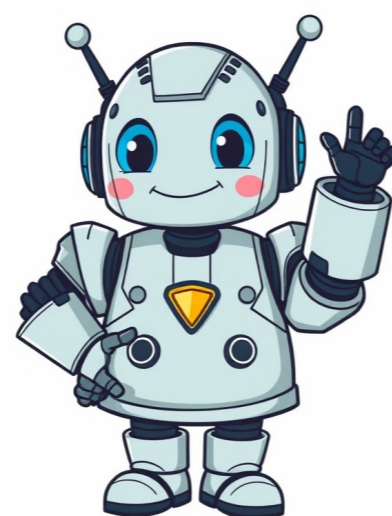


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Hello, Here is a sentence from my English learning book: "There are four people in my family. They are my father, my mother, my sister and I." Shouldn't it be "They are my father, my mother, my sister and me."? I see such a sentence structure twice, in two different articles. So I have to wonder which is really correct. Thanks. I is correct but me is often said informally. If you are taking an exam, always use the subjective tense - "I", "he", "they", etc. Thank you, PaulQ. To my understanding, me is the object of verb be. What grammar rule is it in "They are ...and I"? Thanks. The verb to be does not have objects. Like other copula verbs, its complement is in the nominative in traditional English grammar. From about.com: A verb that joins the subject of a sentence to a subject complement. Adjective: copular. In English, the verb be is sometimes referred to as "the copula," but other verbs (identified in Observations, below) have a copular function as well. "We use a special kind of verb to join an adjective or noun complement to a subject. These verbs can be called 'copulas' or 'copular verbs.' Common copular verbs are: be, seem, appear, look, sound, smell, taste, feel, become, get. Unfortunately for you, English is in a transitional phase where these verbs are being assimilated to regular verbs. Hence the advice to use the nominative on tests (they cannot mark it wrong, no matter how pigheaded the teacher is) but use the objective elsewhere (because that's what native speakers do). To my understanding, me is the object of verb be You could not be more wrong ... "be" cannot take an object .. but note the comments of others here regarding informal usage. Now, that's where I'd disagree with SDGraham. For me, never having learnt these fancy words like "copula" and "complement", all verbs take objects. And all objects are in the accusative. So that's why you'll never hear me answer to the question who's there? "It is I." And I'd never dream of writing "The person at the door was in fact he". In fact, I'd mistrust anyone who said it is I as a pedant and probably dishonest. Now, does that mean I'm on the cutting edge of linguistic change, a transitional phase where these verbs are being assimilated to regular verbs? Or am I just ignorant? Keith Bradford M.A. Now, that's where I'd disagree with SDGraham. For me, never having learnt these fancy words like "copula" and "complement", all verbs take objects. And all objects are in the accusative. So that's why you'll never hear me answer to the question who's there? "It is I." And I'd never dream of writing "The person at the door was in fact he". In fact, I'd mistrust anyone who said it is I as a pedant and probably dishonest. Keith Bradford M.A. My sentiments too - but as always, you have voiced them so much better than I could have done. Now, that's where I'd disagree with SDGraham. For me, never having learnt these fancy words like "copula" and "complement", all verbs take objects. I never learned all those fancy terms either, but I was taught that "to be" is an intransitive verb, which cannot take an object but instead is followed by a predicate nominative - which by definition is in the nominative. And therefore I do say things like "It is I" or "That would be he". Though I'm just as likely to use the accusative.... I also agree with Keith Bradford. English isn't a language which is easily analysed in terms of what was originally Latin. At any rate in Britain "It's me" and suchlike is virtually universal. "it is I" would be thought of as most peculiar, and this would be in any register not just conversational English. If I had to justify the usage of me, I would say that it is a case in English of what would in Latin would be called an emphatic accusative. > Last edited by a moderator: Feb 3, 2013 All very well, however... "There are four people in my family. They are my father, my mother, my sister and I/me." (Both are heard) but My father, my mother, my sister and me are the four members of my family. My father, my mother, my sister and I are the four members of my family. (I'll see if anyone argues before continuing!) My father, my mother, my sister and me are the four members of my family. My father, my mother, my sister and I are the four members of my family. (I'll see if anyone argues before continuing!) I agree with you. However, for some speakers of British English, the I/me distinction after 'and' is becoming very vague. You will hear the first of your two, as you will hear "Me and me brother is going to the match tonight". No matter how much some of us may dislike this, it's common in speech and informal (i.e. internet) writing. I agree with you. However, for some speakers of British English, the