

SUBJECT-VERB AGREEMENT



Subject-Verb Agreement

Subject-Verb Agreement is one of the areas you have surely studied in your English classes. As you have seen, there are many rules governing the usage of subjects and verbs. We will cover several of them here.

Agreement of Subjects and Verbs

The first thing you must know is that the subject of the sentence and the verb of the sentence must agree in number. If the subject is plural, then the verb must be plural also. If the subject is singular, then the verb must be singular also. Whatever the subject is, the verb must be the same. That's why we call it *agreement*. The subject and verb must agree with each other in number.

Perhaps the most critical thing for you to know is that **all singular verbs end in "s"....** with the exception of "I *am*" and "you *are*." Look at these verbs: *is, are, do, does, seem, seems, ask, asks, was, were*. The ones that end in "s" are all singular: *is, does, seems, asks, was*.

Look at all the following verbs and label each as *singular* or *plural*.

- | | |
|-----------------|---------------|
| 1. was _____ | 4. is _____ |
| 2. look _____ | 5. were _____ |
| 3. thinks _____ | 6. ask _____ |

Now let's look at some simple sentences and you decide which verb must agree with the subject. Follow these steps.

1. Decide upon the subject.
 2. Determine whether it is singular or plural.
 3. Choose the verb form that is the **same** as the subject, singular or plural.
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1. That man (is, are) the one who painted our house last summer.
 2. Those children (was, were) arranged according to height.
 3. James (asks, ask) a lot of questions because he is anxious to learn.
 4. All our geese (swims, swim) in the pond adjacent to our property.
 5. Some boys (runs, run) much faster than others.
 6. Our vacation (lasts, last) for three weeks this year.
 7. Sam (want, wants) to know the results of the test last week.
 8. Each one (has, have) his own idea about how the outcome should be.
 9. Everything (was, were) laid out on the table in preparation for the meal.
 10. The cars (was, were) about to be washed by the school's club.

Subjects and Prepositional Phrases

Trying to be sure the subject and the verb agree may seem like a simple task, but for many students the task becomes complicated because of the difficulty in actually identifying the subject in the first place. It's easy enough to make the subject and verb agree you are looking at a very simple sentence, but in a complicated sentence structure like you will find on the SAT, finding the subject is not such an easy task at all.

There are some ways to make that task easier. First, you should eliminate constructions in the sentences that you *know* can't be the subject. One of the things we can eliminate is the prepositional phrase. There may be several of them in one sentence. In fact, the more sophisticated the sentence, the more prepositional phrases the sentence is likely to have. Once you eliminate all prepositional phrases, finding the subject will be much easier.

Let's review what you already know about prepositions, and then we will move on to prepositional phrases. A preposition is a word that shows a relationship to another word in the sentence. Many



prepositions show a spatial relationship to another word. Take a look at this cat and the tree.

Any position the cat can have in relation to the tree is going to be a preposition. For instance, the cat can be *beside* the tree, *in* the tree, *on* the tree. Look at the prepositions that can express a spatial relationship: *over, above, under, underneath, between, by, beneath, to, from*. He can go *up, down, into, out, through, across, along, around, beneath, beside, behind* the tree. These are only a few prepositions. There are others such as *like, with, without, to, about, after, during, following, concerning, regarding, aboard, against, amid, among, around, at, before, below, beyond, but, considering, despite, except, excluding, for, of, inside, near, off, onto, outside, past, per, plus, round, save, since, toward, unlike, upon, versus, via, within*. We also have a compound prepositions, two or more words commonly used as a single preposition: *on top of, according to, along with, apart from, by virtue of, due to, except for, in addition to, in between, out of*. There are more, but you will be able to recognize them.

Let's Practice – Finding Prepositions

Underline the prepositions in the following sentences.

1. He ran on the sidewalk.
2. The child jumped into the hole.
3. Before class, the children walked slowly down the hall.
4. Beside the road lay the old cart.
5. The cat sat on the shelf above the door.
6. Into the room they calmly strolled.
7. Under no circumstances are you to touch that glass sitting on the table.
8. He saw the book on top of the desk in his friend's room.
9. We built the tree house for the child.
10. With a big crash, the tree toppled onto the garage.

Next, we need to learn how to identify prepositional phrases so that we can eliminate them and make it easier to find the subject of the sentence. It is important to know that every preposition **must** have an object. Many students confuse the object of the preposition with the subject. When you eliminate the whole phrase, this will not happen to you. The object of the preposition is the **first noun after the preposition**. The two words together constitute a prepositional phrase. The prepositional phrase begins with the preposition, ends with the 1st noun after it, and includes all words (adjectives and adverbs only) in between.

Example: The dog with the dirt on his face ran through the puddle in the middle of the road.

These are the prepositional phrases:

with the dirt on his face through the puddle in the middle of the road

The nouns in the phrases are the **objects of the prepositions**: *dirt face puddle middle road*
In each phrase, the first noun after the preposition is the *object* of the preposition.
It is possible to have a compound object.

