Subject/Verb Agreement

1. Focus

Explain Subject/Verb Agreement

Say: Every sentence has a subject and a verb. When a subject is singular, or is talking about just one thing, then the verb also needs to be singular and talk about just one thing. In the sentence “The bird eats seeds,” the noun bird is the subject and is singular. It means “one bird.” The verb eats is also singular. Many singular verbs have an -s at the end of the word to make it singular. If the subject is plural, it requires a plural verb. In the sentence “The birds eat seeds,” the noun birds is plural and means “more than one bird.” The verb eat is also plural. We have subject/verb agreement if the subject and verb in a sentence are both singular or are both plural.

Model Correct Subject/Verb Agreement

Display the modeling text on chart paper or using the interactive whiteboard resources and read each sentence aloud to students one at a time to model thinking about subject/verb agreement.

1. Earth Day is one week away.
2. Birds, squirrels, and mice use trees for their nests.
3. My mom, dad, and I pick the apples in the fall.

Modeling Text

Read sentence 1. Say: I’m going to be watching for subjects and verbs that agree as I read each sentence. The subject in the first sentence is Earth Day and the sentence is talking about just one day. So I know that the subject Earth Day is singular and needs a singular verb. The verb is is a singular verb. Another way I can tell that the subject and verb agree is to read the sentence both ways. “Earth Day is one week away. Earth Day are one week away.” “Earth Day is” sounds right but “Earth Day are” does not sound right.

Read sentence 2. Say: The subject of the second sentence has several nouns: birds, squirrels, and mice. These are all plural nouns, so the verb use is the correct plural verb for this sentence.

Read sentence 3. Say: The last sentence is talking about three people—mom, dad, and I—which makes the subject plural. The verb pick is plural and agrees with the plural subject.
2. Rehearse

Practice Using Proper Subject/Verb Agreement

Display the practice text (with errors) on chart paper or use the interactive whiteboard resources. Ask students to work with a partner and read each sentence paying attention to the underlined subjects and verbs. Ask them to identify which have subject/verb agreement and which do not. Ask them to identify whether the subjects and verbs are singular or plural in sentences with agreement.

If your class includes English learners or other students who need support, use “Strategies to Support ELs.”

| The children is are wrong to waste paper. |
| **Birds** and **squirrels** use trees for their nests. |
| **People** cut down trees. |
| The leaves **takes** take in dirty air from cars and trucks. |

Practice Text

Share Sentences with Subject/Verb Agreement

Invite students to share which sentences have agreement and which do not. For sentences with agreement, ask if they are singular or plural. Discuss students’ responses by asking the following questions:

- **What is the subject of the sentence?**
- **What is the verb?**
- **Do the subject and verb agree? How can you tell?**

3. Independent Writing and Conferring

**Say:** Today we learned that the subject and verb in a sentence need to agree. If the subject is singular, then the verb must be singular. If the subject is plural, the verb must be plural, too. When we write a persuasive letter, we want people to focus on our message. We don’t want them to focus on our grammar. That is why it is very important to focus on your subject/verb agreement when you revise and edit your persuasive letters.

If you would like to give students additional practice recognizing and using proper subject/verb agreement, have them complete BLM 6.

4. Share

Bring students together. Review and provide corrective feedback based on students’ answers to BLM 6. Ask students to share what they learned about subject/verb agreement.

Strategies to Support ELs

**Beginning**

Understanding subject/verb agreement may be challenging for many beginning EL students. Ask one student to write something or pantomime writing. Point to the student and say: *He/She writes.* Record the sentence on chart paper. Circle the *s* at the end of the word *writes.*

Then ask three students to each write or mime writing. Say: *Students write.* Record the sentence beneath the first sentence on the chart paper and circle the *s* at the end of *Students.* Have students repeat with you: *He/She writes; Students write.*

**Intermediate and Advanced**

Pair student with fluent English speakers during the practice activity.