

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Subject-Verb Agreement



### SETTING THE STAGE OPENING ACTIVITY

Look at the comic below.



Why is the veterinarian probably confused by the nurse's actions?

*(sample answer) The vet is confused because the nurse only gave her one milk dropper, and she needs more than one to feed the newborn rabbits.*

## Behind the Scenes

### Objective

Students will identify and correct errors in subject-verb agreement.

### Setting the Stage

approx. 5 min.

### Delivery

**Have students complete the Setting the Stage activity independently.**

Alternatively, you may choose to have students complete this activity in pairs.

**Lead a discussion about the importance of subject-verb agreement.**

Have students share their responses to the activity. The discussion should be guided by student responses, but you may wish to address the following points:

- The veterinarian did not use the right verb to indicate to the nurse that she meant more than one newborn.
- Subjects of sentences may be either singular or plural and verb forms change accordingly.

# Dress Rehearsal

 approx. 15 min.

## Delivery

### Introduce the vocabulary terms for this lesson.

Read the vocabulary words and their definitions.

### Introduce subject-verb agreement.

Read the introduction aloud with students.

- Emphasize that verbs change forms to match the subject.
- Explain that the subject and verb forms must match or agree in order for the sentence to make sense.

### Point out the question and response beneath the introduction.

Complete the exercise together.

Explain that in order for the nurse's comment to make sense, the subject and verb must agree. In this case, changing the subject from many rabbits to one rabbit will correct the subject-verb agreement problem.

### Teacher's Note

The subject of a sentence may be difficult to identify for a variety of reasons: it may be separated from the verb by a phrase with another noun in it (e.g., "The sound of bells awakens us."). It may be a compound subject (e.g., "The dog and the cat belonging to Bill need brushing."). It may be an indefinite pronoun (e.g., "Each of the students feels satisfied."). You may wish to point out constructions such as these to students so that they will become familiar with them.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_



## DRESS REHEARSAL

INSTRUCTION & GUIDED PRACTICE

### VOCABULARY TERMS

**Subject:** Noun or pronoun that performs the action of the verb

**Verb:** Word that names the action performed by the subject

### INTRODUCTION

Every sentence must have a **subject** and a **verb** that agree. The verb takes a different form depending on whether the subject is singular or plural. Some subjects may be difficult to identify as either singular or plural.

**For example:** In the Setting the Stage activity, the nurse did not understand that the vet was referring to more than one bunny. If the vet had said, "The newborns *are* hungry," the nurse would have understood because the verb *are* is used with plural subjects.

- How could the cartoon in the Opening Activity be changed to match the current statement?

*(sample answer) Instead of many rabbits, there should just be one.*

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**DRESS REHEARSAL**  
(continued)

The table below shows singular and plural sentences with correct subject-verb agreement.

**Examples of Correct Subject-Verb Agreement**

**Sentences with Singular Subjects and Agreeing Verbs**

- Each of them makes a difference.
- Our team won again.
- The news makes me think.
- Social studies is a difficult class.
- Three dollars is all I have.
- Two hours is too long to wait.
- More than one dish has raisins in it.
- Everyone has a good time.

**Sentences with Plural Subjects and Agreeing Verbs**

- A piece of bread and an egg are all you need.
- A few have signs of age.
- All of them have difficulty.

Determine whether each subject is plural or singular. Circle the correct verb form.

1. Physics is / are my favorite class.
2. The lessons is / are always interesting.
3. Math and science is / are closely related.
4. The class meets / meet every Tuesday.
5. Forty-five minutes never seems / seem long enough.
6. More than one experiment runs / run longer than one class period.

# Dress Rehearsal

## Delivery

**Point out the Subject-Verb Agreement table at the top of the page.**

Read the examples of correct subject-verb agreement together as a class.

- Explain that some subjects are hard to identify as either singular or plural.
- Encourage students to read the entire sentence closely when they are unsure if a subject is singular or plural.

**Guide students through the exercise underneath the table.**

Complete the revision of the sentences as a class by identifying whether the subjects are plural or singular and selecting the correct verb form for each subject.

- For sentence 1, explain that “physics” is singular because it is one subject, as is English or history, so the correct verb must be singular as well. Emphasize that just because “physics” ends with an “s” does not mean that it is a plural noun.
- For sentence 2, point out that “lessons” is plural, so the plural verb form “are” provides subject-verb agreement.
- For sentence 3, let students know that since there is more than one subject in this sentence (“math and science”), the verb form should be plural.
- For sentence 4, clarify that “class” is singular, so the singular verb form “meets” provides subject-verb agreement.
- For sentence 5, explain that “forty-five minutes” describes a period of time. Even though the number of minutes is technically plural, the singular time period necessitates the use of a singular verb form.
- For sentence 6, emphasize that the singular verb form “runs” corresponds to the “one experiment” in the subject phrase. Point out that if this phrase were changed to “more than two experiments,” the verb form would change to “run.”

# Dress Rehearsal

## Delivery

Have students revise an essay by selecting the correct verb form.

Complete the revision of the essay as a class by identifying whether the subjects are plural or singular and selecting the correct verb form for each subject.

