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SOLVING
COMMON
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23 A

Los Angeles nightclub (host/hosts) a ranchera night, it (draw/draws) a large number of English-speaking fans in their twenties. (10) Clearly, ranchera musicians (deserve/deserves) more attention from the music industry.

◆ PRACTICE 23-2

Fill in the blank with the correct present tense form of the verb.

Example: Americans commute an average of 25 minutes to work each day. (commute)

- (1) "Extreme commuters" _____ at least 90 minutes getting to work. (spend)
- (2) Their commutes _____ much longer than the average American's trip to work. (take)
- (3) Sometimes, an extreme commuter even _____ state lines to get to work. (cross)
- (4) Often, a person _____ an extra-long commute for housing reasons. (choose)
- (5) Far outside the city, the "exurbs" _____ more affordable houses. (offer)
- (6) A more rural area usually _____ more peaceful surroundings as well. (provide)
- (7) Many extreme commuters _____ the time they spend commuting. (hate)
- (8) Others _____ the time they get to think, talk to other commuters, or listen to music. (enjoy)
- (9) In any case, extreme commuters usually _____ such a long way to work because they have to. (travel)
- (10) For better or worse, more and more people _____ extreme commuters every year. (become)

■ WRITING FIRST: Flashback

Look back at your response to the Writing First activity on page 370. Choose two sentences that contain present tense verbs, and rewrite the sentences on the lines below. Underline the subject of each sentence once and the verb twice. If the subject and verb of each sentence do not agree, correct them.

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23 B

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Subject-Verb
Agreement**B Compound Subjects**

The subject of a sentence is not always a single word. It can also be a **compound subject**, made up of two or more words. To avoid subject-verb agreement problems with compound subjects, follow these rules.

- When the parts of a compound subject are connected by *and*, the compound subject takes a plural verb.

^s ^v
John and Marsha share an office.

- When the parts of a compound subject are connected by *or*, the verb agrees with the part of the subject that is closer to it.

^s ^v
The mayor or the council members meet with community groups.

^s ^v
The council members or the mayor meets with community groups.

◆ **PRACTICE 23-3**

Underline the correct form of the verb in each of the following sentences. Make sure that the verb agrees with its compound subject.

Example: Gloves or a scarf (make/makes) a good wintertime gift.

1. Cars and trucks (fill/fills) the municipal parking lot each day.
2. Grapes or an apple (provide/provides) a nutritious addition to a lunch.
3. A guard and a video monitoring system (watch/watches) the bank's lobby during business hours.
4. A vegetable or french fries (come/comes) with the steak dinner.
5. A pianist or a guitarist (play/plays) at the club every weekend.
6. Nurses or nurse practitioners (offer/offers) round-the-clock patient care.
7. According to an old saying, fish and houseguests (smell/smells) bad after three days.
8. Flowers or a get-well balloon (cheer/cheers) people up when they are ill.
9. The restaurant owner or her daughter always (greet/greets) customers.
10. A sliding glass door or French windows (allow/allows) light into a room.

► **Word Power**

municipal relating to a town, city, or a local government

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23 C

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WRITING FIRST: Flashback

Look at the two sentences you wrote for the Flashback activity on page 372. Rewrite them with compound subjects. In each sentence, make sure the compound subjects agree with the verb.

C Be, Have, and Do

The verbs *be*, *have*, and *do* are irregular in the present tense. For this reason, they can present problems with subject-verb agreement. Memorizing their forms is the only sure way to avoid such problems.

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Subject-Verb Agreement with Be

	<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>
First person	I am	we are
Second person	you are	you are
Third person	he/she/it is	they are
	Tran is	Tran and Ryan are
	the boy is	the boys are

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Subject-Verb Agreement with Have

	<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>
First person	I have	we have
Second person	you have	you have
Third person	he/she/it has	they have
	Shana has	Shana and Robert have
	the student has	the students have

Subject-Verb Agreement with Do

	<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>
First person	I do	we do
Second person	you do	you do
Third person	he/she/it does	they do
	Ken does	Ken and Mia do
	the book does	the books do

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Subject-Verb Agreement

PRACTICE 23-4

Fill in the blank with the correct present tense form of the verb *be*, *have*, or *do*.

Example: Sometimes, people do damage without really meaning to. (do)

- (1) Biologists _____ serious worries about the damage that invading species of animals can cause. (have)
- (2) The English sparrow _____ one example. (be)
- (3) It _____ a role in the decline in the number of bluebirds. (have)
- (4) On the Galapagos Islands, cats _____ another example. (be)
- (5) Introduced by early explorers, they currently _____ much damage to the eggs of the giant tortoises that live on the islands. (do)
- (6) Scientists today _____ worried about a new problem. (be)
- (7) This _____ a situation caused by wildlife agencies that put exotic fish into lakes and streams. (be)
- (8) They _____ this to please those who enjoy fishing. (do)
- (9) Although popular with people who fish, this policy _____ major drawbacks. (have)
- (10) It _____ one drawback in particular: many species of fish have been pushed close to extinction. (have)

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WRITING FIRST: Flashback

Look back at your response to the Writing First activity on page 370. Have you used a form of *be*, *have*, or *do* in any of your sentences? If so, copy these sentences on the lines below. Have you used the correct forms of *be*, *have*, and *do*? Correct any agreement errors.

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D Words between Subject and Verb

Don't be confused when a group of words (for example, a prepositional phrase) comes between the subject and the verb. These words do not affect subject-verb agreement.

CORRECT ^s High levels of mercury ^v occur in some fish.

CORRECT ^s Water in the fuel lines ^v causes an engine to stall.

