

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