

CHAPTER 4

MAKING THE SUBJECT AND VERB AGREE

CHAPTER PREVIEW

In this chapter, you will learn about:

- Subject-verb agreement
In number
In person
- Writing paragraphs: Coherence in the paragraph
through spatial order

Mistakes in subject-verb agreement are among the most common writing and speaking errors, and they are particularly irritating to readers. Luckily, mistakes in subject-verb agreement are easy to repair if we keep one simple rule in mind: The subject and the verb in a sentence must agree in number and in person. This chapter will explain what *number* and *person* mean, as well as give you dozens of examples to illustrate the rule.

- The subject and the verb must agree in number and in person.

Subject-Verb Agreement

Agreement in number means that a singular subject takes a singular verb and a plural subject takes a plural verb. The singular form of all verbs except *be* and *have* is formed by adding *-s* or *-es*: *goes, takes, writes, fishes, brings, drives*. The singular forms of *be* and *have* are *is* and *has*. The singular form of the verb is used when the subject is *he, she, it*, a singular indefinite pronoun (such as *anyone* or *somebody*), or a singular noun. Plural verbs do not have these endings, and they are used when the subject is *I, you, we, they*, or a plural noun.

A singular subject with a singular verb:

- Celia's *father makes* delicious empanadas.

A plural subject with a plural verb:

- Celia's *parents maintain* their Salvadoran customs.

Notice that adding an *-s* or *-es* to a noun makes the noun **plural** but adding *-s* or *-es* to a verb in the present tense makes the verb *singular*.

Agreement in *person* means that a subject and its verb must both be in the same person (*first, second, or third*). The following sentences illustrate this rule.

First person (*I, we*):

- I *read* (not *reads*) the newspaper online each morning.
- We *subscribe* (not *subscribes*) to several sports magazines.

Second person (*you*):

- You *have* (not *has*) more money in your college fund than I do.
- You *are* (not *be* or *is*) allowed to leave work at noon on Fridays.

Third person (*he, she, it, and they*):

- Eggs and waffles *make* (not *makes*) too heavy a breakfast for Bart.
- Lisa *plays* (not *play*) saxophone in her school's jazz band.

EXERCISE 4-1

Circle the verbs that can be used with the following subjects. There may be more than one verb.

Example: She bring, walks, study, plays

1. She (knows), sing, (blogs), treat
2. The squirrel run, sit, bite, (sleeps)
3. They (join), tries, (flee), (travel)
4. You says, (leap), (count), watches
5. We (shudder), listens, laughs, (sigh)
6. He go, say, (takes), (bows)
7. My sons (ski), climbs, (squint), (tell)
8. Beyonce dance, (acts), ask, sing

72 Making the Subject and Verb Agree

9. It remain, (wants), (proves), mean
10. The teachers meets, (explain), (protest), (shout)
11. The rain soak, (streaks), (chills), (inconveniences)
12. I asks, (say), (remind), plants
13. You hums, (wrestle), lifts, (yawn)
14. The reader (thinks), question, (groans), respond
15. Movies (frighten), entertains, (educate), (record)

If the rule given above is so simple, why are there so many errors in subject-verb agreement? Probably because of the writer's or speaker's uncertainty about the identity of the real subject of the sentence and confusion about whether the subject and verb are singular or plural.

Here are three steps to ensure subject-verb agreement. *First*, find the subject of the sentence. (You may want to review Chapter 3.) *Second*, determine whether the subject is singular or plural. *Third*, select the appropriate singular or plural form of the verb to agree with the subject. The following suggestions will help you with these steps.

1. Remember that a verb must agree with its subject, not with any words that follow the subject but are not part of it. These include terms such as *as well as*, *including*, *such as*, *along with*, *accompanied by*, and *rather than*. If the subject is singular, use a singular verb; if the subject is plural, use a plural verb.
 - A tape-recorded confession by the suspects, as well as statements by eyewitnesses, *has* (not *have*) been read to the jury.
 - Stuffed grape leaves, often accompanied by strong Turkish coffee, *are* (not *is*) featured in many Armenian restaurants.
 - The ambassadors from the West African countries, accompanied by a translator, *intend* (not *intends*) to meet with the president this afternoon.
 - The plan for the new convention center, together with proposals for raising tax revenues, *is* (not *are*) to be debated by the city council members today.
2. Do not confuse the subject with words that rename it in the sentence.
 - The referee's only reward *was* (not *were*) taunts and threats.
 - Transcripts of the senator's remarks *are* (not *is*) the basis of the article.
 - Automobile accidents *are* (not *is*) the chief cause of death on New Year's Eve.
3. Do not be confused by sentences that are not in the usual subject-verb pattern.
 - Where *is* (not *are*) the box of paper clips that was on my desk?
 - *Are* (not *is*) cumulus clouds a sign of rain?

