

Lecture No 3

Subject-Verb Agreement 1st Part

RULE 1: *When two subjects are joined by 'and', the verb is plural.*

For example: My friend and his mother are in town.

RULE 2: *When two singular nouns joined by 'and' refer to the same person or thing, the verb is singular.*

For example: The captain and coach of the team has been sacked.

In case these were two different individuals, two articles need to be used:
The captain and the coach of the team have been sacked.

RULE 3: *Indefinite pronouns (everyone, each one, someone, somebody, no one, nobody, anyone, anybody etc.) are always singular.*

For example: Everyone is selfish.

RULE 4: *When the percentage or a part of something is mentioned with plural meaning the plural verb is used.*

For example: 40 of every 100 children are malnourished in Pakistan.

Rule No 5: When a comparison is made by using a comparative followed by 'than', the word 'other' must be used to exclude the thing compared from the class of things with which it is compared

He is stronger than any man(Incorrect)

He is stronger than any other man (correct)

RULE NO 6: In some cases, the comparison is subtle and must be given proper attention

The climate of Murree is better than Islamabad (Incorrect)

The climate of Murree is better than the climate of Islamabad.(that of)
(correct)

RULE 7: *When the subjects joined by 'either or' or 'neither nor' are of different persons, the verb will agree in person and number with the noun nearest to it.*

For example: Neither she nor her friends know how to behave.

RULE 8: *If connectives like along with, together with, as well as, accompanied by are used to combine two subjects, the verb agrees with the subject mentioned first.*

For example: Mr. Adnan, accompanied by his sisters, was banished to the forest.

RULE 9: *A number of/ the number of*

'A number of (some countable noun)' is always plural. 'The number of (some countable noun)' is always singular.

For example: A number of students are going on the trip.

- **RULE 10:** *When any of 'few, many, several, both, all, some' is used with a countable noun, the verb is plural.*

- For example: Some men are needed for the battle.

- **RULE 11:** *When any of 'little, much, enough , all, some' is used with an uncountable noun, the verb is singular.*

1. For example: Some milk is spoilt.

2. It would be appreciated if some tea is offered.

3. *All time is yours.*

4. Enough courage is required to face the bullies

5. Much money has been wasted.

Rule No 12: Some nouns are singular in form , but they are used as plural nouns usually and take a plural verb: Cattle , gentry , vermin, peasantry, people , clergy, police (Also depends on its usage)

The cattle are grazing in the ground.

Rule No 13 : Some nouns always take a singular verb: scenery, advice, information, machinery, stationary, furniture, abuse, fuel, bedding, repair, news, mischief, poetry, business, economics, ethics, innings.

The scenery of Kashmir is enchanting.

Rule No 14: Some nouns are always used in a plural form and always take a plural verb: Trousers, scissors, spectacles, stockings, shorts, goods, alms, premises, thanks, tidings, annals, chattels.

Where are my spectacles?

- **Trick 1:** After many/a great many/a good many, etc., the noun is always plural, which is followed by a plural verb. Example: A great many students are following fashion trends these days. (Here the plural noun 'students' is followed by the plural verb are.)
- **Trick 2:** After 'a large number', the noun and verb in the sentence are always plural. Example: A large number of soldiers have lost their lives across Indian border. (Here the noun 'soldiers' is used in the plural form and the verb 'have lost' is also plural in nature.)
- **Trick 3:** After 'the number', the noun is plural but the verb is singular. Example: The number of soldiers at the border is large. This time, even though the noun soldiers is plural, the verb in the sentence , 'is', is singular in nature. The reason for this is that we are referring to a singular number in this case.

Trick 4:

Collective nouns may take either a singular or a plural verb, depending on their use in the sentence.

If collective nouns are acting as a unit, use a singular verb. If the sentence implies that the individual members are taking up different actions, we use a plural verb.

Collective noun is the name we give to a group of nouns to refer to them as one entity. A class of students.

Sentence 1: The committee is discussing the issue of safety in NOA.

Sentence 2 : The committee have failed agreeing on a single agenda.

Trick 5:

Some words, such as news, measles, physics, etc. are extremely deceptive. They end in -s and appear to be plural but are really singular and require singular verbs.

Physics is a fascinating subject.

We can see that each of these uses a singular verb.

Trick 8: The verb in the subjunctive mood always takes the plural verb, even if the subject is singular in nature.

The plural verb 'were' replaces 'was' in sentences that express an unfulfilled wish, desire or condition. These sentences are built using if, as if, as though, I wish, etc.

What is the subjunctive mood of the verb? The subjunctive mood of the verb expresses an unfulfilled wish, desire or condition. Generally, these sentences are built using if, as if, as though, I wish, etc. Let's take up some sentence examples to understand this rule:

If I were the Deputy Commissioner of the city, I would have done so much for the poor.

I wish I were a Deputy Commissioner.

Subject-Pronoun agreement

If the noun is singular, the pronoun must be singular. If the noun is plural, however, the pronoun must be plural as well. For example:

Incorrect: Everybody must bring their own lunch.

Correct: Everybody must bring his or her own lunch.

Misplaced Modifiers

To communicate your ideas clearly, you must place a modifier directly next to the word it is supposed to modify. The modifier should clearly refer to a specific word in the sentence.

Modifier: A modifier is a word or phrase that qualifies (modifies) or describes a word, phrase or clause. For example:

Incorrect: At eight years old, my father gave me a watch on my birthday.

Correct: When I was eight years old, my father gave me a watch on my birthday .