Example: My teacher gave the award to Bob and me.

The compound object of the preposition is *Bob and me*.

Remember this: If a word functions as the object of the preposition, *it cannot possibly be the subject*. Thousands and thousands of students will make the mistake of calling the object of the preposition the subject of the sentence. **Make sure that you know the difference!**

CRITICAL: You **must** learn to eliminate prepositional phrases when you analyze test questions for subject-verb agreement. The harder the questions are, the more critical it is that you get rid of the prepositional phrases before analyzing the sentence.

Let's Practice – Identifying Prepositional Phrases

Underline the prepositional phrases in the following sentences. Put parentheses around the **object** of the preposition in each sentence.

1. Behind the tree on the side of the bank is the wagon.
2. The girl with the purple flower on her skirt was at the park in Dallas in the middle of the day.
3. Along the side of the road lay a robin, all crusted with dirt and debris.
4. Without a doubt, the most critical factor in the experiment is the health of the participants.
5. The dog in the window of the pet shop looked at us and barked for attention.
6. The man on the bench under the tree is reading a book about the discovery of America.
7. In spite of the torrential rain, the troop marched through the woods and followed a trail of yellow corn left by their captain.

Once you eliminate the prepositional phrases, you will find it much easier to identify the subject of the sentence.

If a word is part of a prepositional phrase, it is not possible for it to be the subject.

Parenthetical Expressions, Appositives, and other Distractors

Another thing you will need to eliminate when looking for the subject of the sentence is all sorts of stuff that really isn't part of the major sentence elements. If you can't find the subject, then you can't be sure that the subject and verb agree.

Your first task is to get rid of prepositional phrases when you are analyzing sentences.

Your second task is to get rid of any information in the sentence that is **set off by commas**. This can include a great many things, namely appositives, parenthetical expressions, and non-restrictive clauses and phrases, which we will learn about much later. Rather than go into all the possibilities, let's just say that if anything in the sentence has commas before it and after it, then you want to consider getting rid of it. Look at the following diagram.

Sentence....., ///////////////,

All the stuff between the commas should be eliminated. You will not find the subject of the sentence in that information. Just consider, the commas that set off the information are telling you that this information, while perhaps interesting, is *not* part of the basic sentence.

Example: *Get on Board*, a motivation group that works with both employers and employees, help both parties to understand the problems inherent in the management of business.

If you look carefully, you will see that the subject and the verb of the sentence do not agree. Most students will miss a question like this since the sentence sounds so good to be wrong. Again, here's our trick that will help us to see the answer quickly. Get rid of the information set off by commas: *a motivation group that works with both employers and employees*. You see the comma before the phrase and after the phrase. Don't read the stuff in between. Skip over it, and you will see the mistake in the sentence easily. *Get on Board* help both parties....

Finding the Verb of the Sentence

When you are trying to find the subject of the sentence, your first task is to draw a line through the prepositional phrases. Then eliminate any information set off by commas.

Now it's time to find the verb. The simplest way is to look for a word that shows action. That's the verb. It tells what's happening. It might also help to know that all verbs have a form for "ing."

run ... running sing ... singing think ... thinking ask ... asking

The only verb that is different is the verb "be." You have to memorize the various forms of that verb. am, are, is, was, were, be, been, being. There it is. The "ing" form for *be* is *being*. Of course, you have to know that *was* is part of the *be* verb. You can't say *wasing*. Other than this one verb, all other verbs have an *ing* form that is very easy to find.

Let's Practice –Eliminating prepositional phrases

Draw a line through the prepositional phrases before you begin looking for the subject. Decide whether the subject of the sentence is singular or plural. Then underline the correct form of the verb in parentheses.

1. The author of the stories in these books (is, are) Jackie Lander.
2. Candace, along with her sisters Lucy and Janet, (was, were) at the party.
3. One typewriter for two or three students (seems, seem) adequate.
4. This collection of poems (look, looks) interesting.
5. The poems in our literature book (is, are) well chosen
6. Many lines in the poem (is, are) especially good.
7. The scenes on each village street (lives, live) again.
8. The antics of the old man always (makes, make) me laugh.
9. Kathy, along with her sisters, (has, have) chicken pox.
10. A ring of towering mountains (enclose, encloses) the valley.
11. The cause of her troubles (was, were) apparent.
12. The cut of her clothes (is, are) always just right.
13. This book of short stories (is, are) interesting.
14. Members of the council (enjoys, enjoy) special privileges.
15. The cats in the alley (is, are) wild.

Indefinite Pronouns as Subjects

You should find it easier to find subjects now. However, there is still something that might confuse you. Sometimes you will have a sentence that has an indefinite pronoun as the subject. In order to determine whether or not the verb agrees with the subject, you will have to know whether the pronoun is singular or plural. You will need to have these pronouns memorized.

Memorize!

