

TIPS & TRICKS

The words *one*, *thing*, and *body* are singular and so are the indefinite pronouns that contain these words.

EXAMPLES

Is [any]one late?

[Every]body was welcome.

[No]thing has been lost.

SKILLS FOCUS

Use verbs that agree with singular subjects.
Use verbs that agree with plural subjects.

5. The number of months in a year, inches in a foot, and items in a dozen (*is, are*) 12.
6. In our courts of law, 12 members of a jury (*decides, decide*) a defendant's guilt or innocence.
7. Each player in a game of checkers (*begin, begins*) with 12 pieces.
8. In bowling, 12 consecutive strikes (*give, gives*) you a perfect game.
9. The number of black pentagons on a soccer ball (*equal, equals*) the number of buttons on a push-button telephone—12.
10. Samuel Clemens even used this number as his pen name—the riverboat slang for 2 fathoms, or 12 feet, (*are, is*) *mark twain!*

5d. The following indefinite pronouns are singular: *anybody, anyone, anything, each, either, everybody, everyone, everything, neither, nobody, no one, nothing, one, somebody, someone, and something.*

EXAMPLES

Each of the athletes **runs** effortlessly.

Neither of the women **is** ready to start.

Someone was waving a large flag.

Does everyone who signed up **enjoy** playing tennis?

5e. The following indefinite pronouns are plural: *both, few, many, and several.*

EXAMPLES

Were both of the games **postponed**?

Few that I know of **have qualified**.

Several of the runners **are exercising**.

5f. 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. [*Some refers to the singular noun test.*]

Some of the questions **are** easy. [*Some refers to the plural noun questions.*]

All of the exhibit **is** open to the public.

All of the paintings **are** on display.

Most of his routine **sounds** familiar.

Most of his jokes **sound** familiar.

Was any of the feedback positive?

Were any of the reviews positive?

The rice was eaten. **None is** left.

The potatoes were eaten. **None are** left.

More of the class **is** going to the archaeological dig.

More of the students **are** going to the archaeological dig.

Exercise 5 Identifying Subjects and Verbs That Agree in Number

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

EXAMPLE 1. Several of the kittens (*has, have*) been adopted.

1. *Several—have*

1. Each of the comedians (*tries, try*) to outdo the other.
2. Somebody on the bus (*was, were*) whistling.
3. (*Is, Are*) all of the apples spoiled?
4. Neither of these books (*has, have*) an index.
5. (*Do, Does*) everybody in the class have a pencil?
6. Few of these jobs (*sounds, sound*) challenging.
7. (*Is, Are*) more of the vendors in the market?
8. She said that no one in the office (*leaves, leave*) early.
9. Both of her parents (*has, have*) offered us a ride.
10. (*Do, Does*) most of those CDs belong to her?

Review A Proofreading a Paragraph for Subject-Verb Agreement

Identify the agreement errors in the following paragraph. Then, supply the correct form of each incorrect verb.

EXAMPLE [1] On weekends, I often goes with my mother to antique shops.

1. *goes—go*

[1] Until recently, this hunt for old things were very boring.
[2] Then one day I noticed that a dusty shoe box full of antique postcards were sitting near me on a counter. [3] Soon I was flipping through the cards, and before you knows it, I had decided to start a

Reference Note

For more information about **adjectives**, see page 56. For more about **correlative conjunctions**, see page 78.

TIPS & TRICKS

Some of the words listed in **Rule 5d** can also be used as adjectives or as parts of correlative conjunctions: *each, either, neither, one*. Used as these parts of speech, such words cannot function as subjects.

Reference Note

For more information about **indefinite pronouns**, see page 55. For information on distinguishing **indefinite pronouns from adjectives**, see page 56.



Reference Note

For more information about **compound subjects**, see page 98.

SKILLS FOCUS

Use verbs that agree with compound subjects.

postcard collection! [4] The cards in my collection is very precious to me. [5] Because I am interested in American history, I has chosen to specialize in cards showing American Indians. [6] On one of my cards, the flames of a campfire glows in front of several Plains Indian tepees under a colorful sunset. [7] Most of the postcards in my collection shows pictures of Native American leaders and warriors. [8] On my favorite card, a Navajo mother wrapped in beautiful blankets are posing with her baby on her back. [9] Collecting postcards are not an expensive hobby either. [10] Many of my cards was priced at a dollar or less.

The Compound Subject

A **compound subject** consists of two or more subjects that are joined by a conjunction and that have the same verb.

5g. Subjects joined by *and* generally take a plural verb.

The following compound subjects joined by *and* name more than one person, place, thing, or idea and take plural verbs.

EXAMPLES **George Lucas and Steven Spielberg make** movies. [Two persons make movies.]

Rhyme, rhythm, and imagery help poets express their feelings. [Three things help.]

Compound subjects that name only one person, thing, place, or idea take a singular verb.

EXAMPLES My **pen pal and best friend is** my cousin. [One person is my best friend and pen pal.]

Broccoli and melted cheese makes a tasty dish. [The one combination makes a dish.]

5h. Singular subjects joined by *or* or *nor* take a singular verb. Plural subjects joined by *or* or *nor* take a plural verb.

EXAMPLES After dinner, either **Anne or Tony loads** the dishwasher. [Anne loads the dishwasher or Tony loads the dishwasher.]

Neither the **coach** nor the **principal is** happy with the team's performance. [Neither one is happy.]

Either the **boys** or their **sisters take** the garbage out.

Neither the **dogs** nor the **cats come** when we call them.