

## Unit 7: Subject-Verb Agreement

### Lesson 44

## Subject-Verb Agreement

The **subject** and **verb** in a sentence must agree. In the present tense, add *-s* or *-es* to the base form for the third-person singular.

#### SINGULAR

He **skates**.

She **wins**.

#### PLURAL

They **skate**.

They **win**.

The verbs *be*, *have*, and *do* change form to agree with their subjects.

#### SINGULAR

I **am** climbing.

You **are** climbing.

She **is** climbing.

I **have** reached the top.

You **have** reached the top.

He **has** reached the top.

I **do** climb often.

**Do** you climb often?

**Does** she climb often?

#### PLURAL

We **are** climbing.

You **are** climbing.

They **are** climbing.

We **have** reached the top.

You **have** reached the top.

They **have** reached the top.

We **do** climb often.

**Do** you climb often?

**Do** they climb often?

### ► Exercise 1 Underline the form of the verb that agrees with the subject.

My younger brother (has, have) a large collection of toy dinosaurs.

1. Fossils (is, are) fascinating records of the past.
2. They (tells, tell) us about plants and animals of long ago.
3. Some ancient animals, such as dinosaurs, (was, were) huge.
4. A dinosaur fossil (preserves, preserve) a tooth, a bone, or even a major part of the skeleton.
5. Fossil hunters (has found, have found) dinosaur remains around the world.
6. Dinosaurs (was fixed, were fixed) in time in a number of ways.
7. Some (was frozen, were frozen) in glaciers.
8. Such a dinosaur (is, are) like the frozen food in your freezer.
9. Other dinosaurs (was caught, were caught) in tar pits and preserved there.
10. Fossil evidence (shows, show) that many dinosaurs died in a short period of time.
11. Scientists (believes, believe) that a major disaster occurred in the past.

**Lesson 45****Subject-Verb Agreement and Intervening Prepositional Phrases**

The subject of a sentence is never contained within a prepositional phrase. The verb must agree with the subject of the sentence, not the object of a preposition.

The **color** of the thunderclouds **worries** me. (The subject is *color*, a singular noun. *Of the thunderclouds* is a prepositional phrase with a plural object. However, the verb *worries* agrees with the singular subject.)

The **players** on the team **have** new uniforms. (The subject is *players*, a plural noun. *On the team* is a prepositional phrase with a singular object. However, the verb *have* agrees with the plural subject.)

► **Exercise 1 Underline the verb in parentheses that correctly completes the sentence by agreeing with the subject.**

A vase of roses usually (stand, stands) on the piano.

1. The rain forests of the earth (occurs, occur) in places where there is much rainfall.
2. The rain forest ecosystem, to biologists, (is, are) the source of much diversity.
3. Rain forests in a tropical area (is, are) warm and humid.
4. The number of tree species (is estimated, are estimated) to be about 3,000.
5. The area around the trees (is filled, are filled) with mosses, vines, and other water-loving plants.
6. The rain forest, with complex food chains, (recycles, recycle) nutrients constantly.
7. No dead plants on the ground (is, are) left there for long.
8. Plant matter from different species (decays, decay) quickly and is reused as food.
9. Plant life, with many animal species, (keep, keeps) the rain forest teeming with noise and motion.
10. The mammals of a rain forest (includes, include) leopards, jaguars, bats, and different monkeys.
11. Hoots, chirps, and roars from every corner (echoes, echo) throughout the day.
12. An explorer of rain forests also (thrills, thrill) at the wide variety of colorful birds.
13. Scientists interested in insects (has discovered, have discovered) hundreds of new species.
14. The animals on the forest floor (numbers, number) far fewer than those that live in the trees.
15. Not every traveler to these tropical paradises (focuses, focus) on animals.
16. Some visitors on a search for new healing substances (looks, look) at medicinal plants.
17. Students of the rain forest (is alarmed, are alarmed) at its rate of destruction.

**Lesson 46****Subject-Verb Agreement and Linking Verbs**

In sentences with **linking verbs**, the verb agrees with the subject, not with the predicate nominative.

The **flowers** in the pot **are** a **gift**. (The verb, *are*, agrees with the subject, *flowers*, not the predicate nominative, *gift*.)

The **result** of the experiment **was** more effective **medications**. (The verb, *was*, agrees with the subject, *result*, not the predicate nominative, *medications*.)

► **Exercise 1 Underline the verb in parentheses that agrees with the subject.**

Jake's excuse for tardines (is, are) his morning chores.

