

Subject-Verb Agreement B

Indefinite Pronouns

A pronoun that does not refer to a specific person, place, thing, or idea is called an *indefinite pronoun*. When an indefinite pronoun is used as a subject, make sure the verb agrees with the pronoun.

5d. The following indefinite pronouns are singular:

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

Use a singular verb to agree with these pronouns when they are used as subjects.

EXAMPLE **S** **Each** of the dogs **V** **has** its own food bowl. [The singular verb *has* agrees with the singular subject *Each*. The phrase *of the dogs* does not affect agreement, even though it comes between the subject and the verb.]

EXERCISE A Circle the verb form in parentheses that agrees with the underlined subject in each of the following sentences.

Example 1. Everyone (tries, try) his or her hardest on the test. [The indefinite pronoun *Everyone* is singular, so the verb should be singular, too.]

1. Either of these cheeses (*is*, *are*) soft enough to slice. [Which verb agrees with the singular indefinite pronoun *Either*?]
2. Someone usually (*bring*, *brings*) extra blankets to the stadium on cold nights.
3. Anything Keith suggests (*turn*, *turns*) out to be a good idea.
4. No one (*plans*, *plan*) an outdoor party in a thunderstorm!
5. (*Does*, *Do*) something in the refrigerator smell spoiled?

5e. The following indefinite pronouns are plural:

both	few	many	several
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Use a plural verb with these indefinite pronouns when they are used as subjects.

EXAMPLE **S** **Few** of the birds **V** **have returned** to their nests this spring. [The plural verb phrase *have returned* agrees with the plural subject *Few*. The phrase *of the birds* does not affect agreement, even though it comes between the subject and the verb.]

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EXERCISE B Circle the verb form in parentheses that agrees with the underlined subject in each of the following sentences.

- Example 1.** Several of the roses (have *has*) budded. [The indefinite pronoun *Several* is plural, so the verb should be plural, too.]
6. A few of the kittens (*has, have*) opened their eyes. [Which verb agrees with the plural indefinite pronoun *few*?]
7. Both of the windows (*was, were*) open in the warm spring weather.
8. Hooray! Several of my drawings (*are, is*) displayed in the school art exhibit!
9. (*Is, Are*) many of the gymnasts training for the state meet?
10. Few from our school (*compete, competes*) every month.

5f. The following indefinite pronouns may be singular or plural, depending on their meaning in the sentence:

all any more most none some

Look at the phrase that follows the indefinite pronoun. If the noun in that phrase is singular, the pronoun is also singular. If the noun in that phrase is plural, the pronoun is also plural.

EXAMPLES **V S**
Was any of the **shipment** damaged? [The subject *any* is singular because it refers to the singular *shipment*. The singular verb *Was* agrees with the singular subject *any*.]

V S
Were any of the **books** damaged? [The subject *any* is plural because it refers to the plural *books*. The plural verb *Were* agrees with the plural subject *any*.]

EXERCISE C Circle the verb form in parentheses that agrees with the underlined subject in each of the following sentences.

- Example 1.** (*Do, Does*) some of the bread taste stale to you? [The subject is *some*. The noun in the phrase that follows the subject is *bread*, which is singular. The singular verb *Does* agrees with the singular subject.]
11. All of the berries (*has, have*) already been eaten. [Is the noun in the phrase that follows *All* singular or plural? Which verb agrees with the subject?]
12. (*Is, Are*) most of the work completed?
13. None of the runners (*refuse, refuses*) the cool water.
14. Some of my ideas (*is, are*) being considered by the student council.
15. (*Do, Does*) any of the picture appear on the screen?