- Under the sofa *were* (not *was*) the missing cuff links. **But:** Under the sofa *was* (not *were*) the set of missing cuff links.
- There *are* (not *is*) many reasons for her success.
- There *is* (not *are*) one particular reason for her success.

EXERCISE 4-2

Draw a line under the simple or compound subject. Then choose the correct verb and write the appropriate letter in the space provided.

- b** 1. Four hundred woodland acres (a. was b. were) devoured by last week's fire.
- a** 2. The win-loss record of the Los Angeles Lakers (a. is b. are) J. T.'s favorite topic of conversation.
- b** 3. An English major and an economics major (a. is b. are) this year's scholarship winners.
- a** 4. Murals found in China (a. indicate b. indicates) that oil painting may have existed there eight hundred years earlier than in Europe.
- b** 5. At the party (a. was b. were) all of Sarah's family members.
- b** 6. There (a. are b. is) a box of doughnuts waiting for you in the kitchen.
- a** 7. A problem facing many students (a. is b. are) how to pay tuition fees.
- a** 8. The reason for our tardiness (a. was b. were) the storm, as well as the slow traffic.
- b** 9. Only compact cars, not minivans, (a. has b. have) been able to fit in the small spaces.
- a** 10. Even on her worst days, thoughts of defeat (a. are b. is) never tolerated by tennis champion Venus Williams.

4. Subjects connected by *and* or by *both . . . and* usually require a plural verb.
- Following the proper diet *and* getting enough exercise *are* important for maintaining one's health.
 - *Both* Venus Williams and her sister, Serena, *have won* coveted tennis titles.
- Exception:** Use a singular verb when a compound subject refers to the same person or thing.
- Vinegar and oil *is* my favorite salad dressing.
 - The best hunter and fisherman in town *is* Joe Patterson.

74 Making the Subject and Verb Agree

Exception: Use a singular verb when a compound subject is preceded by *each*, *every*, *many a*, or *many an*.

- *Each* owner and tenant *has* been given a copy of the new zoning regulations.
- *Every* cable and pulley *receives* a monthly inspection.

Exception: Use a plural verb when a compound subject is followed by *each*.

- The tenor and the soprano *each wear* different costumes in the final act.

5. If the subject consists of two or more words connected by *or*, *either . . . or*, *neither . . . nor*, or *not only . . . but also*, the verb agrees with the subject that is closer to it.

- *Either* the frost *or* the aphids *have* killed my roses. (The plural noun *aphids* is closer to the verb, and therefore the verb is plural.)

This rule presents few problems when both subjects are plural or singular.

- *Neither* the politicians *nor* the voters *show* much interest in this year's election. (Both subjects are plural, and therefore the verb is plural.)
- *Not only* the car *but also* the greenhouse *was* damaged by the tornado. (Both subjects are singular, and therefore the verb is singular.)

Sentences with singular and plural subjects usually sound better with plural verbs. Notice the difference between the following sentences.

- Neither the players nor the coach *doubts* they will win the Stanley Cup. (Although technically correct, this sentence would sound less awkward if the subjects were reversed and a plural verb used.)
- Neither the coach nor the players *doubt* they will win the Stanley Cup. (This version is less awkward and has not sacrificed the meaning of the sentence.)

REMEMBER

1. Adding an *-s* or *-es* to a *noun* makes the noun *plural*. Adding an *-s* or *-es* to a *verb* makes the verb *singular*.
2. If the subject is singular, the verb must be singular; if the subject is plural, the verb must be plural.
3. The verb must agree with its *subject*, not with any other words in the sentence. Do not be confused by sentences not in the usual subject-verb pattern.

EXERCISE 4-3

Write the letter of the correct verb in the space before each sentence.

- a 1. Mars (a. is b. are) Earth's closest neighbor.
- a 2. The tallest of Mars's volcanoes (a. stands b. stand) taller than Mt. Everest.
- b 3. Scientists say that dried riverbeds, gullies, salt deposits, and a large quantity of ice (a. means b. mean) that water was once present on Mars.
- b 4. Varying rocks and sediments, found in a huge basin, (a. shows b. show) that Mars once experienced floods more torrential than any recorded on Earth.
- a 5. None of Earth's canyons, including the Grand Canyon, (a. is b. are) as large or deep as Mars's most notable canyon.
- b 6. The sizes of polar caps on Mars (a. changes b. change) with the seasons.
- b 7. The desert sands of Mars (a. appears b. appear) red because of their iodized iron.
- b 8. Mars's days (a. is b. are) 37 minutes longer than Earth's.
- a 9. The thin atmosphere of Mars (a. has b. have) been determined to contain mostly carbon dioxide.
- b 10. Therefore, humans (a. is b. are) unable to breathe on Mars unless specially equipped.

