

# PERSONAL PRONOUNS

by Seda Sürel

## INTRODUCTION

Personal pronouns identify grammatical person and mark reference to the speaker, the addressee, or others. They function as independent forms and may combine with possessive or verbal morphology across the language.

### 1. Forms

Turkish personal pronouns consist of six primary forms:

ben  
sen  
o  
biz  
siz  
onlar

No gender distinction exists; all pronouns apply to any referent.

### 2. Person and Number

Turkish distinguishes person and number through pronouns and corresponding verbal morphology:

1st person singular → ben  
2nd person singular → sen  
3rd person singular → o  
1st person plural → biz  
2nd person plural → siz  
3rd person plural → onlar

These forms remain stable and are not declined by case internally; case suffixes attach to the pronoun surface form.

### 3. Case Attachment

Personal pronouns take standard case suffixes according to vowel harmony and consonant rules:

#### Accusative:

ben → beni  
sen → seni  
o → onu  
biz → bizi  
siz → sizi  
onlar → onları

#### Dative:

bana  
sana  
ona  
bize  
size  
onlara

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## Locative:

bende  
sende  
onda  
bizde  
sizde  
onlarda

## Ablative:

benden  
senden  
ondan  
bizden  
sizden  
onlardan

These forms follow regular phonological principles without exceptions.

## 4. Reference and Function

Personal pronouns function as independent noun phrases. They may serve:

- Subject of a clause
- Object of a verb
- Recipient or target of an action
- Anchor for comparison or emphasis
- Base for possessive constructions when combined with possessive suffixes

Pronouns do not express gender. Person is encoded solely through pronoun choice and verbal agreement.

## 5. Plural Use

**Biz** and **siz** refer to first and second person plural.

In addition to its plural meaning, **siz** also functions as a singular honorific form used for polite address.

**Onlar** may also be used as a polite singular reference when referring respectfully to a third person.

## Examples

- Ben evdeyim. — I am at home.
- Sen hazır mısın? — Are you ready?
- O geliyor. — He/She is coming.
- Biz başlıyoruz. — We are starting.
- Siz dışarıdasınız. — You are outside.
- Onlar parkta. — They are in the park.
- Beni aradı. — He/She called me.
- Sana yardım ettim. — I helped you.
- Ona baktım. — I looked at him/her.
- Onlardan haber geldi. — News came from them.

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## Notes

- Pronouns do not change for gender.
- All case suffixes attach regularly according to vowel harmony.
- **O** and **onlar** maintain the stem vowel without change.
- Plural pronoun onlar can function as both literal plural and polite singular reference
- **Bana** and **sana** are irregular dative forms:
  - ben → bana
  - sen → sana