

ENGLISH 10
UNIT IV
SUBJECT/VERB AGREEMENT AND PRONOUN ANTECEDENT AGREEMENT

LESSON ONE- AGREEMENT OF SUBJECT AND VERB

Subject/verb agreement simply means that verbs must always agree with the subject of the sentence in both number and person. For example:

SINGULAR	PLURAL
I was	We were
He seems	They seem
It is	They are

The following are instances where we have trouble with agreement:

Rule One: A verb after a prepositional phrase must agree with the subject, not with the object of preposition.

EXAMPLES: a. The student's *answer* to the questions **was** brief.
b. The *roads* down in the country **are** not paved.
c. _____

Rule Two: A verb in a dependent clause agrees with the subject of the clause; in other words, with the phrase "one of those," the verb that follows will be plural.

EXAMPLES: a. Alice is *one of those* students who always **receive** an "A".
b. _____

Rule Three: A verb after an expletive (*it* or *there*) agrees with its subject, not with the expletive.

EXAMPLES: a. There **seem** to be several *students* absent today.
b. There's not much *time* to get ready for the party.
c. _____

Rule Four: The following singular indefinite pronouns take a singular verb: one, each one, everyone, each, either, neither, no one, anyone, someone, anybody, somebody, everybody.

EXAMPLES: a. Each *one* of the students **is** required to attend.
b. *Neither* of the boys **attends** a private school.
c. _____

Rule Five: The following plural indefinite pronouns take a plural verb: several, few, both, many.

EXAMPLES: a. *Several* of the players **were** sick today.
b. _____

Rule Six: The following indefinite pronouns take either a singular or a plural verb depending on the object of the preposition: any, some, none, all.

EXAMPLES: a. *All* of the milk **was** sour.
b. *All* of the girls **were** sick.
c. _____

Rule Seven: A verb with a collective noun is singular when the group is considered as a unit; a verb with a collective noun is plural when the members of the group are considered as individuals. (There will most often be a clue later in the sentence.)

EXAMPLES: a. The *class* **has** reached a unanimous decision on the issue.
b. The *family* **have** agreed among themselves to stop fighting.
c. _____

Rule Eight: Singular or plural subjects joined by “and” take plural verbs.

EXAMPLES: a. *Mary and Sue* **are** here early today.
b. _____

NOTE: Exception is when the two are considered a single item.

Peanut butter and jelly sandwich

Macaroni and cheese

Rule Nine: Subjects joined by “or” or “nor” take a verb that agrees with the nearer subject.

EXAMPLES: a. Either the judge or the *lawyers* **are** wrong.
b. My brother or *my sister* **is** at home today.
c. _____

Rule Ten: Verbs after expressions of amount are singular when the amount is considered as a unit (time, money, measurement, weight, volume).

EXAMPLES: a. *Three years* in a strange land **seems** like a long time.
b. *Ten dollars* **is** a small price to pay for that book.
c. _____

Rule Eleven: A verb after a fraction can be singular or plural depending on the object of preposition.

- EXAMPLES: a. *Two-thirds* of the meat **is** spoiled.
b. *Two-thirds* of the people **are** French.
c. _____

Name _____

PRACTICE EXERCISE 1: Circle the correct verb for each of the following sentences; underline the subject that the verb must agree with.

1. The welfare of these children (depends, depend) on your generosity.
2. The best features of this magazine (is, are) the pictures of news events.
3. The sweater, as well as the skirt, (was, were) imported from Paris.
4. There (is, are) no living organisms in Great Salt Lake except algae.
5. It's one of those accidents that (happens, happen) when you are tired.
6. Rain or snow (doesn't, don't) stop a football game.
7. How much (is, are) those leather wallets in the showcase?
8. Tracy Avenue is the only one of those streets that (runs, run) that is always busy.
9. The owner or his friends (plans, plan) to use the boat this afternoon.
10. Ten miles (is, are) a long hike for a hot day.
11. He had one of those gliders that (is, are) given away with the cereal.
12. The main floor and the balcony (was, were) sold out the first day.
13. The orchestra (was, were) tuning up their instruments for tonight.
14. Neither the hours nor the pay (is, are) satisfactory to us.
15. Three-quarters of our wheat (was, were) eaten by the grasshoppers.
16. Someone in the group (is, are) going to arrive early.
17. Either baking soda or ammonia (relieves, relieve) mosquito bites.
18. Ten cents (is, are) left in our treasury.
19. Two-thirds of the profit (goes, go) to charity.
20. The entire class (was, were) excused from the examination.

PRACTICE EXERCISE 2: Identify the errors in subject/verb agreement below using the numbers of the rules; correct all errors. If the sentence is correct, put a "C" in the blank.

- _____ 1. Kathy is one of those girls who always arrive early at school.
- _____ 2. There seems to be several students absent today.
- _____ 3. The author's wide interests in literature, education, and politics proves his versatility.
- _____ 4. Each one present are requested to attend the conference.
- _____ 5. The committee are about to announce its unanimous decision.
- _____ 6. The poetry collection with its many poems about the war have been donated to the literary society.
- _____ 7. Frank is one of those citizens who always attends town meetings.
- _____ 8. Everybody knows that we will win the game on Friday.
- _____ 9. There definitely seems to be fewer errors in your compositions lately.
- _____ 10. The study of literature and history occupy her spare time.
- _____ 11. Ten dollars are not enough for this lovely dress.
- _____ 12. Either Harry or Jake is sure to know the answer.
- _____ 13. The cost of his explorations were assumed by the county board.
- _____ 14. All of his friends has been faithful to him through this bad time.
- _____ 15. The question of taxes don't belong in this discussion.
- _____ 16. Fifteen minutes are enough time for this exercise.
- _____ 17. Neither our car nor our truck were able to plow through the drifts.
- _____ 18. There's not many selfish people in the world.