

## Exercises for Tutorial 4. Advanced Subject/Verb Agreement

**Principle I: Nouns that follow prepositions cannot be subjects.**

### Exercise 1

**Instructions:** The following sentences are all written in present tense. Although some of the present-tense verbs are correct for their subjects, others are not. First, find the verb and underline it. Then, using Principle I, find the subject and put brackets around it. Finally, referring to the “Correct Subject/Verb Agreement” chart, check for correct subject/verb agreement. Remember to use present tense in your corrections. The first one has been done for you. *Type, write, or copy-paste each sentence into its answer box. Then add the underline and brackets. Make corrections after the bracketed or underlined word and use **bold** for the corrections.*

1. A group of skilled ballerinas perform brilliantly on stage each season in San Francisco.

A [group] of skilled ballerinas perform **performs** brilliantly on stage each season in San Francisco.

*Once **yesterday** or **today** are added to this sentence, it is clear that the verb is “perform.” To find the subject, we ask “Who or what perform brilliantly on stage each season in San Francisco? Both “group” and “ballerinas” make sense as answers. However, the noun “ballerinas” follows the preposition “of.” According to Principle I, a noun that follows a preposition cannot be the subject of a sentence. Therefore, “group” is the subject of the sentence. The pronoun it could substitute for the noun “group.” According to the “Correct Subject/Verb Agreement” chart, when the subject of a sentence is any noun for which it could substitute, you must add “s” to the end of the present-tense verb.*

2. Our dog, unlike our cats, go for long walks and chew on large bones.

3. One of the bowls belong to his mother.

4. The movie about drag queens from different parts of Cuba intrigue Margaret.

5. During lunch, teachers in the school grades papers or talks about plans for the weekend.

6. The roses in the greenhouse shows sensitivity to light.

**Principle II:** When an indefinite pronoun is the subject of a sentence, you should choose the present-tense verb that is correct for the singular subjects, *he, she, or it*.

## Exercise 2

**Instructions:** The following sentences are all written in present tense and have indefinite pronouns as their subjects. Although some of the present-tense verbs are correct, others are not. First, find the verb and underline it. Then, find the subject and put it in brackets. Finally, check for correct subject/verb agreement. Remember to use present tense in your corrections. The first one has been done for you. *Type, write, or copy-paste each sentence into its answer box. Then add the underline and brackets. Make corrections after the bracketed or underlined word and use **bold** for the corrections.*

1. No one in Sacramento bakeries know how to make authentic cannolis.

[No one] in Sacramento bakeries know **knows** how to make authentic cannolis.

*First, you find the verb. When you temporarily add **today, yesterday or tomorrow** to the sentence, the word that changes tense is the verb, “know.” To find the subject, you then ask, who or what know how to make authentic cannolis? Both “no one” or “bakeries” make sense as answers. However, according to Principle I, since “bakeries” follows the preposition “in,” the correct subject is the indefinite pronoun, “no one.” According to Principle II, indefinite pronouns are always singular and take the present-tense verb that is correct for the subjects, he, she, or it. Referring to the “Correct Subject/Verb Agreement” chart, you can see that you should add “s” to the end of the present-tense verb, “know.”*

2. Each of the carpenters hammer the board.

3. Nobody in the Smith and Saccio families care if Ari eats the last piece of tiramisu.

4. Neither of the girls know how to shop for clothes.

5. Almost everyone play a sport at one time or another.

6. Somebody have to close the windows before we leave.

**Principle III:** When *some* or *all* are the subjects of the sentence, look at the prepositional phrase beginning with “of” to see if the noun that follows the preposition is plural or singular. If the noun is plural, do not add “s” to the present-tense verb. If the noun is singular, add “s” to the present-tense verb.