Singular Indefinite Pronouns

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

It's easy to remember that the first twelve pronouns are singular. Look at the ending of each one of them. They all end in singular words: *one, body, thing*. The pronoun is everyone, not every twenty; everybody, not every bodies. That will help you to remember that they are singular words. Even though conceptually, the sentence may be talking about several people, the **word itself** is a singular indefinite pronoun and will require a singular verb to go with it.

There are four more in the chart that you need to know: *each*, *either*, *neither*, and *one*. Try this to help you remember that they are singular. Put the word **one** after each of the words. That will indicate to you that they are singular. Just like we say *everyone*, we can say **each one**, **neither one**, and **either one**. Here are some examples of these pronouns as subjects. Notice that you must ignore the prepositional phrases! The verb agrees with the subject ... **not** with the object of the preposition.

Each of the cars **is** painted red.

Everyone in those rooms **has** to get his books.

Neither of the boys **was** going to the movie.

Everybody in the stands **is** ready to leave.

Let's Practice – Indefinite Pronouns as Subjects

Draw a line through the prepositional phrases before you begin looking for the subject. Decide whether the subject of the sentence is singular or plural. Then underline the correct form of the verb in parentheses to agree with the subject.

1. We were amazed to discover that one of the horses (was, were) limping severely.
2. Not one of the characters in those plays (seem, seems) good enough for the part.
3. Along the path, each of the trees loaded with pecans (is, are) a haven for the chipmunks.
4. It was no surprise that neither of the girls (has, have) good table manners.
5. Not one of the bills (was, were) counterfeit.
6. Somebody in those clubs (was, were) not following the correct procedure.
7. Each of the signals on those two streets (is, are) broken.
8. We were surprised to see that one of the pictures (was, were) more blue than green.
9. One of these notebooks (is, are) yours.
10. Inside the store, one of the rooms (was, were) under construction.
11. Each of us (was, were) acting silly.
12. Neither of the rugs (lie, lies) flat.
13. One of the children (was, were) going to the concert.
14. Everything on those shelves (has, have) a special purpose.
15. Neither of the reports (is, are) written clearly.
16. Someone in the masses of people (was, were) responsible for that remark.
17. Everybody in the rooms (has, have) agreed that the temperature is uncomfortable.
18. Each of the players (was, were) prepared for the meet.
19. Neither of the girls (plays, play) the piano.
20. Something in the trees (was, were) causing the branches to move

Compound Subjects Joined by Or/Nor

When we have a compound subject, two subjects joined with a conjunction, we have another problem. If the two subjects are joined by *and*, then you have a plural subject, and you will need a plural verb. However, if the two subjects are joined with *or* or *nor*, we have a decision to make. Since we actually have two subjects to look at, we could have several variations:

Singular Plural	Plural Singular
Singular Singular	Plural Plural

Because of the confusion, we have a special rule.

Rule: When you have a compound subject whose parts are joined by *or* or *nor*, the subject closer to the verb determines its number.

This section of subject-verb agreement is critical. This is a rule you will have to memorize.

Example: Neither the ^{subject 1}customers nor the ^{subject 2}manager was aware of the storm.

The two parts of the subject are *customers* (plural) and *manager* (singular). You choose the subject closer to the verb. Since the verb is *was*, you look only at the subject *manager* (since it is closer). Since *manager* is singular, you must choose a singular verb to agree with it. Remember that all singular verbs end in *s*.

If we switch the order of the subjects, you must evaluate the sentence differently.

Example: Neither the ^{subject 1}manager nor the ^{subject 2}*customers* were aware of the storm.

The two parts of the subject are still *customers* and *manager*, but in this example *manager* comes first and *customers* comes closer to the verb. Since *customers* is plural, you must use a plural verb.

Here's another example:

We were all surprised that Mary Ellen or her sisters were responsible for providing the food.

The two parts of the subject are *Mary Ellen* and *sisters*. Since *sisters* is closer to the verb *were*, you let that part of the subject determine the verb. Since *sisters* is plural, you must have a plural verb. Remember that all singular verbs end in *s*; for a plural verb, you must choose the verb form that does NOT end in *s*.

Let's Practice - Compound Subjects Joined by Or/Nor

Choose the correct form of the verb for these sentences that have compound subjects. Remember the rule: *When you have a compound subject whose parts are joined by **or** or **nor**, the subject closer to the verb determines its number.*

