What is pronoun-antecedent agreement?
How to fix problems in agreement

Indefinite pronouns

Antecedents joined by *or* or *nor*

Antecedents joined by *and*

Review A

Review B
You may have heard that it is rude to point, but that’s exactly what pronouns do.
You may have heard that it is rude to point, but that’s exactly what pronouns do.

A pronoun “points” to a noun or another pronoun called its antecedent.
You may have heard that it is rude to point, but that’s exactly what pronouns do.

A pronoun “points” to a noun or another pronoun called its **antecedent**.

Does that plant have mold on it?
You may have heard that it is rude to point, but that’s exactly what pronouns do.

A pronoun “points” to a noun or another pronoun called its antecedent.

Does that plant have mold on it?
You may have heard that it is rude to point, but that’s exactly what pronouns do.

A pronoun “points” to a noun or another pronoun called its **antecedent**.

Does that **plant** have mold on **it**?
A pronoun should agree in both **number** and **gender** with its antecedent.
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A word that refers to one thing is **singular**.
A pronoun should agree in both **number** and **gender** with its antecedent.

A word that refers to one thing is **singular**.
A pronoun should agree in both **number** and **gender** with its antecedent.

A word that refers to one thing is **singular**.

A word that refers to more than one is **plural**.

**Singular**

kitten

girl

it
A pronoun should agree in both **number** and **gender** with its antecedent.

A word that refers to one thing is **singular**.

A word that refers to more than one is **plural**.

**Plural**
- kittens
- girls
- they
Use singular pronouns to refer to singular antecedents.
Use singular pronouns to refer to singular antecedents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Singular personal pronouns</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>he, she, it</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Use singular pronouns to refer to singular antecedents.

**Singular personal pronouns**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I</th>
<th>me</th>
<th>my, mine</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>you</td>
<td>you</td>
<td>your, yours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>he, she, it</td>
<td>him, her, it</td>
<td>his, hers, its</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Peel the onion before you chop it.
Use singular pronouns to refer to singular antecedents.

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<td>he, she, it</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Peel the **onion** before you chop it.
Use plural pronouns to refer to plural antecedents.
Use plural pronouns to refer to plural antecedents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plural personal pronouns</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>we</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>they</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Use plural pronouns to refer to plural antecedents.

**Plural personal pronouns**

- we, us, our, ours
- you, you, your, yours
- they, them, their, theirs

Wash the apples and then slice them.
Use plural pronouns to refer to plural antecedents.

**Plural personal pronouns**

- we
- you
- they
- us
- you
- them
- our, ours
- your, yours
- their, theirs

Wash the apples and then **them**.
Use plural pronouns to refer to plural antecedents.

Plural personal pronouns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Plural</th>
<th>Possessive Singular</th>
<th>Possessive Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>we</td>
<td>us</td>
<td>our, ours</td>
<td>our, ours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>you</td>
<td>you</td>
<td>your, yours</td>
<td>your, yours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>they</td>
<td>them</td>
<td>their, theirs</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Wash the apples and then slice them.
Some singular pronouns indicate gender.
Some singular pronouns indicate gender.
Some singular pronouns indicate **gender**.

- **Masculine** pronouns refer to males.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Masculine</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>he</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>him</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>his</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>himself</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Some singular pronouns indicate **gender**.

- **Masculine** pronouns refer to males.
- **Feminine** pronouns refer to females.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Masculine</th>
<th>Feminine</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>he</td>
<td>she</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>him</td>
<td>her</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>his</td>
<td>her, hers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>himself</td>
<td>herself</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Some singular pronouns indicate **gender**.

- **Masculine** pronouns refer to males.
- **Feminine** pronouns refer to females.
- **Neuter** pronouns refer to places, things, ideas, and animals.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Masculine</th>
<th>Feminine</th>
<th>Neuter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>he</td>
<td>she</td>
<td>it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>him</td>
<td>her</td>
<td>it</td>
</tr>
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<td>his</td>
<td>her, hers</td>
<td>its</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>itself</td>
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</table>
Make sure a singular pronoun agrees with its antecedent in gender.
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Make sure a singular pronoun agrees with its antecedent in gender.

Roberto has studied, so he is ready.
Make sure a singular pronoun agrees with its antecedent in gender.

Masculine antecedent → Masculine pronoun

Roberto has studied, so he is ready.
Make sure a singular pronoun agrees with its antecedent in gender.

Carla usually carries her own books.
Make sure a singular pronoun agrees with its antecedent in gender.

*Carla usually carries her own books.*
Make sure a singular pronoun agrees with its antecedent in gender.

The canary is sitting on its perch.
Make sure a singular pronoun agrees with its antecedent in gender.

The canary is sitting on its perch.
What is pronoun-antecedent agreement?