6. Indefinite pronouns that are singular take singular verbs, and indefinite pronouns that are plural take plural verbs. Some pronouns may be either singular or plural in meaning, depending on the noun or pronoun to which they refer. An **indefinite pronoun** is one that does not refer to a specific thing or person.

When used as subjects or as adjectives modifying subjects, the following indefinite pronouns are always singular and take singular verbs.

Singular Indefinite Pronouns			
another	each one	everything	nothing
anybody	either	much	one
anyone	every	neither	somebody
anything	everybody	nobody	something
each	every one	no one	someone

- Everybody *is* eligible for the drawing tonight.
- Much of the work on the engine *has* been done.

76 Making the Subject and Verb Agree

- Something *tells* me that I am wrong.
- Each dismissed worker *receives* two weeks' pay.

When used as subjects or as adjectives modifying subjects, the following indefinite pronouns are always plural and take plural verbs.

Plural Indefinite Pronouns

both several others few many

- *Few* of the passengers on the tragic cruise of the *Titanic* *are* living today.
- *Many* of the parts in an American car *are* manufactured in other countries; *several* *come* from Japan.

When used as subjects or as adjectives modifying subjects, the following indefinite pronouns may be singular or plural, depending on the nouns or pronouns to which they refer.

Pronouns that May Be Singular or Plural

all any more most none some

- Unfortunately, *all* of the rumors were true.
- *All* of the snow *has* melted.
- *Most* of the food *tastes* too spicy for me.
- *Most* of my freckles *have* disappeared.

Note: *None* is considered a singular pronoun in formal usage. According to informal usage, however, it may be singular or plural, depending on the noun to which it refers. Note the difference in the following sentences.

- **Formal usage:** None of the babies *has* learned to speak yet.
- **Informal usage:** None of the babies *have* learned to speak yet.

EXERCISE 4-4

In the space before each sentence, write the letter corresponding to the correct verb.

- a 1. No motorcycle (a. has b. have) enjoyed more fame or mystique than the Harley-Davidson.

- b 2. The motorcycle company's history of innovations and achievements (a. span b. spans) nearly a century.
- a 3. The main goal of founders William Harley and Arthur Davidson (a. was b. were) "to take the work out of bicycling."
- a 4. A total of three motorcycles (a. was b. were) produced in 1903, Harley-Davidson's first year of manufacturing.
- a 5. One of the company's many unique features, the V-Twin engine, (a. was b. were) introduced in 1909.
- a 6. Sixty miles per hour (a. was b. were) the 1909 model's top speed, a pace considered amazing at the time.
- b 7. More than a hundred thousand Harleys (a. has b. have) been used in American military efforts, including World War I and World War II.
- b 8. Even border skirmishes with Pancho Villa, the Mexican revolutionary, (a. was b. were) won on Harley-Davidson motorcycles.
- a 9. One of Harley-Davidson's 1921 models (a. was b. were) the first bike ever to win a race at speeds averaging one hundred miles an hour.
- a 10. Over the next few years, a spate of innovations, including the Teardrop gas tank and front brake, (a. was b. were) boosting Harley-Davidson's appeal even more.
- a 11. Harley-Davidson's 1980 Tour Glide, with its five-speed transmission, hidden rear chain, and vibration-isolated engine, (a. was b. were) nicknamed "King of the Highway."
- a 12. Today's touring bikes (a. are b. is) derived from the Tour Glide.
- a 13. The Harley Owners Group (a. has b. have) organized local and even cross-country rides, often to raise money against diseases such as breast cancer and muscular dystrophy.
- b 14. Many unofficial riding clubs, consisting of friends or residents from a specific region, (a. has b. have) blossomed throughout the country.
- a 15. Though some people think that the typical Harley-Davidson owner is an outlaw, the majority (a. are b. is) quiet citizens who may wear business suits and drive family vans when they are not enjoying their motorcycles.

REMEMBER

Some indefinite pronouns always take *singular verbs*; some always take *plural verbs*; and still other indefinite pronouns may be singular or plural, depending on the nouns or pronouns to which they refer. Look over the lists on pages 75–76 if you are not sure.