1. Neither the mechanic nor his workers (was, were) able to get the car running again.
2. Neither the manager nor the employee handling all the outstanding accounts (has, have) been successful in reconciling the financials.
3. We tried to tell the teacher that either Bob or his three friends taking the same class (was, were) responsible for the broken desk.
4. None of the witnesses could tell whether the man driving the blue car or the ladies in the red suburban (was, were) guilty of running the light.
5. Nothing in the report indicates that either the ladies from the office or the men from the health club (is, are) in line for a promotion.
6. Either Samson or his opposing candidate in the elections (speak, speaks) tonight.
7. Every time the teacher enters that classroom, either Bob or one of the other students (erase, erases) the board.
8. Neither Jerry nor his parents (is, are) willing to accept responsibility for the broken window.
9. The woman knew that either the brakes or the steering column of her car (was, were) broken.
10. Either the cat or her kittens (has, have) turned over the milk.
11. The principal or her assistant (attends, attend) every game.
12. Neither Trisha nor her friends (is, are) going to visit the ruins of ancient Rome.
13. We were told that either Jim or his friends (has, have) decided to buy the car.
14. Neither Dot nor Avery (has, have) suggested that we read this book.
15. Either the boys or their father (was, were) talking excitedly about the event.
16. Either Jerry or his brothers (ask, asks) more questions than is necessary.
17. Neither the boys nor the girl (ask, asks) many questions before the test.
18. We were surprised to learn that neither Jeremy nor the twins (has, have) been tardy all year.
19. We offered them advice, but neither the girls nor the boy (was, were) interested in our opinions.
20. Either Jeremy or the boys from the hiking club (was, were) responsible for losing the backpack.

We will combine all these rules about subject-verb agreement in the next exercise. If you don't remember how to find the correct answer, look back at the previous pages and study the portion you need to review.

Let's Practice – Subject / Verb Agreement I

Check each of the following sentences to see that the subject and the verb agree. If the agreement is correct, write C in the blank provided. If the agreement is not correct, write I in the blank

- _____ 1. During the summers either James or John go to Ruidoso to watch the horse races in the mountains of New Mexico.
- _____ 2. Several of the horses in the race is there for the first time.
- _____ 3. Because the altitude is so high in the mountains, each of the horses need several days to get acclimated to the area.
- _____ 4. Even though the boys do not place bets on the horses, each one of them have fun watching the races to see which horse will win.
- _____ 5. Standing at the edge of the fence that separates the track from the spectators, neither of the boys takes his eyes off the long line of horses as they walk past.
- _____ 6. Every spectator in the stands try to decide which horse looks like the best runner.
- _____ 7. Because the ugliest horse sometimes runs the fastest, choosing a horse on its looks is not smart.
- _____ 8. There's always some horses that don't want to get into the stalls when the time comes for the race to begin.
- _____ 9. Sometimes neither the jockey nor the horse's trainer knows what the horse will do.
- _____ 10. There seems to be few reasons why a horse would be so contrary when the jockey wants him to do something.
- _____ 11. Both the horse's training and his temperament is responsible for winning a race.
- _____ 12. From the time the bell rings and the gates opens, the excitement of the crowd sets the mood for an exciting day at the races.

Let's Practice – Subject / Verb Agreement II

Underline the verb that agrees in number with its subject.

1. Everyone in the class (was, were) to give a report.
2. Either Felicia or Ellen (is, are) planning a hobo party.
3. (Does, Do) either of them know how to swim?
4. (Does, Do) Allen or the girls in the class know why radium glows in the dark?
5. The length of these boats (are, is) twenty feet.
6. The number of immigrants in the United States (is, are) astounding.
7. Inside the door (stands, stand) severely undernourished kittens.
8. In the last few months, everyone in the courses (has, have) had to fill out an additional form.
9. One of the players (is, are) hurt.
10. Around the corner (sits, sit) among a group of strangers three frightened children.
11. The students in the algebra class (have, has) finished taking the exam.
12. (Do, Does) either of the girls own a bicycle?
13. Each of those jackets (costs, cost) too much.
14. Every one of these planes (carries, carry) fifty passengers.
15. Judy, along with the rest of the girls, (has, have) already gone to the banquet.
16. Each of the organizations (has, have) a faculty sponsor.
17. The infantry, which fights with portable weapons, (constitutes, constitute) the largest division.
18. Either Jerry or his brothers (ask, asks) more questions than is necessary.
19. Either the orchestra or the choir (gives, give) two free concerts a year.
20. If you sit quietly, there (is, are) a greater possibility of seeing the rare bird.
21. My neighbor and closest friend (is, are) Susan Willis.
22. Kim, Chris, and my brother Ed (think, thinks) that the Steelers will win.
23. Nobody in our class (wants, want) to be the moderator of the meeting.
24. Every one of my friends (has, have) read this fascinating book about planets.
25. Along the road (sits, sit) hidden among the bushes two newborn puppies.
26. Under the old boards (was, were) a frightened mouse.

Test Taking Practice

Find the underlined portion of the sentence that contains an error.
Approach each question methodically. Look specifically for errors in
subject-verb agreement.



