

Exercise 1 Underline The Verb In Parentheses That Agrees With The Subject.The Problem (is, Are) Too Many

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Understanding Subject-Verb Agreement in English

Effective communication in English hinges significantly on proper grammar, especially in ensuring that subjects and verbs agree. The phrase "Exercise 1 underline the verb in parentheses that agrees with the subject" highlights an essential aspect of grammatical correctness. The sentence "The problem (is, are) too many" exemplifies common challenges faced by learners when selecting the correct form of the verb.

In this article, we will explore the fundamentals of subject-verb agreement, analyze the common pitfalls highlighted by such exercises, and provide practical tips and exercises to enhance your understanding and application of proper grammar.

What Is Subject-Verb Agreement?

Definition and Importance

Subject-verb agreement refers to the grammatical rule that a subject and its corresponding verb must agree in number and person. This means:

- Singular subjects take singular verbs.
- Plural subjects take plural verbs.

For example:

- The dog barks loudly. (singular subject "dog" with singular verb "barks")
- The dogs bark loudly. (plural subject "dogs" with plural verb "bark")

Proper subject-verb agreement ensures clarity and professionalism in writing, makes sentences easier to understand, and aligns with the rules of standard English.

Analyzing the Sentence: "The problem (is, are) too many"

Identifying the Subject

In the sentence "The problem (is, are) too many," the core subject is "The problem". Since "problem" is singular, the verb must also be singular to maintain agreement.

Choosing the Correct Verb

Given the options:

- is: singular form of the verb "to be."
- are: plural form of the verb "to be."

Because "The problem" is singular, the correct choice is "is". Therefore, the complete sentence should read:

"The problem is too many."

However, this sentence is somewhat awkward because of how "too many" is used. Typically, "too many" refers to a plural noun, which leads to confusion. To clarify, let's examine the proper way to phrase this:

- "The problem is that there are too many." (more natural)
- "Problems are too many." (if referring to multiple problems)

Common Challenges in Subject-Verb Agreement

1. Collective Nouns

Words like "team," "group," "committee," or "family" may be singular or plural depending on context. For example:

- The team is winning. (team as a single entity)
- The team are arguing among themselves. (members acting individually)

2. Indefinite Pronouns

Pronouns such as "everyone," "each," "anyone," "someone," are singular and require singular verbs:

- Everyone is invited.
- Someone has left their umbrella.

3. Compound Subjects

When two subjects are joined by "and", they generally take a plural verb:

- Tom and Jerry are friends.

However, if the compound subjects refer to a single entity or are considered a unit, they may take a singular verb:

- Peanut butter and jelly is my favorite snack.

4. Prepositional Phrases

Prepositions can distract from the true subject. The verb should agree with the subject, not the noun in a prepositional phrase:

- The book on the table is new.
- The books on the shelf are new.

5. Titles and Names

Titles of books, movies, or organizations are singular, even if they seem plural:

- The Chronicles of Narnia is a popular series.

Practical Tips to Master Subject-Verb Agreement

1. Identify the Main Subject

Always find the core subject of the sentence before choosing the verb. Ignore words that come between the subject and the verb, such as prepositional phrases.

2. Watch for Indefinite Pronouns

Remember that indefinite pronouns like "everyone," "each," "anybody," are singular and require singular verbs.

3. Be Careful with Compound Subjects

Determine if the subjects are joined by "and" or "or." Use plural verbs with "and" unless the subjects form a single idea.

4. Pay Attention to Collective Nouns and Phrases

Decide whether the noun refers to a single entity or multiple individuals to select the correct verb form.

5. Practice with Exercises

Regular practice helps internalize the rules. Use exercises like underlining the correct verb to improve your skills.

Examples and Practice Exercises

Example 1:

Choose the correct verb:

- The list of items (is, are) on the desk.

Answer: "is" because "list" is singular.

Example 2:

Select the correct verb:

- Neither of the players (has, have) arrived yet.

Answer: "has," since "neither" is singular.

Exercise 1:

Underline the correct verb:

- The number of students in the class (has, have) increased this year.

Solution: "has"

Exercise 2:

Fill in the blank with the correct verb:

- The team members (agree, agrees) to the new schedule.

