



SUBJECT-VERB AGREEMENT

Suggested level – B1+ intermediate

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PRONOUNS IN APPOSITION

Pronouns in apposition take the same case as the noun or pronoun of which they are appositives.

• All will attend the party – they and we. (**They** and **we** is in apposition with **all**, which is the subject of the verb **will attend**.)

So **they** and **we** are in the nominative case.

• He knew both of them – him and her.

The object of the verb **knew** is **both**. **Him** and **her** are in apposition with **both**, and therefore take the objective case.

FORM OF A PRONOUN AFTER THAN

Usually a pronoun after **than** is in the nominative case. This is because part of the verb **to be** is understood after the pronoun.

• You can be taller than she (is).

• I am as happy as they (are).

THE VERB AFTER HOW MUCH

The expression **how much** can refer either to price, or the commodity, to be bought. If **how much** refers to price, it is followed by a singular verb. If on the other hand **how much** refers to the commodity to be bought it may be followed by singular or plural verb depending on the form of the following noun or pronoun.

• How much is this?

• How much is that car?

• How much are those books?

THE SUBJUNCTIVE MOOD

The Subjunctive mood expresses a contrary-to-fact situation.

• Mother insists that Anna clean her own room (not cleans).

• I recommended that they be suspended (not are).

• We insist that he take every precaution (not takes).

The past Subjunctive mood of the verb **to be** is **were**, or **had been**.

• I wish I **were** a musician. Or I wish I **had been** a musician.

• If the witness **were** honest, the accused would be acquitted.

• Do you wish he **were** your friend?

• I wish Michael **were** the president.

The Subjunctive mood is used in the following situations:

1. (a) to express wishes:

• I wish I were a millionaire.

(b) to express conditions that are doubtful or contrary to fact. In these cases, it is used after such words as: **if**, **as if**, **though**, and **although**:

• If he **were** able, Frank would join the search party.

• Helen acted as if she **were** the only one who had failed.

2. **were**, **be** and the third person subjective forms of other verbs are used:

(a) to express commands or requests after the word **that**:

• The kidnappers demanded that the father come alone.

• The speaker asked that the audience be silent.

(b) in certain archaic phrases:

• Heaven be praised.

• Far be it for me.

• Say what he will.

WAS AND WERE AFTER IF

After **if** either **was** or **were** could be used depending on the meaning intended. **Was** can **never** be used after **if** in a clause **that** refers either to **the present** or to **the future**.

Was expresses a reality in the past.

Were expresses a contrary-to-fact situation and always refers to either **the present** or **the future time**.

• If John **were** here now, he would give the money I needed. (*present*)

• If ever I **were** to win a big prize in a lottery, I would buy a brand new car and also build a decent house. (*refers to future*)

When the clause that follows **if** refers to the past, the first and third persons singular must be followed by **was**.

Were, in such cases, is always wrong.

• If Richard **was** at the reception last night, he must have been presented to the princess.

• If I really **was** as rude as you say I was, I'm dreadfully sorry. I didn't mean to be.

• **Aster**: Where **was** Tom yesterday?

Michael: Tom **was** attending the class with us the whole day.

Aster: If he **was** with us yesterday, I wonder why I did not see him.



NOUN AS ADJECTIVE

A noun in the plural that has the function of an adjective takes the singular form.

- They live in an apartment of nine storeys.

This becomes: They live in a nine-storey apartment.

Storey is part of the compound adjective nine-storey and hence singular.

EXERCISES

1. Write the following sentences as in the example above.

- 1. Each of these tickets costs two dollars. These are...
2. That bag weighs fifty pounds. It is a...
3. A train trip from Kyiv to Sumy takes seven hours.

It is a...

- 4. This book has 200 pages. It is a...
5. There are seven letters in that word. It is a...

2. Write the word in brackets in its correct form.

- 1. Twenty miles (is, are) a long way to walk.
2. The team (has, have) gone to the locker room to change (his, their) clothes.
3. Bread and milk (was, were) our usual Sunday night supper on the farm.
4. Many a man (has, have) spent too much for a used automobile.
5. The jury (has, have) been working for days to arrive at (its, their) decision.
6. The crowd (was, were) on their feet, yelling at the tops of their decision.
7. My mother was opposed to (me, my) taking piano lessons while I was in high school.
8. Jack, Bill, and (myself, me, I) are going on a camping trip next summer.
9. She prepared some coffee and sandwiches for (whomever, whoever) was hungry.
10. My interest in animals (goes, go) back to my childhood.
11. Every of these buttons (bring, brings) in a different situation.
12. One of the faucets (need, needs) fixing.
13. Either of these coats (fits, fit) you very well.
14. The clearness of these pictures (is, are) remarkable.
15. Fresh air and exercises (stimulate, stimulates) the appetite.
16. Much time and effort (was, were) spent on the decoration.
17. Only one of the boys (doesn't, don't) live near the school.
18. Either of these answers (is, are) correct.

3. Show the grammatically correct form of the word in brackets.

- 1. Most men like (this, these) kind of shoes.
2. How much (is, are) those leather wallets?
3. Tracy avenue is the only one of our streets that (run, runs) from one end of the city to the other.

