A. Identifying Verbs That Agree with Their Subjects

In each of the following sentences, if the italicized verb does not agree with its subject, write the correct form of the verb. If the sentence is already correct, write C.

**EXAMPLES**

1. The people on the bus have all been seated.
   1. C
2. The fish, bass and perch mostly, has started feeding.
   2. have

1. The swarm of bees have deserted its hive.
2. My spelling lessons and science homework sometimes takes me hours to finish.
3. Somebody who is on the council don’t approve of the new rule.
4. Neither Danny Glover nor Morgan Freeman stars in tonight’s movie.
5. Doesn’t those children still take piano lessons?
6. There is probably a few children who don’t like strawberries.
7. Most of the guests likes the inn’s Irish soda bread.
8. Both of those varsity players exercise for an hour each day.
9. Evenings is the best time to visit her.
10. Physics or mathematics are the subject you should study.
B. Identifying Pronouns That Agree with Their Antecedents

In each of the following sentences, if the italicized pronoun does not agree with its antecedent, write the correct form of the pronoun. If the sentence is already correct, write C.

EXAMPLES

1. Either of the men could have offered their help.
   1. his
   2. Both of the flowers had spread their petals.
   2. C

11. Why doesn’t somebody raise their hand and ask Mr. Liu for directions?
12. One of the birds lost most of their tail feathers.
13. Joey sold his last ticket to Heather.
14. The old tennis court has weeds growing in their nets.
15. The Smithsonian’s National Museum of the American Indian had closed their doors for the day.
16. I don’t understand how chameleons sitting on a green leaf or on a bush change their color.
17. Alex has studied gymnastics for many years, and he is now very good at them.
18. These girls can choose her own materials from the supply room.
19. The senior class has chosen their theme for homecoming.
20. Island of the Blue Dolphins is my sister’s favorite book, and she has read it three times.

Number

Number is the form a word takes to indicate whether the word is singular or plural.

8a. When a word refers to one person, place, thing, or idea, it is singular in number. When a word refers to more than one person, place, thing, or idea, it is plural in number.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>egg</th>
<th>person</th>
<th>fox</th>
<th>I</th>
<th>die</th>
<th>each</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Plural</td>
<td>eggs</td>
<td>people</td>
<td>foxes</td>
<td>we</td>
<td>dice</td>
<td>all</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reference Note
For more about forming plurals of nouns, see page 420.
Classifying Nouns and Pronouns by Number

Read the following expressions aloud. Tell whether each italicized noun or pronoun is singular or plural.

1. The lion yawns.  
2. The cubs play.  
3. No one stays.  
4. The refugees arrive.  
5. She wins.  
6. The play opens.  
7. Everyone goes.  
8. All applaud.

Exercise 1 Classifying Nouns and Pronouns by Number

Classify each of the following words as singular or plural.

**EXAMPLE**

1. cat  
   1. singular

1. rodeos  
2. book  
3. they  
4. I  
5. many  
6. igloo  
7. geese  
8. we  
9. friends  
10. it  
11. lake  
12. heroes  
13. oxen  
14. aunt  
15. roof  
16. year  
17. children  
18. those  
19. mice  
20. skate  
21. shoes  
22. bases  
23. him  
24. license  
25. guess

Agreement of Subject and Verb

8b. A verb should agree in number with its subject.

(1) **Singular subjects take singular verbs.**

**EXAMPLES**

The car comes to a sudden stop.  \[The singular verb comes agrees with the singular subject car.\]

On that route the airplane flies at a very low altitude.  \[The singular verb flies agrees with the singular subject plane.\]
**2) Plural subjects take plural verbs.**

**EXAMPLES**
- Many senators oppose the new tax bill. [The plural verb oppose agrees with the plural subject senators.]
- The dolphins leap playfully in the channel. [The plural verb leap agrees with the plural subject dolphins.]

In a verb phrase, the first helping verb agrees in number with the subject.

**EXAMPLES**
- He is building a bird feeder. [The singular helping verb is agrees with the singular subject He.]
- They are building a bird feeder. [The plural helping verb are agrees with the plural subject They.]

**Exercise 2**  
**Identifying Verbs That Agree in Number with Their Subjects**

Choose the form of the verb in parentheses that agrees with the given subject.

**EXAMPLES**
1. it (is, are)  
   1. is  
   2. they (does, do)  
   2. do

1. this (costs, cost)  
2. Chinese lanterns (glows, glow)  
3. the swimmer (dives, dive)  
4. we (considers, consider)  
5. the men (was, were)  
6. she (asks, ask)  
7. these (needs, need)  
8. those tacos (tastes, taste)  
9. that music (sounds, sound)  
10. lessons (takes, take)  
11. several actors (accepts, accept)  
12. children (interferes, interfere)  
13. they (says, say)  
14. counselor (advises, advise)  
15. the woman (leads, lead)  
16. you (chooses, choose)  
17. mice (approaches, approach)  
18. friends (tries, try)  
19. the officer (appreciates, appreciate)  
20. I (swims, swim)

**Reference Note**
For more about *helping verbs*, see page 98.

**Computer Tip**
Word processors can find problems in subject-verb agreement. However, such programs are not perfect. If you are not sure that an error found by the word processor is truly an error, check the relevant rule in this book.