Solution: "agree"

Conclusion: The Importance of Correct Subject-Verb Agreement

Mastering subject-verb agreement is crucial for clear and grammatically correct writing. It enhances readability, ensures professionalism, and helps avoid misunderstandings. Exercises like "Underline the verb in parentheses that agrees with the subject" are excellent tools for reinforcing these rules.

By understanding the fundamental rules, paying attention to common tricky cases, and practicing regularly, you can significantly improve your grasp of English grammar. Remember, the key is always to identify the core subject first and then select the verb that matches in number and person.

Additional Resources for Learning

- [Grammarly's Guide to Subject-Verb Agreement](#)
- [British Council's Learning Resources](#)
- [Espresso English Grammar Tips](#)

Final Thoughts

Whether you're a student, a professional, or someone eager to improve your English skills, mastering subject-verb agreement is essential. Regular practice with exercises and awareness of common pitfalls will make your writing more accurate and effective. Keep practicing, and over time, correct subject-verb agreement will become second nature.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the main objective of Exercise 1 regarding verbs and subjects?

The main objective is to underline the verb in parentheses that correctly agrees with the subject in each sentence.

How do you determine whether to use 'is' or 'are' in the sentence 'The problem (is, are) too many'?

You determine it by identifying the subject; since 'problem' is singular, you use 'is'.

Why is subject-verb agreement important in sentences like 'The problem (is, are) too many'?

Because it ensures clarity and grammatical correctness, aligning the verb properly with the subject.

Can you give an example sentence from Exercise 1 where the correct verb is 'are'?

Yes, for example, 'The problems (is, are) too many,' where 'problems' is plural, so 'are' is correct.

What should you do if the subject is compound, like 'The problems and the solution (is, are)'?

Use the plural verb 'are' because the compound subject refers to multiple things.

Is 'The problem (is, are) too many' an example of singular or plural subject?

It is a singular subject, so the correct verb is 'is'.

How can understanding subject-verb agreement improve your writing skills?

It helps you write grammatically correct sentences, making your writing clearer and more professional.

What common mistake should learners avoid in exercises like this?

Learners should avoid mismatching singular subjects with plural verbs or vice versa, ensuring proper agreement.

Why might someone choose 'are' over 'is' in the sentence 'The problem (is, are) too many'?

They might mistakenly think 'problem' is plural or be unsure, but since 'problem' is singular, 'is' is correct.

Additional Resources

Exercise 1 Underline The Verb In Parentheses That Agrees With The Subject. The Problem (is, Are) Too Many

Introduction

In the realm of grammatical precision, especially within the English language, subject-verb agreement remains a fundamental yet often misunderstood component. The exercise titled "Underline The Verb In Parentheses That Agrees With The Subject" serves as an essential tool for language learners and educators alike. Central to this exercise is the question: The Problem (is, are) Too Many. This seemingly simple statement encapsulates a complex issue—how proliferation or excess impacts clarity, comprehension, and grammatical correctness. This article aims to unravel the layers of this problem, exploring its roots, implications, and potential solutions within the context of language learning and usage.

The Significance of Subject-Verb Agreement in English Grammar

Understanding the Basics

Subject-verb agreement is the grammatical rule that the verb in a sentence must correspond in number and person with its subject. For instance:

- Singular subject: The dog barks.
- Plural subject: The dogs bark.

Correct agreement ensures sentence clarity and grammatical correctness. When this agreement falters, sentences can become confusing or misleading, hampering effective communication.

The Role of Exercises in Mastery

Exercises like "Underline The Verb In Parentheses" are designed to train learners to identify correct agreement, reinforcing understanding through practice. They serve as diagnostic tools to pinpoint common errors, especially in complex sentences or those with collective nouns, indefinite pronouns, or compound subjects.

The Core of the Problem: "Too Many"

Deciphering "Too Many"

The phrase "Too Many" in the context of the exercise alludes to the excess of certain grammatical structures—particularly, the overuse or misapplication of verbs that do not agree with their subjects. It also reflects a broader issue: language learners often struggle with choosing the correct verb form amidst complex sentence structures. The problem is compounded in cases where the subject is ambiguous, compound, or separated from the verb by intervening phrases.

