

### EXERCISE 23-1 ♦ Pronoun reference: Guided practice

Edit the following paragraphs to correct errors in pronoun reference. The numbers in the margin refer to relevant rules in section 23 of *Rules for Writers*, Seventh Edition. The first revision has been done for you; a suggested revision of this exercise appears in the back of this book.

George and Mary Jones lived in Memphis during the Civil War. They were sympathetic to the Union, but the city definitely favored the Confederates. <sup>*Being caught in the middle*</sup> This made the war years especially hard on them. They looked forward to a much better life after the war. 23b

At first, it seemed that they were going to have that better life. George got a job as a labor organizer, and Mary stayed at home to care for their four healthy children. Then came yellow fever. In nine months, Mary went from a happy wife and mother to a despondent widow with no children. She had to find work. Because you must have some meaning for living, she needed work that she could care strongly about. 23d

By 1900, Mary had become involved in union activities all over the United States. She found her calling among the coal miners and their wives, which she followed for the next thirty years. Making friends with the workers and outwitting private detectives, she held secret meetings to help them organize and plan strategy. In the newspaper, it often reported her ability to outwit and outlast mine bosses and lawyers as well as to reawaken courage in disconsolate workers. 23a 23a 23d

Mary Jones spent many nights in jail, but often her jailers did not know what to do with this attractive gray-haired woman whom the workers called “Mother.” The jailers’ confusion simply amused Mary, who was far more used to jail than they could imagine. 23c

### EXERCISE 23-2 ♦ Pronoun reference

To read about this topic, see section 23 in *Rules for Writers*, Seventh Edition.

Six of the following sentences contain faulty pronoun references. Find the faulty references and fix them. Mark the correct sentences “OK.” Example:

*and this job*

**Mother Jones got a job working in the textile mills, <sup>^</sup>which made her conscious of how women workers were mistreated.**

1. When Mother Jones started working in the textile mills at the turn of the twentieth century, she saw “the little gray ghosts,” the child laborers which worked from sunup to sundown.
2. Children as young as six scooted along the floor oiling and cleaning the huge whirring looms, which often devoured a child’s fingers or hand.
3. Mother Jones once led a delegation of three hundred children from Philadelphia to New York to dramatize their plight; in some of the newspapers, they called her “the greatest female agitator in the country.”
4. The speeches Mother Jones made about child labor were among her best: They called for legislation to forbid labor practices dangerous to children’s health.
5. When Mother Jones asked for permission to bring three of the children to meet with President Theodore Roosevelt in New York, she was refused. It saddened her because she had hoped for the president’s help.
6. Mother Jones asked again and was again refused. This second one saddened her even more, but she still did not consider the trip a failure.
7. She told the children and their parents that they had been successful.
8. Public awareness, which she felt would help the children, gradually began to increase.
9. Thousands of people had learned about the children’s plight, which was bound to affect their thinking about child labor laws.
10. Mother Jones’s optimism had another basis as well: The children would remember—and they would grow up.

**EXERCISE 23-3 ♦ Pronoun reference**

To read about this topic, see section 23 in *Rules for Writers*, Seventh Edition.

Problem pronouns are italicized in the following paragraphs. Edit the paragraphs to eliminate any misunderstandings these pronouns might cause. You may need to restructure some sentences. Example:

*workers*  
In the mines, ~~you~~ didn't get much chance at the good life.

Mother Jones was determined to change the intolerable working conditions in the mines. After digging coal in twelve-to-fourteen-hour shifts, *they* found in their miners' pay envelopes not US currency but scrip, paper money that was honored only by the mining company. Local merchants had no use for the scrip, so *they* couldn't use it to buy food, clothes, or anything else. Workers, therefore, had to rent their homes from the company and buy their supplies at company stores. In company-run schools, the workers' children were taught by teachers *that* were hired by the company. *Their* families listened to company-paid ministers in company-owned churches.

Songwriter Merle Travis may have broken a pronoun reference rule, but he certainly summed *it* up neatly in one of his songs:

You load sixteen tons, what do you get?  
Another day older and deeper in debt.  
St. Peter, don't you call me 'cause I can't go.  
I owe my soul to the company store.

[What pronoun does Travis use in a way that would be inappropriate in formal written English?]

### EXERCISE 23-4 ♦ Pronoun reference: Guided review

Edit the following paragraphs to correct errors in pronoun reference. The numbers in the margin refer to relevant rules in section 23 of *Rules for Writers*, Seventh Edition. The first revision has been done for you.

Coal miners' struggles turned into actual war in the Kanawha Valley of West Virginia, where <sup>miners</sup> they were striking. The mine owners dominated the courts and the newspapers; they did not need to worry about the law or public opinion. Although the miners did not want to accept this, they were often forced to face it. Guards used violent tactics to maintain the mine owners' control, once spraying strikers' tent colonies with machine-gun fire and kicking a pregnant woman so hard that her unborn child died in the womb.

Mother Jones urged the miners to fight while she tried to gain the ear of the governor, federal lawmakers, and the public. In records of the fight, it says that two thousand miners came from outside the valley to help in the battle. The state militia was called in, but the owners got control of the militia soon after it arrived. En route to the state legislature to ask them for help, Mother Jones was kidnapped by soldiers, held incommunicado, put in solitary confinement, and tried by a military court. When the new governor of West Virginia, Henry D. Hatfield, investigated, he found a soldier guarding an eighty-year-old pneumonia-ridden woman that had a 104-degree fever.

Word about the Kanawha situation got out, but Governor Hatfield acted first. Out of his work came the Hatfield Agreement. This document, which historians of the labor movement consider a major advance for workers in the United States, forced the companies to recognize the union and to shorten the workday. Even more important, it stipulated that companies must pay wages in US currency. He also guaranteed civilians the right to civil, not military, trials and dismissed all sentences the military court had imposed—including the twenty-year prison term it had set for Mother Jones.