

# SUBJECT/VERB AGREEMENT

PS-16

**REMEMBER:** You must be able to identify the subject and verb in each independent clause and dependent clause before you can begin to understand that subjects and verbs should agree. If, perhaps, you need to refresh your memory in identifying subjects and verbs, please ask for a learning packet.

## **NOW, LET'S TRY TO LEARN SOME IMPORTANT RULES.**

1. **If the subject is singular (one person, one thing), the verb must be singular.**  
Ex. A good student does his homework.\*  
\* In the present tense a singular verb ends with an s.
2. **If the subject is plural (more than one person or thing), the verb must be plural.**  
Ex. All good students do their homework.\*  
\*Notice that the verb do does not have an s!

## **PRACTICE EXERCISE A:** Underline the correct verb form (singular or plural).

1. The student (works, work).
2. He (studies, study) too.
3. All the students (walks, walk) to school.
4. These pictures (was, were) drawn by the instructor.
5. Children (wants, want) their parents to go to school.

## **NOW, CHECK YOUR ANSWERS IN THE BACK OF THE PACKET.**

3. **If words or phrases come between the subject and the verb, first isolate the subject and then decide on the correct verb form.** Prepositional phrases can be real trouble makers, so if you don't remember how to identify them, stop now and ask for a learning packet.  
  
Ex. The designs on Indian pottery (fascinates, fascinate) me.  
(The subject, designs, is plural; therefore, the verb must be plural. The plural verb is fascinate.)

## **PRACTICE EXERCISE B:** In each of the following sentences, underline the subject and the verb.

1. The buildings on each campus (was, were) recently completed.
2. All applications for the job (has, have) been received.
3. Every student in all classes (has, have) been notified of the CLAST test date.
4. The chalkboards in the school (is, are) scratched.
5. Each year the winner from all the schools throughout the state (seems, seem) to be very much surprised.

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4. **Some words that are often used as subjects are always singular. Memorize them!!**  
(each, one, either, neither, no one, everyone, anyone, someone, anybody, somebody, everybody, nobody, everything.)

Ex. Everybody wants to make good grades.

**Some words that are often used as subjects are always plural. Memorize them!!**  
(Several, few, both, many)

Ex. Several of the staff understand the idea of an attendance policy.

**Some words may be either singular or plural, depending on how they are used.**  
(some, any, all, most)

Ex. Some of the fruit is rotten. (Some fruit is rotten.)  
Some of the apples are rotten. (Some apples are rotten.)  
All of this apple is rotten. (The entire apple is rotten.)  
All of these apples are rotten. (All apples are rotten.)

**PRACTICE EXERCISE C:** Underline the correct form of the verb.

1. Some of the students (has, have) left the building.
2. Each of her students ( is, are) special.
3. Several on the team (hits, hit) the ball really hard.
4. Everything in the buildings (was, were) destroyed.
5. Neither of the men (meets, meet) his class every day.

**CHECK YOUR ANSWERS!**

5. **If the sentence has compound subjects (more than one subject) joined by and, the verb is usually plural.**

Ex. Ellis and John are twins.

The beginning of the story (and) the end of the story were exciting.

6. **When compound subjects are joined by or or nor, the verb must agree with the nearer subject.**

Ex. Either the old men or the young man was responsible for the lovely music.

Neither the teacher nor the students are in class this morning.

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**PRACTICE EXERCISE D:** Underline the correct form of the verb.

1. Neither science nor math (gives, give) me a problem.
2. Either the cat or the dogs (greet, greet) me at the door.
3. Neither the men who are listen as administrators nor the woman who is also listed (has, have) been appointed to the board.
4. Either my cousin or my uncle (was, were) on the critical list.
5. Neither Ms. Jones nor a member of her staff (is, are) going to attend the meeting.

## **CHECK YOUR ANSWERS**

7. **When a sentence begins with either there or here, the subject comes behind the verb.**

Ex. There is going to be just one student representative on the board.

## **REVIEW OF SUBJECT-VERB AGREEMENT**

Directions: Some of the verbs in the following sentences agree with their subject(s); some do not. If the verb does not agree with the subject, underline it and write the correct form above it.

takes

Ex. Each of the students take the bus.