1. Outdoor activities (seems, seem) the best method for teaching the nature class.
2. The total cost (was, were) hundreds of dollars more than we expected.
3. Exercising and dieting (remains, remain) a healthful way to live.
4. The game scores (was, were) a major disappointment.
5. Jana's injured teeth (is, are) a source of much pain to her.
6. Pinks and oranges (makes, make) a beautiful sunset.
7. My greatest success this year (is, are) my grades.
8. The Porpoises (is, are) the best swimming team in town.
9. The band director's biggest disappointment (remains, remain) the clarinets.
10. The man's remarks (was, were) an embarrassment to his listeners.
11. Our most important resource (is, are) our children.
12. The Carters (is, are) a happy couple.
13. The two lovely monuments (remains, remain) a testament to human courage.
14. The two robberies (was, were) a mystery to the police.
15. The problem (is, are) too many cooks in the kitchen.
16. The cause of the accident (was, were) faulty brakes.
17. The noisy neighbors (was, were) a constant problem.
18. The cost of pollution (is, are) higher medical bills.
19. The reason for the delay (is, are) the strikes in the trucking industry.
20. The sounds of the birds (was, were) the only disturbance.

**Lesson 47****Subject-Verb Agreement in Inverted Sentences**

In most sentences the subject comes before the verb. However, some **inverted sentences** begin with a prepositional phrase followed by the verb and then the subject. The verb in such sentences must always agree with the subject, not the object of the prepositional phrase.

V                    S    V                    S

Up the tree **crawls** the **bear**.      Up the tree **crawl** the **bears**.

In sentences that begin with *here* or *there*, do not confuse either word with the subject. Look for the subject following the verb.

V                    S    V                    S

There **is** a **bear** in that tree.      Here **come** the **bears** down the tree!

Questions are inverted sentences. In such constructions, a helping verb often comes before the subject.

V                    S                    V    V                    S                    V

**Does** the **bear** **live** in a den?      **Do** the **bears** **fish** for salmon?

► **Exercise 1** Draw a line under the subject. Choose the verb in parentheses that agrees with the subject, and write it in the blank.

On the sidelines stand many eager players ready for action. (stand, stands)

1. \_\_\_\_\_ you \_\_\_\_\_ for the festivities tomorrow? (Is prepared, Are prepared)
2. Here \_\_\_\_\_ the fliers about the founder's day celebration. (is, are)
3. Beside that bench \_\_\_\_\_ a stack of decorations. (is, are)
4. On the walls \_\_\_\_\_ the decorations we already put up. (hangs, hang)
5. Along the sidewalks \_\_\_\_\_ a long banner. (extend, extends)
6. Here \_\_\_\_\_ Luella, the chairperson of the committee. (comes, come)
7. In her hands \_\_\_\_\_ a list of tasks to be completed. (is, are)
8. \_\_\_\_\_ a few of those tasks \_\_\_\_\_ you? (Does interest, Do interest)
9. Under the trees \_\_\_\_\_ the people who want to help. (gather, gathers)
10. From the apartment building \_\_\_\_\_ the sounds of the band practicing. (pours, pour)
11. There \_\_\_\_\_ an article about this event in today's paper. (was, were)
12. \_\_\_\_\_ the paper \_\_\_\_\_ our plans? (Does support, Do support)
13. There on the sidewalk \_\_\_\_\_ the photographers. (waits, wait)
14. Down the street \_\_\_\_\_ a series of floats. (moves, move)

**Lesson 48****Subject-Verb Agreement and Special Subjects**

A **collective noun** names a group (see Lesson 1, pp. 47–48). In a sentence, a collective noun is **singular** when it names the group as a whole. It is **plural** when it refers to individual members of a group.

- Singular:** The team **takes** the bus.  
The cast **rehearses** the play.
- Plural:** The team **get** regular physical exams.  
The cast **sign** autographs for the audience.

Some nouns ending in *-s*, such as *mumps*, *measles*, and *mathematics*, take singular verbs. Other nouns ending in *-s*, such as *scissors*, *pants*, *binoculars*, and *eyeglasses*, take plural verbs. Many nouns that end in *-ics* are either singular or plural, depending on the context.

- Singular:** Mathematics **is** my favorite subject.
- Plural:** My pants **are** muddy from the river.
- Singular:** Politics **is** that professor's area of expertise.
- Plural:** That candidate's politics **were** dirty during the campaign.

A noun of amount can refer to a single unit, in which case it is singular. It can also refer to several individual units, in which case it is plural.

- Singular:** Ten **weeks is** the period of the first term.
- Plural:** Ten **weeks are** needed to complete that research.

