

**SAMPLE** Kate and Martin read the story.
**ANSWER** She and he

**SAMPLE** Kate and Martin liked it.
**ANSWER** They

1. Amy and John wrote a fable.
2. They read Mr. Jackson and Ms. Diaz the tale.
3. Gina and I saw Amy and John after school.
4. Amy and John asked us to watch them act out their fable.
5. Gina and I applauded Amy and John after their great performance.
6. Amy and John thanked Gina and me.
7. They told Gina and me that they appreciated our applause.
8. Mr. Jackson and Ms. Diaz applauded too.
9. Ms. Diaz gave Amy and John a flower.
10. Mr. Jackson saluted Amy and John.
Review: Exercise 5  Using Possessive Pronouns with Nouns

The following sentences based on passages in “The Wise Old Woman” do not appear in this textbook. Write a possessive pronoun to replace the underlined words in each sentence.

SAMPLE  The villagers’ leader issued a cruel decree.
ANSWER  Their

1. The ruler wanted all of the ruler’s people to be young and strong.
2. The lord said, “I have no use for old people in the lord’s village.”
3. No one guessed that the woman was hiding in the young farmer’s house.
4. The ruler was amazed by the old woman’s wisdom.
5. The farmer told the ruler, “It was the farmer’s aged mother who solved the ruler’s problems.”
6. The villagers were no longer forced to abandon the villagers’ parents in the mountains.
7. Lord Higa left the village alone, declaring that the village’s people be allowed to live in peace.
8. The young farmer now had the farmer’s worry lifted from the farmer’s mind.
9. The ruler’s new understanding would allow the villagers to live full lives.
10. The people would always remember how the farmer’s courage had saved the people’s village.

Review: Exercise 6  Writing Sentences with Indefinite Pronouns

Write a sentence for each item below. Use the pronoun as the subject and the correct word from each pair as the verb.

1. Someone listens, listen
2. All makes, make
3. Several talks, talk
4. Everybody plays, play
5. Many enjoys, enjoy
Review: Exercise 7

Proofreading

The following passage is about African American artist Jacob Lawrence. Rewrite the passage, correcting the errors in spelling, capitalization, grammar, and usage. Add any missing punctuation. There are ten errors.

Jacob Lawrence

Jacob Lawrence, who was born in 1917, grew up in Harlem. This thriving artistic center influenced him. Lawrence chose to become a painter in his teens and he was encouraged by artists in his community. Lawrence was twenty-four years old when his work was exhibited in a New York art gallery.
Lawrence’s paintings portrays the lives and struggles of African Americans. Most people finds his work appealing. In the painting on the previous page, Lawrence shows a man talking to some children. The painting reminds us that everyone learn from others.

Review: Exercise 8

Mixed Review

Number a sheet of paper from 1 to 20. Then choose a pronoun from the list below to fill in each blank. You will not need to use all the pronouns, but you may need to use some pronouns more than once. Use correct capitalization.

- everyone
- its
- she
- her
- me
- them
- him
- mine
- they
- his
- my
- us
- I
- nobody
- we
- it
- our
- yours

1. _____ class read a fable written by Aesop. 2. _____ was the story of a very hungry fox. Some grapes tempted 3. ____. However, 4. ____. were out of 5. ____ reach. The fox knew other animals could probably reach the grapes. The fox thought of a way to reach 6. ____ too. If you want to know how this story ends, you will have to read 7. ____.

Almost 8. ____ enjoys a good folktale. Our teacher told 9. ____ class a story based on a Native American folktale. Mae and I found 10. ____ wise. The story taught 11. ____ about life in a village. It amused and surprised both her and 12. ____. Later Mae read the tale again to 13. ____ sister, Ann.

Yesterday my brother and 14. ____ went to the library. 15. ____ were both looking for a book of fables. 16. ____ brother found a book of Aesop’s fables. 17. ____ is better known for fables than Aesop. The book is now a favorite of 18. ____. 19. ____ has a story has about a vixen. In it, she talks about 20. ____ cubs.
Writing Application

Pronouns in Writing
Michael Dorris uses pronouns in this passage from *Morning Girl* to make his writing clear and concise. Read the passage, paying particular attention to the pronouns that are italicized.

1. I knew *my* hands very well. *I* study *them* when *I* trim *my* nails with the rough edge of a broken shell, making *them* smooth and flat. *I* could spread *my* fingers and press *them* into wet sand to see the shape *they* leave. Once *I* tried to do that with *my* head, but *all* *I* got was a big shallow hole and dirty hair.

2. *I* knew the front of *my* body, the bottoms of *my* feet. *I* knew the color of *my* arms—tan as the inside of a yam after the air has dried it—and if *I* stretched *my* tongue *I* could see *its* pink tip.

Techniques with Pronouns
Use pronouns in your writing as does Michael Dorris.

1. Always check that a pronoun agrees with its antecedent.

**INCORRECT USE** I knew my *hands* very well. *I* study *it* . . .

**DORRIS’S VERSION** I knew my *hands* very well. *I* study *them* . . .

2. To make your writing smooth, replace repeated nouns and their modifiers with pronouns.

**REPEATED WORDS** I could spread *my* fingers and press *my* fingers into wet sand to see the shape *my* fingers leave.

**DORRIS’S VERSION** I could spread *my* fingers and press *them* into wet sand to see the shape they leave.

Practice
Practice the techniques with pronouns by revising the following passage on a separate sheet of paper.

Morning Girl spends every day with Morning Girl’s brother Star Boy. Morning Girl and Star Boy go to the beach. The brother and sister walk along the shore. Star Boy finds smooth pebbles. Star Boy finds unbroken shells and gives them to Morning Girl. The boy and girl wade in the shallow water and find tiny crabs and starfish. Morning Girl and Star Boy take Morning Girl’s and Star Boy’s treasures home. They put their treasures in a shaded pool next to the house where they live with their parents. Morning Girl and Star Boy will watch the crabs and starfish for several hours. Then the children will return the live creatures to the sea.