Identify the antecedent of the pronoun in parentheses. Then, choose the form of the pronoun that agrees with the antecedent.

1. The cats have eaten all (its, their) food.

2. Shelley painted a landscape, and then (she, they) had the painting framed.

3. Mr. Hertz checked the weather forecast before (he, they) left.
What is pronoun-antecedent agreement?

Practice

Identify the antecedent of the pronoun in parentheses. Then, choose the form of the pronoun that agrees with the antecedent.

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What is pronoun-antecedent agreement?

Identify the antecedent of the pronoun in parentheses. Then, choose the form of the pronoun that agrees with the antecedent.

Antecedent

1. The cats have eaten all (its, their) food.

The plural pronoun their agrees with the plural antecedent cats.
What is pronoun-antecedent agreement?

Identify the antecedent of the pronoun in parentheses. Then, choose the form of the pronoun that agrees with the antecedent.

2. Shelley painted a landscape, and then (she, they) had the painting framed.
What is pronoun-antecedent agreement?

Identify the antecedent of the pronoun in parentheses. Then, choose the form of the pronoun that agrees with the antecedent.

**Antecedent**

2. Shelley painted a landscape, and then *(she, they)* had the painting framed.

The singular feminine pronoun *she* agrees with the singular feminine antecedent *Shelley.*
What is pronoun-antecedent agreement?

**Practice** Identify the antecedent of the pronoun in parentheses. Then, choose the form of the pronoun that agrees with the antecedent.

3. Mr. Hertz checked the weather forecast before *(he, they)* left.
What is pronoun-antecedent agreement?

**Practice** Identify the antecedent of the pronoun in parentheses. Then, choose the form of the pronoun that agrees with the antecedent.

Antecedent

3. Mr. Hertz checked the weather forecast before (he, they) left.

The singular masculine pronoun *he* agrees with the singular masculine antecedent *Mr. Hertz*. 
Complete each sentence by providing a pronoun that agrees with its antecedent. Then, identify the antecedent.

1. Ants sometimes make ___________ home in your yard.
2. That plant needs water, or ___________ will die.
3. Jerry lent ___________ bike to Paul.
4. The captains of the teams accepted ___________ awards.
5. My sister is smart, and ___________ is also funny.
On Your Own

Complete each sentence by providing a pronoun that agrees with its antecedent. Then, identify the antecedent.

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What is pronoun-antecedent agreement?

**Answers**

Complete each sentence by providing a pronoun that agrees with its antecedent. Then, identify the antecedent.
What is pronoun-antecedent agreement?

**Answers**

Complete each sentence by providing a pronoun that agrees with its antecedent. Then, identify the antecedent.

1. Ants sometimes make their home in your yard.
What is pronoun-antecedent agreement?

**Answers**

Complete each sentence by providing a pronoun that agrees with its antecedent. Then, identify the antecedent.

1. Ants sometimes make **their** home in your yard.
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What is pronoun-antecedent agreement?

Answers

Complete each sentence by providing a pronoun that agrees with its antecedent. Then, identify the antecedent.

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Indefinite pronouns refer to a person or thing whose exact identity is unknown.
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Indefinite pronouns refer to a person or thing whose exact identity is unknown.

- Some indefinite pronouns are singular.
**Indefinite pronouns** refer to a person or thing whose exact identity is unknown.

- Some indefinite pronouns are singular.
- Some are plural.
Indefinite pronouns refer to a person or thing whose exact identity is unknown.

• Some indefinite pronouns are singular.

• Some are plural.

• Some may be either singular or plural, depending on how they are used.
The following indefinite pronouns are singular:
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<tr>
<td>anything</td>
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<tr>
<td>each</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>either</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>everybody</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>everyone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>everything</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>neither</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nobody</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>nothing</td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
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Each of the cars is missing one of its hubcaps.
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<td>each</td>
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One of the ladies left her notebook here.
The following indefinite pronouns are singular:

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</tr>
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<td>anything</td>
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Someone on the boys’ team forgot his backpack.
When you do not know the gender of the subject, or when the subject includes both males and females, you can use both the masculine and feminine pronouns connected by *or*.
When you do not know the gender of the subject, or when the subject includes both males and females, you can use both the masculine and feminine pronouns connected by *or.*
When you do not know the gender of the subject, or when the subject includes both males and females, you can use both the masculine and feminine pronouns connected by or.

No one offered his or her help.
When you do not know the gender of the subject, or when the subject includes both males and females, you can use both the masculine and feminine pronouns connected by or.

No one offered his or her help.

