

Answer Key

Name _____ Instructor's Name _____

GRAMMAR REVIEW PACKET 6

SUBJECT-VERB AGREEMENT

All nouns and pronouns have number. They are singular in number if they refer to one thing. They are plural in number if they refer to more than one thing.

- A. When a word refers to one person or thing, it is singular in number. When a word refers to more than one, it is plural in number.

Examples: hat, I, sky, principle (singular)
hats, we, skies, principles (plural)

- B. A verb agrees with its subject in number.

Two words agree when they have the same number. The number of the verb must always agree with the number of its subject.

Examples: He fights. (singular subject and singular verb)
Animals fight. (plural subject and plural verb)

- I. Singular subjects take singular verbs.

Examples: The lightning fills the sky.
(The verb **fills** is singular to agree with the singular subject **lightning**.)
Linda begins her vacation today.
(The verb **begins** is singular to agree with the singular subject **Linda**.)

- II. Plural subjects take plural verbs.

Examples: Cheetahs run faster than most other animals.
(The verb **run** is plural to agree with the plural subject **cheetahs**.)
New families move into our neighborhood frequently.
(The verb **move** is plural to agree with the plural subject **families**.)

*** Notice that an -s ending is often a sign of the singular in the verb.

Examples: He screams. Everyone sings.

NOTE - When a sentence contains a verb phrase, it is the helping verb that agrees with the subject.

Examples: The motor is running.
The motors are running.

Examples: The girl has been sick.
The girls have been sick.

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...

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

Examples: Every [one] ^{subject} ~~of the students~~ work/works hard.
The [girls], ^{subject} ~~along with their dogs~~, walk/walks daily.
Either the vase ^{subject} or the [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.
The doctor, as well as the nurses, work/works hard.

Singular subject, so use 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.
The girls, along with their dogs, walk/walks daily.

Plural subject, so use 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, so use verb with “s”

Neither the teacher nor his students was/were present.

Plural subject, so use verb without “s”

Exercise:

1. One of the students (is/are) studying algebra.
2. The exhibit of the artist's paintings (was/were) very interesting.
3. Mrs. Andrews, along with Mr. Stone, (do/does) volunteer work.
4. The applications for the job (is/are) on the desk.
5. Every one of the girls (do/does) her shorthand homework.
6. Either Julia or her friends (is/are) planning to attend.
7. Neither Michelle nor Paul (has/have) registered yet.
8. Neither the students nor the instructor (want/wants) to miss class.
9. The women, as well as the men, (sing/sings) beautifully.
10. The dictator, accompanied by his generals, (was/were) at the meeting.

V. (A) If a relative pronoun (WHO, WHOM, WHICH, THAT, WHOSE) refers to only one, use a singular verb.

Examples: It is the only one of the stores that (has) / have shoes.

This is the only one of the trees that bloom / (blooms).

(B) If a relative pronoun refers to a plural noun, use a plural verb.

Examples: She is one of the best students who (attend) / attends.

He is one of those persons who never (grow) / grows up.

*Example B:
The prepositional phrase
cannot be omitted; use the
plural verb.*

SINGULAR AND PLURAL SUBJECTS AND VERBS

Exercise 1: If a word is singular, write **S** before it. If it is plural, write **P**.

- | | |
|---------------------|------------------------|
| <u>S</u> 1. morning | <u>P</u> 6. mosquitoes |
| <u>P</u> 2. calves | <u>S</u> 7. actress |
| <u>P</u> 3. women | <u>S</u> 8. cave |
| <u>S</u> 4. she | <u>P</u> 9. we |
| <u>P</u> 5. pencils | <u>P</u> 10. leaves |

Exercise 2: The subjects and verbs that follow are in agreement. If an item is singular, write **S** before it. If it is plural, write **P**.

- | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <u>P</u> 1. people think | <u>S</u> 6. night arrives |
| <u>S</u> 2. wind howls | <u>P</u> 7. gates open |
| <u>P</u> 3. owls hoot | <u>S</u> 8. she tries |
| <u>P</u> 4. we practice | <u>S</u> 9. actor rehearses |
| <u>P</u> 5. days pass | <u>P</u> 10. girls study |

SUBJECT VERB AGREEMENT

Exercise: In each of the following sentences, two verbs are written in parentheses. First locate and underline the subject. Then circle the one that agrees with the subject.

