



1. A manager should treat his or her employees with respect.
2. A manager should treat his employees with respect.
3. A manager should treat their employees with respect.

SHORT ANSWER:

Sentences 1 and 3 are correct.

LONGER ANSWER:

There are two important things to remember:

1. In the English language, there is no third person singular pronoun (he, she, his, her) that can refer to someone without identifying whether that person is male or female, and a manager can be a man or a woman.
2. A pronoun must agree with its antecedent in number. The antecedent is the word that the pronoun refers to. In the sentence above the antecedent is "manager," and "manager" is singular, so the pronoun should also be singular.

If you follow those rules, sentences 1 and 2 are correct. However, if you have to keep repeating "his or her" throughout a piece of writing, it can become cumbersome, and today using "his" is considered outdated or sexist. And sentence 3 can't be correct because the antecedent "manager" is singular and the pronoun "their" is plural.

But wait (imagine hearing the sound of screeching tires)... Why did I say that sentences 1 and 3 were correct in the short answer?

I'm glad you asked (Yes, there's a little conversation going on in my head as I write this.) Things they are a-changing! The 2017 AP Stylebook came out in early spring, and one of the changes is the acceptance of "they" as a singular pronoun. Now, they do advise using "they" as a singular pronoun sparingly and that "it's usually possible to write around that." Plus, if you're writing to any so-called "grammar Nazis," they may call you out on it.

So, what do you think about this change? I would love to hear your thoughts.