**Skills Focus**
Understand agreement. Demonstrate understanding of correct subject-verb agreement. Use verbs that agree with singular subjects. Use verbs that agree with plural subjects.
Exercise 3  Identifying Verbs That Agree in Number with Their Subjects

Choose the correct form of the verb in parentheses in each of the following sentences.

EXAMPLE  1. The sport of basketball (enjoys, enjoy) great popularity worldwide.
    1. enjoys

1. Successful basketball leagues (exists, exist) in many countries, but the National Basketball Association remains the world’s major league.
2. Around the world, children (dreams, dream) of one day playing in the NBA.
3. NBA teams (selects, select) some of the best international players, along with college players, in the yearly NBA draft.
4. The NBA (appeals, appeal) to a global audience through these talented foreign-born players.
5. One such player (is, are) Emanuel Ginobili of Argentina.
6. Ginobili (plays, play) for the San Antonio Spurs as well as the Argentine national team.
7. In Argentina, fans (follows, follow) the career of their beloved “Manu.”
8. (Do, Does) many people know that Ginobili is the only player in history to win a Euroleague championship, an NBA championship, and an Olympic gold medal?
9. With such accomplishments, he (has, have) proven to be a winner wherever he plays.
10. Other international stars (includes, include) Yao Ming of China, Pau Gasol of Spain, and Nenê of Brazil.

Problems in Agreement

Phrases and Clauses Between Subjects and Verbs

8c. The number of a subject is not changed by a phrase or clause following the subject.

EXAMPLES  The lights on the Christmas tree create a festive atmosphere. [The prepositional phrase on the Christmas tree does not affect the number of the subject lights.]

SKILLS FOCUS Demonstrate understanding of correct subject-verb agreement.

Chapter 8  Agreement
The distance between the two posts is eight feet. [The prepositional phrase between the two posts does not affect the number of the subject distance.]

Karen’s brother, who has always enjoyed bicycle repair and maintenance, works at the bike shop on weekends. [The adjective clause who has always enjoyed bicycle repair and maintenance does not affect the number of the subject brother.]

NOTE If the subject is the indefinite pronoun all, any, more, most, none, or some, its number may be determined by the object of a prepositional phrase that follows it.

EXAMPLES All of the vegetables were peeled. [All refers to the plural word vegetables.]

All of the salad was eaten. [All refers to the singular word salad.]

Exercise 4 Identifying Subjects and Verbs That Agree in Number

Identify the subject in each sentence. Then, choose the form of the verb in parentheses that agrees with the subject.

EXAMPLE 1. The houses on my block (has, have) two stories.
1. houses—subject; have

1. The launch of a space shuttle (attracts, attract) the interest of people throughout the world.
2. Our thermos, which is in the picnic basket, (is, are) filled with apple juice.
3. That collection of poems (is, are) Where the Sidewalk Ends.
4. People in some states (observes, observe) the fourth Friday in September as Native American Day.
5. The children of the world (needs, need) food and medicine.
6. The house on the hill (is, are) where my grandfather was born.
7. Koalas that live in the wild and in captivity (eats, eat) only eucalyptus leaves.
8. The principal of each high school (awards, award) certificates to honor students.
9. Stories about Hank Aaron always (makes, make) me want to play baseball.
10. The cucumbers in my garden (grows, grow) very quickly.
Indefinite Pronouns

You may recall that personal pronouns refer to specific people, places, things, or ideas. Some pronouns do not refer to a definite person, place, thing, or idea and are therefore called *indefinite pronouns*.

8d. The following indefinite pronouns are singular: *anybody, anyone, anything, each, either, everybody, everyone, everything, neither, nobody, nothing, no one, one, somebody, someone,* and *something*.

**EXAMPLES**

- Everyone was invited to the celebration.
- Either of the answers is correct.
- One of the tapes belongs to Sabrena.
- Someone in the stands has been waving at us.

Pronouns like *each* and *one* are frequently followed by prepositional phrases. Remember that, for these pronouns, the verb agrees with the subject of the sentence, not with a word in a prepositional phrase.

8e. The following indefinite pronouns are plural: *both, few, many, and several*.

**EXAMPLES**

- Both of the apples are good.
- Few know about the surprise.
- Many of the students walk to school.
- Several of the club’s members have not paid their dues.

8f. The indefinite pronouns *all, any, more, most, none,* and *some* may be singular or plural, depending on their meaning in a sentence.

Often, the object in a prepositional phrase that follows the pronoun indicates whether the pronoun is singular or plural. Usually, if the object of the preposition is singular, the pronoun is singular. If the object is plural, the pronoun usually is plural.

**EXAMPLES**

- All of the fruit looks ripe. [*All refers to the singular object fruit.*]
- All of the pears look ripe. [*All refers to the plural object pears.*]
Some of the equipment has been stored in the garage. [Some refers to the singular object equipment.]

Some of the supplies have been stored in the garage. [Some refers to the plural object supplies.]

NOTE The pronouns listed in Rule 8f are not always followed by prepositional phrases.

EXAMPLES All have left.

Some was eaten.

In such cases, you should look at the context—the other words and sentences surrounding the pronoun—to see if the pronoun refers to a singular or a plural word.

Exercise 5 Identifying Subjects and Verbs That Agree in Number

Identify the subject in each of the following sentences. Then, choose the form of the verb in parentheses that agrees with the subject.

