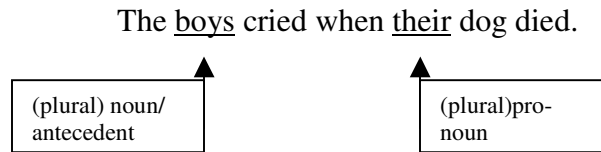


**Problems: Agreement in person, number and gender
Pronouns that are always singular**

Antecedent: an antecedent is the noun that is being replaced by a pronoun



Literally “antecedent” means “the word that comes first.” However, often a pronoun precedes its antecedent.

Because he loved her, Tom asked Colleen to go steady.
(He and her are the pronouns and Tom and Colleen are the nouns, or antecedent.)

Problem: Agreement in person, number and gender

A pronoun must agree with its antecedent in person (that is, first, second, third person).

No one can say that I did not do my duty. (first person)
You must remember your lines. (second person)
The boys knew they were in trouble. (third person)

A pronoun must agree with its antecedent in number (singular or plural).

Rocke picked up his suitcase and kissed his mother as she said goodbye to him.
The twins raced to meet their father who was bringing them a gift.

A pronoun must agree with its antecedent in gender (masculine, feminine, neuter).

I hope each girl will remember her lines.
Each boy has agreed to bring his own lunch.
The chimney cast its shadow over the three men.

Problem: Certain pronouns are always singular

Each	every	one	body	Many a
		anyone	anybody	
		someone	somebody	
		no one	nobody	
		everyone	everybody	
		none (think: not one)		

Each of the boys is doing his share of the work.

Each candidate has a fair chance

One of the answers is incorrect.

Is anybody home?

Nobody likes a cheat.

Someone has to responsible for the results.

No one knows how I have suffered.

Many a boy dreams of becoming an athlete.

Hint: When a single individual from a mixed group is indicated, custom has dictated use of the masculine pronoun. It is not incorrect to use the feminine pronoun. It IS incorrect to use a plural pronoun. (Mrs. Hall's rule-of-thumb: if the speaker is female, use she; if the speaker is male, use he).

Correct: One of the students forgot his assignment.

Correct: One of the students forgot her assignment

Wrong: One of the students forgot their assignment.

Name: _____

Exercise One

Exercises: Write the correct answer in the column beside the question. Draw a line under the subject of each sentence.

1. _____ Each of the boys knows what (he/they) has to do in the morning.
2. _____ Everyone was so busy putting away (his/her/their) books that no one heard what (his/her/their) teacher said about the assignment.
3. _____ When the meeting had barely begun, someone raised (his/their) voice in protest about the proceedings.
4. _____ All of the girls knew what (she/they) wanted to give to the counselor as a farewell gift.
5. _____ Is there anyone here who has finished (his/her/their) extra-curricular assignment?
6. _____ Many a student has found out that (he/she/they) must continue to work hard in high school if (he/she/they) wishes to improve.
7. _____ Almost everyone in our town (rides/ride) the bus line daily.
8. _____ If anyone of you (has/have) something to say, say it now.
9. _____ I hope that everyone (understands/understand) the instructions.
10. _____ Many a high school senior (wishes /wish) to apply to that college.

**Problems: Compound antecedents
Correlative conjunctions**

Problem: Agreement with compound antecedent

Every boy and every girl in the class should strive to do (his/her/their) best.

The pronoun subject in this sentence refers not to one noun but to two nouns jointed by **and**. Since such a compound antecedent is plural, the pronoun replacing it must be plural too.

Problem: Correlative conjunctions

both... and...
not only... but also...
either... or...
neither... or

Logic is important. Are both alternative subjects going to participate, or is only one or the other going to participate?

Both Joe and Frank (is/are) joining the army. (How many are enlisting?)

Either Jessica or Sue (is/are) going to make the presentation. (How many get the honor?)

These items are trickier:

Not only Joe but also Frank (is/are) joining the army.

Neither Jessica nor Sue (is/are) going to make the presentation.

Logic is again the most important factor. In the first example, is the emphasis on both Joe and Frank, or is it on Frank alone? In the second example, is the emphasis on both Jessica and Sue, or is it on each separately? For examples of this type it is best to think of the sentence as compound; that is, think of each subject as the subject of the sentence by itself.

Not only *Joe is* joining the army, but also *Frank is* joining the army.
Neither *Jessica is* making the presentation, nor *Sue is* making the presentation.

The singular form is correct because the logic of the sentence is that neither girl (singular) is going to make the presentation.

Hint: When “either” or “neither” is used as a subject by itself, silently add the word “one” after it.

Neither (has/have) answered my letters.

Neither one has answered my letters.

Problem: The choices presented by correlative conjunctions are not always in the same number or person.

Neither the boys nor their mother (is/are) at home.

Neither you nor I (are/am) qualified for the job

Hint: In an either/or or neither/nor construction, make the verb agree with the choice closer to it.

