

Conventions 18: Subject / Verb Agreement

Sometimes when people see “and” or “or” (or even “nor”) in a sentence, they’re not sure whether to make the verb singular or plural. For example .

..

The student and the teacher like / likes to read.

Either the students or the teacher like / likes to read.

In the first case, the “and” means that you should go with a plural verb, “like.”

In the second case, the “or” means that you should match the verb to the subject closest to it, the teacher, which means you need a singular verb, “likes.” Try these.

1. The dog and the cat like / likes to run.
2. Either the dog or the cat like / likes to run.
3. Either the dog or the cats like / likes to run.
4. My sister and my brothers read / reads a lot.
5. Neither my sister nor my brothers read / reads a lot.
6. Neither my brothers nor my sister read / reads a lot.
7. My friends and I walks / walk to school.

- “and” = “they”
- “or” = ignore what’s furthest from the verb
- “nor” = ignore what’s furthest from the verb

Try these.

1. The dog and the cat like / likes to run.
2. Either the dog or the cat like / likes to run.
3. Either the dog or the cats like / likes to run.
4. My sister and my brothers read / reads a lot.
5. Neither my sister nor my brothers
read / reads a lot.
6. Neither my brothers nor my sister
read / reads a lot.
7. My friends and I walks / walk to school.
8. Either my friends or I drives / drive to school.

- **“and” = “they”**
- **“or” and “nor” = ignore what’s furthest from the verb**
- **ignore intervening phrases (interrupting elements)**

Try these.

1. **The dogs and the cat like / likes to run.**
2. **Either the dogs or the cat like / likes to run.**
3. **The dogs, whenever not with the cat, like / likes to run.**
4. **The cat, when not being chased by the dogs, like / likes to run.**

Conventions 18: Subject / Verb Agreement

Name _____

Conventions Workshop: Subject / Verb Agreement I

Sometimes when people see “and” or “or” (or even “nor”) in a sentence, they’re not sure whether to make the verb singular or plural. For example . . .

The student and the teacher like / likes to read.

~~Either the students or~~ the teacher like / likes to read.

In the first case, the “and” means that you should go with a plural verb, “like.”

In the second case, the “or” means that you should match the verb to the subject closest to it, the teacher, which means you need a singular verb, “likes.”

In other words, if there’s an “and,” replace the subjects with “they,” then listen for the right verb. If there’s a “or” or a “nor,” ignore the subject farthest from the verb—cross it out—then say the sentence with only the subject closest to the “or” or “nor,” and listen for the correct verb.

Directions: Circle the correct verb.

1. Both my parents and my sister like / likes to go to bed early.
2. Either my parents or my sister insist / insists on going to bed early.
3. Either my sister or my parents insist / insists on going to bed early.
4. Your friends and your mom / Mom read / reads a lot.
5. Your mom and your friends read / reads a lot.
6. Your mom or your friends like / likes to read.
7. Your friends or your mom like / likes to read.
8. Bill’s dad / Dad and his brothers go / goes to school with me.
9. Bill’s dad or his brothers go / goes to school with me.
10. Bill’s brothers or Bill go / goes to school with me.
11. Neither the chipmunk nor the squirrels is / are bothering us.
12. Neither the squirrels nor the chipmunk is / are bothering us.
13. The chipmunk and the squirrels is / are bothering us.

Name _____

Conventions Workshop: Subject / Verb Agreement II

Sometimes when people see “and” or “or” (or even “nor”) in a sentence, they’re not sure whether to make the verb singular or plural. For example . . .

The student and the teacher like / likes to read.

~~Either the students or~~ the teacher like / likes to read.

In the first case, the “and” means that you should go with a plural verb, “like.”

In the second case, the “or” means that you should match the verb to the subject closest to it, the teacher, which means you need a singular verb, “likes.”

In other words, if there’s an “and,” replace the subjects with “they,” then listen for the right verb. If there’s a “or” or a “nor,” ignore the subject farthest from the verb—cross it out—then say the sentence with only the subject closest to the “or” or “nor,” and listen for the correct verb.

Directions: Circle the correct verb.

1. Either cake or cookies is / are fine for dessert.
2. Bob and Randy wants / want to have cookies.
3. Bob or Randy wants / want cake.
4. Neither jogging nor swimming interests / interest him.
5. Neither swimming nor outdoor sports interests / interest him.
6. Both swimming and sailing is / are difficult to truly master.
7. The hunter and the hounds is / are following the bear.
8. The hunter or the hounds is / are lost.
9. The hounds or the hunter is / are lost.
10. The book and the movie lacks / lack a compelling plot.
11. The book or the movie was / were written by the same person.
12. This book and those movies is / are too long.
13. These movies or that book is / are too long.
14. Our new teachers or our new principle / principal refuse / refuses to allow gum.