EXAMPLE 1. Each of the marchers (was, were) carrying a sign protesting apartheid.

1. Each—subject; was

1. All of my friends (has, have) had the chickenpox.
2. Everyone at the party (likes, like) the hummus dip.
3. Both of Fred’s older brothers (celebrates, celebrate) their birthdays in July.
4. Some of the story (is, are) funny.
5. None of those rosebushes in my mother’s garden ever (blooms, bloom) in February.
6. Several of those colors (do, does) not appeal to me.
7. Many of Mrs. Taniguchi’s students (speaks, speak) fluent Japanese.
8. Nobody in these beginning painting classes (has, have) displayed work in the annual art show.
9. Most of the food here (tastes, taste) delicious.
10. One of Georgia O’Keeffe’s paintings (shows, show) a ram’s skull.
Proofreading Sentences for Subject-Verb Agreement

Many of the following sentences contain errors in subject-verb agreement. If the verb does not agree with its subject, write the correct form of the verb. If the sentence contains no errors, write C.

EXAMPLES

1. One of the best-known prehistoric monuments in the world stand in a field in Britain.
   1. stands

2. Today everybody calls the monument Stonehenge, and thousands of people visits it each year.
   2. visit

1. All of the visitors to Stonehenge wants to know why the structure was built.
2. The huge rocks at Stonehenge challenges tourists and scientists alike to uncover their mysteries.
3. Most people easily recognize the monument as it looks in the photograph below.
4. However, nobody are sure how Stonehenge looked long ago.
5. Some of the archaeologists studying the site believes that Stonehenge once looked very different.
6. Few of the stones remains in their original places.
7. Many visitors to Stonehenge assume that ancient Druids built the monument.
8. Most scientists, though, says it was built many years before the Druids—perhaps four thousand years ago.
9. After seeing Stonehenge, few doubt that the stones weighs as much as fifty tons.
10. Of course, nearly everyone seem to have a theory about how these stones were set in place and what they were used for, but no one knows for sure.

**Compound Subjects**

8g. **Subjects joined by and usually take a plural verb.**

Most compound subjects joined by and name more than one person or thing and take plural verbs.

**EXAMPLES**
- Antonia Brico and Sarah Caldwell are famous conductors. [Two persons are conductors.]
- Last year a library and a museum were built in our town. [Two things were built.]

A compound subject that names only one person or thing takes a singular verb.

**EXAMPLES**
- The secretary and treasurer of the science club is Leona. [One person is both the secretary and the treasurer.]
- Chicken and dumplings is a favorite Southern dish. [Chicken and dumplings is one dish.]

**Exercise 6 Choosing Verbs That Agree in Number with Compound Subjects**

Identify the compound subject in each of the following sentences as singular or plural. Then, choose the form of the verb that agrees with the compound subject.

**EXAMPLE**

1. Cleon and Pam (is, are) here.
   1. plural—are

1. March and April (is, are) windy months.
2. The mechanic and shop owner (is, are) preparing his estimate.
3. Martina Hingis and Venus Williams (plays, play) in the finals today.
4. Red beans and rice (is, are) my favorite Cajun dish.
5. Carla and Jean (takes, take) dancing lessons.
6. The knives and forks (is, are) in the drawer.
7. English and science (requires, require) hours of study.
8. Our star and winner of the meet (has, have) just entered the gym.
9. The bread and the honey (is, are) in the pantry.
10. An Austrian and a German generally (speaks, speak) the same language.

8h. Singular subjects joined by or or nor take a singular verb. Plural subjects joined by or or nor take a plural verb.

EXAMPLES

A pen or a pencil is needed for this test.

Neither Miami nor Jacksonville is the capital of Florida.

Neither the leopards nor the tigers were paying attention to the herd.

Are the Bulldogs or the Mustangs winning the game?

**Exercise 7 Choosing Verbs That Agree in Number with Compound Subjects**

Choose the form of the verb in parentheses that agrees with the compound subject in each of the following sentences.

EXAMPLE 1. Neither Theo nor Erin (has, have) learned the Jewish folk dance *Mayim, Mayim*.

1. has

1. Either Mrs. Gomez or Mr. Ming (delivers, deliver) the welcome speech on the first day of school.
2. Neither our guava tree nor our fig tree (bears, bear) fruit if we experience a drought.
3. Tuskegee Institute or Harvard University (offers, offer) the best courses in Francine’s field.
4. Do armadillos or anteaters (has, have) tubular mouths and long, sticky tongues for catching insects?
5. Either the president or the vice-president of the class (thinks, think) we should have a paper drive.
6. Neither Sarah’s report on Booker T. Washington nor the boys’ reports on Quanah Parker (sounds, sound) boring to me.
7. Green or royal blue (looks, look) nice in this bedroom.
8. Bridge or canasta (is, are) my favorite card game.
9. Neither my sister nor my brother (mows, mow) the lawn without complaining.
10. Either the tulips or the daffodils in Mrs. Green’s garden (is, are) the first to bloom every April.

8i. **When a singular subject and a plural subject are joined by or or nor, the verb agrees with the subject nearer the verb.**

**EXAMPLES**

Neither the manager nor the employees want to close the store early. [The verb agrees with the nearer subject, employees.]

Neither the employees nor the manager wants to close the store early. [The verb agrees with the nearer subject, manager.]

