

## Subject-Verb Agreement: Indefinite Pronouns B

**18d.** Some indefinite pronouns are singular, some are plural, and some can be singular or plural depending on how they are used.

USAGE

**EXAMPLES** **Everyone** who votes **receives** a lapel button to wear.

**Many** who apply to Ivy League schools **get** turned down.

**Some** of the story **is** set in France. [*Some* refers to the singular noun *story*.]

**Some** of the characters **are** not very believable. [*Some* refers to the plural noun *characters*.]

**EXERCISE A** In each of the following sentences, circle the subject of the verb in parentheses, and above it write *S* for *singular* or *P* for *plural*. Then, underline the verb in parentheses that agrees in number with the subject.

**Example 1.** <sup>P</sup>Some of our friends (are, *is*) throwing Eli a surprise party for his birthday.

- Most of the ingredients for our supper (*were*, *was*) fresh vegetables from our garden.
- None of the documentary (*have*, *has*) been cut from this videotape.
- Several in the crowd (*is*, *are*) waving banners and hoping to be noticed by the band.
- Everything on television tonight (*has*, *have*) been on before; I'm tired of re-runs.
- All of us in the forensics society (*is*, *are*) going to the regional competition.

**EXERCISE B** Most of the following sentences contain an error in agreement between a subject and a verb. First, circle the simple subject of each sentence. Then, draw a line through each incorrect verb, and above it write the form that agrees with the subject. If a sentence is correct, write *C* at the end.

**Example 1.** Somebody in the judo or karate class <sup>has</sup>~~have~~ already reserved the practice room for next Thursday.

- Some of the kittens in this litter *is* gray tabbies like their mother.
- All of the backpacks *was* on sale at Edelmann's Sporting Goods Store.
- Anyone answering all the homework questions correctly *are* excused from taking the quiz.
- Several of the daffodils *has* already sprouted.
- One of the finalists in the diving competition *was* born in China.
- Either of these tuxedos *are* suitable for the prom, Ernesto.
- Both of the car dealerships *is* offering special deals on financing.
- After the potluck supper, some of Mom's rhubarb pie *was* left.
- Neither of these applicants *have* the experience necessary, Ms. Chao.
- Few of the pages in that old history book *has* pictures.

## Agreement with Compound Subjects B

A *compound subject* consists of two or more subjects that are joined by a conjunction and that have the same verb.

**18e.** Subjects joined by *and* usually take a plural verb.

Some compound subjects joined by *and* name only one person or thing and take singular verbs.

**EXAMPLES** The **parrot** and the **cockatoo do not like** to be left alone very long.  
The **writer** and **director** of that popular new play **is** he.

**18f.** Singular subjects joined by *or* or *nor* take a singular verb.

**EXAMPLES** Either the letter **opener** or a sharp **knife is** what I need to open this package.  
Neither **Wanda** nor **June knows** about the surprise party we are planning for them.

**18g.** When a singular subject and a plural subject are joined by *or* or *nor*, the verb agrees with the subject nearer the verb.

**EXAMPLES** Either the **twins** or **Alice washes** the dishes after supper.  
Either **Alice** or the **twins wash** the dishes after supper.

**EXERCISE** Each of the following sentences contains an error in agreement between a subject and a verb. First, underline once the simple subjects that are part of the compound subject. Then, draw a line through the incorrect verb, and above it write the form that agrees with the subject.

**Example 1.** Many of Alan's friends and some of his coworkers <sup>have</sup> ~~has~~ arranged to bring him meals while he recuperates at home from his surgery.

1. The oboists and the band director is scheduled to have the practice room this afternoon.
2. Two physicians or an emergency room nurse have agreed to speak to our science class about careers in medicine.
3. Twenty geraniums and an entire flat of petunias is what we planted in the window boxes.
4. A good book and a shady hammock is going to help me relax this Saturday.
5. Our boss, cheerleader, and role model are our store manager, Kris.
6. The student council and their faculty advisor has chosen the theme for the prom.
7. During every appointment, the assistants or the veterinarian advise me on tooth care for my basset hound.
8. Cookies or a chocolate cake are a good dessert to bring to a potluck supper.
9. Macaroni and cheese are my little sister's favorite main dish.
10. A dropcloth or even some newspapers helps prevent painting accidents.