Pronoun Case

The form a pronoun takes depends on how the pronoun functions in a sentence, and pronouns can serve a number of different functions in sentences. This handout discusses four particular uses of pronouns:

subjective case, when a pronoun serves as a subject of a verb;
objective case, when a pronoun serves as the object of a verb or a preposition;
possessive case, when a pronoun serves to illustrate "ownership";
reflexive form, when a pronoun refers to a preceding noun or pronoun (see the chart below).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Person</th>
<th>Subjective Case</th>
<th>Objective Case</th>
<th>Possessive Case</th>
<th>Reflexive Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Singular Plural</td>
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<td>Singular Plural</td>
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<tr>
<td>First</td>
<td>I we</td>
<td>me us</td>
<td>my, mine</td>
<td>myself ourselves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second</td>
<td>you you</td>
<td>you you</td>
<td>your, yours</td>
<td>yourself yourselves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third</td>
<td>he she it</td>
<td>him her it</td>
<td>his her, hers</td>
<td>himself herself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>they</td>
<td>them</td>
<td>their, theirs</td>
<td>themselves</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Subjective Case:
Use the subjective case when the pronoun is the subject of the sentence:

*He and I are going to Europe next year.*

Formal usage requires the use of the subjective case in the sentences below, even though the meaning is not affected by pronoun choice:

*She is more aggressive than I.* ("than I am")
*Aristotle is not so often quoted as they.* ("as they are")

Use the subjective case of the pronoun for the subject complements and for the complement of the verb to be:

*It was I who made that statement, and I shall stand by it.*
*It is she who proposes the amendment.*

Objective Case:
Use the objective case when the pronoun is the object of a verb:

*Kevin likes both her and me, so we three get along well.*

Use the objective case of the pronoun as subject or object of an infinitive:

*He ordered Lisa and me to leave the room.* (pronoun subject of to leave)
*I wish to see either you or him in my office by 8:00.* (object of to see)
Use the **objective** case of the pronoun when the pronoun is object of the preposition:

*The letter will be sent to both you and her.*
*You must choose between her and me.*

Use the **objective** case when the pronoun is object of a gerund or participle:

*My giving her the job was, I know, a mistake.* (object of the gerund giving)
*Leaving us in the car, he went into the store.* (object of the participle leaving)

**Possessive Case:**
Use the possessive case of the pronoun before gerunds.
*I approve your making this decision early.*
*Our going at this time will not upset your plans, I hope.*

**Reflexive Case:**
Use the reflexive form of the pronoun when the pronoun refers to a preceding noun or pronoun in the sentence:
*Jane enjoyed herself at the party.*
*We expected ourselves to graduate with honors.*

This form may also be used for emphasis:
*The mayor himself wrote us a note.*

**Appropriate Case:**
After "than" or "as," use the pronoun case **that fits the sense of the sentence**. Some sentences have implied (not stated) elements; the meaning is affected by the pronoun choice in these sentences.
*She enjoys opera more than I.* ("more than I do")
*She admires him as much as me.* ("as much as she admires me")

In compound constructions, use the **appropriate** case.
*Jim and she played golf.* (means: Jim played golf. She did, too.)
*Clara may ask you or me about it.* (means: Clara may ask you about it. Or she may ask me).

In appositives, use the case that is **appropriate** for the element the appositive refers to:
*Two clerks, Bruce and I, were promoted.* (the appositive identifies a subject.)
*Sarah Miles promoted two clerks, Bruce and me.* (here, it identifies an object.)