► **Exercise 1 Underline the subject. Fill in the blank with the verb in parentheses that agrees with the subject in the context of the sentence.**

The recycling club asks for the entire neighborhood's support. (asks, ask)

- The band \_\_\_\_\_ school songs at halftime. (plays, play)
- Congress \_\_\_\_\_ to adjourn early this session. (plans, plan)
- Measles \_\_\_\_\_ no longer the dread disease it once was. (is, are)
- The six months \_\_\_\_\_ since my best friend moved. (has dragged, have dragged)
- The orchestra \_\_\_\_\_ in black for concerts. (dresses, dress)
- My family \_\_\_\_\_ sick with the flu. (is, are)
- Your binoculars \_\_\_\_\_ a big help at our star party. (was, were)
- Seven feet \_\_\_\_\_ a long distance to jump. (is, are)
- Three eggs \_\_\_\_\_ too many for this recipe. (is, are)
- Athletics \_\_\_\_\_ the only thing Jack wanted to pursue. (was, were)

**Lesson 49****Subject-Verb Agreement and Compound Subjects**

Some sentences have more than one subject. A **compound subject** that is joined by *and* or *both...and* is usually plural. However, some compound subjects have two parts that make up one unit. These take a singular verb.

- Plural:** Molly and Mabel **are racing**.  
**Plural:** Both Aunt Fran and Uncle George **have arrived**.  
**Singular:** Milk and cookies **is** a good snack.

Compound subjects joined by *or*, *nor*, *either...or*, or *neither...nor* always have a verb that agrees with the closer subject.

- Singular:** Either Mark or Carlo **was** the winner.  
**Singular:** Neither the Morgans nor Mr. Hale **is** coming to the dinner.  
**Plural:** Neither the book nor the calendars **are** on sale.

When a compound subject is preceded by *many a*, *every*, or *each*, the subject takes a singular verb.

- Many a student and teacher **has come** to Ms. Randolph for advice.  
 Every Tom, Dick, and Harry **has** an opinion.  
 Each tree and fence post **is covered** with political signs.

► **Exercise 1** Draw a line under the compound subject of each sentence. Choose the verb in parentheses that agrees with the subject, then write it in the blank.

Many a bird and squirrel \_\_\_\_\_ visits our backyard feeders. (visit, visits)

- Every orchard and farm \_\_\_\_\_ by the storm. (was damaged, were damaged)
- Spaghetti and meatballs \_\_\_\_\_ a regular meal at our home. (is, are)
- Neither Grace nor her sisters \_\_\_\_\_ the early bus. (takes, take)
- Either the squirrels or the opossum \_\_\_\_\_ through the storage boxes. (chews, chew)
- The bat and the ball \_\_\_\_\_ Ed's. (is, are)
- Every seed, nut, and suet ball \_\_\_\_\_. (was eaten, were eaten)
- Each bird and field mouse \_\_\_\_\_ hungry. (is, are)
- Both movies and books \_\_\_\_\_ enjoyable. (is, are)
- Neither the soup nor the casserole \_\_\_\_\_ hot. (is, are)
- Either Lani or Marcia \_\_\_\_\_ in the race today. (skates, skate)
- Both my shoes and socks \_\_\_\_\_ full of burrs. (is, are)
- Either my dad or my brothers \_\_\_\_\_ me at the bus station. (meets, meet)

**Lesson 50****Subject-Verb Agreement and Intervening Expressions**

Certain expressions seem to create a compound subject but do not. *Accompanied by, as well as, in addition to, plus, and together with* are expressions that introduce phrases that tell about the subject. However, the subject remains singular and takes a singular verb.

The **President**, as well as the Cabinet, **is expected** tonight.

The **mayor**, accompanied by her staff, **eats** lunch in the cafeteria.

► **Exercise 1** Draw a line under the subject. Then write in the blank the form of the verb in parentheses that agrees with the subject. Use the present tense of the verb.