78 Making the Subject and Verb Agree

7. If the subject is *who*, *which*, or *that*, be careful: all of these pronouns can be singular or plural, depending on their antecedents. When one of them is the subject, its verb must agree with its antecedent in number.
- Sergei is one of those musicians *who are* able to play music at first sight. (*Who* refers to *musicians*; several musicians are able to play music at first sight, and Sergei is one of them.)
 - Hoang is the only one of the musicians *who has* forgotten his music. (*Who* refers to *one*. Among the musicians, only one, Hoang, has forgotten his music.)
 - I ordered one of the word processors *that were* on sale. (*That* refers to *word processors* and therefore takes a plural verb.)
 - I also bought a desk *that was* reduced 40 percent. (*That* refers to *desk* and therefore takes a singular verb.)

EXERCISE 4-5

In the space before each sentence, write the letter corresponding to the correct verb.

- b** 1. Ms. Gupta is one of those instructors who (a. is b. are) easy to speak with outside the classroom.
- a** 2. Justin is the only one of the players who (a. practices b. practice) every day.
- b** 3. Connor is one of those many drivers who (a. takes b. take) unnecessary risks.
- b** 4. We adopted the youngest of the kittens that (a. was b. were) featured at the county fair.
- a** 5. Ask if one of the guests who are coming to the party (a. is b. are) willing to bring some ice.
- b** 6. To reduce paper use, Terry reads only magazines that (a. is b. are) published online.
- b** 7. Yazmin is one of the dancers who (a. performs b. perform) each year.
- a** 8. Terrell is one member of the debate team who (a. practices b. practice) every night.
- a** 9. The Army is the branch of the military services that (a. appeals b. appeal) most to Todd.
- b** 10. Yolanda bought one of the backpacks that (a. was b. were) on sale today.

8. Collective nouns take singular verbs when the group is regarded as a unit, and plural verbs when the individuals of the group are regarded separately. A **collective noun** is a word that is singular in form but refers to a group of people or things. Some common

collective nouns are *army, assembly, committee, company, couple, crowd, faculty, family, flock, group, herd, jury, pair, squad,* and *team*.

When the group is thought of as acting as one unit, the verb should be singular.

- The faculty *is* happy that so many students are volunteering for community service.
- The committee *has* published the list of finalists.
- The couple *was* married last week.

If the members of the group are thought of as acting separately, the verb should be plural.

- The faculty *have* been assigned their offices and parking spaces.
- The committee *are* unable to agree on the finalists.
- The couple constantly *argue* over their jobs and their children.

9. Some nouns appear plural in form but are usually singular in meaning and therefore require singular verbs. The following nouns are used this way: *athletics, economics, electronics, measles, mathematics, mumps, news, physics, politics,* and *statistics*.

- Mathematics *frightens* many students.
- The news from the doctor *is* encouraging.
- Politics *is* the art of the possible.
- Electronics *is* an intriguing field offering relative job security.

When the items they refer to are plural in meaning, these words are plural.

- The economics of your plan *sound* reasonable.
- My measles *are* spreading.
- The statistics *indicate* that little progress has been made.

10. Subjects plural in form that indicate a quantity or number take a singular verb if the subject is considered a unit, but a plural verb if the individual parts of the subject are regarded separately. Such expressions include *one-half of* (and other fractions), *a part of*, *a majority of*, and *a percentage of*.

REMEMBER

Collective nouns take singular verbs if you consider the group as a unit; they take plural verbs if you regard the individuals in the group separately.

Example: *A number* are, but *the number* is.

80 Making the Subject and Verb Agree

If a singular noun follows *of* or is implied, use a singular verb.

- Two-thirds of her fortune *consists* of stock in computer companies.
- Part of our intelligence, according to geneticists, *depends* on our genes.
- A majority of the herd of sick cattle *has* to be destroyed.

If a plural noun follows *of* or is implied, use a plural verb.

- Three-fourths of the students in the third grade *speak* a foreign language.
- A large percentage of the film actors *live* in either Los Angeles or New York.
- A majority of the lawyers *want* to make the law exam more difficult.

11. Words that refer to distance, amounts, and measurements require singular verbs when they represent a total amount. When they refer to a number of individual items, they require plural verbs.

- More than six hundred dollars *was* spent on my dental work.
- Many thousands of dollars *were* collected for Thanksgiving meals for the poor.
- Two miles *is* the maximum range of his new rifle.
- The last two miles *were* paved last week.
- Six months *is* a long time to wait for an answer to my complaint.
- Six months *have* passed since we last heard from you.

