

Subject-Verb Agreement

Section 7.2 Phrases Between the Subject and the Verb



In the previous practice, the subject was located right before the verb. Many times, there are words or phrases between the subject and the verb. You need to be careful to see **who** or **what** is doing the action or is being.

singular
subject

singular
verb

Example: One of my friends is going.

The subject is *one*, not *friends*. *One* is singular so you choose *is going*, not *are going*.

Note: *Friends* is the object of the preposition *of my friends*. Remember, prepositions cannot be subjects.

Practice

Circle the correct verb. Be careful to pick out the subject (not just the word before the verb) to make the verb agree with it. Remember singular verbs end in -s.

1. The tiles in the corner (is / are) broken.
2. Which type of pens (was / were) your favorite?
3. The letters from Cale (has / have) been found in the drawer.
4. The forks in the drawer (was / were) bent.
5. My interest in crafts (keeps / keep) me busy.
6. Two colors of the flag (has / have) been changed.
7. The best of all the entries (was / were) yours.
8. One of the robins (has / have) an injured wing.
9. Most members of her family (is / are) artistic.
10. The pieces of furniture (is / are) antique.
11. The houses on that street (is / are) huge.
12. The tires on the left (was / were) low in air pressure.
13. The challenge from the instructors (was / were) to break the record.
14. The orchids on the table (has / have) been drooping.
15. His focus on the issues (is / are) his strength.
16. Two horses in the pasture (was / were) eating grass.

Subject-Verb Agreement

Section 7.5 Indefinite Pronouns

The indefinite pronouns that we worked with in Section 3 use the same rules as subjects. The pronouns that are always singular take singular verbs. The ones that are always plural take plural verbs. The ones that can be singular or plural take singular verbs if they can be measured and plural verbs if they can be counted. Let's review each of these.

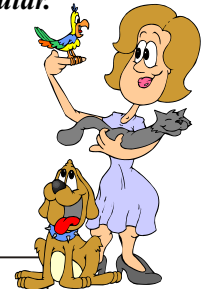
Indefinite Pronouns That Are Always Singular

everyone	no one	somebody	either	anything
someone	each	anybody	everything	nothing
anyone	everybody	nobody	something	neither

Remember: All the pronouns ending in *-body* or *-one* are always singular. "One" is also singular.

Example 1: Each of the pets is fed separately.

Each is always singular, so the verb must also be singular. In this sentence, the correct verb is *is fed*, not *are fed*. Remember, you have to ignore the prepositional phrase *of the pets*.



Indefinite Pronouns That Are Always Plural

several	few	both	many
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Example 2: Several of the players eat spaghetti before every game.

Several is always plural, so the verb must also be plural. In this sentence, the correct verb is *eat*.

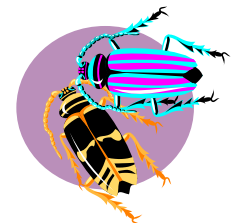


Indefinite Pronouns That Can Be Singular Or Plural

some	any	all	most	none
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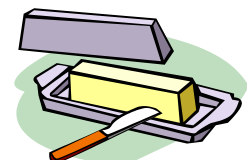
Example 3: Some of the trees were infested with pine beetles.

In this sentence, *some* refers to *trees* which can be counted, so the plural verb *were infested* is used.



Example 4: Some of the butter is used to grease the pan.

In this sentence, *some* refers to *butter* which is measured, not counted, so the singular verb *is used* is the correct choice.



Characterization

Section 18.1

Direct and Indirect Characterization

Direct Characterization

Characterization is the way the author reveals a character's personality or nature. In **direct characterization**, the author describes the character or makes statements about him.



Example 1: Jordan at five is a sweet but mischievous girl who loves to dress up and play pretend games.

In this example of **direct characterization**, the author both describes the girl's nature and tells about what she loves to do. The author is not showing us through her actions yet.

Indirect Characterization

In **indirect characterization**, the author shows the reader something about the character through the character's words, his thoughts, his actions, or what other characters say or think about him. Indirect characterization is more effective because the author is showing, rather than just telling.

Indirect Characterization Through The Character's Words

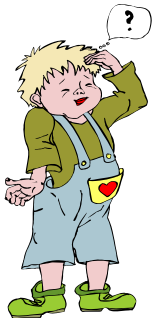
Example 2: The husband was fussing at his wife. "That bag of lettuce is half empty. Why didn't you try to get one that had more in it? I can't believe you didn't look at the bag more carefully at the grocery store."

How is the husband indirectly characterized in this passage? Through his words, the husband he is characterized as picky and critical. The author doesn't have to tell us these characteristics directly.



Indirect Characterization Through The Character's Thoughts

Example 3: As he sat brooding in his room, Caleb thought of how his baby sister spoiled everything. He thought of how things used to be before she arrived. He wanted to go to Disney World and have fun for his fourth birthday. He got an idea. Buck, their neighbor, feeds the dogs when they go out of town, so Buck could come by and feed the baby when he came to feed the dogs. He loved to play with her, and he could do that. He got up to go tell his mother.



Here we see the thoughts of a little boy about his frustrations with his new baby sister and the solution he thought of to solve the problem. We are shown his thoughts, and the reader sees an intelligent little problem-solver.

Section 18.1, continued
Direct and Indirect Characterization

Indirect Characterization Through The Character's Actions

Actions can tell the reader the most about an individual. People's actions usually show more than words because people may say one thing but do another.

Example 4: Julie began fixing supper while the children played. First she washed the romaine lettuce with grapefruit seed extract. Then she got out the mill to grind the corn. After it was ready, she used honey to replace the sugar in the recipe and put the cornbread in the oven. The dried beans were simmering in the crock pot. She washed and cut up the fresh strawberries they had picked that morning for dessert.



How is Julie, the mother, characterized? Through her actions, we see a conscientious mother concerned about the nutrition of her family. She cares enough to work harder in preparing meals the way she thinks is best.

Indirect Characterization Through The Other Characters' Words

Example 5: After visiting my sister Jean, Frances said, "She really knows how to get a lot of storage into every space, doesn't she?"
"Yes," I answered. "Organizing is a fun challenge for her and is what she enjoys. She never stops but keeps reorganizing in better ways."

How is Jean indirectly characterized? From the conversation between Frances and Jean's sister, the reader gets a picture of Jean's organizational skills.

Practice

Read each example and then answer the questions about characterization.

Doris moaned as she sat gingerly on the chair and frowned as she squirmed a little.

- (A) (B) (C) (D) 1. What method of characterization does the author use in this example to describe Doris?
- A. direct characterization
 - B. indirect characterization through Doris's actions
 - C. indirect characterization through Doris's thoughts
 - D. indirect characterization through Doris's words

Little Bruce was three years old and loved anything with wheels but especially Thomas the Train and the many named cars that could be bought.

- (A) (B) (C) (D) 2. What method of characterization does the author use in this example for Bruce?
- A. direct characterization
 - B. indirect characterization through Bruce's actions
 - C. indirect characterization through Bruce's thoughts
 - D. indirect characterization through Bruce's words