

Hints for Subject-Verb Agreement

I. (A) Cross out all prepositional phrases.

Examples: Every one ~~of the students~~ (try, tries) hard.
 The windows ~~in the house~~ (stick, sticks) easily.

Watch out especially for prepositional phrases beginning with of or in.

(B) Cross out word groups within commas.

Examples: The doctor, ~~as well as the nurses~~, (work, works) hard.
 The girls, ~~along with their dogs~~, (walk, walks) daily.

Word groups between commas often begin with:
 , as well as ...,
 , with ...,
 , along with ...,
 , in addition to ...,
 , including ...

(C) Cross out word groups beginning with *either...or...* and *neither...nor*.

Examples: ~~Either the vase or the dish~~ (was, were) a gift.
~~Neither the teacher nor his students~~ (was, were) here.

Look for
Either ... or
Neither ... nor

II. Find the subject: (Remember, the subject cannot be one of the words that you crossed out in Number I.)

Examples: Every subject ~~one of the students~~ (work, works) hard.

The subject ~~girls, along with their dogs~~ (walk, walks) daily.

~~Either the vase or the~~ subject ~~dish~~ (was, were) a gift.

III. Select the verb:

(A) If the subject is singular, choose the verb ending in *s*.

Examples: Every one of the students (try, tries) hard.

*Singular subject
 verb with S*

The doctor, as well as the nurses, (work, works) hard.

*Singular subject
 verb with S*

(B) If the subject is plural, choose the verb ending without the *s*.

Examples: The windows in the house (stick, sticks) easily.

*Plural subject
 verb without S*

The girls, along with their dogs, (walk, walks) daily.

*Plural subject
 verb without S*

(C) If two subjects are joined by *or* or by *nor*, the verb usually agrees with the nearer subject.

Examples: Either the vase or the dish (was, were) a gift.

Singular subject
verb with S

Neither the teacher nor his students (was, were) present.

Plural subject
verb without S

(D) If two subjects are joined by *and*, the verb is automatically plural (except for situations where the two words denote a single subject like “macaroni and cheese”).

Examples: The vase and the dish (was, were) gifts.

Plural subjects
verb without S

Subject/Verb Agreement

Directions: Write the verb that agrees in number with its subject.

1. We (*was, were*) the first to arrive. 1. _____
2. My father (*doesn't, don't*) care for fishing. 2. _____
3. Either Ralph or Terry (*have, has*) your keys. 3. _____
4. The noise of the explosions (*was, were*) heard in the next town. 4. _____
5. One of the stories (*is, are*) about a fight with an octopus. 5. _____
6. (*Don't, Doesn't*) one of your friends live in Hollywood? 6. _____
7. A school and a library (*are, is*) close to our home. 7. _____
8. One of these pictures (*shon, shows*) our cottage. 8. _____
9. How much (*is, are*) the sugared doughnuts? 9. _____
10. The furnishings of the room (*look, looks*) shabby. 10. _____
11. Only one of these books (*contains, contain*) the information. 11. _____
12. A little lemon juice or vanilla (*improve, improves*) the flavor. 12. _____
13. One of these faucets (*doesn't, don't*) work. 13. _____
14. The coach and the referee (*were, was*) discussing the play. 14. _____

15. There (*was, were*) dozens of people around the car. 15. _____
16. At that time his two brothers (*were, was*) in the army. 16. _____
17. (*Where's, Where are*) the cookies I brought home? 17. _____
18. There (*was, were*) too many people for such a small boat. 18. _____
19. This new rule (*doesn't, don't*) seem fair to me. 19. _____
20. The spelling of these words (*are, is*) tricky. 20. _____
21. The motor and the body (*is, are*) in good condition. 21. _____
22. An apple or a sandwich (*satisfies, satisfy*) my hunger. 22. _____
23. The speed of these jets (*is, are*) unbelievable. 23. _____
24. This title (*don't, doesn't*) sound interesting. 24. _____
25. One of these envelopes (*contains, contain*) the lucky number. 25. _____