12. When *the number* is used as the subject, it requires a singular verb. *A number* is always plural.

- The number of students who work part-time *is* increasing.
- A number of students *receive* financial support from government loans.

13. Some words taken from foreign languages, especially Greek and Latin, keep their foreign plural forms, but others have acquired English plural forms. As a result, it is not always obvious when to use the singular or the plural form of the verb. For example, “Data *are* available” is preferred to “Data *is* available.” If you are not sure about a word’s plural form, consult your dictionary. Here are some of the more common words from Greek and Latin and their plural forms.

Plural Form of Words from Greek and Latin

singular	plural
alumna	alumnae
alumnus	alumni
	(continued)

crit ^{er} ion	crit ^{er} ia
cris ^{is}	cris ^{es}
medi ^{um}	medi ^a
memorand ^{um}	memorand ^a
parenth ^{esis}	parenth ^{eses}
phenomen ^{on}	phenomen ^a
stimul ^{us}	stimul ⁱ
thes ^{is}	thes ^{es}

EXERCISE 4-6

In the space before each sentence, write the letter corresponding to the correct verb.

- b** 1. The couple (a. was b. were) awarded prizes for their costumes.
- b** 2. Every year the board of education in most school districts (a. recognize b. recognizes) the outstanding high school graduates.
- a** 3. Four miles (a. was b. were) the distance that he ran every week last year.
- b** 4. Approximately \$1,200 (a. remain b. remains) in my bank account to pay my expenses next semester.
- b** 5. About half of the drivers on the road (a. has b. have) no liability insurance.
- a** 6. The cab driver decided that fifteen minutes (a. was b. were) long enough to wait for his fare.
- b** 7. Statistics (a. are b. is) a required course for psychology majors.
- b** 8. Approximately two-thirds of last semester's graduates (a. has b. have) been unable to find jobs.
- a** 9. Statistics (a. reveal b. reveals) that women are still paid less than men for doing the same work.
- b** 10. The last two miles of the marathon (a. was b. were) the most difficult.



For more practice, visit <http://www.mywritinglab.com> and click "Verbs," then "Subject-Verb Agreement." You can view an animation about how to find the subject in a sentence and how to ensure subject-verb agreement. You can also practice spotting and correcting subject-verb agreement errors in a paragraph, or try revising an entire paragraph that contains severe subject-verb agreement problems.

EDITING EXERCISE

The following paragraphs contain a series of errors in subject-verb agreement. Improve each paragraph by correcting the errors. Revise the sentences when necessary.

Marathons held in most cities are open to anyone who wish to run. The Boston Marathon, however, ^{keeps} keep the number of runners low by accepting only runners who perform ^{performs} at an elite level. Why? The Boston race ^{begins} begin and ends on a narrow road built in the Colonial days of horses and wagons. 25,000 ^{is} are the magic limit that the race organizers strive for each year. They allow only runners who ^{have} has finished a marathon with a certain time, within the previous year. Therefore, the Boston race ^{is} are just a dream for most non-professional marathoners. The online sale of Boston Marathon entries—or “bibs”—^{is} are now a growing problem. Runners who ^{have} has been allowed to register for the race can receive hundreds of dollars if they are willing to skip the race and sell their bibs to unqualified runners. So far, race organizers and many an angry participant ^{have} has been able to trace names or photos of bib sellers and buyers on running club Web sites. One powerful reason for not selling a Boston Marathon bib ^{is} are that the completion time earned by the much slower buyer ^{is} are recorded on several renowned sports databases under the name of the much faster runner who sold it!

Shark! Even the word referring to the terror of the ocean waters ^{is} are enough to send chills down the average swimmer’s back. Stories of shark attacks resulting in injury or death ^{appear} appears frequently in the media. Sharks have been sighted in shallow water near the beach as well as in deep ocean trenches. But sharks, despite their fearsome reputation, are not all man-eaters. In fact, the majority of sharks ^{are} is not interested in devouring human swimmers. They are also different in their appearance, depending on their species. The hammerhead, for example, is named for its hammer-shaped head, which ^{bears} bear an eye and nostril at each end. The thresher is recognized by its extremely long tail. Differences in shark behavior ^{are} is equally obvious. Some species swim in schools, while others swim alone. Because they are slaughtered in such large numbers each year, the shark population ^{is} are in danger of becoming an endangered species.