**Exercise 8** **Choosing Verbs That Agree in Number with Compound Subjects**

Choose the form of the verb in parentheses that agrees with the compound subject in each of the following sentences.

**EXAMPLE**

1. Neither Derrick nor his friends (is, are) going to the concert tomorrow.
   
   1. are

1. Either Sylvia or her brothers (scrubs, scrub) the kitchen floor.
2. This bread or those muffins (contains, contain) no preservatives.
3. Either the students or the teacher (reads, read) aloud during the last ten minutes of each class period.
4. Heavy rain clouds or a powerful wind (shows, show) that a hurricane is approaching.
5. Neither the seal nor the clowns (catches, catch) the ball that the monkey throws into the circus ring.
6. Mr. Speck or his cousins (teach, teaches) Spanish in New York City.
7. Neither the horses nor the dog (wants, want) to go into the barn.
8. Either the boys or Lee Ann (calls, call) out words at the spelling bee.
9. The curtains or the bedspread (is, are) on sale.
10. Neither the CD players nor the computer (belongs, belong) to the school.
Choosing Verbs That Agree in Number with Their Subjects

Choose the form of the verb in parentheses that agrees with its subject in each of the following sentences.

EXAMPLE 1. Pan dulce and other baked goods (sells, sell) well at the Mexican American bakery shown below.
   1. sell

1. The wonderful smells at the bakery (invites, invite) hungry customers.
2. Children and their parents always (enjoy, enjoys) choosing and tasting the baked treats.
3. Display cases and large bowls (holds, hold) the fresh breads and pastries.
4. Rolls with powdered toppings and braided breads (goes, go) quickly.
5. Either an empanada or some giant biscuits (are, is) likely to be someone’s breakfast.

6. Pumpkin or sweet potato (is, are) often used to fill the empanadas.
7. Most children (likes, like) volcano-shaped pastries known as volcanes.
8. Some raisin bars or a buñuelo (makes, make) a special after-school treat.
9. Bakeries like this one (prepares, prepare) mainly traditional Mexican American breads.
10. Holidays and special occasions (calls, call) for extra-fancy baked goods.

Other Problems in Agreement

8j. When the subject follows the verb, find the subject and make sure the verb agrees with it.

The subject usually follows the verb in sentences beginning with here or there and in questions.

EXAMPLES
Here is my seat.
Here are our seats.
There is an exciting ride at the fair.
There are exciting rides at the fair.

Where is the bread?
Where are the loaves of bread?

Does he know them?
Do they know him?

**Exercise 9  Choosing Verbs That Agree in Number with Their Subjects**

For each of the following sentences, choose the word or word group in parentheses that correctly completes the sentence.

**EXAMPLE**
1. (Here’s, Here are) the Nina Simone tapes I borrowed.
   1. Here are

1. According to this map, (there’s, there are) seven countries in Central America.
2. Where (is, are) the rough draft you were proofreading for me?
3. (Has, Have) they returned from the cafeteria yet?
4. There (has, have) been fewer rainy days this month than last month.
5. (Here’s, Here are) the team’s new uniforms.
6. (There’s, There are) no reason we can’t finish these math problems on time.
7. When (is, are) the next lunar eclipse?
8. (Does, Do) your parents know about the new schedule?
9. Janelle, (here’s, here are) a question only you can answer.
10. When (does, do) you expect to hear from your cousin in Singapore again?

**8k. The contractions don’t and doesn’t should agree with their subjects.**

The word don’t is a contraction for do not. Use don’t with all plural subjects and with the pronouns I and you.

**EXAMPLES**
- These gloves don’t fit.
- I don’t want to be late.
- Don’t you feel well?

**H E L P**
The contractions here’s, there’s, and where’s contain the verb is and should be used with only singular subjects.

**NONSTANDARD**
Here’s your keys.

**STANDARD**
Here are your keys.

**STANDARD**
Here’s your key.

**T I P S & T R I C K S**
When the subject of a sentence follows part or all of the verb, the word order is said to be inverted. To find the subject of a sentence with inverted order, restate the sentence in normal word order.

**INVERTED**
Here is Eileen.

**NORMAL**
Eileen is here.

**INVERTED**
Are they on time?

**NORMAL**
They are on time.

**INVERTED**
Into the woods ran the deer.

**NORMAL**
The deer ran into the woods.

**Reference Note**
For more information about contractions, see page 398.
The word *doesn’t* is a contraction of *does not*. Use *doesn’t* with all singular subjects except the pronouns *I* and *you*.

**Examples**

- The music box *doesn’t* play.
- *Doesn’t* she like cold weather?
- *It doesn’t* matter.

**Oral Practice 2 Using Doesn’t and Don’t with Singular Subjects**

Read the following sentences aloud, emphasizing the italicized words.

1. *Don’t* Oktoberfest and the *Fall Carnival* start Saturday?
2. We *don’t* call meetings often.
3. One *doesn’t* interrupt a speaker.
4. *They don’t* play their stereo loudly.
5. *Doesn’t* the television *set* work?
6. *It doesn’t* look like a serious wound.
7. *She doesn’t* play basketball.
8. *Fido doesn’t* like his new dog food.

**Exercise 10 Using Doesn’t and Don’t Correctly**

Complete each sentence by inserting the correct contraction, *doesn’t* or *don’t*.