Example: Cherry trees (lines, line) the Potomac.

1. An electric computer (solves, solve) difficult problems quickly.
2. Many colleges (has, have) computers.
3. Over one hundred thousand forest fires (is, are) reported each year.
4. Sometimes lightning (causes, cause) fires.
5. Careless people (is, are) often at fault.
6. Forest rangers (says, say) that we can prevent forest fires.
7. Some Polynesian divers (descends, descend) almost forty-five feet without special equipment.
8. The owl's eyes (makes, make) it look wise.

9. Actually, the owl (see~~s~~, see) poorly during the day.
10. Every year scientists (discovers, discover) new drugs to fight diseases.

PROBLEMS IN AGREEMENT

In the previous exercise, it was easy to make the subjects and verbs agree because the verbs followed their subjects closely and the number of the subject was clear. However, a phrase may come between the subject and verb, creating an agreement problem, or the subject may be a pronoun, the number of which is hard to determine.

A. Phrases between subject and verb

Sometimes a prepositional phrase comes between the subject and verb in a sentence.

Remember - the subject is not in the prepositional phrase. Therefore, put () around the prepositional phrase. Then locate the subject and agree the verb with the subject.

Examples: The special effects (in the movie) were particularly original.
The lights (in the stadium) have been dimmed.

Exercise: Put () around prepositional phrases. Underline subject and (circle) the correct verb.

- The girls (from John Carroll) is (are) arriving early (for class.)
- The heads(of state) arrive, arrives (for the conference.)
- The bag(of golf balls) (is, are) (for practice).
- The boxes (of chalk) is, (are) (at the chalkboard).
- A shipment(of clothing) (is, are) expected soon.
- A little practice (in the evenings) (help, helps) us play better.
- The little baby(with the dimples) (slide, slides) (down the bank.)
- The problems(with Bobby) (has, have) to be solved.
- A package(from my daughters) (was, were) left (on the doorstep).
- The courses (in college) (require, requires) a lot (of studying.)

Sometimes phrases other than prepositional ones follow the subject. Usually they are set off by commas and are introduced by words and phrases like *including, with, in addition to, together with, as well as, or accompanied by*. The subject cannot be found in any of these phrases. Therefore, cross out any phrase set off by commas. Then locate the subject and agree the verb with the subject.

Examples: Mother, ~~along with Aunt Sue~~, (has, have) left for Canada.
The successful candidate, ~~including two of her aides~~, (has, have) entered the auditorium.

Exercise: Follow the basic directions.

1. (~~Is~~, Are) New York and Chicago the two largest cities (in the United States?)
2. Sleet and some snow (is, are) predicted (for tomorrow.)
3. The dogs (in the pound) and their owners (~~was~~, were) reunited.
4. New words and new meanings (for old words) (is, are) included.
5. Your finger nail and a piece (of glass) (is, are) two means (for testing hardness) (in minerals.)
6. Both talc and gypsum (~~shows~~, show) a fingernail scratch.
7. The president (with his wife) and the vice president (~~has~~, have) just left (for the summit.)
8. The opossum and the kangaroo (is, are) members (of the same family) (of mammals.)
9. Rattlesnakes, copperheads, coral snakes, and cottonmouths (is, are) four kinds (of poisonous snakes) found (in the United States.)
10. (In large cities), subways and cabs (is, are) two popular means (of transportation.)

C. Subjects connected by “or” or “nor”

The verb agrees with the subject closer to it.

Hint: Draw a straight line after or or nor, ignoring the words before the line. Begin reading the sentence after this line.

Examples: The chief geologists or | their assistant is due to arrive tonight.
 Neither a rabbit nor | raccoons do that kind of damage in a garden.

Exercise 1: Follow the basic directions. Also use the straight line to separate the or, nor subjects.

1. Either a loan or | a scholarship (is, are) available (to selected applicants.)
2. A desk or | a bookcase (goes, go) (into that corner).
3. Neither sheets nor | towels (is, are) furnished (at camp).
4. (~~Has~~, Have) the books or | other supplies come?
5. A vocabulary notebook or | vocabulary flashcards (is, are) helpful (for review).
6. Either the clock (on the town hall) or | my watch (is, are) wrong.