Name _____

Conventions Workshop: Subject / Verb Agreement III: Intervening Phrases

You already know that when you see “and” in a sentence, you should replace the subjects with “they” or “we,” then listen for the correct verb, singular or plural. You also know that when you see “or” or “nor” in a sentence, you should ignore the subject farthest from the verb (just cross it out), then listen for the correct verb, singular or plural. So . . .

The student and the teacher LIKE to read.

~~Either the students or~~ the teacher LIKES to read.

But here’s something new: When the sentence has an intervening phrase (remember those? unnecessary parts of a sentence, with commas before and after, sort of like parenthetical statements), you should ignore the intervening phrase to find the correct verb. Yep—just cross it out, then listen for the right verb. For example . . .

The teacher, ~~but not the students~~, READS daily.

The students, ~~along with the new teacher~~, GO to the cafeteria for lunch.

Directions: Circle the correct verb.

1. The team, including both pitchers, is / are outstanding.
2. The team and the pitchers is / are outstanding.
3. Neither the team nor the pitchers is / are outstanding.
4. Either the pitchers or the team is / are outstanding.
5. Rudy, as well as his cat, likes / like milk.
6. Rudy, but not his cats, likes / like milk.
7. Neither Rudy nor his cats likes / like milk.
8. Rudy and his cats likes / like milk.
9. Either his cats or Rudy like / likes milk.
10. The new student and her parents wants / want to meet the principal.
11. The new student or her parents wants / want to meet the principal.
12. The new student, but not her parents, wants / want to meet the principal.
13. The new student’s parents, but not the student, wants / want to meet the principal.
14. Neither the new student nor her parents wants / want to meet the principal.
15. Many young people, not including my cousin Sam, likes / like to snowboard.
16. Many young people and my cousin Sam likes / like to snowboard.

Name _____

Conventions 18: Subject / Verb Agreement

Two subjects joined by “**and**”? Replace the subjects with “they,” then listen for the correct verb.

Example: My parents and my sister [THEY] DECIDES / DECIDE when to leave the house.

Two subjects joined by “**or**” or “**nor**”? Ignore the subject further from the verb, then listen.

Example: ~~My parents or~~ my sister DECIDES / DECIDE when to leave.

So . . . If it’s “**and**,” you say they; if it’s “**or**,” you ignore. (It rhymes! Say it a few times so it’ll stick.)

But there’s more. If your sentence has an interrupting element, like this one, the rule is different. Ignore the interrupting element in the sentence, then listen.

Example: The baskets, ~~not including that one~~, still HAS / HAVE to be loaded.

Directions: Circle the correct verb.

1. Either cake or cookies is / are fine for dessert.
2. Bob and Randy wants / want to have cookies.
3. Bob or Randy wants / want cake.
4. Bob, not including his friends, wants / want cake.
5. Neither jogging nor swimming interests / interest him.
6. Neither swimming nor outdoor sports interests / interest him.
7. Swimming, when not taking place in lakes, is / are always fun.
8. Both swimming and sailing is / are difficult to truly master.
9. The hunter and the hounds is / are following the bear.
10. The hunter or the hounds is / are lost.
11. The hounds or the hunter is / are lost.
12. The hunter, when not pursued by the hounds, is / are usually successful.
13. The book and the movie lacks / lack a compelling plot.
14. The book or the movie was / were written by the same person.
15. This book and those movies is / are too long.

16. These movies or that book is / are too long.
17. This movie, when not accompanied by short stories, is / are always interesting.
18. Our new teachers or our new principle / principal refuse / refuses to allow gum.
19. Neither our new principle / principal nor our new teachers allows / allow gum.
20. Sometimes our friends, as well as our enemies, teach / teaches us about ourselves.
21. My cousins, when not chaperoned by their dad, doesn't / don't like to run.
22. Either my cousin or her friends eat / eats dinner late.
23. My cousin and her friends eat / eats dinner late.

- 1. Either cake or cookies is / are fine for dessert.**
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- 3. Bob or Randy wants / want cake.**
- 4. Neither jogging nor swimming interests / interest him.**
- 5. Neither swimming nor outdoor sports interests / interest him.**
- 6. Both swimming and sailing is / are difficult to truly master.**
- 7. The hunter and the hounds is / are following the bear.**
- 8. The hunter or the hounds is / are lost.**
- 9. The hounds or the hunter is / are lost.**
- 10. The book and the movie lacks / lack a compelling plot.**
- 11. The book or the movie was / were written by the same person.**
- 12. This book and those movies is / are too long.**
- 13. These movies or that book is / are too long.**
- 14. Our new teachers or our new principle / principal
refuse / refuses to allow gum.**
- 15. Neither our new principle / principal nor our new teachers
allows / allow gum.**
- 16. Sometimes our friends as well as our enemies teach / teaches us
about ourselves.**

Name _____

Conventions 18 Quiz

Directions: Fill in the blanks with the correct word or punctuation.