Types of modifiers

Adjectives: Words which modify nouns and pronouns. E.g.: They stay in the red house across the street. In this 'red' is the adjective modifying the house.

Adverbs: They modify verbs, adjectives and adverbs. E.g.: This is a very good book. The boy runs quickly. In these examples, 'very' and 'quickly' are adverbs.

Modifier phrases: There are certain phrases which modify an action or the doer of action. E.g.: Looking at the clock, he noticed that he was late

- ## Common Errors in use of modifiers

Misplaced Modifier: As the name suggests, a misplaced modifier is a modifier that is not placed correctly. If the modifier is not placed next to the item it modifies, the sentence is not able to convey the correct meaning and sometimes even ends up being unintentionally funny.

She wore the hat on her head which she bought yesterday.

Did she buy the head yesterday? No, she bought the hat yesterday. Thus, the correct sentence will be: She wore the hat which she bought yesterday, on her head.

Dangling Modifier: Dangling means hanging or unattached. In dangling modifier the item which is modified is not attached to the modifier and is left hanging.

Waiting for the train a brick fell on my foot.

Was the brick waiting for the train? We need to add the subject here. The correct sentence will be: While I was waiting for the train, a brick fell on my foot.

Examples of Sentence Correction:

She picked up the scarf and tied it around her head which was gifted by her friend.

Correct sentence: She picked up the scarf which was gifted by her friend and tied it around her head.

The boy was riding the elephant who broke his leg.

Correct sentence: The boy who broke his leg, was riding the elephant.

I almost listened to the whole album.

Correct sentence: I listened to almost the whole album.

We read that Uzma was married in her last letter.

Correct sentence: In her last letter, we read that Uzma was married.

Pleased with their conduct, it was decided by her to honor them.

Correct sentence: Pleased with their conduct, she decided to honor them.

Redundancy Error

Redundancy means that the same data has been repeated twice, but just by using different words. The sentences which have redundant data don't necessarily mean are grammatically incorrect, but they have unnecessary words, which need to be avoided at all costs.

We hear redundancies so commonly and so often that many a times we are not able to identify them, which in turn make them tough to spot.

List of common Redundant phrases: Drop down, End result, Few in number, Follow after, General public , Chase after, But yet, Collaborate together, Each and every, Current status quo, Continue on, Blatantly obvious, Adequate enough, Burning fire, Blend together, Actual fact, Join together, Little baby, Free gift, Black darkness, Merge together

Examples

Please combine the three departments into one.

Correct: Please combine the three departments.

“Into one” is redundant because on combining departments we will automatically get one.

Would you please repeat again what you said.

Correct: would you please repeat what you said.

The new innovations were startling.

Correct: the innovations are startling.

Errors Related to Prepositions

Sometimes, prepositions need to accompany the verbs to complete the sentence. A noun affected by such a preposition is called the object of a preposition. E.g. Stop talking about them. (The object of the preposition about is 'them'.)

A preposition is generally, but not always used before the noun or pronoun. E.g.

Correct: Where did she go?

Incorrect: Where did she go to?

The preposition 'like' implies "similar to". It is followed by the object of the preposition by a subject and verb. It is better to avoid using 'like' when a verb is present.

Correct: He looks like his father.

Incorrect: He looks like his father does.

Correct: He looks the way his father does.

Incorrect: Do like I ask.

Correct: Do as I ask.

Incorrect: She looks like she is angry.

Correct: She looks as if she is angry.

Errors Related To Punctuation

Apostrophes are used to show possession. However, you do not use an apostrophe after a possessive pronoun such as my, mine, our, ours, his, hers, its, their, or theirs. For example:

Incorrect: My mothers cabin is next to his' cabin.

Correct: My mother's cabin is next to his cabin.

In the case of it's, the apostrophe is used to indicate a contraction for it is. For example:

Incorrect: Its a cold day in October.

Correct: It's a cold day in October.

Errors Related To Capitalization

1. For proper nouns and adjectives derived from them:

Many people from Pakistani descent live in Los Angeles.

2. For generic names with a proper noun:

The college is located on 4th Gulbahar Street.

3. For the first word in a sentence:

Did you leave the oven on when you left the house?

4. For the pronoun I:

Even if I wanted to, I could not ski.

5. For the title of a relative when the relative is named:

That blonde woman is Merry(Maryam).

6. For titles that precede a proper name (but not when a name is not given):

That man in the blue suit is PM Imran Khan.

My doctor is Doctor Adnan.

7. For words in titles (except coordinating conjunctions, articles, and prepositions):

***Lord of the Rings* is one of my favorite movies.**

8. For races and ethnic groups:

My friend Rashid married an American last year.

9. For historical, religious, or political groups:

Many Catholics tend to consider themselves Republicans.

10. For specific course titles:

We studied Précis Writing in the first class.

11. For seasons only if they refer to semesters or issues of magazines:

Ahamd plans to enroll at NOA in the Fall 2021 session.

12. For formal systems, organized departments, etc.:

Most personal computers have Windows installed on them.

The English Department has some great instructors.

13. For the first word of a complete sentence in parentheses:

She was nearly hit in the head. (Of course, she never knew.)

14. For names and abbreviations of associations, clubs, and organizations:

The NOA Teaching Club meets once a month.

15. For sacred names:

The Bible is a very important book for Christians.

16. For directions when they are used as specific geographic places:

Have you ever visited the Northeast?

I have only been to Peshawar City once.

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