CORRECT ^s Food between the teeth ^v leads to decay.

An easy way to identify the subject of the sentence is to cross out the words that come between the subject and the verb.

High levels ~~of mercury~~ occur in some fish.

Water ~~in the fuel lines~~ causes an engine to stall.

Food ~~between the teeth~~ leads to decay.

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FOCUS Words between Subject and Verb

Look out for words such as *in addition to*, *along with*, *together with*, *as well as*, *except*, and *including*. Phrases introduced by these words do not affect subject-verb agreements.

^s St. Thomas, ~~along with St. Croix and St. John~~, ^v is part of the United States Virgin Islands.

◆ PRACTICE 23-5

In each of the following sentences, cross out the words that separate the subject and the verb. Then, underline the subject of the sentence once and the verb that agrees with the subject twice.

Example: The messages ~~on the phone~~ say/says that Carol is out of town.

1. Each summer, fires from lightning (cause/causes) a great deal of damage.
2. Global warming from pollution (make/makes) the earth hotter.
3. One out of ten men (gets/get) prostate cancer.
4. The wood stove in the living room (heat/heats) the entire house.

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23 E

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Subject-Verb Agreement

5. Trans fat in a variety of foods (lead/leads) to increased rates of heart disease.
6. A good set of mechanic's tools (costs/cost) a lot of money.
7. New Orleans, along with other Gulf Coast cities, (suffers/suffer) from severe flooding.
8. The United States as well as Germany and Japan (produces/produce) the world's best cars.
9. Fans at a concert (gets/get) angry if the band is late.
10. The book on the table (look/looks) like an interesting story.

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■ WRITING FIRST: Flashback

Look back at your response to the Writing First activity on page 370. Can you find any sentences in which a prepositional phrase comes between the subject and the verb? If so, write each subject and verb on the lines below.

<i>Subject</i>	<i>Verb</i>
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Now, correct any errors in subject-verb agreement.

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E Collective Noun Subjects

Collective nouns are words (such as *family* and *audience*) that name a group of people or things but are singular. Because they are singular, they always take singular verbs.

The ^steam ^vpractices five days a week in the gym.

Frequently Used Collective Nouns

army	club	family	jury
association	committee	gang	mob
band	company	government	team
class	corporation	group	union

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◆ PRACTICE 23-6

Fill in the blank with the correct present tense form of the verb.

Example: The club is supposed to meet every Tuesday. (be)

1. The jury usually _____ a verdict after much discussion. (reach)
2. Before the exam, the class _____ into study groups. (break)
3. Each year, the family _____ to the beach for a vacation. (go)
4. Every year, the corporation _____ a new health plan for its employees. (establish)
5. A group of lions _____ resting under the trees. (be)

■ WRITING FIRST: Flashback

Look back at your response to the Writing First activity on page 370. Can you find any sentences that have collective nouns as subjects? If so, check carefully to make sure the subjects and verbs agree. If they do not, revise each incorrect sentence. Write the correct form of each verb on the lines below.

Collective Noun Subject

Verb

_____	_____
_____	_____

F Indefinite Pronoun Subjects

Indefinite pronouns—*anybody*, *everyone*, and so on—do not refer to a particular person, place, or idea.

Most indefinite pronouns are singular and take singular verbs.

^s No one ^v likes getting up early.

^s Everyone ^v likes to sleep late.

^s Somebody ^v likes beets.

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23 F

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Subject-Verb
Agreement*Singular Indefinite Pronouns*

another	either	neither	one
anybody	everybody	nobody	somebody
anyone	everyone	no one	someone
anything	everything	nothing	something
each	much		

A few indefinite pronouns (*both, many, several, few, others*) are plural and take plural verbs.

^s Many ^v were left homeless by the flood.

FOCUS Indefinite Pronouns as Subjects

If a prepositional phrase comes between the indefinite pronoun and the verb, cross out the prepositional phrase to help you identify the sentence's subject.

^s Each ~~of the boys~~ ^v has a bike.

^s Many ~~of the boys~~ ^v have bikes.

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◆ **PRACTICE 23-7**

Circle the correct verb in each sentence.

Example: Each of the three streams in our area (is/are) polluted.

- One of the streams no longer (have/has) any fish.
- Another (contain/contains) a lot of algae.
- Everybody (want/wants) to improve the situation.
- However, no one (are/is) willing to do anything.
- Somebody (need/needs) to take the lead.
- Everyone (know/knows) that pollution is difficult to control.
- Neither of the candidates (seem/seems) willing to act.
- Whenever anyone (ask/asks) them for suggestions, neither (have, has) any.

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► **Word Power**

algae water-dwelling organisms that look like plants but have no roots, stems, or leaves

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23 G

- 9. According to the candidates, everything possible (is/are) being done.
- 10. One of my friends (say/says) that she will not vote for either candidate.

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WRITING FIRST: Flashback

Look back at your response to the Writing First activity on page 370. Do any of your sentences contain indefinite pronoun subjects? Write each indefinite pronoun subject and its verb on the lines below. Do all the verbs agree with their indefinite pronoun subjects? Correct any errors below.

Indefinite Pronoun Subject

Verb

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

G Verbs before Subjects

A verb always agrees with its subject—even if the verb comes *before* the subject. In questions, for example, word order is reversed, with the verb coming before the subject or with the subject coming between two parts of the verb.

v s

Where is the bank?

v s v

Are you going to the party?

If you have trouble identifying the subject of a question, answer the question with a statement. (In the statement, the subject will come before the verb.)

v s s v

Where is the bank? The bank is on Walnut Street.

