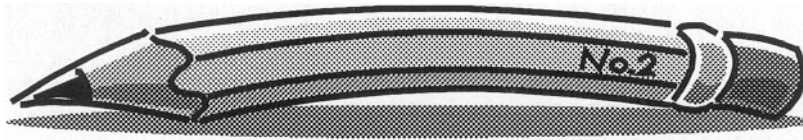


Your Name: _____



GRAMMAR PRACTICE

Making Verbs Agree with Their Subjects

© Brought to you for classroom (not commercial) use by ASU students in English Education

You probably have little trouble in figuring out how to make your verbs agree with your subjects when the subjects are clearly singular or plural as in these examples.

SINGULAR SUBJECTS

Marie plays the piano.
This book is poorly bound.
A city is a good place to buy gas.
The boy skips school all the time.

PLURAL SUBJECTS

My friends play soccer.
These books are poorly bound.
Cities are good places to buy gas.
The boys skip school all the time.

However, it is not so easy when there are complications in the way the subject is presented as with these kinds of statements:

COMPLICATION

Use of *either...or* and *Neither...nor*

Use of *each, either, neither, anyone, anybody, everybody, everything, another, little, much*

Use of such compound subjects as *Sam and Angie* or Indefinite plural pronouns such as *several, few, many, most, others, both*

The use of an appositive or parenthetical phrase, set off by commas and such words as *plus* or *as well as*.

RULE

Make the verb agree with the closer subject.
Ex. Neither my aunt nor my cousins are coming.

Use a singular verb.
Ex. Neither wants to get up at 7:00 a.m.
Nobody is here.

Use a plural verb.
Ex. Sam and Angie are going.
Several of us are angry.

Make the verb agree with the main subject.
The appositive is something extra that does not affect the verb.
Ex. My nephew, plus two or three friends, is coming with us.

PRACTICE EXERCISE

Follow these rules to figure out which verb should be used in the following sentences. Circle the appropriate form of the verb in each sentence. For extra practice, revise the subject of the sentence and then rewrite the sentence on the line using the alternate form of the verb.

Examples: Either player (know, knows) how to pitch a curve ball. (Circle *knows*)
 One of the two teachers (is, are) eligible for promotion this year. (Circle *is*)

Rewrite: Both players know how to pitch a curve ball.

1. Someone (sing, sings) a solo in the talent show.

_____.

2. Spaghetti and pizza (is, are) his favorite foods.

_____.

3. The senior judge, as well as three junior judges, (is, are) to attend the seminar.

_____.

4. There (was, were) a flat tire on the bicycle.

_____.

5. Neither Max nor Clara (use, uses) catsup on hamburgers and French fries.

_____.

6. The team, including the coach, (host, hosts) the pep rally each spring.

_____.

7. Violet, Mia and Devon's teams (play, plays) well under pressure.

_____.

8. His favorite meal (is, are) spaghetti and meatballs.

_____.

Verbs to be circled: 1. sings, 2. are, 3. is, 4. was, 5. uses 6. hosts, 7. play, 8. is.

Possible rewrites: 1. Both sing a solo... 2. Homemade spaghetti is...3. The senior judge and three junior judges are...
4. There were two flat tires... 5. Both Max and Clara use... 6. The coach and the team host... 7. Violet's team plays well... 8. His favorite foods are spaghetti and pizza.

Lesson created by Rachel Collay