7. Another boy or | girl (takes, take) the part (of the narrator).
8. A map or | a guidebook (has, have) been my constant companion (in this city).
9. Enthusiasm (for the proposal) or excitement (about it) (is, are) not the same (as solid support).
10. A course (in ceramics) or | a course (in woodworking) (is, are) recommended.

D. Indefinite Pronouns

The following common words are singular: each, either, neither, one, everyone, everybody, no one, nobody, anyone, anybody, someone, somebody.

Examples: Anyone (without tickets) is asked to see Mrs. Harris.
Each (of the newcomers) was welcomed (to the city.)
No one understands a person who mumbles.

Exercise 1: Follow the basic directions.

1. Each (of the apples) (was, were) ripe.
2. No one (except Mary and Lettie) (was, were) excited.
3. Each (try, tries) to win the game.
4. Neither (of them) (walk, walks) to school.
5. Somebody (is, are) going to be surprised!
6. Everybody (on the team) (show, shows) outstanding ability.
7. Why (hasn't, haven't) someone given us the signal?
8. Either (of the quarterbacks) (is, are) going to be the new captain.
9. (Do, Does) everyone (in the band) play well?
10. (Of all my friends), only one (has, have) written (to me).

The following common words are plural: both, few, many, several.

Examples: Few (of my neighbors) have parakeets.
Many (of them) keep dogs as pets.

Exercise 2: Follow the basic directions. Notice that both singular and plural pronouns are tested.

1. Many (of our group) (has, have) had flu shots.
2. Everyone (in the surrounding towns) (was, were) warned (about the epidemic).
3. (Of the new cases), few (is, are) serious.
4. Neither (of those paths) (leads, lead) home.
5. Each (of the stores) (gives, give) gifts (to our graduates).
6. Several (in the group) (doubts, doubt) the existence (of intelligent life) (on other planets).
7. (Has, Have) either (of you) seen an ice hockey game?
8. (In the corner) (stands, stand) one (of the suspects).
9. Many (of the fans) (of football) (think, thinks) (about little else) (during the football season).
10. Both (of the coaches) (of the varsity team) (works, work) (with the students) every afternoon.

The following common words are either singular or plural based on context: all, any, more, most, some.

Examples: Most (of my neighbors) have parakeets.
Most (of the food) was good

All (of the students) are here.
All (of the newspaper) was soaked.

Exercise 3: Follow the basic directions. Notice that both singular and plural pronouns are tested.

1. All (of the sopranos) (sing, sings) the solo part (in the operetta).
2. All (of the movie) (was, were) entertaining.
3. Most (of the test) (is, are) hard.
4. Most (of the questions) (is, are) hard.
5. Some (of the books) (is, are) inspiring.
6. Some (of the information) (is, are) unreliable.
7. I don't think any (of the students) (is, are) ready (for the test).
8. She is wondering if any (of the pie) (is, are) left.

9. More (of the house) (needs, need) to be painted.
10. More (of the students) (is, are) coming tomorrow.

Special Problems in Agreement

There are a few other constructions that may pose special problems in agreement of subject and verb. This section will cover some of these.

A. Collective Nouns

Some nouns that are singular in form name a group of people or things: class, company, family, team, group, flock, team, for example. These nouns are called collective nouns. A collective noun is singular when it refers to the group as a whole. It is plural when it represents or refers to the individuals in the group.

- Examples:*
- The jury was dismissed by the judge.
 - The faculty has decided to have a science table in the room.
 - The jury disagree on the verdict.
 - The faculty are still planning their curriculums.

Exercise: Follow the basic directions.

1. The group (was, were) going (on a trip).
2. That flock (of geese) (make, makes) a beautiful pattern (in the sky).
3. The team (is, are) celebrating its victory.
4. (In July), the committee (make, makes) their decision (about the location) (of the August picnic).
5. (In the jungle), the herd often (stampede, stampedes).
6. (After the chapter) (on research methods), the class (start, starts) their research papers.
7. Every summer the class (take, takes) many field trips.
8. The panel (has, have) differing opinions (on that topic).
9. (Is, Are) the group (in charge) (of refreshments) here yet?
10. The company (vote, votes) (for a new president) next month.

B. Sentences beginning with HERE, THERE, or WHERE

When the subject follows the verb, as in sentences beginning with there, here, or where, be careful to locate the subject and make sure that the verb agrees with it.

