ESOL E2 – Subject verb agreement

# of 18 – Welcome

Welcome to this session on subject verb agreement.

This session will cover:

* What subject verb agreement is
* Locating the subject and verb
* Identifying if the subject is singular or plural

# of 18 – What is agreement?

A verb and its subject must match. If the subject of a verb does not match the verb, we say that the verb and subject do not agree.

Compare these two sentences:

1. I are sad.

In this sentence, the subject and verb do not agree.

2. I am sad.

In this sentence, the subject and verb agree.

# of 18 – Subject verb agreement

A verb and its subject must match in number.

If the **verb** is singular, then the subject must be singular. Singular means one.

For example:

The boy is in the **car**.

The singular verb (is) matches with the singular subject (boy). Therefore, the sentence is correct.

If the **verb** is plural, the subject must be plural. Plural means more than one.

For example:

The boys **are** in the car.

The plural verb (are) matches with plural subject (boys). Therefore, the sentence is correct.

# of 18 – Subject verb agreement - continued

Now lets’ look at what happens when the verb and subject do not match.

The boy **are** in the car.

The singular subject (boy) does not match with the plural verb (are). Therefore, the sentence is NOT correct.

The boys **is** in the car.

The plural subject (boys) does not match with the singular verb (is). This sentence is also NOT correct.

# of 18 – Locating the subject and verb

In most English sentences, the subject comes before the **verb**.

For example:

* Saaj **sat** on the floor
* Suzanne **felt** tired
* Todd **jumped** in a puddle

# of 18 – Locating the subject and verb - continued

To find the subject of a sentence, first find the verb and then ask who or what it does. The verb is easier to spot because it is usually an action and it changes form to show tense.

Let’s try to find the subject of this sentence:

“Peter ate a sandwich.”

Question: What is the action?

Answer: ate (VERB)

Question: What or who ate?

Answer: Peter (SUBJECT)

By asking these two simple questions, we have identified that the verb is ‘ate’ and the subject is ‘Peter’.

# of 18 – Subject – singular or plural

Sometimes it is easy to identify whether the subject is singular or plural.

For example:

* The dog is sleeping (singular)
* The boys are playing in the garden (plural)
* The toys are all over the floor (plural)
* The bottles are lined up in a row (plural)
* The car won’t start (singular)
* The sun is shining (singular)

In these sentences, the plural subjects all end in ‘s’ and the singular subjects don’t.

# of 18 – Tricky singular words

However, some subjects seem plural but are considered to be singular. Watch out for these ones!

These words are always singular:

-ONE words:

* Anyone
* Everyone
* Someone
* No one

-BODY words:

* Anybody
* Everybody
* Somebody
* Nobody

-THING words:

* Anything
* Everything
* Something
* Nothing

# of 18 – Tricky singular words - continued

Watch out for these words which end in ‘s’ but are considered singular.

1. Amounts of money

For example:

A thousand pound**s** is a lot to ask for.

2. Words that have no ending other than ‘s’

For example:

The new**s** was exciting.

# of 18 – Singular words ending in ‘s’

Words that refer to groups are usually considered singular because the members of the group act as one unit.

For example:

* The class is going on a trip today
* The jury is deliberating
* The team is going to win
* The union is fighting for the workers’ rights
* The corporation is enormous

# of 18 – Question 1

Select the correct verb from the choices below to complete the following sentence.

“All of the children who sat the exam **blank** passed.”

1. has
2. have

Answer: The correct answer is **b)**. The sentence should read “All of the children who sat the exam **have** passed.” Because the subject (children) is plural, the verb must also be plural (have).

# of 18 – Question 2

Select the correct verb from the choices below to complete the following sentence.

“Benji **blank** not funny.”

1. is
2. are

Answer: The correct answer is **a)**. The sentence should read “Benji **is** not funny.” Because the subject (Benji) is singular, the verb must also be singular (is).

# of 18 – Question 3

Select the correct verb from the choices below to complete the following sentence.

“Martyn always **blank** a blue tie.”

1. wears
2. wear

Answer: The correct answer is **a)**. The sentence should read “Martyn always **wears** a blue tie.” Because the subject (Martyn) is singular, the verb must also be singular (wears).

# of 18 – Question 4

Select the correct word from the choices below to complete the following sentence.

“Nobody **blank** to do the washing up.”

1. want
2. wants

Answer: The correct answer is **b)**. The sentence should read “Nobody **wants** to do the washing up.” Because the subject (nobody) is singular, the verb must also be singular (wants).

# of 18 – Question 5

Select the correct word from the choices below to complete the following sentence.

“The books **blank** arranged by author.”

1. are
2. is

Answer: The correct answer is **a)**. The sentence should read “The books **are** arranged by author.” Because the subject (books) is plural, the verb must also be plural (are).

# of 18 – Question 6

Select the correct word from the choices below to complete the following sentence.

“The parents **blank** watching the school play.”

1. like
2. likes

Answer: The correct answer is **a)**. The sentence should read “The parents **like** watching the school play.” Because the subject (parents) is plural, the verb must also be plural (like).

# of 18 – Question 7

Select the correct word from the choices below to complete the following sentence.

“Everyone **blank** to receive a compliment.”

1. love
2. loves

Answer: The correct answer is **b)**. The sentence should read “The parents **like** watching the school play.” Because the subject (everyone) is singular, the verb must also be singular (loves).

# of 18 – End

Well done. You have completed this session on subject verb agreement.

We have covered:

* What subject verb agreement is
* Locating the subject and verb
* Identifying if the subject is singular or plural

If you have any questions about anything covered in this session, speak to your tutor for more help.