1. By now, _____ are _____ of conventions _____ remember.
there/they're/their a lot / alot to/two/too
2. _____ _____ turn to change the oil, _____ get groceries.
It's / Its you're / your than / then
3. _____ skipping school _____, but _____ going with them?
There/They're/Their every day / everyday whose / who's
4. Did the three _____ _____ give the papers to my friend and _____?
woman / women all ready / already I / me
5. Yesterday, I was _____ sick to go, but today, I feel _____, _____.
to/two/too all right / alright mom / Mom
6. My _____ belt is getting too _____ because it has _____
every day / everyday lose / loose fewer / less
holes _____ it should have.
than / then
7. We could _____ eaten _____ lunches, but we _____ full.
of / have to/two/too were / where
8. _____ not going to be _____ to the _____, are you?
Your / You're defiant/definite principle / principal
9. They have a plan, but _____ plan is _____ not going to work.
there/they're/their defiantly / definitely
10. That tall _____ has a new car, but _____ headlights don't work.
woman / women it's / its
11. _____ are the students _____ _____ to leave class early yesterday?
Were / Where who / that chose / choose
12. _____ _____ is standing outside right now?
Who's / Whose mom / Mom
13. I want to have _____ trouble, but I'll have to _____ different friends.
fewer / less chose / choose

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14. When will you _____ the fact that you will _____ your keys if you
accept / except loose / lose
are not more careful about where you put them?
15. My friend Elsa and _____ have everything ready _____ pens _____ don't leak.
me / I accept/except that/who
16. Do you _____ know the _____ your behavior could _____ had?
already / all ready affect / effect have / of
17. The volunteers are _____ to _____ the lives of people in Hood River.
already / all ready affect / effect

Circle the correctly spelled words.

18. A. peralel / B. parrallel / C. paralell / D. parallel / E. parellel / F. perallel
19. A. gramar / B. gramer / C. grammer / D. grammar / E. gramur/ F. grammur
20. A. address / B. adress / C. addres / D. adres / E. addrus
21. A. leyesens / B. liesence / C. licence / D. lisense / E. lisence / F. license
22. A. committment / B. commitment / C. comitment / D. commitmnt/ E. cummitmment
23. A. embarased / B. embarrased / C. embarassed / D. embarrased
24. A. absense / B. abcence / C. abcense / D. absence / E. absunse / F. absens
25. A. innocence / B. innosence / C. inosence / D. inocence / E. innosense
26. A. seperate / B. separate / C. separut / D. seprate / E. seprut
27. A. neseccery / B. nesessary / C. neccesary / D. neccessary / E. necessary
28. A. acidentally / B. accidentally / C. accidentaly / D. accidentely / E. axadently
29. A. forrun / forein / foriegn / foreign / forrein / forreign
30. A. priviledge / B. priveledg / C. privlige / D. priveledge / E. privilege
31. A. maintanence / B. maintenance / C. maintenence / D. maintunance / E. maintenance
32. A. beginnin / B. begining / C. begginning / D. beginning / E. bugginning
33. A. ocashun / B. occasion / C. occassion / D. ocasion / E. occation

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Complete sentence, fragment, or run-on?

35. _____ Yesterday, I drove to school.
36. _____ I drove to school I was too late to ride the bus.
37. _____ Although I was too late to ride the bus.
38. _____ I wasn't too late to drive I drove fast.
39. _____ Luckily, I made it to school on time.
40. _____ I wonder when our school will start to.

41. Circle the correctly punctuated sentence.

- A. I bought three books, including: *Timequake*, *Aftershock*, and *Still Waiting*.
- B. I bought three books: "Timequake," "Aftershock," and "Still Waiting."
- C. I bought three books, including: "Timequake," "Aftershock," and "Still Waiting".
- D. I bought three books: *Timequake*, *Aftershock*, and *Still Waiting*.

Circle the correct verb in each sentence.

42. The students, even when unaccompanied by their teacher, **ARRIVE / ARRIVES** on time.
43. The students and their teacher **ARRIVE / ARRIVES** on time.
44. Either the students or their teacher **ARRIVE / ARRIVES** on time.

Circle the correctly punctuated sentences.

45. a. I have two friends'. 46. a. My last essays introduction was good.
 b. I have two friend's. b. My last essay's introduction was good.
 c. I have two friends. c. My last essays' introduction was good.
47. a. My moms car is new.
 b. My mom's car is new.
 c. My moms' car is new.

SCORE ABOVE _____ / 13