Introductory words, such as here, there, and where are never subjects of sentences. In these sentences, the subject usually follows the verb.

Example: Here (come, comes) Stephanie and her brother.

Exercise: Follow the basic directions.

1. Here (on your desk) (is,are) the reports (for your consideration).
2. Where (has, have) the dance been held other years?
3. There (is, are) four (of us) going (to the fair).
4. There (has, have) been rumors (of a strike).
5. Here (in this room) (is, are) the best paintings.
6. There (come, comes) the team.
7. Here (is, are) one (of the five members) (of the club).
8. Here (in class) (is, are) the time to learn.
9. There (in the hammock) (lie, lies) Carl and his dog.
10. There (is, are) the senator and the congressman (on the steps) (of the Capitol).

C. Words Stating Amount

Some words that are plural in form may be singular in meaning if they mean an amount (or unit) of something.

Examples: Thirty-five cents is enough for lunch today. (Although thirty-five cents is plural in form, it means a single amount of money. It takes a singular verb, is.)

Two weeks never seems long enough for vacation. (Although two weeks is plural, it is thought of here as a single unit of time. It takes a singular verb, seems.)

Exercise: Follow the basic directions.

1. Two cups (of flour) (seems, seem) too much (for that recipe).
2. Three days (was, were) all the time needed (for the tour).

3. Two hours (of homework) (in one subject) (is, are) unfair.
4. Three weeks (of rehearsal time) usually (proves, prove) to suffice.
5. Fifty cents (is, are) more than enough (for your allowance).

D. Titles, organizations, or countries

A title, organization, or country, even when plural in form, usually takes a singular verb.

Example: “Murders in the Rue Morgue” is an intriguing mystery.

Exercise: Follow the basic directions.

1. "The Seven Sisters" (is, are) a story (about a New England family).
2. Morgan and Company (advertises, advertise) beach bags (for a dollar).
3. The Veterans of Foreign Wars (is, are) holding its convention (in Chicago) this year.
4. The Women (was, were) written (by Clare Boothe Luce).
5. Wales (has, have) a beautiful countryside.

E. Don't and Doesn't

The words don't and doesn't (contractions of do not and does not) must, like all other verbs, agree with their subjects. Mistakes are often made with these forms.

HINT: To avoid mistakes, use **do** and **does** (take off the **n't**). Remember the singular verb ends in **s**.

Examples: Lena **doesn't** exercise enough. (Lena **does** exercise enough.)
 Those answers **don't** make sense. (Those answers **do** make sense.)

Exercise: Follow the basic directions, and use the **do/does** hint.

1. The girl (don't, doesn't) understand the problem.
2. (Don't, Doesn't) she want the prize?
3. The lettuce (don't, doesn't) look fresh.
4. That school (don't, doesn't) have a stage.
5. It (don't, doesn't) matter at all.
6. He (don't, doesn't) see the rainbow.

7. The boxer and the poodle (don't, doesn't) get along.
8. The curtains (in the room) (don't, doesn't) match the color (of the walls).
9. Mary (don't, doesn't) need to go (with me).
10. This bar (of candy) (don't, doesn't) taste good.

F. Plural-looking nouns

A few nouns, though plural in form, take a singular verb.

Examples: Mathematics **seems** easy this year.
 Mumps **is** certainly an uncomfortable disease.
 The news **was** not good.

Exercise: Follow the basic directions.

1. Economics (is, are) taught (by Professor Gray).
2. The news (on the radio) (was, were) encouraging.
3. Ethics (is, are) a code (of values).
4. Politics (appeal, appeals) (to some people).
5. Civics (was, were) my dad's best subject.
6. Measles (is are) very contagious.
7. Social Studies 101 (has, have) always been an interesting course.
8. Aerobics (is, are) a fun activity (for most youngsters).
9. Gymnastics often (require, requires) the use (of special apparatus).
10. Acrobatics (involve, involves) skills (in agility and balance).

G. Nouns ending in -ing

Occasionally the **-ing** form of the verb can be used as a noun and, therefore, as the subject of a sentence. This **-ing** subject takes a singular verb.

Examples: Learning to drive **is** an exciting experience.
 Building wooden tables **was** my dad's favorite hobby.

Exercise: Follow the basic directions.

