

Lesson
1

Agreement in Number

Teaching

A verb must agree with its subject in number. **Number** refers to whether a word is singular—naming one—or plural—naming more than one.

A singular subject takes a singular verb.

That **boy follows** a trail. (singular subject, singular verb)

A plural subject takes a plural verb.

Those **boys follow** a trail. (plural subject, plural verb)

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

For the past hour the **boys have been following** the trail.

The **contractions** *doesn't* and *don't* are short forms of *does not* and *do not*. Use *doesn't* with all singular subjects except *I* and *you*. Use *don't* with all plural subjects, *I*, and *you*.

Doesn't this **tree look** old? **Don't** those **trees look** tall?

A. Making Subjects and Verbs Agree in Number

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

1. The turtles (was, were) sunning themselves on a log.
2. Marie (was, were) looking for dragonflies.
3. Her teacher (want, wants) her to write a paper on them.
4. Arthur (sketches, sketch) in his notebook.
5. Anna and Marie (has, have) never seen cattails before.
6. The teacher (says, say) cattails are edible.
7. They (was, were) disappointed when they tried eating one.
8. Jim (has, have) captured a garter snake.
9. He (assures, assure) everyone that it is not poisonous.
10. Fred (is, are) calling it a "garden snake."

B. Identifying Subjects and Verbs That Agree in Number

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

1. Fred and John wants adventure on this hike. _____
2. They is grabbing at a turtle. _____
3. Their teacher reminds them of their promise not to remove any plants or animals. _____
4. The students has agreed to that rule. _____
5. The turtles have disappeared under the water. _____

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More Practice

A. Making Subjects and Verbs Agree in Number

On the line following each sentence, write the present tense form of the verb that agrees with the subject.

1. The captain (board) the ship early this evening. _____
2. The musicians (practice) diligently. _____
3. Usually, the plumber (arrive) on the work site before the carpenter. _____
4. The French teacher (like) browsing through bookstores. _____
5. Tom (be) searching for a quote from Shakespeare. _____
6. Fritz (think) the pasta dish is delicious. _____
7. The team members (go) to the library together. _____
8. Thomas (have) been working on that problem for a half hour. _____
9. I (be) the one who spoke up when nobody else would. _____
10. Marty (feel) she knows the piece well enough now. _____

B. Correcting Agreement Errors

In each sentence, underline the subject and circle the verb. If the verb agrees with the subject, write **Correct** on the line to the right. If it does not agree, write the correct verb.

1. José are searching for leopard frogs. _____
2. Mary were looking among the bushes. _____
3. I were observing the water striders. _____
4. They actually stand on the water surface. _____
5. Their feet makes little indentations on the surface. _____
6. How many students is on that bus? _____
7. They were told to bring their lunches. _____
8. One student have brought a net. _____
9. How many sets of wings do dragonflies have? _____
10. How do dragonflies and damselflies differ? _____