

When to Use “I” or “Me”

Lesson 16: The Moon Shone High for You and I

Song lyrics are notorious for misusing *I* and *me*. Here's what I mean:

I gaze into the starry sky
And dream each night of you and I.

This corny yet grammatical travesty happens so often that it barely scratches our ears any more.

You already know when to use *I* and *me* in sentences:

I went to the movie and spilled my drink all over me.

The problem occurs when you are not alone, when you spill your drink on yourself *and* your friend. Do you use *I*? Do you use *me*?

Here's an example of the problem and how NOT to do it:

Emily and me went to the movie, and I spilled my drink all over her and I.

Whoa! With that sentence, we are not enjoying the movie or the grammar!

Rule of thumb: When trying to figure out whether to use *I* or *me* with the word *and*, cross out the extra person.

If you would use *I* alone, use *I* with the extra person. If you would use *me* alone, use *me* with the extra person. If *I* went to the movie, then *Emily and I* went to the movie, like this:

Emily and I went to the movie, and I spilled my drink all over her and me.

~~Emily and~~ I went to the movie, and I spilled my drink all over ~~her and~~ me.

[I went to the movie and spilled all over *me*.]



Of course, you could just write, "We went to the movie, and I spilled my drink all over us," but then we wouldn't be having this little discussion, now would we.

Incidentally, notice that *Emily* comes before *I*. You always put the other person first. Please, please, I'm begging you, don't say, "Me and Emily went to the movie."

So, back to those terrible song lyrics, here goes . . .

I gaze into the starry sky
And dream each night of ~~you and~~ (I, me).

Take out the extra person. You wouldn't say, "And dream each night of I." You would say, "And dream each night of me." It becomes . . .

And dream each night of you and me.

. . . which, of course, does not rhyme with *sky*, which was the origin of our problem.

Exercise 16

Correct the following sentences. Only one of them is correct as it stands. Mark it with a "C."
Each sentence is worth 10 points.

1. Me and Molly took pictures of each other in Hawthorne Park yesterday.
2. I and my neighbor's dog Ruff love to play Frisbee together.
3. Jessica is a tremendous painter. When she and me get together, we're even better.
4. My brother and I have to clean our bedroom this weekend.
5. Some have described the Bible as God's love letter to you and I.
6. Emil and me are going to watch all the Star Wars movies tomorrow—in French!

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7. Joaquin says he won't come to our party until he gets an invitation from you and I.
8. We make a great team, you and me!
9. How many miles do you think Jamie and me will run before we collapse?
10. Email your senior pictures to Val and I before Friday.

Exercise 16 Answers

Correct the following sentences. Only one of them is correct as it stands. Mark it with a “C.”
Each sentence is worth 10 points.

1. Me and Molly took pictures of each other in Hawthorne Park yesterday. *Molly and I took pictures of each other in Hawthorne Park yesterday.*
2. I and my neighbor's dog Ruff love to play Frisbee together. *My neighbor's dog Ruff and I love to play Frisbee together.*
3. Jessica is a tremendous painter. When she and me get together, we're even better. *Jessica is a tremendous painter. When she and I get together, we're even better.*
4. My brother and I have to clean our bedroom this weekend. **C** *Correct as stands.*
5. Some have described the Bible as God's love letter to you and I. *Some have described the Bible as God's love letter to you and me.*
6. Emil and me are going to watch all the Star Wars movies tomorrow—in French! *Emil and I are going to watch all the Star Wars movies tomorrow—in French!*
7. Joaquin says he won't come to our party until he gets a personal invitation from you and I. *Joaquin says he won't come to our party until he gets a personal invitation from you and me.*
8. We make a great team, you and me! *We make a great team, you and I!*
9. How many miles do you think Jamie and me will run before we collapse? *How many miles do you think Jamie and I will run before we collapse?*
10. Email your senior pictures to Val and I before Friday. *Email your senior pictures to Val and me before Friday.*