- For sentence 1, explain that the subject is “table,” which means that it is singular and should take “shows” as the verb.
- For sentence 2, point out that the subject “each” is singular, so “is” is the most appropriate verb.
- For sentence 3, let students know that “atomic number” is the subject. Since it is singular, it can take the verb “is.”
- For sentence 4, point out that “number” is the singular subject in this sentence, and “makes” is the singular verb that accompanies it.
- For sentence 5, encourage students to select the verb that matches the singular subject, “Number 1.”
- For sentence 6, explain that the subject, “Number 112,” is singular, so it takes the verb “has.”
- For sentence 7, tell students that the plural subject “elements” corresponds to the plural verb “were.”
- For sentence 8, clarify that the subject “atomic mass” is singular, so the correct verb is “is.”
- For sentence 9, point out that the plural verb form “know” accompanies the plural subject “scientists.”
- For sentences 10 and 11, remind students that the subjects in this sentence are the plural “isotopes” and “molecules” (not the singular “element,”) so they should take a plural verb form.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_



### DRESS REHEARSAL (continued)

The following is a rough draft of an essay explaining how the elements are organized on the periodic table. Read the essay and determine whether each subject is plural or singular. Then circle the correct answers.

ROUGH DRAFT

## The Periodic Table of Elements

The periodic table of elements shows / show all the known elements. Each of the elements is / are arranged in order of its atomic number. The atomic number is / are the number of protons in the nucleus of the atom. This number makes / make each element different from the others. Number 1, hydrogen, has / have one proton in its nucleus. Number 112, ununbium, has / have 112 protons.

At one time, elements was / were arranged by atomic mass instead of by atomic number. Atomic mass is / are the combined mass of protons and neutrons in the nucleus. Scientists now knows / know that different molecules of the same element may have different atomic masses. This is because different isotopes of an element contains / contain different numbers of neutrons. In contrast, all molecules of an element has / have the same number of protons.

16

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**SHOW TIME**  
INDEPENDENT PRACTICE

The following is a rough draft of an essay comparing calories and nutrition. Read the essay and determine whether each subject is plural or singular. Then circle the correct answers.

ROUGH DRAFT

## Calories and Nutrition

Healthy eating involves / involve choosing nutritious foods to fill up on. Calories and nutrition is / are two different things. Everyone needs / need to get enough nutrients in their diet. Some foods has / have more nutrients than others. Foods that is / are high in fat or added sugar tends / tend to be high in calories but relatively low in nutrients. These includes / include candy, sweet drinks, greasy meats, and foods fried in fat or oil. Unfortunately, many people finds / find these foods more appetizing and convenient than healthier food choices. Fast food, prepackaged snacks, and "junk food" is / are ready to eat and easy to buy. People who fills / fill up on these foods often gets / get fewer nutrients than they needs / need in their diet. In contrast, whole grains, lean meats, fruits, and vegetables provides / provide more nutrition with fewer calories. Filling up on these foods gives / give your body the nourishment it needs. A healthy diet and adequate exercise helps / help you to perform well each day and prevents / prevent possible health problems as you grow older.

## Show Time

approx. 20 min.

### Delivery

Have students complete the Show Time activity.

As students work, observe and assist when necessary. Redirect students as needed by asking them questions about their work. Effective questions include the following:

- Who or what is doing something in this sentence? Is the subject plural or singular?
- Which verb form agrees with the subject?

### Teacher's Note

Students who are accustomed to using and hearing nonstandard English may have particular difficulty identifying errors in subject-verb agreement. You may wish to inform these students that constructions that sound right to them may be considered incorrect according to Standard English conventions.

Reserve a few minutes to review the answers as a class.

You may wish to discuss each of the questions in this exercise, or you may choose specific questions that were especially challenging for students.

- Remind students that they should examine an entire sentence or even group of sentences before they identify the subject. In many cases (as in underlined sections 2, 9, 13, 15, and 16), the noun that is listed closest to the verb may be only part of the entire subject.
- In some cases, the subject of the sentence may only be implied. For example, in underlined section 14, the subject of the sentence is really the *act* of filling up on the foods. Students should always ask themselves, "Who or what is completing the action in this sentence?" when they identify subjects.
- Remind students that, usually, the plural form of a verb ends in "s" and the singular form does not. Point out that this is the opposite of the structure of regular plural nouns, and that students can avoid most subject-verb confusion by keeping this opposition in mind.

# Encore! Encore!

## Extension Activities

### Writing Extension

Have students analyze their own writing for correct subject-verb agreement. Instruct students to make revisions as necessary. You may wish to have students work with an existing piece of writing or have them draft an essay explaining several ways they can improve their diet.

### Group Project

Engage students in a game of concentration by correctly matching subjects and verbs. Have pairs of students create three sentences with correct subject-verb agreement. Students should write each sentence in a single line on a piece of paper. Have students cut each sentence into strips. Then have students cut their sentences to separate the subject from the verb (e.g., Each of them / makes a difference.). Have students play Concentration with another set of partners. Student groups should mix their sentence parts, turn over the pieces of paper, and take turns making matches.

### Reteaching

Put a shared paragraph of text on an overhead projector or digital whiteboard to model the process of matching subjects to verbs. As students look on, highlight the subject of a sentence in one color. Then highlight the verb that is associated with that sentence in the same color. If the subject of a sentence is implied, write the subject in the margins of the paragraph. Repeat this process several times, as you allow students to help you identify the subjects and verbs in each sentence.



### Content Background

Noncount nouns (*contentment, economics*) are singular even if they end in “s.”

*Example:* The iron works is closed.

Compound subjects (two or more nouns or pronouns connected by “and”) count as plural.

*Example:* The kittens and their mother are sleeping.

Collective nouns (*group, assembly, party, team*) are singular.

*Example:* The crowd is thinning.

Amounts (*two ounces, five dollars, four days*) and mathematical sums are usually treated as singular nouns.

*Example:* Three thousand calories is more than most people need.

Some indefinite pronouns (*all, any, most, more, none*) may be singular or plural depending on the nouns to which they refer.

*Example:* Most [of the cookies] are broken.

*Example:* Most [of the dough] is frozen.