1. Either the captain or the members of the crew on the ship was responsible for the accident that had occurred during last night's shift. No error
a b c d e
2. Either James or the workers in the store believe that under the steps sit a lost puppy cowering in fear and yelping for our attention. No error
a b c d e
3. The teacher was adamant when he said that each of the students in the room are responsible for the damaged equipment. No error
a b c d e
4. The ladies living in the apartment next to my patio is planning to look for another job after their immediate supervisor retires from the company. No error
a b c d e
5. Each of the man's children knows the value of money and frequently refers to the adage "A penny saved is a penny earned." No error
a b c d e
6. Before they can make any decisions about the experiment, the boys in the chemistry class needs to consult their data. No error
a b c d e
7. Neither the students in the room nor the teacher know why the alarm suddenly began to sound so loudly in the halls. No error
a b c d e
8. There was reasons the man decided not to pursue the thief running from the store. No error
a b c d e
9. Even after Jeremy had worked at the store for months, neither his supervisor nor the store's owners of the large chain was aware of his superior work. No error
a b c d e
10. Each of the children were supposed to be given awards at the end of the play. No error.
a b c d e

A vocabulary study over the words in this passage follows this test. You should consider doing the vocabulary study first, then taking this test. All subsequent vocabulary tests cover words you are sure to see in your college studies and in your more difficult reading passages on the PSAT and SAT. You will want to know them!

Passage Based Testing

The passage below contains underlined sections for you to consider editing and revising. Choose the answer choice that best completes the sentence according to conventional grammar standards. Look specifically for errors in **subject-verb agreement** in this test.



As the sergeant looked over his new recruits, he was not totally incurious about the backgrounds of the men he was to train, but he knew that the personal stuff would have to come later. At this time, he had other concerns that were paramount. He was cognizant of his responsibility for preparing his fold for those imminent situations that each of the soldiers ¹ encounter almost daily in the line of duty, and he was ready to get started.

Decorousness, while appropriate in formal military settings, ² were not something he pressed upon his men, nor did he want them to move in the opposite direction and ³ expects equality among all members. There is an order and equilibrium in the dissemination of power. The men would see this and would come to appreciate and rely upon it.

Perhaps the most important aspect of being part of large teams ⁴ is the cooperation that must exist among its members. Dissention among the men could be dangerous, almost treacherous to a company of men whose ⁵ life depends upon their working together as a unit, and not as separate individuals. At some time, each of the men ⁶ exercise reserve and ⁷ inhibits the ardor of his passions regarding an issue or a command.

The sergeant was not presumptuous enough to think he could train this group of young men without some amount of frustration and difficulty, but his intention was to prepare them to face dangerous situations and not be called upon to retreat from their position.

With a quick movement he made an about face, called his men to attention, and began their arduous journey.

1. A) NO CHANGE
B) encounters
C) encountered
D) encountering

2. A) NO CHANGE
B) is
C) are
D) was

3. A) NO CHANGE
B) expecting
C) expect
D) expected

4. A) NO CHANGE
B) are
C) were
D) was

5. A) NO CHANGE
B) lives depend
C) lives depended
D) life depending

6. A) NO CHANGE
B) exercised
C) exercises
D) exercising

7. A) NO CHANGE
B) inhibit
C) inhibited
D) inhibiting

College Readiness Vocabulary

Definitions



- ardor** (AR dur) **Definition:** warmth or heat of emotion; extreme force, vigor, or energy
Synonyms: passion, intensity, fervor, enthusiasm, zeal
Derivatives: ardour, ardors
Overcome with ardor, she jumped into the arms of her fiancé.
- cognizant** (KOG nuh zunt) **Definition:** aware, having knowledge
Synonyms: au courant, conscious, informed, sentient
Derivatives: cognition, cognizable, cognizably, cognizance, cognize, cognized, cognizing
To be a successful politician, it is necessary to be cognizant of your community's needs.
- concord** (KON kord) **Definition:** agreement; concurrence in attitudes, consensus
Synonyms: concert, agreement, consensus, understanding
Derivatives: concordal, concordance, concordant, concordatory
The town council voiced its concord for the new ordinance and adjourned the meeting.
- decorousness** (DEK ur us ness) **Definition:** proper behavior
Synonyms: civility, decency, modesty, propriety
Derivatives: decorous, decorously, decorum
Their good manners and decorousness made them a favorite with their professors.
- despicable** (des PIK uh bul) **Definition:** very bad, contemptible
Synonyms: pitiable, scurvy
Derivatives: despicability, despicableness, despicably
We thought he was a despicable person, until we learned that he had been framed for the murder.
- equanimity** (ee kwuh NIM uh tee) **Definition:** a calm temper, an even disposition
Synonyms: levelheadedness, aplomb, composure, confidence, poise, sangfroid
Derivatives: equanimous, equanimously
She was well-regarded for her equanimity and ability to settle disputes.
- equilibrium** (ee kwuh LIB ree um) **Definition:** a state of balance between opposing forces
Synonyms: balance, poise
Derivatives: equilibriums, equilibriize, equilibrate
The crew tried frantically to restore equilibrium to the small boat and prevent it from capsizing.
- exigent** (EK seh junt) **Definition:** urgent, requiring immediate attention
Synonyms: acute, critical, imperative, insistent, necessary
Derivatives: exigency, exigencies, exigence, exigently
Make sure you take care of your exigent needs first; everything else can be dealt with later.
- fold (noun)** (FOLD) **Definition:** a group bound together by common beliefs; fenced enclosure for sheep
Synonyms: congregation
Derivatives: folds
The nuns welcomed the young neophytes into their fold.
- incurious** (in KYOOR ee us) **Definition:** uninterested, lacking normal curiosity
Synonyms: callous, detached, impassive, indifferent, languid, phlegmatic, stoic, stolid
Derivatives: incuriosity, incuriously, incuriousness
Even those with the most incurious natures will be interested in the new exhibit about modern-day inventions.