Either the *girls* or the *boys are* going to win the volleyball game.

(Both choices are plural, so the verb will be plural.)

Neither my *sister* nor my *brother is* as good a student as I am.

(Both choices are singular, so the verb will be singular.)

Either my brothers or my *sister is* responsible for trashing my room.

Either my sister or my *brothers are* responsible for trashing my room.

Since we do not know which of the alternative subjects is responsible, and one choice is singular and the other choice is plural, the verb will agree with the choice that is closer to it. Note the logic of this construction: one or the other choice is the actual subject, not both choices, but we do not know which one is correct.

Name: _____

Exercise Two

Exercises: Write the correct answer in the column beside the question. Draw a line under the subject of each sentence.

- _____ 1. Either Tom or Frank (is, are) going to give his report today.
- _____ 2. Neither the sophomores nor the juniors (is, are) ready to present their class play.
- _____ 3. Neither the Blums nor Mr. Carelli (was, were) at the meeting.
- _____ 4. Either Marilyn or her twin sisters (has, have) volunteered to play piano during the reception.
- _____ 5. Neither you nor I (are, am) the best student in the class.
- _____ 6. If either of them (has, have) come in, tell him to see me as soon as possible.
- _____ 7. Neither of the boys (is, are) willing to make the sacrifice
- _____ 8. Neither the condenser nor the tubes (was, were) working.
- _____ 9. Both Jason and Kelly (is, are) homesick.
- _____ 10. Not only Brighton but also Penfield (has, have) the day off today.

Problems: Intervening prepositional phrases
Compound subjects
Inverted sentence order
Questions

Agreement: two or more words or parts of a sentence must fit together logically.
 Subjects and verbs and pronouns and their antecedents must agree in number, gender and case.

Subject/Verb agreement: Singular subjects take singular verbs. Plural subjects take plural verbs.

Singular:	I am	I sing	I run
	You are	you sing	you run
	He/she/it is	he/she/it sings	he/she/it runs
Plural:	we are	we sing	we run
	You are	you sing	you run
	They are	they sing	they run

Problem: Intervening prepositional phrases

One of the cameras (is/are) broken.

How many cameras are broken? Which word is the subject of the sentence?

A prepositional phrase is never the subject of the sentence. It may modify the subject. The object of the preposition is never the subject.

Others besides Mary (believe/believes) that Tim is right.

The intervening prepositional phrase *besides Mary* is not the subject of the sentence. The verb must agree with the subject, *Others*.

Problem: Compound subjects

Do not confuse a subject followed by a prepositional phrase with a compound subject. Compound subjects must be joined by “and.”

Singular: *Joshua*, together with his friends, **is** remaining overnight.

Compound: *Joshua* **and** *his friends* **are** remaining overnight.

Problem: Inverted sentence order

Make sure you have located the actual subject of the sentence. **Sometimes the subject follows the verb.**

Around the corner (was/were) a church *and* a post office.
There (is/are) Joe *and* Frank.
Here (is/are) the book I lost.

Problem: Questions

Word order is often rearranged in questions. When you are given an example in the form of a question, mentally change it into a statement of fact. This way you can more easily identify the subject and verb.

(Were/was) you expecting to meet him?
(*You were* expecting to meet him.)

Name: _____

Exercise Three

Exercises: Write the correct answer in the column beside the question. Draw a line under the subject of each sentence.

- _____ 1. A program of body-building exercises (is/are) urgently needed.
- _____ 2. The detective, together with two patrolmen, (was/were) sent to watch the house.
- _____ 3. (Do/Does) your teacher intend to tell your parents about your missing assignments?
- _____ 4. Underneath the tree (was/were) John with two of his friends.
- _____ 5. All of the boys except Fred (expects/expect) to go to college.
- _____ 6. Peter, Harry, and Jane (is/are) willing to help in the fund drive.
- _____ 7. Here (comes/come) the holidays at last!
- _____ 8. Frank as well as the others (is/are) anxious about the test.
- _____ 9. (Was/Were) there any changes in the standing of the team?
- _____ 10. (Am I not/Aren't I) the one who is supposed to recite now?
- _____ 11. Only one of my sisters (was/were) invited.
- _____ 12. The ambassador, accompanied by his staff, (is/are) flying to the conference.
- _____ 13. Weakness in math as well as in social studies (prevents/prevent) him from being a good student.
- _____ 14. Many hobbies other than coin collecting (interests/interest) me.
- _____ 15. On top of the dresser (was/were) his long-missing comb and brush.
- _____ 16. The price of the rebuilt motors (is/are) too high.
- _____ 17. Talent coupled with hard work (makes/make) for outstanding performance.
- _____ 18. Here (is/are) one of the best stories I have ever read.

_____19. One of the greatest problems the world faces today (is/are) the large number of people who are starving.

_____20. One of the boys (is/are) sick.