WRITING SENTENCES Subject and Verb Agreement

In this exercise you are asked to write original sentences in which the subject and verb agree in number and person. Refer to the appropriate section of the chapter as needed.

1. Write an original sentence with two subjects connected by *both . . . and* and requiring a plural verb.
2. Write a sentence in which the subject consists of two or more words connected by *either . . . or*, *neither . . . nor*, or *not only . . . but also*.
3. Write two sentences that use an indefinite pronoun as a singular subject. Circle the pronoun and the verb in each sentence.
4. Write two sentences that use an indefinite pronoun as a plural subject. Circle the pronoun and the verb in each sentence.
5. Select two of the following pronouns and use them as subjects of two sentences: *all*, *any*, *more*, *most*, *none*, *some*.
6. Write a sentence in which you use a collective noun as a singular subject. Circle the noun and its verb.
7. Write a sentence in which you use a collective noun as a plural subject. Circle the noun and its verb.

LANGUAGE TIP

Don't forget that verbs used with third person singular nouns and pronouns (*he*, *she*, and *it*) end with *-s*.

Examples: The college bookstore *close* at nine o'clock tonight. (nonstandard)
The college bookstore *closes* at nine o'clock tonight. (standard)
Linda usually *wear* a hat to church. (nonstandard)
Linda usually *wears* a hat to church. (standard)
He *study* two hours every night with his chemistry lab partner.
(nonstandard)
He *studies* two hours every night with his chemistry lab partner. (standard)

REVIEW TEST 4 - A

Making the Subject and Verb Agree

Identify the correct verb by using the appropriate letter.

- b 1. Alicia's car alarm (a. are b. is) a source of irritation for her neighbors.
- a 2. For years, a problem facing the city (a. was b. were) killer bees.
- b 3. On the curb (a. was b. were) sitting Gary and Linda.
- a 4. The topic of my essay (a. was b. were) the various kinds of tropical fish, as well as how to care for them.
- a 5. Goalies, rather than defensive players, often (a. receive b. receives) the most media coverage.
- a 6. Cable news channels sometimes (a. announce b. announces) the winner of an election before all citizens have gone to the polls to vote.
- b 7. In his movies, Johnny Depp always (a. know b. knows) when the outlaws are about to attack.
- b 8. On his Web site, Carlos (a. offer b. offers) cell phone accessories at discounted prices.
- a 9. Why (a. is b. are) there so much traffic on Interstate 405?
- b 10. Many tourists are surprised to learn that there once (a. was b. were) a lot of steelhead trout in the canyons of Malibu, California.
- a 11. People now (a. begin b. begins) smoking at a younger age than ever before.
- a 12. Senator Diaz (a. has b. have) promised not to raise taxes.
- b 13. Did you know that cross-country skis (a. is b. are) much cheaper than downhill skis?
- b 14. The Ice Hotel, built each winter in Arctic Sweden, (a. melt b. melts) in May or June.
- b 15. To win horseracing's treasured Triple Crown, a horse (a. have b. has) to win the Kentucky Derby, Preakness, and Belmont races.
- a 16. At nearly one hundred years old, Lloyd Moore (a. is b. are) Nascar's oldest former driver.
- b 17. The founder of Craigslist.com, one of America's twenty most popular Web sites, (a. are b. is) actually a man named Craig Newmark.
- a 18. Laker player Kobe Bryant won the league's Most Valuable Player award in 2008, and many fans thought it (a. was b. were) long overdue.
- b 19. Just how many chiles (a. was b. were) in those enchiladas we ate?

- a 20. We all know not to disturb Caitlyn when her favorite show, *Desperate Housewives*, (a. is b. are) on.
- b 21. To ascend the St. Louis Arch, you must ride in a cramped capsule that (a. resemble b. resembles) an egg.
- a 22. After watching a season of *Boston Legal*, Linda (a. has b. have) decided to become an attorney.
- a 23. The television special *Lewis and Clark* (a. has b. have) lured many people into learning about early American explorers.
- b 24. Ryan and Emma said that there (a. is b. are) two assignments due this Friday.
- a 25. (a. Has b. Have) anyone met the new dormitory advisor?

REVIEW TEST 4 - B

Making the Subject and Verb Agree

Identify the correct verb by using the appropriate letter.