Joe, as well as his brothers, \_\_\_\_\_ delivers papers in the morning. (deliver)

1. Folk, in addition to rock, \_\_\_\_\_ my favorite music. (be)
2. Weight lifting, as well as wrestling, \_\_\_\_\_ strength. (take)
3. Jupiter, plus Saturn, Uranus, and Neptune, \_\_\_\_\_ a gas planet. (be)
4. The truck, as well as a car and a bus, \_\_\_\_\_ involved in the wreck. (be)
5. The players, plus the coach and manager, \_\_\_\_\_ by bus. (travel)
6. A hoe, in addition to a rake and a ladder, \_\_\_\_\_ missing from the garage. (be)
7. The singer, accompanied by her bodyguards, \_\_\_\_\_ tonight. (arrive)
8. The doctor, together with a large staff, \_\_\_\_\_ many patients. (treat)
9. A plane, in addition to a service truck, \_\_\_\_\_ on the runway. (sit)
10. Nancy, plus her parents and grandparents, \_\_\_\_\_ to Florida for the holidays. (go)
11. My bicycle, as well as my skates, \_\_\_\_\_ repair. (need)
12. The toolshed, together with the garage and the greenhouse, \_\_\_\_\_ near the stream. (sit)
13. The bank, as well as the arcade, \_\_\_\_\_ tomorrow. (open)
14. The VCR, plus the compact-disc player, \_\_\_\_\_ a good holiday gift. (make)
15. The watermelon, as well as the cantaloupe, \_\_\_\_\_ ripe. (be)
16. Dan, in addition to his friends, \_\_\_\_\_ depressed. (seem)
17. The Big Dipper, accompanied by the Little Dipper, \_\_\_\_\_ the polestar. (circle)
18. The city, as well as the suburbs, \_\_\_\_\_ today. (vote)
19. The bike, plus the skates and the skis, \_\_\_\_\_ to Oona. (belong)
20. Cereal, together with fruit and milk, \_\_\_\_\_ a good breakfast. (provide)

## Lesson 51

# Subject-Verb Agreement and Indefinite Pronouns as Subjects

Not all subjects are nouns. Many subjects consist of indefinite pronouns. A verb must agree in number with an **indefinite pronoun** used as a subject.

- Singular:** Everything about the party **was** perfect.  
**Singular:** One of the windows **is** broken.  
**Singular:** Nothing on television tonight **interests** me.  
**Plural:** Many of our friends **study** Spanish.  
**Plural:** A few of the trees **are** stunted.

Some pronouns can be either singular or plural, depending upon the nouns to which they refer in the sentence.

- Singular:** All of the punch **is** gone.  
**Plural:** All of the players **are** exhausted.

Indefinite pronouns fall into three groups, as shown in the following chart.

### INDEFINITE PRONOUNS

<b>Always Singular</b>	each	everyone	nobody	anything	
	either	everybody	nothing	someone	
	neither	everything	anyone	somebody	
	one	no one	anybody	something	
<b>Always Plural</b>	several	few	both	many	
<b>Singular or Plural</b>	some	all	any	most	none

► **Exercise 1** Draw one line under the indefinite pronoun subject. Draw two lines under the correct form of the verb.

Several of my friends (swim, swims) on the school team.

- Many of the passengers (is, are) unhappy with coach service.
- A few of the swimmers (was, were) ready to leave the pool.
- Everything in the window (look, looks) expensive.
- Something in the basement (has, have) eaten the vegetables.
- One of the dogs (hunt, hunts) alone.
- Some of the tomatoes (was, were) spoiled.
- Everybody in the class (has, have) voted.
- No one (answer, answers) the phone at the Caldwells.



Name \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

9. Nothing (seem, seems) to please Linda.
10. All of the grass (is, are) brown from the drought.
11. Anybody who was there (know, knows) that Randy gave a good speech.
12. One of the contestants (was, were) late.
13. Nobody in our class (like, likes) the new movie.
14. Several of the squirrels (has, have) raided the sunflower sack.
15. Most of the class (do, does) push-ups each morning.
16. None of the mothers (like, likes) this arrangement.
17. Everything at the museum (was, were) fascinating.
18. Both of my aunts (is, are) from Poland.
19. Nobody in the audience (understand, understands) the play.
20. None of the players (was, were) tired.
21. Many of the old pirate ships (has been, have been) lost in that area.
22. Neither of the deer (use, uses) the salt lick.
23. Several of the class officers (was, were) ill.
24. Nothing on the menu (interest, interests) me.
25. One of the defendants (has, have) pleaded not guilty.
26. Several of the judges (has, have) ruled on their cases.
27. Everybody in the room (was, were) freezing.
28. Several of the high-school students (earn, earns) money after school.
29. Somebody in our community (has, have) won that huge prize.
30. All (is, are) well with the world.
31. Both of the twins (sing, sings) in the choir.
32. Someone (has, have) painted the old chairs.
33. Few of the people polled (approve, approves) of the new policies.
34. All of the spaghetti (was, were) gone.
35. Everyone here (has, have) finished lunch.
36. One of the babies in the nursery (is, are) crying.
37. Few of the people invited (is, are) coming.
38. Anyone at all (is, are) eligible to enter the race.