**Example**

1. _____ they go to our school?
   1. *Don’t*

1. _____ anyone in the class know any interesting facts about Susan B. Anthony?
2. Kareem Abdul-Jabbar _____ play professional basketball anymore.
3. They _____ have enough people to form a softball team.
4. You _____ need to change your schedule.
5. It _____ hurt very much.
6. _____ the Japanese celebrate spring with a special festival?
7. Those snow peas _____ look crisp.
8. Hector _____ win every track meet; sometimes he places second.
9. _____ anybody know the time?
10. He _____ know the shortest route from Dallas to Peoria.
81. A collective noun may be either singular or plural, depending on its meaning in a sentence.

The singular form of a collective noun names a group of persons, animals, or things.

### Common Collective Nouns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Army</th>
<th>Club</th>
<th>Fleet</th>
<th>Public</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assembly</td>
<td>Committee</td>
<td>Flock</td>
<td>Swarm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audience</td>
<td>Crowd</td>
<td>Group</td>
<td>Team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class</td>
<td>Family</td>
<td>Herd</td>
<td>Troop</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A collective noun is
- singular when it refers to the group as a unit
- plural when it refers to the individual parts or members of the group

**Examples**

Tomorrow the science **class is taking** a field trip to the planetarium. [The class as a unit is taking a field trip.]

The science **class are working** on their astronomy projects. [The members of the class are working on various projects.]

The **family has moved** to Little Rock, Arkansas. [The family as a unit has moved.]

The **family have been** unable to agree on where to spend their next vacation. [The members of the family have different opinions.]

**Review C**

**Proofreading Sentences for Subject-Verb Agreement**

Most of the following sentences contain errors in subject-verb agreement. If a sentence contains an error in agreement, write the correct form of the verb. If a sentence is already correct, write C.

**Example**

1. There is a man and a woman here to see you.
   1. *are*

1. Leilani and Yoshi doesn’t know how to swim.
2. Here are the vegetables for the stir-fry.
3. The Seminoles of Florida sews beautifully designed quilts and jackets.
4. Here’s the sweaters I knitted for you.
5. Each of these ten-speed bicycles cost more than two hundred dollars.
6. The soccer team always celebrate each victory with a cookout at Coach Rodriguez’s house.
7. The jury was arguing among themselves.
8. The flock of geese fly over the lake at dawn.
9. Doesn’t that Thai dish with chopped peanuts taste good?
10. Where’s the bus schedules for downtown routes?

**Review D Proofreading Sentences for Subject-Verb Agreement**

Some of the following sentences contain errors in subject-verb agreement. If a sentence contains an error in agreement, write the correct form of the verb. If a sentence is already correct, write C.

**EXAMPLE**

1. Don’t this neon sign light up the night with color?
   1. Doesn’t

1. The public have been fascinated with neon lights since they were introduced in the 1920s.
2. There’s neon lights in large and small cities all over the world.
3. Times Square in New York City and Tokyo’s Ginza district is two places famous for their neon lights.
4. Some of today’s neon signs are very large and creative.
5. Many signs like the one shown here is used in advertising.
6. Nowadays you sometimes see neon decorations and sculptures.
7. Our science class are learning how neon lights work.
8. Neon lights is made from hollow glass tubes filled with neon gas.
9. An electric current shot through the tube makes the gas glow.

10. The diagrams on the previous page shows the action of a neon light.

8m. An expression of an amount (a measurement, a percentage, or a fraction, for example) may be singular or plural, depending on how it is used.

An expression of an amount is

- singular when the amount is thought of as a unit
- plural when the amount is thought of as separate units

**EXAMPLES**  
Three years seems like a long time.

Two years in particular were difficult for the family.

A fraction or a percentage is singular when it refers to a singular word and plural when it refers to a plural word.

**SINGULAR**  
Two thirds of the city council was at the meeting.

Eighty percent of the student body is present.

**PLURAL**  
Two thirds of the council members were present.

Eighty percent of the students are present.

Expressions of measurement (such as length, weight, and area) are usually singular.

**EXAMPLES**  
Ten feet of yarn is needed for this art project.

Two gallons of that paint covers approximately two hundred square feet.

8n. Some nouns that are plural in form take singular verbs.

The following nouns take singular verbs:

- civics
- economics
- electronics
- genetics
- gymnastics
- mathematics
- measles
- molasses
- news
- physics
- mumps
- summons

**EXAMPLES**  
Economics is my sister's favorite subject.

The evening news begins at 6:00.
However, some nouns that are plural in form and that name singular objects take plural verbs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>binoculars</th>
<th>pants</th>
<th>shears</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>eyeglasses</td>
<td>pliers</td>
<td>shorts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olympics</td>
<td>scissors</td>
<td>slacks</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**EXAMPLES**

Your **binoculars have** complicated controls.

The **slacks are** torn in two different spots.

The **pliers belong** in the toolbox.

80. Even when plural in form, the title of a creative work (such as a book, song, movie, or painting) or the name of a country, city, or organization generally takes a singular verb.

**EXAMPLES**

*Blue Lines* is an early Georgia O’Keeffe painting.

*The Souls of Black Folk* has often been cited as a classic of African American literature.

*“Greensleeves”* is an old English folk song.

The **Netherlands has** thousands of canals.

*Cedar Rapids* is a manufacturing center in the Midwest.

*Friends of the Earth* was founded in 1969.

8p. A verb agrees with its subject but not necessarily with a predicate nominative.

