

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.

- EXAMPLES** I **don't** know. They **don't** give up.
 You **don't** say. **Don't** these shrink?
 We **don't** want to. Apathetic people **don't** care.

The word *doesn't* is the contraction of *does not*. Use *doesn't* with all singular subjects except the pronouns *I* and *you*.

- EXAMPLES** He **doesn't** know. One **doesn't** give up.
 She **doesn't** say. This **doesn't** shrink.
 It **doesn't** want to. **Doesn't** Donna care?

Exercise 7 Using *Doesn't* and *Don't* Correctly

Write the correct form (*doesn't* or *don't*) for each of the following sentences.

- EXAMPLE** 1. ____ that bouquet of roses look great?
 1. *Doesn't*
- This apple ____ taste sweet.
 - ____ he want to see the game?
 - These ____ impress me.
 - One of the players ____ plan to go.
 - ____ Jason and Tanya like the new band uniforms?
 - You and she ____ have time to play computer games now.
 - The engine in that old pickup ____ start in winter.
 - Tonio asked why we ____ want to go mountain biking.
 - ____ several of those in the front window cost more than these in the fruit cart?
 - The international children's chorus is so marvelous that their new fans ____ want to leave the theater.

5k. A collective noun may be either singular or plural, depending on its meaning in a sentence.

The singular form of a *collective noun* names a group of persons or things.

Collective Nouns

| | | | | |
|----------|-----------|--------|-------|--------|
| army | class | family | group | public |
| assembly | club | fleet | herd | swarm |
| audience | committee | flock | jury | team |

Think as a Reader/Writer

Many people consider contractions informal. Therefore, it is generally best not to use contractions in formal speaking and writing.

Reference Note

For more information about **collective nouns**, see page 51.

SKILLS FOCUS

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

Contractions such as *here's*, *where's*, *how's*, and *what's* include the singular verb *is*. Use these contractions only with singular subjects.

- NONSTANDARD There's some facts on that topic in a chart.
 STANDARD There **are** some **facts** on that topic in a chart.
 STANDARD There's a **chart** with some facts on that topic.

5n. An expression of an amount (a measurement, a percentage, or a fraction, for example) may be singular or plural, depending on how it is used.

A word or phrase stating an amount is singular when the amount is thought of as a unit.

- EXAMPLES** **Thirty dollars is** too much for a concert ticket.
Two hours is a long time to wait.

Sometimes, however, the amount is thought of as individual pieces or parts. If so, a plural verb is used.

- EXAMPLES** **Five dollars were scattered** on the desk.
Two hours—one before school and one after—**are** all I have for practice.

A fraction or a percentage is singular when it refers to a singular word and plural when it refers to a plural word.

- EXAMPLES** **Three fourths** of the pizza **is** gone.
 Of these songs, **three fourths are** new.

5o. Some nouns that are plural in form take singular verbs.

- EXAMPLES** **Politics is** a controversial topic.
 The **news** of the nominee **was** a surprise.
Rickets is a serious health problem in some countries.

NOTE Some nouns that end in *-s* take a plural verb even when they refer to a single item.

- EXAMPLES** The **scissors need** to be sharpened.
Were these **pants** on sale?
 The **Olympics are** on television.

Reference Note

For more on **contractions**, see page 381.

Reference Note

For a discussion of **standard and nonstandard English**, see page 269.



HELP

If you do not know whether a noun that is plural in form is singular or plural in meaning, look up the word in a dictionary.

SKILLS FOCUS

Demonstrate understanding of correct subject-verb agreement. Use verbs that agree with singular subjects. Use verbs that agree with plural subjects.

5p. Even when plural in form, the title of a creative work (such as a book, song, film, or painting), the name of an organization, or the name of a country or city generally takes a singular verb.

EXAMPLES *The Souls of Black Folk* **is** often **cited** as a classic of African American literature. [one book]

“Greensleeves” **is** an old English folk song. [one piece of music]

The United Nations **was founded** in 1945. [one organization]

White Plains **is** home to several colleges. [one city]

Review C Using Titles That Agree with Verbs in Number

Terence and Janeese are at the video rental store deciding what movies they will rent for the weekend. In the following sentences, wherever *TITLE* appears, supply the name of one of the movies shown here or of a movie of your own choice. Then, choose the correct form of the verb to complete each sentence.

