



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.

5i. When a singular subject and a plural subject are joined by *or* or *nor*, the verb agrees with the subject nearer the verb.

ACCEPTABLE Neither the children nor their **mother was** ready for the trip.

ACCEPTABLE Neither the mother nor her **children were** ready for the trip.

Oral Practice 1 Using Verbs That Agree in Number with Their Subjects

Read the following sentences aloud, stressing the italicized words.

1. The *books* on that shelf *need* dusting.
2. A *carton* of duck eggs *is* in the refrigerator.
3. *Tina and Betty are* first cousins once removed.
4. *Playing games or listening* to old records *is* an enjoyable way to spend a rainy Saturday.
5. *Several* of these insects *eat* through wood.
6. Every *one* of you *has* met my friend Phil.
7. Neither the *twins nor Greg enjoys* listening to that kind of music.
8. Both *Mr. and Mrs. Chen agree* to be chaperons for our spring dance.

Exercise 6 Choosing 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. In August, eager players and their fans (*looks, look*) forward to the start of football season.
1. *look*
1. The coach and the player (*was, were*) surprised by the referee's call.
 2. (*Is, Are*) Drew or Virgil going out for the pass?
 3. Neither the quarterback nor the wide receiver (*hear, hears*) the referee's whistle.
 4. The marching band or the pep squad (*has, have*) already performed.
 5. (*Do, Does*) Christopher and Alexander enjoy football as much as Rachel does?
 6. Either Albert or Selena (*leads, lead*) the student fight song.
 7. The drum major and student council president (*is, are*) my older sister Janet.
 8. The principal, the band director, and the gymnastics coach (*was, were*) proud of the half-time show.

Think as a Reader/Writer

Constructions like those shown with Rule 5i can sound awkward. Try rephrasing sentences to avoid such awkward constructions.

EXAMPLES

The **children were** not ready for the trip, and neither **was** their **mother**.

or

The **mother was** not ready for the trip, and neither **were** her **children**.

9. Neither the coach nor the players (*has, have*) ever won a state championship game.
10. (*Was, Were*) the announcer or the referees prepared for the triumphant fans to rush the field?

Review B Revising Sentences for Subject-Verb Agreement

Revise each of the following sentences according to the directions given in parentheses. Change the verb in the sentence to agree with the subject as necessary.

- EXAMPLE**
1. The teachers have finished grading the tests. (Change *The teachers* to *Each of the teachers*.)
 1. *Each of the teachers has finished grading the tests.*
 1. My aunt is planning a trip to Nairobi National Park in Kenya. (Change *aunt* to *aunts*.)
 2. Have Yoko and Juan already seen that movie? (Change *and* to *or*.)
 3. Nobody on the team plans to attend the award ceremonies. (Change *Nobody* to *Many*.)
 4. My grandmother, as well as my mother and aunts, raises tropical fish to earn extra money. (Change *grandmother* to *grandparents*.)
 5. Most of the food for the party is in the refrigerator. (Change *food* to *salads*.)
 6. Neither the librarian nor the aides have found the missing book. (Change *Neither the librarian nor the aides* to *Neither the aides nor the librarian*.)
 7. Black bean soup and a tossed salad make an inexpensive meal. (Change *Black bean soup and a tossed salad* to *Macaroni and cheese*.)
 8. Some of my friends take the bus to school. (Change *Some* to *One*.)
 9. Few of the reporter's questions were answered in detail. (Change *Few* to *Neither*.)
 10. The puppy playing with my sisters is two months old. (Change *puppy* to *puppies* and *sisters* to *sister*.)

Other Problems in Agreement

5j. The contractions *don't* and *doesn't* should agree with their subjects.

The word *don't* is the contraction of *do not*. Use *don't* with all plural subjects and with the pronouns *I* and *you*.

SKILLS FOCUS

Demonstrate understanding of correct subject-verb agreement.