College Readiness Vocabulary

Definitions



11. **lithe** (LIETH) **Definition:** flexible and graceful
Synonyms: agile, lean, limber, nimble, pliable, supple
Derivatives: lithely
The ballerina was lithe and nimble, impressing everyone in the audience.
12. **perfidious** (pur FID ee us) **Definition:** calculated to deceive; deceitful; treacherous
Synonyms: betraying, insidious, recreant, unreliable
Derivatives:
The girl's perfidious nature stunned her teachers.
13. **pithy** (PITH ee) **Definition:** concise and meaningful
Synonyms: compendious, laconic, succinct, summary, terse
Derivatives: pithier, pithiest, pith
She was able to summarize her feelings into one pithy sentence.
14. **portly** (PORT lee) **Definition:** heavy or rotund in a stately manner, stout
Synonyms: ample, burly, corpulent, fleshy, rotund
Derivatives: portliness
The portly dog was happy to perform tricks in exchange for treats and belly rubs.
15. **presumptuous** (preh ZUMP choo us) **Definition:** brazenly overstepping bounds, arrogant
Synonyms: audacious, conceited, egotistic, insolent, pompous, pretentious, supercilious
Derivatives: presume, presumer, presumption, presumptive, presumptively, presumptuously, presumptuousness
He was fired for his presumptuous actions and stubborn attitude.
16. **reserve** (reh ZURV) **Definition:** self-restraint
Synonyms: reticence
Derivatives: reserved, reservedly, reserveless
The basketball player exhibited great reserve as he quietly exited the court.
17. **retrogress** (REH truh gres) **Definition:** to move backward, to degenerate
Synonyms: recede, retract, retreat
Derivatives: retrogressed, retrogressing, retrogression, retrogressive, retrogressively
Without consistent treatment, the patient's condition is likely to retrogress.
18. **snippet** (SNIP it) **Definition:** a small amount, morsel
Synonyms: bit, fragment, piece, smidgen, snip
Derivatives: snippiness, snippety, snippy
He made an inaccurate assumption based on a snippet of a conversation he had overheard.
19. **unimpeachable** (un im PEE chuh bul) **Definition:** not to be called into question, exempt from liability
Synonyms: irreproachable, blameless
Derivatives: unimpeachableness, unimpeachably, unimpeached
The mayor believed himself to be unimpeachable and beyond reproach.
20. **woe** (WOE) **Definition:** great sorrow, grief, or misfortune
Synonyms: affliction, anguish, dejection, hardship, rue, tribulation
Derivatives: woes, woebegone, woeful, woebegoneness, woefully, woefulness
Everyone was filled with a feeling of woe upon hearing of his neighbor's untimely death.

College Readiness Vocabulary

Matching Test



Directions: Match the vocabulary word to its definition.

Practice 1

- | | | | |
|-----------|--------------|----|--|
| _____ 1. | ardor | a. | aware, having knowledge |
| _____ 2. | cognizant | b. | proper behavior |
| _____ 3. | concord | c. | a state of balance between opposing forces |
| _____ 4. | decorousness | d. | agreement; concurrence in attitudes |
| _____ 5. | despicable | e. | very bad, contemptible |
| _____ 6. | equanimity | f. | warmth of emotion; extreme force, or vigor |
| _____ 7. | equilibrium | g. | a calm temper, an even disposition |
| _____ 8. | exigent | h. | uninterested, lacking normal curiosity |
| _____ 9. | fold | i. | urgent, requiring immediate attention |
| _____ 10. | incurious | j. | a group bound together by common beliefs |

Practice 2

- | | | | |
|-----------|---------------|----|---|
| _____ 11. | lithe | k. | brazenly overstepping bounds, arrogant |
| _____ 12. | perfidious | l. | to move backward, to degenerate |
| _____ 13. | pithy | m. | flexible and graceful |
| _____ 14. | portly | n. | a small amount, morsel |
| _____ 15. | presumptuous | o. | concise and meaningful |
| _____ 16. | reserve | p. | self-restraint |
| _____ 17. | retrogress | q. | calculated to deceive; deceitful; treacherous |
| _____ 18. | snippet | r. | heavy or rotund in a stately manner, stout |
| _____ 19. | unimpeachable | s. | great sorrow, grief, or misfortune |
| _____ 20. | woe | t. | not called into question, without liability |

College Readiness Vocabulary



Multiple Choice Test



Directions: Find the correct vocabulary word that fits the definition.

