

Lesson 41

Subject-Verb Agreement

- A verb must agree in number with its subject.
EXAMPLES: The dog is barking. The cats are hissing.
- Difficulties with subject-verb agreement arise in the following instances:

Situation	Rule	Example (subject / verb)
Collective noun as the subject	Usually, use a singular verb.	The jury <u>was</u> out for three days.
Indefinite pronoun as the subject	Usually, use a singular verb, except with <i>both, many, few, others,</i> and <i>several</i> , which take a plural verb. <i>All, any,</i> and <i>some</i> can take a singular or plural verb, depending on the context.	Everyone <u>is</u> happy for you. One of the players <u>is</u> hurt. Some of the cake <u>is</u> left over. Some of the houses <u>are</u> sold.
Compound subjects connected by <i>and</i>	Usually, use a plural verb, unless the items form a single unit, or refer to the same person or thing.	Haroun and Mihir <u>are</u> knocking down a wall. The soup and sandwich <u>is</u> on special today. (single unit) My oldest friend and best buddy <u>has</u> moved away. (refer to same person)
Compound subjects connected by <i>or</i> or <i>nor</i>	Make the verb agree with the part closest to it.	<i>Either your job performance or your marks</i> <u>are</u> going to suffer. <i>Either your marks or your job performance</i> <u>is</u> going to suffer.

A. Underline the correct verb form.

1. Either John Williams or his sons (is, are) going to clear the snow for us.
2. Some of my credit cards (has, have) fallen out of my wallet.
3. Everyone who participated on school sports teams last year (is, are) going to receive a certificate for their efforts.
4. The committee looking into extra-curricular activities (is, are) meeting every Thursday.
5. Salsa and tortilla chips (has, have) replaced milk and cookies as my favourite snack.
6. Dean Martin and Jerry Lewis (was, were) a popular comedy team who made many movies in the 1950s.
7. My haven and refuge (is, are) my bedroom.
8. The sky, huge and blue and studded with small white clouds, (looms, loom) above us.
9. Either these instructions or my understanding (is, are) faulty.
10. All of my family (live, lives) in Cape Breton.

- When words separate the subject and the verb in a sentence, be sure to make the verb agree with the true subject.
 EXAMPLE: A pair of gloves was left in the snow.
 (subject is pair, not gloves)
- In sentences that begin with There is or There are, the verb agrees with the subject that comes after the verb, not with there.
 EXAMPLE: There are about 27 students per class.
 (subject is students)
 There is an empty classroom at the end of the hall.
 (subject is classroom)

B. Underline the subject and the verb in the following sentences. Write Y if they agree, and N if they do not agree.

1. The team with the most points get to move on to the next round. _____
2. The side effects of this potent drug is too dangerous for someone with a heart condition. _____
3. The insight into the foibles of human beings in Shakespeare's works makes him one of the greatest writers of all time. _____
4. The pages of the book on the top shelf is faded. _____
5. There are never a good reason to pick on someone. _____
6. There are both good and bad aspects to this deal. _____
7. There was, without a doubt, too many people in the room. _____
8. The large speakers on one side of the stage is giving feedback. _____
9. A battalion of soldiers, ready for action, was marching smartly along the road. _____
10. Both leaders of the scout pack that meets in the gym is sick tonight. _____

C. Complete the sentences below. Use a verb in the present tense that agrees with the subject.

1. The Singh family and I _____

2. The school band _____

3. The brochures he handed out during the seminar _____

4. A few of the participants at the conference _____

5. Neither the kittens nor their mother _____
