

UNIT 4 Subject and Verb Must Agree in Number

WRITING APPLICATION A: Using Subject-Verb Agreement

You probably would never buy gloves that had too few finger openings. Naturally, you would want the number of finger holes to match the number of fingers you have. Similarly, to prevent problems in having your message understood as you write, you need to use verbs that agree in number with your subjects. This is true no matter how many words separate each subject and verb.

EXAMPLE Each week, four members of the student volunteer group visit the children's ward at the hospital. *Each volunteer wears a clown costume and does something entertaining for the children. For example, Steve nervously juggles five balls that change color in midair. Tina pulls coins out of the children's mouths each time one of them recites a poem. Eric operates two little robots that make whizzing and beeping sounds and answer the children's questions. Stacey draws caricatures of the children. After she has finished each one, she gives it to the child to keep.*

Writing Assignment: On a separate sheet of paper, write about your participation in a club or organization. Describe some of the things you do or have done. Also, include information about the activities of individual members. Concentrate on writing a good composition. You will be able to change later any verbs you have written incorrectly.

Evaluation Checklist: Reread your first draft. Use these guidelines to help you judge the content and organization of your writing.

- ___ I have used correct subject-verb agreement.
- ___ Each of my paragraphs includes a topic sentence and supporting sentences.
- ___ My writing follows a logical order.

Revising, Proofreading, and Writing the Final Version: Revise your draft based on your evaluation. Replace any verbs that do not illustrate clearly what you want to say. Proofread your draft after you have revised it. Then write your draft in final form.

WRITING APPLICATION B: Using Verbs with Compound Subjects

In mathematics, a plus sign in an equation means that two numbers are being added. In sentences, the word *and* between two subjects usually means those subjects are being combined. When two subjects are combined, or made compound, the verb that describes what the subjects are doing should be plural. Unlike *and*, the conjunction *or* is usually used to separate subjects. When *or* is used in this way, the verb that describes what either subject is doing is singular.

EXAMPLES

1. Raquel *and* Eduardo *are* exchange students.
2. Raquel *or* Eduardo *is* an exchange student.
3. Rome *and* Florence *are* the last cities she will visit.
4. Rome *or* Florence *is* the last city she will visit.

Writing Assignment: On a separate sheet of paper, write about two places you like to visit after school or on weekends. First, write about both places together. Connect your subjects with the word *and*. Then give reasons why either place is a good place to visit. In these cases, connect your subjects with the word *or*.

Evaluation Checklist: Reread your first draft. Use these guidelines to help you judge the content and organization of your writing.

- ___ I have used a plural verb with compound subjects connected by *and*.
- ___ I have used a singular verb with compound subjects connected by *or*.
- ___ Each of my paragraphs has a topic sentence and supporting sentences.

Revising, Proofreading, and Writing the Final Version: Revise your draft based on your evaluation. Correct any sentences that show incorrect subject-verb agreement. Proofread your draft after you have revised it. Then write your draft in final form.

WRITING APPLICATION C: Using Verbs That Come Before the Subject

Drivers sometimes need to back up and turn around. That is why automobiles can be driven in reverse as well as in forward. Similarly, in writing, writers sometimes need to back up mentally to check the verb forms they are using in their sentences. This is most often true in sentences in which the verb comes before the subject. Note how the verb in each of the following sentences precedes the subject.

- EXAMPLES
1. How much *are* those black *puppies* in the window?
 2. Here *is* the *batch* of whole-grain biscuits you ordered.
 3. There *were* only twelve *students* in class that day.

Writing Assignment: On a separate sheet of paper, describe an item that has several parts. Do not name the item until the last sentence of your description. However, provide details so that your readers have clues about the identity of the item.

Evaluation Checklist: Reread your first draft. Use these guidelines to help you judge the content and organization of your writing.

- ___ I have used correct subject-verb agreement in my writing.
- ___ My description provides detailed clues about the item I have chosen.
- ___ Each of my paragraphs has a topic sentence and supporting sentences.

Revising, Proofreading, and Writing the Final Version: Revise your draft based on your evaluation. Make sure you have identified your selected item in your last sentence. Then proofread your revised draft. Write your revised draft in final form.