

## INDEFINITE REFERENCE

To avoid confusion for the reader, every personal pronoun should refer clearly to a definite antecedent.

**Indefinite:** When the play begins, they don't let late-comers in until the end of the first act.  
(We do not know who won't let them in.)

**Better:** When the play begins, the ushers don't let late-comers in until the end of the first act.

**Indefinite:** They say that All Creatures Great and Small is a good book. (We don't know who says.)

**Better:** That book reviewer said that All Creatures Great and Small is a good book.

**Avoiding Indefinite Reference.** Revise the sentences below to remove all indefinite pronoun references.

Example: It says in the book that Elizabeth I was a great queen.

The book says that Elizabeth I was a great queen.

1. You should find out your credit rating if they will let you.

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2. In Ireland, you're apt to be rained on every day.

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3. They try very hard, but it never shows.

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4. In the preface, it says why the author wrote the book.

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5. Helen wants to be an actress because it's such an exciting life.

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6. We hailed the taxi driver, but it kept going.

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7. In the nineteenth century, you had to work a twelve-hour day.

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8. Mr. Jones writes a good letter, and does it often.

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9. In Arizona, you get very little rainfall.

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10. The luncheon as a whole was good, but they didn't do a very good job with dessert.

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1. You should find out your credit rating if they will let you.  
You should find out your credit rating if the credit bureau will let you.
  
2. In Ireland, you're apt to be rained on every day.  
In Ireland, residents are apt to be rained on every day.
  
3. They try very hard, but it never shows.  
They try very hard, but the effort never shows.
  
4. In the preface, it says why the author wrote the book.  
The preface says why the author wrote the book.
  
5. Helen wants to be an actress because it's such an exciting life.  
Helen wants to be an actress because acting is such an exciting life.
  
6. We hailed the taxi driver, but it kept going.  
We hailed the taxi driver, but he kept going.
  
7. In the nineteenth century, you had to work a twelve-hour day.  
In the nineteenth century, people had to work a twelve-hour day.
  
8. Mr. Jones writes a good letter, and does it often.  
Mr. Jones writes a good letter, and he does it often.
  
9. In Arizona, you get very little rainfall.  
Arizona gets very little rainfall.
  
10. The luncheon as a whole was good, but they didn't do a very good job with dessert.  
The luncheon as a whole was good, but the chef didn't do a very good job with dessert.