- _____1. great sorrow, grief, or misfortune
a. reserve b. snippet c. woe d. equanimity e. fold
- _____2. self-restraint
a. concord b. reserve c. equilibrium d. snippet e. equanimity
- _____3. a calm temper, an even disposition
a. snippet b. concord c. exigent d. equanimity e. woe
- _____4. brazenly overstepping bounds, arrogant
a. presumptuous b. incurious c. perfidious d. lithe e. pithy
- _____5. a small amount, morsel
a. fold b. woe c. reserve d. concord e. snippet
- _____6. urgent, requiring immediate attention
a. incurious b. exigent c. portly d. presumptuous e. perfidious
- _____7. to move backward, to degenerate
a. perfidious b. exigent c. reserve d. retrogress e. incurious
- _____8. not to be called into question, exempt from liability
a. pithy b. presumptuous c. exigent d. incurious e. unimpeachable
- _____9. heavy or rotund in a stately manner, stout
a. portly b. pithy c. lithe d. perfidious e. exigent
- _____10. flexible and graceful
a. lithe b. pithy c. decorousness d. despicable e. perfidious
- _____11. warmth or heat of emotion; extreme force, vigor, or energy
a. reserve b. woe c. exigent d. snippet e. ardor
- _____12. uninterested, lacking normal curiosity
a. exigent b. pithy c. incurious d. cognizant e. decorousness
- _____13. calculated to deceive; deceitful; treacherous
a. cognizant b. exigent c. presumptuous d. incurious e. perfidious
- _____14. proper behavior
a. presumptuous b. decorousness c. incurious d. perfidious e. lithe
- _____15. aware, having knowledge
a. exigent b. cognizant c. incurious d. pithy e. despicable

College Readiness Vocabulary



Sentence Completion Test

Directions: Find the correct word from the box below to complete the sentences that follow.

Exercise A

ardor	cognizant	concord	decorousness	despicable
equanimity	equilibrium	exigent	fold	incurious

- _____ 1. Nothing interested him anymore; since the loss of his job, he had become _____.
- _____ 2. My father was always careful to take care of our _____ needs first and his afterward.
- _____ 3. I don't feel as passionate about my art now; all my _____ for it has diminished.
- _____ 4. During the argument he lost all sense of _____ and became enraged.
- _____ 5. The hang glider struggled to restore _____ as the wind batted his small craft around.
- _____ 6. The shepherd kept the sheep together in the _____ where they could be safe and protected.
- _____ 7. The team was in complete _____; everyone agreed to reschedule the game.
- _____ 8. Never under-estimate the necessity of _____; good manners are always important.
- _____ 9. He went through life in a daze and was barely _____ of those around him.
- _____ 10. We have never met a more _____ person than that distasteful, lying thief.

Exercise B

lithe	perfidious	pithy	portly	presumptuous
reserve	retrogress	snippet	unimpeachable	woe

- _____ 11. She was ill-equipped to handle her grief; she had never experienced such _____.
- _____ 12. I don't need very much fabric; this _____ will work just fine.
- _____ 13. It is a mistake to be _____ in your actions and overstep your bounds.
- _____ 14. I find that short, _____ statements are more effective than drawn-out orations.
- _____ 15. The _____ cat jumped swiftly down from the counter, its leap swift and graceful.
- _____ 16. He was skilled at maintaining _____ under pressure and not showing his true feelings.
- _____ 17. His deceitful nature made it easy for the jury to see through his _____ lies.
- _____ 18. His behavior was _____; no one could find fault with his previous actions.
- _____ 19. Though he was short and overweight, the _____ man was still very agile.
- _____ 20. We thought his behavior was improving, but it actually began to _____.

Answers for Subject-Verb Agreement

Check Your Answers - Agreement of Subjects and Verbs

Verb	Sing./Pl.	Verb	Sing./Pl.
1. was	singular	1. man	is
2. look	plural	2. children	were
3. thinks	singular	3. James	asks
4. is	singular	4. geese	swim
5. were	plural	5. boys	run
6. ask	plural	6. vacation	lasts
		7. Sam	wants
		8. one	has
		9. everything	was
		10. cars	were

Let's Practice – Finding Prepositions

- | | | | | |
|---------|--------------|------------------|-----------|----------------|
| 1. on | 2. into | 3. before, down | 4. beside | 5. on, above |
| 6. into | 7. under, on | 8. on top of, in | 9. for | 10. with, onto |

Let's Practice – Identifying Prepositional Phrases

1. Behind the (tree) on the (side) of the (bank) is the wagon.
2. The girl with the purple (flower) on her (skirt) was at the (park) in (Dallas) in the (middle) of the (day).
3. Along the (side) of the (road) lay a robin, all crusted with (dirt and debris).
4. Without a (doubt), the most critical factor in the (experiment) is the health of the (participants).
5. The dog in the (window) of the pet (shop) looked at us and barked for (attention).
6. The man on the bench under the (tree) is reading a book about the (discovery) of (America).
7. In spite of the torrential (rain), the troop marched through the (woods), following a trail of yellow (corn) left by their (captain).