**EXAMPLES**

The best **time to visit** is weekday **mornings**. [The verb *is* agrees with the singular subject *time*, not the plural predicate nominative *mornings.*]

Weekday **mornings are** the best **time to visit**. [The verb *are* agrees with the plural subject *mornings*, not the singular predicate nominative *time.*]
Choosing Verbs That Agree in Number with Their Subjects

Choose the form of the verb in parentheses that agrees with the subject in each of the following sentences.

EXAMPLE
1. There (is, are) many new students this year.

1. are

1. The audience (loves, love) the mime performance.
2. The story “Flowers for Algernon” (makes, make) me appreciate what I have.
3. Eight dollars (is, are) too much for that baseball card.
4. Andy’s gift to Janelle (was, were) two roses.
5. Here (is, are) the letters I have been expecting.
6. The public (differs, differ) in their opinions on the referendum.
7. Physics (was, were) my sister’s favorite subject.
8. The softball team usually (practices, practice) every Saturday morning.
9. His legacy to us (was, were) words of wisdom.
10. Where (is, are) the limericks you wrote?

Agreement of Pronoun and Antecedent

A pronoun usually refers to a noun or another pronoun called its antecedent. Whenever you use a pronoun, make sure that it agrees with its antecedent.

8q. A pronoun should agree in both number and gender with its antecedent.

Some singular personal pronouns have forms that indicate gender. Masculine pronouns (he, him, his) refer to males. Feminine pronouns (she, her, hers) refer to females. Neuter pronouns (it, its) refer to things (neither male nor female) and sometimes to animals.

EXAMPLES
Bryan lost his book.

Dawn lent her book to Bryan.
The book had Dawn’s name written inside its cover.
The antecedent of a personal pronoun can be another kind of pronoun, such as each, neither, or one. Often, the object of a prepositional phrase that follows the antecedent indicates the gender of the pronoun.

**EXAMPLES**

Each of the men put on his hat. \([Men, \text{the object of the preposition of, indicates that the pronoun Each refers to males.}]\)

Neither of those women got what she ordered. \([Women, \text{the object of the preposition of, indicates that the pronoun Neither refers to females.}]\)

Some singular antecedents may be either masculine or feminine. When referring to such antecedents, use both the masculine and the feminine forms.

**EXAMPLES**

Did someone in this line lose his or her ticket?

Everybody in the class wanted to know his or her grade.

8r. Use a singular pronoun to refer to two or more singular antecedents joined by or or nor.

**EXAMPLES**

Julio or Van will bring his football.

Neither the mother nor the daughter had forgotten her running shoes.

8s. Use a plural pronoun to refer to two or more antecedents joined by and.

**EXAMPLES**

My mother and father send their regards.

My dog and cat never share their food.

8t. Some indefinite pronouns are plural, some are singular, and some may be either.

(1) **Use a singular pronoun to refer to anybody, anyone, anything, each, either, everybody, everyone, everything, neither, nobody, no one, nothing, one, somebody, someone, and something.**

**EXAMPLES**

Anyone who has finished his or her sketch should show it to the teacher.

Each of the birds built its own nest.
(2) The following indefinite pronouns are plural: both, few, many, and several.

**EXAMPLES**

Several of the ice sculptures are melting. How can we save them?

Were both of the concerts canceled, or were they just rescheduled?

(3) The indefinite pronouns all, any, more, most, none, and some may be singular or plural, depending on their meaning in a sentence.

These pronouns are singular when they refer to a singular word and plural when they refer to a plural word.

**EXAMPLES**

Some of the test is hard, isn’t it? [Some refers to the singular noun test.]

Some of the questions are easy. I’ll do them first. [Some refers to the plural noun questions.]

All of the casserole looks burned, doesn’t it?

All of the potatoes look burned, don’t they?

Was any of the music original, or had you heard it all before?

Were any of the songs original, or were they covers of old hits?

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**Exercise 11**  
**Proofreading for Pronoun-Antecedent Agreement**

Many of the following sentences contain errors in pronoun-antecedent agreement. If the sentence contains an error in agreement, write the antecedent and the correct form of the pronoun. If the sentence is already correct, write C.

**EXAMPLE**

1. Everyone in my English class will give their oral report on Friday.

   1. Everyone—his or her

1. Either Don or Buddy will be the first to give their report on literary devices.

2. Several others volunteered to give theirs first.

3. Everybody else in class wanted to put off giving their report as long as possible.
4. Last year my friend Sandy and I figured out that waiting to give our reports was worse than actually giving them.
5. I am surprised that more people did not volunteer to give his or her reports first.
6. Someone else will be third to give their report; then I will give mine.
7. Some of the students will show slides or play music with his or her reports.
8. Our teacher, Mrs. Goldenburg, says that anyone who is nervous about giving their report should try rehearsing it in front of a mirror.
9. Most of us think that giving a report later will leave more time to work on them.
10. While they may put off giving his or her reports till later, I would rather do mine as soon as possible.

Exercise 12 Identifying Antecedents and Writing Pronouns That Agree with Them

Complete the following sentences with pronouns that agree with their antecedents. Identify each antecedent.

