

Agreement in Number

Reteaching

A verb must agree with its subject in number. Number refers to whether a word is singular or plural. Singular subjects take singular verbs; plural subjects take plural verbs.

This **horse runs** fast. (singular subject and verb)

Few **horses run** faster. (plural subject and verb)

In a sentence with a verb phrase, the first helping verb agrees with the subject.

Lately this **horse has** been running better than ever before.

A. Identifying Subjects and Verbs That Agree in Number

In each sentence, underline the subject and the verb. On the line following the sentence, write whether the two parts of the sentence **Agree** or **Disagree** in number.

1. At first horses were used only for hunting and war. _____
2. Now horses serves us in many other ways. _____
3. Ancient horse fossils have been excavated near the Mississippi. _____
4. The fox-sized ancient horse has developed into the heavy draft horse, the short pony, and the light saddle or riding horse. _____
5. Zebras and donkeys belongs to the horse family also. _____
6. A horse's size is measured by hands, that is, the distance on the palm between the index and the little finger. _____
7. A mature stallion stand about 18 hands at the withers, the high point on the back at the base of the neck. _____
8. Arabians make good saddle horses. _____
9. Bay refers to coats of brown ranging from reddish brown and tan to sandy. _____
10. Sorrel name the color of horses with lighter chestnut coats. _____

B. Making Subjects and Verbs Agree in Number

In each sentence, underline the verb in parentheses that agrees with the subject.

1. The term "quarter horse" (identify, identifies) a special American breed of horse.
2. Quarter horses (is, are) so named because they are the fastest horses in the quarter-mile race.
3. These horses (was, were) first bred over 200 years ago.
4. In those days, the race track (was, were) cut through dense forests and rarely ran more than a quarater-mile long.
5. In the American West of today, people (uses, use) this horse for work that requires quick starts and fast turns.
6. Young horses (are, is) known as foals.
7. Off the Virginia coast, Chincoteague Island (has, have) become noted for its annual wild pony roundup and auction.

Words Between Subject and Verb

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The subject of a verb is never found in a prepositional phrase or an appositive phrase. Such phrases may separate the subject from the verb. To find the subject, look at the words before the phrase. Make sure the verb agrees with the subject.

Prepositional Phrases

This string of multicolored beads **glitters**. (singular subject and verb)

The beads on the string **reflect** the light. (plural subject and verb)

Appositive Phrases

Jewelry, bracelets, necklaces, rings, and such, **has been** popular with humans from earliest times. (singular subject and verb)

A. Identifying Subjects and Verbs

Underline the subject and verb in each sentence. (Do not underline appositive phrases.) On the line, identify whether the subject and verb are **singular** or **plural**.

EXAMPLE The necklace, as well as the matching earrings, is silver. *singular*

1. Earth's hardest substance, the diamond, originates 75 miles under the earth. _____
2. The diamond, a stone of crystallized pure carbon, is the most prized of gems. _____
3. The rich diamond mines of Africa remain the world's major diamond producers. _____
4. Most diamonds for jewelry are tinged with yellow. _____
5. Industrial diamonds, on the other hand, have a gray or brown appearance. _____
6. The toughness of diamonds makes them ideal for industrial use. _____
7. Diamonds of the greatest rarity and value appear colorless or pale blue. _____

B. Making Subjects and Verbs Agree

Draw a line through any phrase that separates the subject from the verb. Underline the verb that agrees with the subject.

1. A gem show with its hundreds of precious stones (provide, provides) an afternoon of exquisite beauty.
2. Diamonds of every color, cut, and size (sparkle, sparkles) under neon lights.
3. Other precious gems such as brilliant rubies, lustrous pearls, luminous sapphires, and bright emeralds (are, is) also very beautiful.
4. Korean amethysts, the world's clearest variety, (glow, glows) pure and translucent.
5. Smooth jade of milky green (are, is) set off in a ring by tiny, flashing diamonds.
6. Spectators, transfixed by the beauty of the jewels, (move, moves) about slowly.
7. Armed guards, each in a strategic position, (keep, keeps) watchful guard.
8. The show, merely a limited display of earth's generous riches, (take, takes) your breath away.