Implications of Excessive or Incorrect Usage

The consequences of misapplication or overcomplication include:

- Reduced clarity of communication
- Increased grammatical errors in writing and speech
- Frustration among learners attempting to master rules
- Diminished confidence in language proficiency

In educational contexts, these issues can hinder progress, leading to a cycle of errors and misconceptions.

Analyzing the Sentence: "The Problem (is, are) Too Many"

Grammatical Breakdown

The sentence in question:

> The Problem (is, are) Too Many.

The core challenge here is selecting the correct verb form—"is" or "are"—that agrees with the subject "The Problem."

- "The Problem" is a singular noun phrase.
- Therefore, the correct verb should be singular: "is."

Thus, the complete, correct sentence reads:

> The Problem is too many.

But this raises a semantic inconsistency, which leads us to the next critical point.

Semantic and Contextual Considerations

While grammatically, "The Problem is too many" is correct, semantically, it sounds awkward because "too many" typically refers to a plural noun. To improve clarity, the sentence could be reframed:

- "The problem is that there are too many."
- "The problem is the existence of too many..."

Alternatively, if "Too Many" is intended as a noun phrase referring to an abundance, then the sentence should be adjusted accordingly.

This highlights a critical aspect: correct grammatical agreement does not always equate to clarity or correctness in meaning.

Common Pitfalls in Subject-Verb Agreement Exercises

1. Confusing Compound Subjects

- Subjects joined by "and" are typically plural: The cat and the dog are playing.
- Subjects joined by "or" or "nor" require agreement with the closest subject: Either the teacher or the students are responsible.

2. Indefinite Pronouns

- Pronouns like everyone, each, nothing are singular and take singular verbs: Everyone is here.
- Pronouns like few, many, several are plural: Many are called, but few are chosen.

3. Collective Nouns

- Depending on context, collective nouns can be singular or plural.
- American English favors singular agreement: The team is winning.
- British English may accept plural: The team are arguing among themselves.

4. Distracting Intervening Phrases

- Phrases inserted between the subject and verb can mislead: The bouquet of roses in the garden smells lovely.
- The subject is "bouquet," singular.

The Role of "Too Many" in Language Development and Learning

Overuse and Misuse in Learner Language

Language learners often produce sentences like:

- "There is many problems." (Incorrect)
- "There are many problems." (Correct)

Such errors stem from overgeneralization and confusion about countability and agreement rules.

Impact on Fluency and Comprehension

Incorrect agreement can slow down comprehension, both for the speaker and listener, and impede

fluency development. It also hampers writing quality, especially in formal contexts.

Strategies to Address the "Too Many" Problem

Educational Interventions

- Emphasize clear identification of the subject before choosing the verb.
- Use visual aids and sentence diagrams to illustrate agreement rules.
- Practice exercises that progressively increase in complexity, focusing on common pitfalls.

Practical Tips for Learners

- Always identify the main subject first.
- Watch out for intervening phrases that may distract from the core subject.
- Remember that collective nouns can be tricky; consider context.
- Read sentences aloud to check for agreement and natural flow.

Technological and Automated Tools

- Grammar checkers can assist in identifying agreement errors.
- Educational software can provide instant feedback, reinforcing correct usage.

Conclusion: Navigating the "Too Many" Dilemma

The exercise "Underline The Verb In Parentheses That Agrees With The Subject" underscores a central challenge in mastering English grammar: ensuring that verbs agree correctly with their subjects amid a sea of potential pitfalls. The phrase "The Problem (is, are) Too Many" epitomizes the common confusion—should it be "is" or "are"? The answer hinges on understanding the subject's number and context, but the underlying issue extends beyond individual exercises to broader language acquisition concerns.

In an increasingly complex linguistic landscape, the proliferation of exceptions and ambiguous structures contributes to the "too many" problem—too many rules, too many exceptions, too many opportunities for error. Addressing this requires a comprehensive approach: targeted education, practice, awareness of common pitfalls, and technological assistance.

Ultimately, mastering subject-verb agreement is not merely about ticking correct boxes in exercises but about cultivating a nuanced understanding of language structure. As learners become more attuned to the intricacies of agreement, the "too many" problem diminishes, paving the way for

clearer, more confident communication.

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Author's Note:

This article aims to shed light on the often-overlooked complexities of subject-verb agreement exercises, emphasizing that understanding the nuances behind "too many" and similar constructs is crucial for advancing language proficiency.

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