### Exercise 3

**Instructions:** The following sentences are all written in present tense. Although some of the present-tense verbs are correct for their subjects, others are not. First, underline the verb. Then, put the subject in brackets. Using Principle III and the “Correct Subject/Verb Agreement” chart, check for correct subject/verb agreement. Remember to use present tense in your corrections. The first one has been done for you. Type, write, or copy-paste each sentence into its answer box. Then add the underline and brackets. Make corrections after the bracketed or underlined word and use **bold** for the corrections.

1. [Some] of the forest look dead.

[Some] of the forest look **looks** dead.

*Once you have identified the verb and the subject, you look at the word “forest,” which follows “some of.” The word “forest” is a singular noun. In this case, “some of” refers to a portion of a single forest; the pronoun it could substitute for “some of the forest.” According to the “Correct Subject/Verb Agreement” chart, you should add “s” to the present-tense verb, “look.”*

2. Some of the children fails to learn to read by age seven.

3. Some of the water evaporates before used.

4. All of the art interest me.

5. All of the lions frighten children who visit the zoo.

**Principle IV.** In there + to be structures, you will find the subject after the verb. Use *is* or *was* for singular subjects, and use *are* or *were* for plural subjects.

## Exercise 4

**Instructions:** First, underline the verb. Then, put the subject in brackets. Using Principle IV and the “Correct Subject/Verb Agreement for There + *To Be*” chart, check for correct subject/verb agreement. The first one has been done for you. *Type, write, or copy-paste each sentence into its answer box. Then add the underline and brackets. Make corrections after the bracketed or underlined word and use **bold** for the corrections.*

1. Tonight, there is too many stars in the sky to count.

Tonight, there is **are** too many [stars] in the sky to count.

*The subject is plural; the pronoun they can substitute for “stars.” Thus, the verb should be “are.”*

2. There was several birds with clipped wings that Helen could choose from.

3. On the table, there is three white mugs.

4. There is crowds of people protesting the war in front of the Capitol Building.

5. There was many reasons that I could write my essay last night.

6. At the end of the street, there was many dogs begging the man for bones.

## Exercise 5

**Instructions:** In the following exercise, use Principles I, II, III and IV to correct the verbs that don't agree with their subjects. Remember to use present tense in your corrections. The first one has been done for you. *Type, write, or copy-paste each sentence into its answer box. Make any corrections in **bold** replacing the verb.*

1. Tonight there is many people at the restaurant.

Tonight there **are** many people at the restaurant.

2. A pile of books sit before her.

3. Nobody on the trip know how to change the tire or jumpstart the battery.

4. There is six reasons that the Giants are going to win the World Series.

5. A big group of women now searching for jobs are having no luck.

6. Everybody in the kitchen know how to make tacos.

7. Every night, all of the water evaporate.

8. Some of the women tell different stories.

9. In the band, some of the trombone players stands during their solos.

## Exercise 6

**Instructions:** This passage contains many of the agreement problems that we have gone over in this tutorial. Using Principles I, II, III and IV, correct any subjects or verbs that don't agree with each other. Remember to use present tense in your corrections. If you have any difficulty, try reading the passage aloud and reviewing the information in this tutorial. *Type, write, or copy-paste the paragraph into the answer box. Make corrections in **bold**.*

Within the state of Arizona, Rob move frequently, from city to city. After his arrival, one of his first tasks are to find an apartment close to work as he do not have a car. Usually, there is many different places to choose from, and he consider cost, location, and luxury. If one apartment has a washing machine and dryer and cost four hundred dollars a month, he prefer to rent it over another apartment with significantly less rent located two blocks from a laundromat. He never rents an apartment on the thirteenth floor since he fear heights. He also try to choose an apartment with landlords recommended by former tenants. Everybody know that it is important to find a responsible landlord. Rob and his best friend love to cook together when his friend visits, so he need a spacious, well-equipped kitchen. Rob often also look for a place with an air conditioner because there is so many scorching days and nights in Arizona. Whenever Rob find a new apartment, all of his concerns disappears. He feel relieved and call his mother. Someone understands!