1. Dr. Jones and her mother teaches music.
2. Neither Dr. Jones nor her mother know how to boil water.
3. There is the list of courses that you were looking for.
4. Either you or your sister have to take notes on the lecture.
5. Both the instructors and the students has left for the day.
6. Spring classes was announced last week.
7. Here are the list of supplies which you ordered.
8. Everybody in this school have taken the shot that prevents measles.

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9. Some of the students in her class enters the essay contest every year.
10. The women who registered early are going got get extra credit.
11. Mr. and Mrs. Smith has been attending that conference for many years.
12. The students and Dr. Lee prepares the bulletin each month.
13. There goes one of the men who will conduct the research.
14. Some of that paper are going to be presented at the workshop.
15. Each of the children was promised a part in the play.
16. Neither of the women has been late to class this semester.
17. The section of paper which I read most often were missing.
18. Several of the faculty takes roll everyday.
19. Everything in this room fit with the decor of the home.
20. All of the signs along the highway was removed.

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## **ANSWERS**

**PRACTICE A:** THE SUBJECT IS UNDERLINED.

1. student, works      2. he, studies      3. students, walk  
4. pictures, were      5. children, want

**PRACTICE B:** THE SUBJECT IS UNDERLINED.

1. buildings, were      2. applications, have      3. student, has  
4. chalkboards, are      5. winner, seems

**PRACTICE C:** THE SUBJECT IS UNDERLINED.

1. some, have      2. each, is      3. several, hit  
4. everything, was      5. neither, meets

**PRACTICE D:** THE SUBJECT IS UNDERLINED.

1. science, math, gives      2. cat, dogs, greet  
3. men, woman, has      4. cousin, uncle, was  
5. Ms. Jones, member, is

**REVIEW ANSWERS:**

1. teach      2. knows      3. C      4. has      5. have  
6. were      7. is      8. has      9. enter      10. C  
11. have      12. prepare      13. C      14. is      15. C  
16. C      17. was      18. take      19. Fits      20. were

## Subject/Verb Agreement Websites

[http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/cgi-shl/quiz.pl/agreement\\_add1.htm](http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/cgi-shl/quiz.pl/agreement_add1.htm)

Practice #1 on Subject-Verb Agreement. Work this practice and see your answers!

[http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/cgi-shl/quiz.pl/agreement\\_add2.htm](http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/cgi-shl/quiz.pl/agreement_add2.htm)

Practice #2 on Subject-Verb Agreement. This should help reinforce your understanding of what subject-verb agreement actually means.

[http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/cgi-shl/quiz.pl/agreement\\_add3.htm](http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/cgi-shl/quiz.pl/agreement_add3.htm)

Practice #3 on Subject-Verb Agreement. As you progress through these exercises, you should develop improved knowledge of this area of grammar.

[http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/cgi-shl/par\\_quiz.pl/agreement\\_add4.htm](http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/cgi-shl/par_quiz.pl/agreement_add4.htm)

Practice #4 on Subject-Verb Agreement. By the time you reach this point, you should be much more comfortable in identifying exactly how subjects and verbs should agree.

[http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/sv\\_agr.htm](http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/sv_agr.htm)

This website has good printed information on Subject/Verb Agreement. It also gives a link to an excellent power point presentation on this skill. Finally, at the bottom of this page, it gives links to 3 quizzes so that you may check your understanding of this information. Take Quiz 1 and print out your score!

<http://leo.stcloudstate.edu/grammar/subverag.html>

Excellent information from Literacy Education Online from St. Cloud State University regarding Subject/Verb Agreement. This will help with your understanding of exactly what is meant by “subjects and verbs agreeing with each other”.

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**<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/esl/eslsubverb.html>**

This is another outstanding website that will help you “understand” what subject and verb agreement means!

**[http://aliscot.com/bigdog/agreement\\_sv.htm](http://aliscot.com/bigdog/agreement_sv.htm)**

This Big Dog Grammar website is another good tool to help with your comprehension of subject/verb agreement.

**<http://www.bbc.co.uk/skillswise/words/grammar/sentencebasics/verbsubjectagreement/game.shtml>**

This is a fun, interactive game you will enjoy to “make sure” that you truly understand subject/verb agreement. Enjoy! After you have played the game, please do the quiz to make sure you have the complete understanding you need!