Everybody in the play studied his or her lines.
How to fix problems in agreement
Indefinite pronouns
How to fix problems in agreement
Indefinite pronouns

Sentences with singular antecedents joined by or or nor can sound awkward if the antecedents are of different genders. If a sentence sounds awkward, revise it to avoid the problem.
How to fix problems in agreement
Indefinite pronouns

Grammar Gal Says...

Sentences with singular antecedents joined by *or* or *nor* can sound awkward if the antecedents are of different genders. If a sentence sounds awkward, revise it to avoid the problem.

**Awkward**

Jen or Ray will bring his or her road map.
How to fix problems in agreement
Indefinite pronouns

Grammar
Gal Says...

Sentences with singular antecedents joined by or or nor can sound awkward if the antecedents are of different genders. If a sentence sounds awkward, revise it to avoid the problem.

Awkward
Jen or Ray will bring his or her road map.

Revised
Jen will bring her road map, or Ray will bring his.
The following indefinite pronouns are plural:
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<table>
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Monday, February 10, 14
The following indefinite pronouns are plural:

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<tr>
<td>both</td>
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<tr>
<td>few</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>many</td>
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<tr>
<td>several</td>
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Both of the soldiers respect their captain.
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Both of the soldiers respect **their** captain.

Few of the dogs obeyed **their** owners.
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<td>many</td>
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<tr>
<td>several</td>
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Both of the soldiers respect their captain.

Few of the dogs obeyed their owners.

If several are ready, serve them.
The following indefinite pronouns may be singular or plural, depending on how they are used:
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<tbody>
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<td>all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>any</td>
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Some of the music is good. Will you play it again?

Some refers to the singular word music. The singular pronoun it agrees with the singular antecedent some.
The following indefinite pronouns may be singular or plural, depending on how they are used:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Singular or plural indefinite pronouns</strong></th>
<th><strong>Singular</strong></th>
<th><strong>Plural</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>all</td>
<td>more</td>
<td>none</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>any</td>
<td>most</td>
<td>some</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some of the **music** is good. Will you play **it** again?

Some of the **songs** are new. Have you heard **them**?

*Some* refers to the plural word *songs*. The plural pronoun *them* agrees with the plural antecedent *some*. 
Identify the antecedent of the pronoun in parentheses. Then, choose the form of the pronoun that agrees with the antecedent.

1. Each of the birds built (its, their) own nest.
2. Several on the council have expressed (his or her, their) opinions.
3. Everybody studied (their, his or her) notes.
4. All of the boys brought some healthy snacks with (him, them).
PRACTICE

Identify the antecedent of the pronoun in parentheses. Then, choose the form of the pronoun that agrees with the antecedent.

1. Each of the birds built (its, their) own nest.
Identify the antecedent of the pronoun in parentheses. Then, choose the form of the pronoun that agrees with the antecedent.

Antecedent

1. Each of the birds built (its, their) own nest.

The singular pronoun its agrees with the singular antecedent each.
2. Several on the council have expressed (his or her, their) opinions.
Identify the antecedent of the pronoun in parentheses. Then, choose the form of the pronoun that agrees with the antecedent.

**Antecedent**

2. Several on the council have expressed *(his or her, *their*) opinions.

The plural pronoun *their* agrees with the plural antecedent *several.*
3. Everybody studied *(their, his or her)* notes.
 Identify the antecedent of the pronoun in parentheses. Then, choose the form of the pronoun that agrees with the antecedent.

**Antecedent**

3. **Everybody** studied *(their, his or her)* notes.

The singular pronoun pair *his or her* agrees with the singular antecedent *everybody*. Both *his* and *her* are used because in this sentence *everybody* may be masculine, feminine, or both.
4. All of the boys brought some healthy snacks with (him, them).
Identify the antecedent of the pronoun in parentheses. Then, choose the form of the pronoun that agrees with the antecedent.

4. **All of the boys brought some healthy snacks with (him, them).**

In this sentence *all* refers to the plural word *boys*. The plural pronoun *them* agrees with the plural antecedent *all*. 
Most of the following sentences contain pronouns that do not agree with their antecedents. If a pronoun does not agree with its antecedent, provide the correct pronoun. If a sentence is already correct, label it C.

1. Several of the babies had special blankets with it.
2. I’ve read most of the book, and I have enjoyed it.
3. Only one of the girls had finished their homework.
4. Most of the players accepted his awards in person.
5. Someone left their backpack on the bus.
On Your Own

Most of the following sentences contain pronouns that do not agree with their antecedents. If a pronoun does not agree with its antecedent, provide the correct pronoun. If a sentence is already correct, label it C.

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Use a singular pronoun to refer to two or more singular antecedents joined by or or nor.
Use a singular pronoun to refer to two or more singular antecedents joined by *or* or *nor*.
Use a singular pronoun to refer to two or more singular antecedents joined by *or* or *nor*.

