

■ ■ Grammar Spy™ — Subject-Verb Agreement Drills

Focused Practice on Tricky Cases · Intermediate–Advanced · Answer Key Included · © Grammar Spy

Drill 1: Subjects Separated from Verbs

Rule: The subject determines the verb form — ignore words between the subject and verb. Prepositional phrases, relative clauses, and appositives do not change the subject number.

Directions: Choose the correct verb form.

1. The box of chocolates (is / are) on the table.
2. The players on the team (practice / practices) every afternoon.
3. The woman with three cats (live / lives) next door.
4. The results of the experiment (show / shows) improvement.
5. A bouquet of roses (was / were) delivered this morning.

Drill 2: Compound Subjects

Rule: Subjects joined by *and* take a plural verb. Subjects joined by *or* / *nor* — the verb agrees with the nearest subject. Exception: if the compound subject refers to a single entity ("peanut butter and jelly"), it takes a singular verb.

6. Tom and his brother (is / are) joining the team.
7. Neither the teacher nor the students (was / were) aware of the change.
8. Either the dogs or the cat (has / have) eaten the food.
9. Macaroni and cheese (is / are) my favorite meal.
10. Neither she nor her friends (want / wants) to leave early.

Drill 3: Indefinite Pronouns

Rule: *Everyone, everybody, someone, nobody, each, every, either, neither* → singular verb. *Both, few, many, several* → plural verb. *Some, all, most, none, any* → depends on the noun they refer to.

11. Everyone in the class (has / have) completed the assignment.
12. Several of the answers (was / were) incorrect.
13. None of the water (has / have) been contaminated.
14. Each of the students (is / are) responsible for a chapter.
15. Some of the cake (is / are) left over.

16. Most of the books (has / have) been returned.

Drill 4: Tricky Subjects

Rule: Collective nouns (team, family, class) are usually singular when acting as one unit. Titles, amounts, and measurements take singular verbs. "There is / there are" depends on the subject that follows.

17. The committee (has / have) reached a decision.
18. Fifty dollars (is / are) a lot for a textbook.
19. There (is / are) several reasons for the delay.
20. The news (is / are) on at six o'clock.
21. Mathematics (is / are) my favorite subject.
22. There (is / are) a pen and two notebooks on the desk.
23. The audience (was / were) clapping enthusiastically.
24. Three miles (is / are) a long distance to walk.
25. The pair of scissors (is / are) in the top drawer.

■ **Score:** ____ / 25

23–25: Master Agent · 18–22: Senior Agent · 13–17: Field Agent · Below 13: Cadet — Review the Rules!

■ Answer Key

1. is

2. practice

3. lives

4. show

5. was

6. are

7. were

8. has

9. is

10. want

11. has

12. were

13. has

14. is

15. is

16. have

17. has

18. is

19. are

20. is

21. is

22. is

23. was

24. is

25. is

■ **Spy Tip:** The most common agreement trap is a prepositional phrase between the subject and verb. Always identify the true subject by mentally removing phrases that start with *of*, *with*, *in*, *on*, *between*, *among*, *along with*, *as well as*, *together with*. These phrases never change the subject's number.