

EACH ONE
A Grammar Play
By Carole L. Cooney

“Each one” is an indefinite pronoun that ends in “one” and is always singular.

Wrong example: Each one received their corrected homework assignment.

Correct example: Each one received his corrected homework assignment.

Setting: English Class

Characters:

Narrator

Mrs. Jones, the English teacher

Gavin, a student

Evan, a student

Chloe, a student

Emma, a student

Narrator: There was a chill in the air as the students began to enter the classroom. Each one huddled in small groups sharing what he or she had done over the weekend.

Gavin: Hey, Evan. Did you do what Mrs. Jones suggested? Did you find anyone on TV who used a pronoun incorrectly?

Evan: What? Oh, yeah! Mrs. Jones said she’d give extra credit if we could find one. I did! A news announcer said something like, “Today, at the Westfield Dog Show, each one of the winners was given their award.”

Gavin: What’s wrong with that? It sounds all right to me.

Narrator: Just then, the bell rang and the students ran to their seats. Mrs. Jones rushed into the room. She quickly wrote on the board just two words: Each one.

Mrs. Jones: All right, class. Does any one have an idea why I wrote those two words on the board? Evan?

Evan: Because we’re going to study them?

Mrs. Jones: Yes, we’re going to start learning about two little words that are a source of many mistakes, so listen up, get your notebooks and pen and let’s start. Now, write the following: “Each one” is an indefinite pronoun that ends with “one” and is always singular.

Narrator: The students wrote the definition of “each one” while Mrs. Jones wrote two sentences on the board.

Mrs. Jones: Class, here are two sentences. Only one is correct. Chloe, please read the first sentence.

Chloe: Each one of the basketball players waited for their turn to shoot a basket.

Mrs. Jones: Emma, please read the second sentence.

Evan: Each one of the basketball players waited for his turn to shoot a basket.

Mrs. Jones: Which sentence is correct? Chloe?

Chloe: I'm not sure. I see the word "players" and that's plural, so that matches the pronoun "their." I guess sentence one is correct.

Mrs. Jones: Does anyone disagree? Chloe has given her reasons for the choice. Emma?

Emma: Well, you just had us write the definition of "each one," so if it is a singular pronoun, then it has to agree with the singular pronoun, "his." That makes sentence two correct.

Mrs. Jones: Well class, which sentence is correct? Gavin?

Gavin: Emma gave the correct answer and the reason for it. "Each one" sure is a tricky pronoun.

Mrs. Jones: Now class, let's practice. Here is a page of sentences. You may work in partners. You have five minutes to finish correcting the sentences.

Narrator: The students worked slowly until they caught on to the fact that "each one" is a singular pronoun. Mrs. Jones smiled as she saw the students shaking their heads then finally working faster and faster.

Mrs. Jones: Time's up! How was that exercise? Evan?

Evan: I finally see how "each one" is used. It makes a lot of sense.

Chloe: Now I see my mistake. The best thing is to remember that "each one" is singular and it does not matter what is pluralized in the sentence.

Mrs. Jones: Excellent thinking, Evan and Chloe. Any one else have a comment?

Gavin: I'm going to listen carefully from now on to see if any one on TV uses "each one" incorrectly.

Emma: Maybe we could write to the TV station and point out their mistake!

Mrs. Jones: What an excellent idea, Emma! I'd be so proud of you if you wrote to the station. I wonder if the station manager would send you a reply?