**EXAMPLE**

1. Ann Marie and Margaret wore ____ cheerleader uniforms.
   1. *their*—Ann Marie and Margaret

1. The trees lost several of ____ branches in the storm.
2. Each of the early Spanish missions in North America took pride in ____ church bell.
3. Anthony, do you know whether anyone else has turned in ____ paper yet?
4. Many in the mob raised ____ voices in protest.
5. The creek and the pond lost much of ____ water during the drought.
6. One of my uncles always wears ____ belt buckle off to one side.
7. No one should be made to feel that ____ is worth less than someone else.
8. One of the dogs had gotten out of ____ collar.
9. A few of our neighbors have decided to fence ____ backyards.
10. Lucinda and Val looked forward to ____ chance to play basketball during the district playoffs.
Proofreading for Pronoun-Antecedent Agreement

Many of the following sentences contain errors in pronoun-antecedent agreement. If a sentence contains an error in agreement, write the antecedent and the correct form of the pronoun. If the sentence is already correct, write C.

EXAMPLE
1. Each of the president’s Cabinet officers gave their advice about what to do.
   1. Each—his or her

1. All of the nation’s presidents have had his own Cabinets, or groups of advisors.
2. Shortly after taking office, presidents appoint the members of their Cabinets.
3. Everyone appointed to the Cabinet is an expert in their field.
5. Neither had more than five people in their Cabinet.
6. The Cabinet received its name from James Madison, the fourth president.
7. Congress and the president have used their power over the years to create new government agencies.
8. In 1979, Shirley M. Hufstedler took their place on the Cabinet as the first secretary of education.
9. Neither President Reagan nor the first President Bush created a new post in their Cabinet.
10. The room where it meets now has more than fifteen chairs around their large table.

8u. Either a singular or a plural pronoun may be used to refer to a collective noun, depending on the meaning of the sentence.

EXAMPLES
The first group will give its presentation next Friday. [The group as a unit will give the presentation.]
The group shared their ideas for topics. [The members of the group had various ideas.]
The committee has given its full approval. [The committee as a unit has given approval.]
After a brief debate, the committee recorded their final votes. [The committee members recorded their individual votes.]
8v. An expression of an amount may take a singular or plural pronoun, depending on how the expression is used.

**EXAMPLES**  
Ten dollars is all I need. I think I can earn it over the weekend. [The amount is thought of as a unit.]

Where are the two dollars that were on the counter? Have they been taken? [The amount is thought of as individual pieces or parts.]

8w. Some nouns that are plural in form take singular pronouns.

(1) **The following nouns take singular pronouns:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>civics</th>
<th>gymnastics</th>
<th>mumps</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>economics</td>
<td>mathematics</td>
<td>news</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>electronics</td>
<td>measles</td>
<td>physics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>genetics</td>
<td>molasses</td>
<td>summons</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**EXAMPLES**  
Stacy enjoys physics even though it is a difficult subject.

I spilled the molasses and had to clean it up.

(2) **The following nouns take plural pronouns:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>binoculars</th>
<th>pants</th>
<th>shorts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>eyeglasses</td>
<td>pliers</td>
<td>shears</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olympics</td>
<td>scissors</td>
<td>slacks</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**EXAMPLES**  
Jason removed his eyeglasses and placed them on the table.

Please hand me the scissors when you are finished with them.

8x. Use a singular pronoun to refer to the title of a creative work (such as a book, song, movie, or painting).

**EXAMPLES**  
After reading “Neighbors,” I recommended it to Juanita. [one story]

Terms of Endearment is my mom’s favorite movie, and she has seen it six times. [one movie]

Reference Note

For information on using *italics* and *quotation marks with titles*, see pages 386 and 393.
8y. Use a singular pronoun to refer to the name of a country, city, or organization.

EXAMPLES  
The Philippines is located in the southwest Pacific Ocean; it consists of thousands of islands. [one country]

The Knights of Pythias expects its members to maintain high moral standards. [one organization]

Exercise 13  Choosing Pronouns That Agree in Number with Their Antecedents

In each of the following sentences, identify the antecedent for the pronouns in parentheses. Then, choose the form of the pronoun that agrees with the antecedent.

EXAMPLE  
1. I looked for my binoculars until I remembered that I had lent (it, them) to my sister.

   1. binoculars—them

1. The chess club decided that (it, they) would each bring two cans of food for the food drive.
2. Cats is one of Joan’s favorite musicals, and she is very excited that (it, they) will be performed in town soon.
3. Lourdes is a famous town in France; (it, they) may attract as many as two million visitors each year.
4. Next, I carefully measured out three cups of water and poured (it, them) into the bowl.
5. Once Janette started paying close attention to the news, she found (it, them) fascinating.
6. The flock of ducks flapping (its, their) wings gracefully overhead made very little noise.
7. When he got paid for mowing lawns, Jason’s little brother put the four dollars in separate places so that he wouldn’t spend (it, them) all at once.
8. The Bear Backers is what our high school booster club calls (itself, themselves).
9. When you are finished, be sure to put the scissors back where you found (it, them).
10. Before the measles was finally controlled with an effective vaccine, (it, they) often caused dangerous epidemics in the United States.
Proofreading Sentences for Subject-Verb and Pronoun-Antecedent Agreement

Most of the following sentences contain errors in pronoun-antecedent agreement or subject-verb agreement. Identify each error in agreement, and give the correct pronoun or verb. If a sentence is already correct, write C.

