**The City School**

**North Nazimabad Boys Campus**

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**Subject: English**

**Class: 9**

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Subject verb agreement can be one of the more challenging aspects of writing. While short clauses provide for an easily identifiable subject, longer clauses with extensive phrases can make proper subject verb agreement more of a challenge.

**The first and most important rule in subject verb agreement is that the verb must agree with the intended number of the subject.**

To accomplish that task, follow two occasionally not so simple tasks.

1. Identify the real subject
2. Determine whether subject is singular or plural

The first step is often made difficult by phrases and/or sentence structure that work to obscure the true subject.

* Prepositional phrases are one of the main culprits in the misidentification of the true subject of the clause. Remember, objects cannot be subjects, so the object of a preposition cannot be a subject of a clause.
  + Among the constitutional rights we cherish is **freedom**.
    - AMONG is a preposition; therefore, RIGHTS is the object of the preposition. FREEDOM is the subject of the sentence.
  + The **group** of protesters is blocking the entrance to the building.
    - OF is a preposition; therefore, PROTESTERS is the object of the preposition. GROUP is the subject of the sentence and it is singular.
  + The annual **rituals** of the group confuse the neighbors.
    - OF is a preposition; therefore, GROUP is the object of the preposition. RITUALS is the subject of the sentence and it is plural.
* Parenthetical phrases can also work to obscure the true subject. Phrases such as "as well as," "such as," "along with," "rather than," "accompanied by" and "including" introduce items that are NOT considered when determining whether a verb is singular or plural.
  + The **quiz**, as well as all workbook exercises, **was** collected.
    - QUIZ is the subject. The parenthetical expression does not affect the verb.
  + His **jacket**, not his shirt or his socks, always **seems** to match his slacks.
    - JACKET is the subject. It is singular. The parenthetical expression does not affect the verb.
  + Her birthday **celebration**, together with the upcoming holiday, **makes** for a very full calendar.
    - CELEBRATION is the subject. The parenthetical expression does not affect the verb.
  + The **president and vice president**, accompanied by the board of directors, **plan** to vote against changing the company bylaws.
    - PRESIDENT and VICE PRESIDENT are the subject. The verb is plural.
* Expletives (There, Here) are false subjects. Disregard them completely when determining the subject that the verb must agree with.
  + There **are** fewer **students** in this class.
    - The true subject in this sentence is STUDENTS.
  + Officer, here **is** the **person** I was telling you about.
    - The true subject in this clause is PERSON.

**WORDS THAT ARE ALWAYS A SINGULAR SUBJECT:**

First it might be helpful to remember that the singular form of all verbs except **to be** and **to have** is formed by adding "s" or "es." For example: dives, runs, answers and crashes, presses and tosses.

* When used as a subject or adjective these indefinite pronouns are always singular and, therefore, they take singular verbs.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| another | anybody | anyone | anything | Each | each one |
| either | Every | everybody | everything | Much |  |
| neither | Nobody | no one | nothing | One | other |
| somebody | something | someone |  |  |  |

* These pronouns may be used as subjects, and they take a singular verb.
  + - Everyone **has** been invited.
    - She said that something **was** all she wanted for her birthday.
    - The Democratic leadership suggested two solutions but neither **was** acceptable to the committee chair.

When they are used as adjectives, the noun they modify always takes a singular verb

* + - Neither solution **works** for the committee chair.
    - Each tragedy **gives** the population given less time to recover from the previous shock.
* The number--when used as subject of a sentence (an organized unit)—takes a singular verb.
  + The number of tenants without heat **is** increasing.
* Subjects that stand for definable units of money, measurement, time, organization, food and medical problems always take singular verbs.
  + Six months **is** not enough time.
  + Five thousand dollars **is** the minimum bid.
  + Ham and eggs **is** my favorite meal.
* Singular subject followed by phrases such as *together with and as well as* take singular verb.
  + The tax measure, together with its amendments, **has** passed.
* When all parts of a compound subject are singular and refer to same person or thing.
  + The head of the expedition and mayor of the village **was** the same person.
* When the subject is followed by the phrase "the only one of."
  + Jake is the only one of the runners who **has** finished.
  + *BUT:* Jake is one of those runners who **have** finished.  
    (In this case, Jake is one of many [those] runners. The verb "have" agrees with "those runners" not with Jake.)