Ralph or Carlos will display his paintings.
Use a singular pronoun to refer to two or more singular antecedents joined by *or* or *nor*.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ralph</th>
<th>or</th>
<th>Carlos</th>
<th>will display <em>his</em> paintings.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Singular</td>
<td></td>
<td>Singular</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Neither</th>
<th>Elia</th>
<th>nor</th>
<th>Mary</th>
<th>brought <em>her</em> jacket.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Singular</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Singular</td>
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</table>
Use a plural pronoun to refer to two or more antecedents joined by *and*. 
Use a plural pronoun to refer to two or more antecedents joined by *and*.
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Use a plural pronoun to refer to two or more antecedents joined by *and*.

Tyrone and James are artists. **They** draw well.

Both Max and Helen delivered **their** speeches.
Complete the following sentences by providing pronouns that agree with their antecedents.

1. The dog and the cat have finished eating _________ food.

2. Either Leo or Julius will lend me _________ camping gear.

3. Sara or Susan might arrive early so that _________ can help.
Complete the following sentences by providing pronouns that agree with their antecedents.

1. The dog and the cat have finished eating ___________ food.

The antecedents *dog* and *cat* are joined by *and*, so the plural pronoun *their* should be used.
Complete the following sentences by providing pronouns that agree with their antecedents.

1. The dog and the cat have finished eating **their** __________ food.

The antecedents *dog* and *cat* are joined by *and*, so the plural pronoun *their* should be used.
Complete the following sentences by providing pronouns that agree with their antecedents.

2. Either Leo or Julius will lend me __________ camping gear.

The singular antecedents Leo and Julius are joined by or, so a singular pronoun should be used. His is correct since both the antecedents are masculine.
Complete the following sentences by providing pronouns that agree with their antecedents.

2. Either Leo or Julius will lend me __________ camping gear.

The singular antecedents *Leo* and *Julius* are joined by *or*, so a singular pronoun should be used. *His* is correct since both the antecedents are masculine.
Complete the following sentences by providing pronouns that agree with their antecedents.

3. Sara or Susan might arrive early so that __________ can help.

The singular antecedents Sara and Susan are joined by or, so a singular antecedent should be used. She is correct since both the antecedents are feminine.
Complete the following sentences by providing pronouns that agree with their antecedents.

3. Sara or Susan might arrive early so that she can help.

The singular antecedents Sara and Susan are joined by or, so a singular antecedent should be used. She is correct since both the antecedents are feminine.
Most of the following sentences contain pronouns that do not agree with their antecedents. If a pronoun does not agree with its antecedent, provide the correct pronoun. If a sentence is already correct, label it C.

1. Both Rick and Ned were pleased with their test results.
2. Can even a princess or a queen have their every wish?
3. If you get a red rose or a lily, it will look nice here.
4. My brother and my sister lent me her favorite videos.
5. Two cars and one truck had its lights on.
Most of the following sentences contain pronouns that do not agree with their antecedents. If a pronoun does not agree with its antecedent, provide the correct pronoun. If a sentence is already correct, label it C.

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On Your Own
Answers

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Complete the following sentences by providing pronouns that agree with their antecedents.

1. Frances or Donna will sing __________ favorite song.
2. Each of the mice has white markings on __________ back.
3. No one in the band forgot __________ sheet music.
4. Some of the customers complained that __________ food was cold.
5. When my aunt and uncle come to visit, I am going to show __________ the skate park.
Complete the following sentences by providing pronouns that agree with their antecedents.

1. Frances or Donna will sing ___________favorite song.
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Review A

Complete the following sentences by providing pronouns that agree with their antecedents.

1. Frances or Donna will sing **her** favorite song.
2. Each of the mice has white markings on **their** back.
3. No one in the band forgot **their** sheet music.
4. Some of the customers complained that **their** food was cold.
5. When my aunt and uncle come to visit, I am going to show **their** the skate park.
Complete the following sentences by providing pronouns that agree with their antecedents.

1. Frances or Donna will sing her favorite song.
2. Each of the mice has white markings on its back.
3. No one in the band forgot their sheet music.
4. Some of the customers complained that the food was cold.
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Complete the following sentences by providing pronouns that agree with their antecedents.

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Review A

Monday, February 10, 14
Review B

Most of the following sentences contain errors in pronoun-antecedent agreement. Identify each error, and give the form of the pronoun that agrees with its antecedent. If a sentence is correct, label it C.

1. Somebody left the engine running in their car.
2. Several of the kittens are sick, but the veterinarian can help him or her.
3. Will either Hector or Kevin read his paper aloud?
4. Neither of the robins has their winter plumage.
5. Ted and his brother must have left. I don’t see him anywhere.

Answer
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