- a 1. Just after the United States (a. was b. were) established, the president's annual salary was \$25,000.
- b 2. The worst soccer disaster occurred at a game between Peru and Argentina in 1964, when more than 300 fans (a. was b. were) killed in a protest against a referee's ruling.
- a 3. *The Young and the Restless* consistently (a. wins b. win) awards for being the best daytime soap opera.
- a 4. The real name of Judy Garland, star of *The Wizard of Oz* and many Broadway shows, (a. was b. were) Frances Gumm.
- b 5. Indonesia, Pakistan, and India (a. has b. have) the largest Muslim populations.
- a 6. The Congressional Medal of Honor, given to men and women in the armed forces, (a. recognizes b. recognize) uncommon valor.
- a 7. The last veteran of the American Revolution died in 1869, which (a. means b. mean) that he lived to see the War of 1812, the Spanish-American War, and the Civil War.
- b 8. Sirius is the brightest of all the stars that (a. shines b. shine) in our galaxy.
- b 9. Not many people (a. knows b. know) that there is a \$100,000 bill or that it holds President Woodrow Wilson's portrait; it is used only in transactions between government offices.
- a 10. Spanish, the official language of two dozen countries, (a. is b. are) the foreign language most often studied by U.S. college students.
- a 11. An outbreak of Spanish influenza, which killed half a million people, (a. ranks b. rank) as our nation's worst single epidemic.
- a 12. The St. Lawrence Seaway, between the United States and Canada, (a. hosts b. host) the world's longest ship canal.
- b 13. 43,560 square feet (a. makes b. make) an acre.
- a 14. 212 degrees (a. is b. are) the boiling point of water.
- a 15. The duration of trademark registrations (a. is b. are) ten years, though they can be renewed at the end of each term.
- a 16. Afghanistan, along with Ethiopia, Haiti, and Nepal, (a. is b. are) one of the world's poorest countries.

- b 17. A number of diverse and beautiful vacation spots, including Antigua, Canada, Scotland, and Australia, (a. is b. are) under the British monarch's rule.
- b 18. Snowfields, glaciers, and a large section of the snowy Alps (a. covers b. cover) much of Austria.
- a 19. The Atacama Desert, the driest of all Earth's deserts, (a. lies b. lie) in the north of Chile.
- a 20. Olympic gymnastics (a. is b. are) divided into two categories: artistic and rhythmic.
- a 21. The records for all-time scoring and all-time receiving (a. belong b. belongs) to one man: Jerry Rice.
- a 22. The Stanley Cup, recognizing the world's best hockey teams, (a. has b. have) been awarded since 1893.
- a 23. The United Nations' General Assembly (a. discusses b. discuss) world events and makes recommendations, but it does not enforce any.
- b 24. The Urdu words pak, meaning pure, and stan, meaning nation, (a. forms b. form) the name Pakistan.
- a 25. Norway, located near Sweden and Denmark, (a. extends b. extend) farther north than any other European country, and about 70 percent of it is uninhabitable.

WRITING PARAGRAPHS

COHERENCE IN THE PARAGRAPH THROUGH SPATIAL ORDER

If the purpose of your paragraph is to tell how something looks, the most effective organization pattern is usually *spatial*. Spatial order presents a visual effect: through your careful attention to detail, word choice, and organization, you can draw a mental picture for your readers. This means that in order for your readers to see your subject, you have to select details that make the subject clear and you have to present those details in a pattern that your reader can follow. The arrangement often used in this kind of paragraph follows the sequence in which you would look at a scene or an object: from top to bottom, side to side, front to back, or near to far.

The following paragraph, from a book about an American who has built fifty-five schools for girls in Pakistan, describes a dangerous mountain truck ride. Notice that the writers begin their paragraph with a topic sentence that presents the main idea of teetering high above a rocky canyon. Notice, too, that they supply details in spatial order to support that topic sentence.

- He leaned over the side of the truck to request a stop and saw the top of the bearish assistant's close-cropped head stretching out the window, and beyond it, straight down fifteen hundred feet to the bottom of a rocky gorge, where a coffee-colored river foamed over boulders. He looked up and saw they were hemmed in hard by granite walls that rose ten thousand feet on both sides of the river. The Bedford [truck] was climbing a steep hill, and slipped backward near its crest, as Mohammed fumbled with the shift, manhandling it until it clanked into first gear. Mortenson, leaning out over the passenger side of the cab, could see the truck's rear tires rolling a foot from the edge of the gorge, spitting stones out into the abyss as Mohammed gunned the engine.

—Mortensen and Relin, *Three Cups of Tea: One Man's Mission to Promote Peace, One School at a Time*, p. 76

Spatial order presents a *visual effect*. Notice how the use of specific details helps to make clear the image of the newborn baby.

