

15.1

Making Subjects and Verbs Agree

A subject and its verb are the basic parts of a sentence. The subject and its verb must *agree in number*. A singular noun subject takes a singular form of the verb. A plural noun subject takes a plural form of the verb. In the present tense, the singular form of the verb usually ends in *-s* or *-es*.

Read the sentences in the chart below. You can see that the subjects and verbs agree in number.

Subject Noun and Verb Agreement

Singular

A **mountain rises** sharply to the sky.
A **naturalist teaches** us about nature.

Plural

Mountains rise sharply to the sky.
Naturalists teach us about nature.

Verbs and subject pronouns must also agree in number. In the present tense, the *-s* ending is used with the subject pronouns *it*, *he*, and *she*.

Subject Pronoun and Verb Agreement

Singular

He, she, or it **travels**.
You **travel**.
I **travel**.

Plural

We **travel**.
You **travel**.
They **travel**.

The irregular verbs *be*, *do*, and *have* can be main verbs or helping verbs. They must agree with the subject, whether they are main verbs or helping verbs.

I **am** fine. He **is** ready. [main verb]

They **are** questioning a ranger. [helping verb]

She **does** well. [main verb]

She **does** work hard. They **do** sing. [helping verb]

He **has** a boat. [main verb]

He **has** visited Utah. They **have** eaten. [helping verb]

Exercise 1 Using Subject and Verb Agreement

For each sentence, write the correct form of the verb in parentheses.

1. Acadia National Park (lies, lie) along Maine's coast.
2. Several islands (is, are) in the park.
3. Acadia (features, feature) a rocky coastline.
4. Mount Desert Island (is, are) very beautiful.
5. Many people (travels, travel) to Acadia every year.
6. They (photographs, photograph) the wildlife.
7. Mammoth Cave (is, are) in Kentucky.
8. The passageways (winds, wind) for nearly two hundred miles.
9. An underground river (flows, flow) through the caves.
10. Tour guides (leads, lead) people through the chambers.
11. Many visitors (enjoys, enjoy) the sense of adventure.
12. For example, my mother (does, do).
13. Yellowstone National Park (has, have) some of the few surviving grizzly bears.
14. Campers (does, do) enjoy the wilderness.
15. Large bears sometimes (approaches, approach).
16. Park visitors (does, do) require protection.
17. A camper (carries, carry) bedding and supplies.
18. Yellowstone (has, have) a beautiful waterfall.
19. Our national parks (contains, contain) natural wonders.
20. Wind Cave (has, have) unusual crystals.
21. Tiny white crystals (lines, line) the cave walls and ceiling.
22. Ancient animal fossils (lies, lie) in the Agate Fossil Beds.
23. The park (includes, include) the remains of two-horned rhinoceroses.
24. Unusual rock formations (fills, fill) Death Valley.
25. The National Park Service (protects, protect) Death Valley and other national monuments.

Exercise 2 Writing Sentences with Subject and Verb Agreement

Write ten original sentences. Use singular subjects in some sentences and plural subjects in others. Be sure each verb agrees with its subject. In each sentence, underline the subject once and the verb twice. Write whether the subject is *singular* or *plural*.

SAMPLE ANSWER: My friends are packing for a camping trip. (plural)