

Boost Free Lessons - Year 9 English

Lesson 3: Subject-Verb Agreement

Name: _____ Grade: _____ Date: _____

Worked Example 1

Choose the correct verb.

*The box of files (**is / are**) on the desk.*

1. Find the **subject** first. Ask who or what the sentence is about.
2. The subject is *box*, not *files*. *Of files* is a phrase describing the box.
3. A phrase between the subject and the verb never changes the agreement.
4. *Box* is singular, so the verb must be singular.

The box of files is on the desk.

Worked Example 2

Choose the correct verb.

*Neither of the answers (**was / were**) correct.*

1. Words like *neither*, *each*, *every* and *one* are always singular.
2. The subject is *neither*, meaning not one of them.
3. *Of the answers* is again just a describing phrase, so ignore it.
4. A singular subject takes a singular verb, even though *answers* is plural.

Neither of the answers was correct.

Remember: Find the **real** subject and ignore any phrase between it and the verb. Words such as **each**, **every**, **neither** and **one** are always singular.



Question 1: Choose the correct verb in each sentence.

1. The list of names (is / are) on the noticeboard.

2. Each of the students (has / have) a locker.

3. The players (was / were) waiting outside.

4. My sister and her friend (is / are) coming.

5. Every one of the windows (was / were) locked.

6. A group of tourists (was / were) blocking the path.

7. There (is / are) three reasons for this.

8. Neither of the buses (stop / stops) here.



Question 2: Read the passage below, then answer the questions.

The collection of essays were published last year. Each of the writers were paid a small fee, and none of them were told who else had contributed.

1. Find one subject-verb error in the passage and correct it.

2. Find a second error and correct it.

3. What is the subject of the first sentence?

4. Why do phrases like *of the students* often cause mistakes?

5. Rewrite the corrected passage in full.



Question 3: Answer the following questions.

1. Write a sentence with a singular subject separated from its verb by a phrase.

2. Write a sentence using **each** correctly.

3. Explain how to find the subject of a sentence.

4. Why is *the team* sometimes treated as singular and sometimes as plural?





Every student has gaps. The hard part is knowing exactly where they are.
That is what a Boost assessment is for.

Book a Free Assessment

Normally valued at \$199, free for new families

- A friendly skills check aligned to the NSW syllabus
- Face to face with our qualified tutors
- A clear picture of your child's strengths and gaps
- A weekly plan built around what they actually need

Book a Free Assessment →

boosttutoring.com.au/contact



Answers and Model Responses: Subject-Verb Agreement**Question 1**

1. is
2. has
3. were
4. are
5. was
6. was
7. are
8. stops

Question 2

1. *The collection of essays were published* should be *was published*.
2. *Each of the writers were paid* should be *was paid*.
3. *collection*
4. The noun closest to the verb is often plural, so people match the verb to that noun instead of to the real subject.
5. The collection of essays was published last year. Each of the writers was paid a small fee, and none of them were told who else had contributed.

Question 3

1. Model response: The bag of tools was left in the shed.
2. Model response: Each of the answers is worth two marks.
3. Ask who or what the sentence is about, then remove any phrase beginning with *of*, *with* or *including*. What remains is the subject.
4. It is a collective noun. It is singular when the group acts as one unit, and plural when the members are acting individually.