- Babies right after birth are not beautiful. The trip through the birth canal compresses the unfused bones of the skull, and many babies' heads are temporarily cone-shaped. The pressure also pastes back their ears. Newborns are covered with vernix, a white protective skin coating that looks like cheese, and are splotched with their mothers' blood. Some have virtually no hair on their heads, and some are born with a coat of fine hair (lanugo) all over their bodies. Even after they're cleaned up, most have mottled red skin from their arduous passage to birth. The struggle to be born is so exhausting that most newborn babies fall asleep within a couple of hours and stay fast asleep for many hours afterward.

WRITING TIPS Tell Me the Truth!

After you have revised your paragraph the best you can, let a friend or classmate read it to make sure it conveys exactly the points you intend. Ask him or her to consider the following questions:

- What is the point of the paragraph?
- Do you accept the writer's argument or point of view? Why or why not?
- Could any ideas be expanded? Omitted?
- Are some sentences unclear?
- Are there any grammatical or spelling errors?
- What is the paragraph's strongest quality?
- Does the paragraph stick to its topic?
- Does the author avoid slang, vagueness, repetition, and careless word choice?

EXERCISE A Spatial Order

Arranging your ideas in spatial order, write a paragraph of at least one hundred words on one of the following topics. Underline your topic sentence.

- my roommate's closet
- an appealing Web page
- the ugliest building in town
- my city from the air
- a favorite restaurant
- a favorite painting

After you write your first draft, answer the following questions.

1. Does my paragraph concentrate on describing one thing, scene, person, or object, or does it try to describe too much?
2. Have I given my reader specific details so that he or she can see what I am describing, or is my paragraph just a series of general and vague statements?
3. Does my paragraph have a plan, or does it jump around, confusing my reader?
4. Does my paragraph reflect the care I put into it, or is it filled with careless spelling mistakes or other errors?

These paragraphs, the first written by a well-known American writer of the nineteenth century, and the second written by a modern American novelist, are both based on spatial order. Read each paragraph carefully and then write a response.

- The most foreign and picturesque structures on the Cape, to an inlander, not excepting the salt-works, are the wind-mills,—gray-looking octagonal towers, with long timbers slanting to the ground in the rear, and there resting on a cart-wheel, by which their fans are turned round to face the wind. These appeared also to serve in some measure for props against its force. A great circular rut was worn around the building by the wheel. The neighbors who assemble to turn the mill to the wind are likely to know which way it blows, without a weathercock. They looked loose and slightly locomotive, like huge

wounded birds, trailing a wing or a leg, and reminded one of pictures of the Netherlands. Being on elevated ground, and high in themselves, they serve as landmarks,—for there are no tall trees, or other objects commonly, which can be seen at a distance in the horizon; though the outline of the land itself is so firm and distinct that an insignificant cone, or even precipice of sand, is visible at a great distance from over the sea. Sailors making the land commonly steer either by the wind-mills or the meeting-houses.

—Henry David Thoreau, *Cape Cod*, p. 39

- Sighing, she raised her eyes and gazed out at Paris’s dazzling landscape. On her left, across the Seine, the illuminated Eiffel Tower. Straight ahead, the Arc de Triomphe. And to the right, high atop the sloping rise of Montmartre, the graceful arabesque dome of Sacre-Coeur, its polished stone glowing white like a resplendent sanctuary. Here at the westernmost tip of the Denon Wing, the north-south thoroughfare of Place du Carrousel ran almost flush with the building with only a narrow sidewalk separating it from the Louvre’s outer wall. Far below, the usual caravan of the city’s nighttime delivery trucks sat idling.

—Dan Brown, *The Da Vinci Code*, p. 78

EXERCISE B Spatial Order

Presenting your ideas in spatial order, write a paragraph of at least 150 words on one of the following:

- a campus hangout
- your best friend’s appearance
- a popular vacation spot
- your neighborhood
- a room in your house
- a cherished possession
- a favorite article of clothing
- an offbeat place



You can find more tips at <http://www.mywritinglab.com>. Click on “Verbs,” then “Coherence in the Paragraph,” to watch animations about developing, organizing, and drafting a paragraph. There are also tips for using concrete words, supporting details, and spatial order. You can browse a list of topics and topic sentences that will help you start your own paragraph.

WRITING TIPS Now Hear This!

One of the best ways to revise your paragraph is to hear it. Seeing your writing is usually not enough. As you read it silently, you unconsciously fill in missing punctuation marks, letters, and even words. You might even miss rough sentences or clumsy expressions. When you read it aloud, however, you use different cognitive and critical skills that will expose the errors that might escape a silent reading.