- EXAMPLE**
1. Look, Terence. *TITLE* (*is, are*) supposed to be very funny.
 1. Horse Feathers—*is*
 1. Terence: According to LaShonda, *TITLE* and *TITLE* (*is, are*) very exciting.
 2. Janeese: Well, *TITLE* or *TITLE* (*sounds, sound*) more interesting to me. Let's ask the clerk.
 3. Terence: Sir, (*is, are*) *TITLE* in stock?
 4. Clerk: I'm afraid not, but *TITLE* (*entertain, entertains*) almost everyone, and you might enjoy it.
 5. Terence: Janeese, *TITLE* (*is, are*) a fairly recent movie, but *TITLE* (*are, is*) an old-timer.
 6. Janeese: Well, I like animated films, and *TITLE* (*fit, fits*) that category.
 7. Clerk: If you ask me, *TITLE* (*beat, beats*) every other film we have, but someone just rented my last copy.
 8. Janeese: Both *TITLE* and *TITLE* (*are, is*) good, but I've seen each of them twice.
 9. Terence: (*Isn't, Aren't*) *TITLE* any good? I'm surprised.
 10. Janeese: All right, here's my vote. *TITLE* (*is, are*) tonight's movie, and either *TITLE* or *TITLE* (*is, are*) the movie for Saturday night's party.



5q. Subjects preceded by *every* or *many* take singular verbs.

EXAMPLES **Every** homeowner and storekeeper **has joined** the cleanup drive sponsored by the town council.

Many a litterbug **was surprised** by the stiff fines.

5r. When the relative pronoun *that*, *which*, or *who* is the subject of an adjective clause, the verb in the adjective clause agrees with the word to which the relative pronoun refers.

EXAMPLES This is the store **that has** the discount sale. [*That refers to the singular noun store.*]

London, **which is** the capital of England, is the largest city in Europe. [*Which refers to the singular noun London.*]

The Garcias, **who live** next door, are going with us to the lake. [*Who refers to the plural noun Garcias.*]

Oral Practice 2 Using Subject-Verb Agreement

Read each of the following sentences aloud, stressing the italicized words.

1. Of the inhabitants, *two thirds are* registered to vote.
2. *Many a* writer and scholar *has* puzzled over that problem.
3. *Is economics* taught at your high school?
4. *Are* there any green *apples* in that basket?
5. *Romeo and Juliet has* been made into a ballet, a Broadway musical, and several movies.
6. *Two weeks is* more than enough time to write a report.
7. My *family is* planning to hold its reunion in October.
8. My *family are* planning their schedules now.

Exercise 9 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 the subject.

EXAMPLE 1. (*Do, Does*) Meals on Wheels deliver in your neighborhood?

1. *Meals on Wheels—Does*

1. The class (*has, have*) chosen titles for their original plays.
2. First prize (*was, were*) two tickets to Hawaii.

Reference Note

For more about **relative pronouns**, see page 54.

For more about **adjective clauses**, see page 147.

SKILLS FOCUS

Demonstrate understanding of correct subject-verb agreement. Use verbs that agree with singular subjects. Use verbs that agree with plural subjects.

3. Three quarters of the movie (*was, were*) over when we arrived at the theater.
4. Rattlesnakes (*was, were*) the topic of last week's meeting of the hiking club.
5. (*Has, Have*) every student in the class memorized a poem to present for the oral interpretation contest?
6. *Crime and Punishment* (*is, are*) a world-famous novel.
7. Two thirds of the missing books (*was, were*) returned to the downtown branch of the library.
8. Mathematics (*is, are*) an important part of many everyday activities.
9. Where (*is, are*) the paragraphs you wrote?
10. Four weeks (*is, are*) enough time to rehearse the play.

Review D Identifying Verbs That Have the Correct Number

Choose the correct form of the verb in parentheses in each of the following sentences.

- EXAMPLE** 1. Fifty pesos (*was, were*) a great price for that carving.
1. *was*
1. Mumps (*is, are*) a common childhood disease that causes swelling in glands in the neck.
 2. Politics (*is, are*) always a popular subject both to debate and to study at college.
 3. Not one of the ushers (*know, knows*) where the lounge is.
 4. The team (*is, are*) on a winning streak.
 5. Carol, as well as Inés, (*write, writes*) a weekly column for the *East High Record*.
 6. "Beauty and the Beast" (*is, are*) a folk tale that exists in many different cultures.
 7. Ten pounds (*is, are*) too much weight for a young child to carry in a backpack.
 8. It is difficult to concentrate when there (*is, are*) radios and stereos blasting away.
 9. (*Has, Have*) either of you read the book or seen the movie version of *To Kill a Mockingbird*?
 10. In most situation comedies, there (*is, are*) a very wise character, a very foolish character, and a very lovable character.