**WORDS THAT ARE ALWAYS PLURAL SUBJECT:**

* When a compound subject is joined by a coordinating conjunction (and), it always takes a plural verb if the subjects refer to different persons or things and if the subject cannot be considered a unit.
  + Your investments and property **are** sure to increase in value.
* Indefinite pronouns (both, few, many, several) always take plural verbs.
  + Both **are** acceptable choices.
* "A number" as the subject of a sentence always takes plural verbs.
  + A number of tenants **are** in the building.
* Certain plural subjects always take plural verbs.
  + The news media **are** under attack. (singular of media: medium)

**WORDS THAT ARE EITHER SINGULAR OR PLURAL SUBJECT:**

* When the parts of a compound subject are joined by  
  or, but, either ... or, neither ... nor, not only ... but also   
  **the verb must agree with the subject nearest to the verb.**
  + Neither the Oregon players nor the coach **was** overconfident.
  + Neither the Oregon coach nor the players **were** intimidated by Arizona.
* Collective nouns and certain plural words may take singular or plural verbs-depending on the meaning in the sentence.  
    
  **TEST:** If the word indicates persons or things working together as an identifiable unit, a singular verb is used.
  + The jury **was** seated at 9 a.m. ("It" was seated.)
  + *BUT:* The jury **were** being interviewed by the media.  
    (refers to individual members of the jury; could be rewritten as: "The jurors were ... ")
  + Politics is a hot topic. (politics as a single topic)
  + *BUT:* The mayor's politics **are** offensive.  
    (politics as several actions over time)
* The pronouns any, none or some and the nouns all and most:
  1. take singular verbs when they refer to a unit or quantity
     1. Some of the money **was** missing. (a bag of money)
  2. take plural verbs when they refer to number, amount or individuals
     1. Some of the gold coins **were** missing. (a series of coins)
  3. "NONE":

a. "No Single One"; "Not One"--Singular

* + 1. None of the gold coins **was** missing. (not one of the coins)

b. "No Two" or "No Amount"--Plural

* + 1. None of the goods **were** missing. (no amount of the goods)
    2. None of the forests **were** destroyed. (no amount of the forests)
* When subject is a fraction or a word such as half, part, plenty, rest, its intended number is suggested by the object of the preposition that follows it.
  + Three-fourths of the enemy's army **is** wounded.
  + Three-fourths of the enemy's soldiers **are** wounded.

Agreement Practice Exercise

1. Scientists are concerned that a number of species of frogs a) seems b) seem to be mutating.

2. Neither the offensive linemen nor the quarterback a) want b) wants to run the drill again.

3. Will they announce whether that group of students a) boards b) board the plane ahead of everyone.

4. Kimberly is the only one of those executives a) who b) that believes her product will sell this year.

5. None of the animals in the shelter a) belong b) belongs to someone.

6. The number of mutated frogs a) is b) are increasing every year.

7. Curtis is sure that the news media a) is b) are not helping the situation.

8. Jennifer is one of those actresses who a) audition b) auditions for every role she can.

9. The school’s alumni a) hope b) hopes to raise enough money to complete the new wing.

10. Finding other contestants a) has b) have been the responsibility of the show's producers.

11. Neither of the executives a) want b) wants to tell the boss that profits are down.

12. None of them a) knows b) know who has the map.

13. There a) has b) have been so many doctors in to see him, that we don’t know who's in charge.

14. The governor is proud to announce that more than 2,000 pounds of cheese a) has b) have been collected.

15. Everyone at the park a) is b) are going to the concert, including you and me.

16. Does anyone have a) his b) her c) his or her d) their map of the city?

17. He is the only one of the senators who a) has b) have agreed to testify.

18. One-third of the village a) receives b) receive water from the river just north of here.

19. A group of the city's voters a) choose b) chooses to send in mail-in ballots rather than go to the polls.

20. Neither his sister nor her friend Sarah a) think b) thinks Benjamin should go to Milan this summer.

Agreement Practice Exercise Answers

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