Let's Practice – Identifying Subjects and Verbs

- correct 1. ~~Long before the last freeze of the winter~~, come beautiful blooms ~~of the violet~~.
- incorrect 2. ~~Throughout the room~~ was the unbelievably loud and shrill cries ~~of the child~~. (**cries were**)
- incorrect 3. ~~After the second course of their meal~~, the third course ~~of the feast~~, which included cheeses, cream, and fruits, were served. (**course was served**)
- incorrect 4. ~~Even after the encore~~ the cheers ~~of the attentive man in the audience~~ was quite astounding. (**cheers were**)
- incorrect 5. ~~Quietly through the leaves of the tree~~ comes the mournful chirps ~~of the lonely bird~~. (**chirps come**)
- correct 6. ~~Only after the judge passes the sentence~~ does the attorney ~~for the defense~~ feel he can relax.
- incorrect 7. ~~Far away from the crowd~~ comes the muddy waters rushing ~~past the flooded banks~~. (**waters come**)
- correct 8. When the evening sun sets ~~over the distant hills~~, few details ~~of the newly blooming tree~~ are seen.

Let's Practice – Eliminating Prepositional Phrases

- | | | |
|----------|--------------|-----------|
| 1. is | 6. are | 11. was |
| 2. was | 7. live | 12. is |
| 3. seems | 8. make | 13. is |
| 4. looks | 9. has | 14. enjoy |
| 5. are | 10. encloses | 15. Are |

Let's Practice – Indefinite Pronouns as Subjects

- | | | | |
|------------------|-------------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| 1. (one) was | 6. (somebody) was | 11. (each) was | 16. (someone) was |
| 2. (one) seems | 7. (each) is | 12. (neither) lies | 17. (everybody) has |
| 3. (each) is | 8. (one) was | 13. (one) was | 18. (each) was |
| 4. (neither) has | 9. (one) is | 14. (everything) has | 19. (neither) plays |
| 5. (one) was | 10. (one) was | 15. (neither) is | 20. (something) was |

Let's Practice - Compound Subjects Joined by Or/Nor

- | | | | |
|-------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|
| 1. (workers) were | 6. (candidate) speaks | 11. (assistant) attends | 16. (brothers) ask |
| 2. (employee) has | 7. (one) erases | 12. (friends) are | 17. (girl) asks |
| 3. (friends) were | 8. (parents) are | 13. (friends) have | 18. (twins) have |
| 4. (ladies) were | 9. (column) was | 14. (Avery) has | 19. (boy) was |
| 5. (men) are | 10. (kittens) have | 15. (father) was | 20. (boys) were |
-

Let's Practice - Subject / Verb Agreement I

- | | | |
|----------------------|-------|------------------------------|
| 1. I John goes | 7. C | |
| 2. I Several are | 8. I | horses are |
| 3. I each needs | 9. C | |
| 4. I one has | 10. I | reasons seem |
| 5. C | 11. I | training and temperament are |
| 6. I spectator tries | 12. I | gates open |
-

Let's Practice – Subject / Verb Agreement II

- | | | | | |
|---------|----------|-----------------|-----------|---------|
| 1. was | 7. stand | 13. costs | 19. gives | 25. sit |
| 2. is | 8. has | 14. carries | 20. is | 26. was |
| 3. does | 9. is | 15. has | 21. is | |
| 4. does | 10. sit | 16. has | 22. think | |
| 5. is | 11. have | 17. constitutes | 23. wants | |
| 6. is | 12. does | 18. ask | 24. has | |
-

Test Taking Practice

- | | | | | |
|------|------|------|------|-------|
| 1. b | 2. b | 3. c | 4. b | 5. e |
| 6. c | 7. c | 8. a | 9. d | 10. b |
-

Passage Based Testing

- | | | | | | | |
|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| 1. b | 2. d | 3. c | 4. a | 5. b | 6. c | 7. a |
|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
-

Vocabulary Matching Test Answers

- | | | | | | | | | | |
|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1. f | 2. a | 3. d | 4. b | 5. e | 6. g | 7. c | 8. i | 9. j | 10. h |
| 11. m | 12. q | 13. o | 14. r | 15. k | 16. p | 17. l | 18. n | 19. t | 20. s |
-

Vocabulary Multiple-Choice Tests Answers

- | | | | | | | | | | |
|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|------|------|------|------|-------|
| 1. c | 2. b | 3. d | 4. a | 5. e | 6. b | 7. d | 8. e | 9. a | 10. a |
| 11. e | 12. c | 13. e | 14. b | 15. b | | | | | |
-

Vocabulary Sentence Completion Answers

- | | | | | |
|--------------|----------------|-------------------|---------------|----------------|
| 1. incurious | 2. exigent | 3. ardor | 4. equanimity | 5. equilibrium |
| 6. fold | 7. concord | 8. decorousness | 9. cognizant | 10. despicable |
| 11. woe | 12. snippet | 13. presumptuous | 14. pithy | 15. lithe |
| 16. reserve | 17. perfidious | 18. unimpeachable | 19. portly | 20. retrogress |
-