1. Slicing tomatoes (is, are) messy.

2. Every semester, studying (for final exams) (cause, causes) stress.
3. Riding the rapids (in Colorado) (provide, provides) adventure.
4. Mowing lawns (furnish, furnishes) additional income (for youngsters).
5. Shopping (for school clothes) often (test, tests) a mother's patience.

H. I and you

I and you take the plural form of the verb. The only exception to this rule is the singular verb **am** which is used exclusively with the pronoun **I**.

Examples: I **am going** to school.
You **are going** to school.

Exercise: Follow the basic directions.

1. (Have, Has) you seen Mrs. Smith?
2. I (is, am) leaving (for my trip) (to Ohio) (on Monday).
3. (Do, Does) you want to go (to the mall) tomorrow?
4. I (know, knows) that you (has, have) been doing a lot (of work).
5. (During the night) I usually (hear, hears) strange noises.

REVIEW SECTION

In each of the review exercises, follow the basic directions and use any of the hints that apply.

EXERCISE 1:

1. The citizens (of this town) (demand, demands) police protection.
2. Glenville's Glee Club always (give, gives) a fine concert.
3. Either Kathy or | Dorothy (is) are going.
4. Both Ruth and I (go, goes) (to bed) early.
5. The man, (along with the two women), (was) were) delayed.
6. We (was, were) passed (by six cars).
7. Few (of the students) (live) lives) (in the dormitory).

8. The ice cream (melt, melts) (at room temperature).
9. No one (has, have) stolen my secret ideas!
10. The first baseman and the catcher (has, have) made many errors.
11. Mrs. Laird (speak, speaks) (with authority).
12. The guitar, accompanied (by the bass viola), (play, plays) the tune.
13. Joe and his brother always (drink, drinks) too fast.
14. Thelma, (as well as her sister), (is, are) good (at sports).
15. Neither (of my parents) (is, are) home tonight.
16. The captain (of the two teams) (is, are) Dan.
17. Where (do, does) the Chester family live?
18. I (see, sees) your uncle and cousin coming (down the street).

EXERCISE 2:

1. Someone (has, have) to do the work.
2. Steve, (along with Jim and Cindy), (was, were) there.
3. Where (is, are) you going?
4. There (go, goes) Emily and Claire.
5. Each (of the members) (has, have) contributed.
6. Ten dollars (is, are) not much money.
7. The set (of rules) (control, controls) the game.
8. Neither the boss nor | her assistant (was, were) present.
9. Here (is, are) an old and famous landmark.
10. Ralph, (along with his father), (is, are) attending the game.
11. One often (ask, asks) (for help) (from others).
12. Where (has, have) you and Rachel worked (during the summer)?

13. The leader (of the choir) (sing, sings) tenor.
14. The helpers, (as well as the leader), (has, have) to work well.
15. Everyone (hope, hopes) to find a special friend.
16. A sign (of the times) (is, are) the fashion (in clothes).
17. There (is, are) opportunities (for all).
18. Neither my sisters nor I (expect) expects) to graduate (in June).

EXERCISE 3:

1. Unfortunately, my mother (doesn't, don't) get a vacation this year.
2. Many (of the people) (in her shop) (gets, get) only a few days.
3. The safety commissioner or | the radio announcer (has, have) suggestions (for driving carefully) (on holidays).
4. Each (of us) (knows, know) how to avoid accidents.
5. Our car (doesn't, don't) have any antifreeze yet.
6. There (is, are) a briefcase, a laptop, and a tape recorder (in the office).
7. Several names (of places) (in our country) (comes, come) (from Spanish words).
8. Five hours (is, are) needed to fly (across the Atlantic).
9. Anyone (on the tennis courts) today (is, are) liable to get a sunburn.
10. The architects (wasn't, weren't) sure what kind (of building) to plan (for the new hotel).
11. The Knights of Columbus (meets, meet) every Thursday evening.
12. One (of the wheels) (wasn't, weren't) functioning properly.
13. Every one (of the girls) (do, does) her homework.
14. Classifying students (is, are) a tedious job (for a guidance counselor).
15. (Is, Are) there enough copies (of the music) to go around?
16. It (doesn't, don't) look (like a snowman).
17. Economics (is, are) a complex but fascinating subject.
18. Either the leader or | his followers (doesn't, don't) understand the instructions.