I/me distinction after 'and' is becoming very vague. You will hear the first of your two, as you will hear "Me and me brother is going to the match tonight". No matter how much some of us may dislike this, it's common in speech and informal (i.e. internet) writing. Yes but we have to draw the line somewhere or dictionaries and grammar books would be useless. In fact, if there were no rules, this forum would be pointless. Yes but we have to draw the line somewhere ... I agree. However, while we need to point out that such constructions are considered substandard at present by all style guides and teachers, we also have to say, in my opinion, that they are frequently heard. I agree. However, while we need to point out that such constructions are considered substandard at present by all style guides and teachers, we also have to say, in my opinion, that they are frequently heard. That's fine. All we have to do is make the usual distinctions. My argument is that if you listen to, say, the news on the BBC, you don't expect the newsreader to say "Him and his brother was in a pub when a man with a knife came in." You could very well hear that in the street but the newsreader would probably say "He and his brother were in a pub when a man with a knife came in." We are here to explain 'educated' English in my opinion. Anyway we are getting way off topic. Last edited by a moderator: Feb 4, 2013 ...My father, my mother, my sister and I are the four members of my family. ... Yes, you're right, but that's a totally different case. That's the subject of the verb, so I is correct. I agree. However, while we need to point out that such constructions are considered substandard at present by all style guides and teachers, we also have to say, in my opinion, that they are frequently heard. If you have in mind a usage such as "It's me" and "It's us," then you are wrong. From the entry "me" in Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary: Almost all usage books recognize the legitimacy of me in these positions [preceding examples included "It's me"], especially in speech; some recommend I in formal and written contexts after be.... One such usage book, The Columbia Guide to Standard American English by Kenneth G. Wilson, explicitly identifies "It's me" as standard: ... It's me and it's us are both Standard in all Conversational and most Informal uses. .... I and we are required in these cases, according to Wilson, only in "Oratorical speech and Formal writing." These still leave the question of what case form is required in "There are four people in my family. They are my father, my mother, my sister and I/me." The works I cite do not address the issue, as they deal with "It's I" and other short sentences which are almost spoken. My own opinion is that "and me" is acceptable in standard usage except for very formal levels of writing and speech. If I saw such a usage in a newspaper article, for example, I would not find it objectionable at all. Yes but we have to draw the line somewhere or dictionaries and grammar books would be useless. In fact, if there were no rules, this forum would be pointless. Cart before the horse. If there were not forums like this, and other computerised corpus searches, modern rules would not exist. Modern grammar describes how modern, educated, native speakers of a language use it. You can call these descriptions "rules" if you like, as we talk of the "laws" of the universe. I prefer to talk of "usage". But in any event, it doesn't mean that we have to obey 18th-century ideas of how a classically-educated gentleman ought to have spoken. The copula-complement-nominative argument is not relevant to modern English usage. Cart before the horse. If there were not forums like this, and other computerised corpus searches, modern rules would not exist. I don't agree There are plenty of would-be Fowlers around, eating, shooting and leaving, who insist that their ideas on what is 'correct' should be followed. I agree with what you wrote in the rest of your post, I is correct but me is often said informally. If you are taking an exam, always use the subjective tense - "I", "he", "they", etc. This is incorrect. As much as it sounds more formal to always say "I" in place of "me" what you just said is incorrect. I mean, would you said, "He is I." No, it doesn't sound correct when it's singular, does it? "They look like Nick and I!" This doesn't SOUND wrong, but, think of it. "They look like I!" No. "They look like me." You are using an out of date browser. It may not display this or other websites correctly. You should upgrade or use an alternative browser. Thread starter comeonda! Start date Aug 23, 2007 -We are four -There are four of us in my family -We are four in the family

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