EXAMPLE

1. Ray Bradbury, shown below, is a favorite writer of many young people because he makes science fun for him or her.

   1. him or her—them

1. One reason for his stories’ popularity are that they are usually about people, not things.
2. There is some science fiction writers who care more about the gadgets they can imagine than the characters who use them.
3. Bradbury tries to show that a person is more important than the technology that affects them.
4. If you have not read his most famous book, *The Martian Chronicles*, you should read them right away.
5. In one of his short stories, children on Venus sees the sun only once every seven years.

   6. One girl, who grew up on earth, remembers what the heat of the sun is like.
7. Some of the other children make fun of her, and they lock her in a closet.
8. When the rain stops and the sun comes out, each of the other children have fun outside.
9. After the rain starts again, all of the children feel bad about what he or she did to their classmate.
10. Even though the story is set in the future and on another planet, human emotions, as opposed to technology, is the focus of the story.
Chapter Review

A. Identifying Verbs That Agree with Their Subjects

For each of the following sentences, if the italicized verb does not agree with its subject, rewrite the sentence, using the correct form of the verb. If the sentence is already correct, write C.

1. When is Bill’s parents coming to pick us up?
2. Mr. Epstein said that it don’t look like rain today.
3. Neither of the bar mitzvahs have been scheduled yet.
4. Everyone who wears eyeglasses is having vision tests today.
5. My baseball bat and my catcher’s mitt was in my room.
6. Neither Esteban nor Tina have tried out for the play yet.
7. All of our guests have been to Fort Worth’s Japanese garden.
8. Don’t the team captain plan to put her into the game soon?
9. One of the men have decided that he will get his car washed.
10. The Bill of Rights give the American citizens the right to worship where they please.

B. Identifying Pronouns That Agree with Their Antecedents

For each of the following sentences, if the italicized pronoun does not agree with its antecedent, rewrite the sentence, using the correct form of the pronoun.

11. Each of the boys brought their permission slip.
12. One of the does was accompanied by their fawn.
13. Have all of the winners taken his or her science projects home?
14. Everyone going to the concert should bring their own food.
15. Many of the buildings had yellow ribbons on its windows.
16. Neither Stephanie nor Marilyn had brought their book bag.
17. Every dog had a numbered tag hanging from their collar.
18. Someone in the Boy Scout troop camped near poison ivy and has gotten it all over themselves.
19. Only a few workers had brought tools with him or her.
20. One of the contest winners had their picture taken.
C. Proofreading a Paragraph for Subject-Verb Agreement

Some of the following sentences contain errors in subject-verb agreement. If a sentence contains an error in agreement, write the correct form of the verb. If a sentence is already correct, write C.

[21] People in Switzerland has four national languages.  
[22] German is spoken by most Swiss, but French and Italian, as well as the old Latin dialect Romansh, has equal status.  
[23] Not many speakers of Romansh exists, but the Romansh language, which is also called Grishun, has semiofficial national status.  
[24] Romansh, along with German, are spoken in the mountains of eastern Switzerland.  
[25] In the Western cities of Geneva and Lausanne, French are the language of most inhabitants.  
[26] To the north, the people in Bern, the capital, and in the famous banking centers of Basel and Zürich, speak German.  
[27] Visitors in search of an Italian lifestyle enjoys the Italian-speaking city of Lugano, in the south.  
[28] One of Switzerland’s larger cities are actually divided between two languages.  
[29] Truly bilingual, the city is called Biel on the German-speaking side and Bienne on the French-speaking side.  
[30] Communication between the two sides are no problem, because everybody in Biel/Bienne grows up speaking both languages!

D. Proofreading Sentences for Pronoun-Antecedent Agreement

Many of the following sentences contain errors in pronoun-antecedent agreement. If a sentence contains an error in agreement, write the antecedent and the correct form of the pronoun. If a sentence is already correct, write C.

31. If you see either Maggie or Melanie, will you please tell them I won’t be able to stay after school?
32. Tom and Mike meet every Friday with his teammates to discuss strategy.
33. The museum’s portrait gallery now has more than ten portraits on their walls.
34. Each club has their own service project.
35. One of the women in the acting class designs her own costumes.
36. Linda or Rosa will donate their time to the project.
37. One of the parrots escaped from their cage.
38. Did either George or Patrick forget to bring their birth certificate?
39. People who film an animal in its natural habitat face many problems.
40. All of the students shouted his or her approval.

Writing Application
Using Correct Agreement in a Report

Agreement with Collective Nouns  You are on the committee in charge of organizing your school’s participation in the local Thanksgiving Day parade. Write about the committee’s plans in a brief report, which you will read at the next student council meeting. Use at least five collective nouns in your report.

Prewriting  Write down the names of some clubs or organizations that might be in the parade. Think about collective nouns to use in your report.

Writing  Use your notes to help you write your first draft. Begin with a main-idea statement that tells other student council members what progress your committee has made. Then, tell about some of the groups that have asked to be in the parade and what those groups are planning to do.

Revising  As you read your report, ask yourself these questions: Is it clear what kind of participation is planned? Have I included important details? Do the committee’s plans sound logical? Revise any parts of the report that are unclear.

Publishing  Proofread your report for any errors in grammar, spelling, and punctuation. Make sure that you have used five collective nouns and that the verbs and pronouns you use agree with them. Your class may wish to have each student present his or her report. Then, vote on which parade proposal is most entertaining.