4. The owner or his friends (plan, plans) to use the boat this afternoon.

5. This is one of the greatest oil fields that (has, have) ever been discovered.

6. The orchestra (were, was) tuning up their instruments for their opening number.

7. Neither the hours nor the pay (are, is) satisfactory to most of the employees.

8. Three quarters of our wheat (was, were) eaten by the grasshoppers.

9. Are you one of those readers who (don't, doesn't) read beyond the headlines?

10. Mrs. White's greatest worry (was, were) her children.

11. Alex is one of those boys who (has, have) very little sense of humour.

12. About one of every three of our graduates now (goes, go) to college.

13. Five dollars (seem, seems) too much for dues.

14. This is one of the most freakish accidents that (has, have) ever occurred.

15. Two-thirds of the eggs (was, were) broken in shipment.

16. One of the most highly recommended safety devices (is, are) safety belts.

17. This kind of tires (gives, give) better traction in snow.

18. This pen and pencil set now (cost, costs) ten dollars.

4. Make the subject and verb agree.

1. That is the only one of those watches that (require, requires) no winding.

2. The dumping of sewage and waste (make, makes) this an unhealthful place to live.

3. Either of these doors (lead, leads) to the auditorium.

4. The knowledge of these remarkable children (amaze, amazes) television listeners.

5. It is one of those programmes that (is, are) constantly interrupted by commercials.

6. Mrs. Perry, along with her two children, (has, have) gone to Paris.

7. Each boy and each girl (is, are) to work independently.

8. Every boy and girl (has, have) been urged to attend the play.

9. Neither teacher nor pupils (is, are) invited.

10. None (is, are) so blind as those who will not see.

11. 'They' (is, are) a pronoun.

12. Doyle's 'The Five Orange Pips' (is, are) a fascinating story.

13. (Is, Are) either of the novels likely to become a best-seller?

14. The cat or her kittens (are, is) to blame for turning over the Christmas tree.

15. A simple majority (is, are) sufficient to elect Gene class secretary.



16. There (come, comes) to my mind now the two or three men who were the most influential in my life.

17. A study of the many contrasts in the poetry of Browning and Tennyson (seem, seems) a good research topic.

5. Correct the errors in agreement between the subject and the verb in the following.

1. Every door and window in the cottage were bolted.

2. Cheese, lettuce, and tomato are my favourite sandwich.

3. Mandarin, the language of millions of Chinese, top the list of the ten most widely spoken languages.

4. The secretary and treasurer of the photography club are Marvin Goldenberg.

5. Some of the paint are on sale.

6. Some of the houses is on sale.

7. All of the book are very interesting.

8. All of the actress's jewelry were imitation.

9. Six months are needed to complete the work.

10. Three-fourths of my salary go to the bank.

11. The number of the students entering college increase each year.

12. A number of these students intends to go onto vocational schools.

13. Measles are a very contagious disease.

14. The local news are on from six to seven o'clock in the evening.

15. Those scissors is dull.

16. Gymnastics take up most of my sister's spare time.

17. Ten minutes after the end of the opera, the audience were still applauding.

18. Three miles are the distance from here to the next school.

Key: 1. 1) two-dollar tickets; 2) fifty-pound bag; 3) seven-hour trip; 4) 200 page book; 5) seven-letter word.

2. 1) is; 2) have ... their; 3) was; 4) has; 5) has ... its; 6) were; 7) my; 8) myself; 9) whoever; 10) goes; 11) brings; 12) needs; 13) fits; 14) is; 15) stimulate; 16) was; 17) doesn't; 18) is.

3. 1) this; 2) are; 3) runs; 4) plan; 5) have; 6) were; 7) is; 8) was; 9) don't; 10) was; 11) have; 12) goes; 13) seems; 14) have; 15) were; 16) is; 17) gives; 18) costs.

4. 1) requires; 2) makes; 3) leads; 4) amazes; 5) are; 6) has; 7) is; 8) has; 9) are; 10) are; 11) is; 12) is; 13) Is; 14) are; 15) is; 16) come; 17) seems.

5. 1. Every door and window in the cottage *was* bolted.

2. Cheese, lettuce, and tomato *is* my favourite sandwich.

3. Mandarin, the language of millions of Chinese, *tops* the list of the ten most widely spoken languages.

4. The secretary and treasurer of the photography club *is* Marvin Goldenberg.

5. Some of the *paints* are on sale.

6. Some of the houses *are* on sale.

7. All of the *books* are very interesting.

8. All of the actress's jewelry *was* imitation.

9. Six months *is* needed to complete the work.

10. Three-fourths of my salary *goes* to the bank.

11. The number of the students entering college *increases* each year.

12. A number of these students *intend* to go onto vocational schools.

13. Measles *is* a very contagious disease.

14. The local news *is* on from six to seven o'clock in the evening.

15. Those scissors *are* dull.

16. Gymnastics *takes* up most of my sister's spare time.

17. Correct.

18. Three miles *is* the distance from here to the next school.