

AGREEMENT

Pretest

Look at the following sentences. If you think the sentence is written correctly, write a check (✓). If you think the sentence is not written correctly, write an X.

1. _____ My mother's friend like to go to the movies every Friday.
2. _____ Susan's sister always does his homework on time.
3. _____ The people in San Francisco is very friendly.
4. _____ Mary and the teacher was talking after class.
5. _____ John writes lots of letters but she doesn't receive many.
6. _____ There are many reason for coming to the United States.
7. _____ I found some paper in the desk.
8. _____ Harry told some joke yesterday after class.
9. _____ There was many people on the bus yesterday.
10. _____ Do you like those student?
11. _____ Washington, Lincoln, and Roosevelt were American presidents.
12. _____ I really liked them and I wanted to be their friends.
13. _____ He is a very good person. These kind of people are the best.
14. _____ People should care about their friends.
15. _____ There is two newspapers on the table in the kitchen.

Check your answers on page 92.

THINK ABOUT IT

We talk about **agreement** when we talk about correcting surface errors in writing. This means that two words in a sentence have to match, or be similar, in some way. What kinds of words have to "agree" with each other in written English? Write some ideas here.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Check your answers here again after you have completed this unit.

Part I: Discovery

There are different ways to have agreement in writing. Let's look at three kinds of agreement problems briefly.

AGREEMENT PROBLEM #1:

TASK A

Something is wrong with all of these sentences. One word is written incorrectly because it doesn't agree or go together with another word in the sentence. Underline these **two words** that don't agree and make corrections.

- incorrect* 1. My uncle don't work at the hospital.
- incorrect* 2. We was walking on Fifth Avenue when it happened.
- incorrect* 3. The house have big windows.
- incorrect* 4. Our school's buildings is beautiful.
- incorrect* 5. Everybody are coming to the party on Friday.

Check your answers on page 92.

THINK ABOUT IT

All of the sentences above have a problem with agreement between the subject and the verb: **SUBJECT/VERB AGREEMENT**. Why don't the subject and verb in each of these sentences agree? (If you're not sure what a subject and a verb are, see Unit 2.)

AGREEMENT PROBLEM #2:

TASK B

Something is wrong with all of the following sentences. Some of the words are written incorrectly because they don't agree or go together with another word in the sentence. Underline the words that don't agree and make corrections.

- incorrect* 1. Jack gave her some rose and three book for her birthday.
- incorrect* 2. Many family get together for the holidays.
- incorrect* 3. Did you read these magazine yet?
- incorrect* 4. Most American like to eat hot dogs.
- incorrect* 5. John Lennon and Paul McCartney were famous musician.
- incorrect* 6. The Hyundai is a Korean cars.

Check your answers on page 92.

THINK ABOUT IT

All of the sentences above have a problem with agreement between singular or plural words: **SINGULAR/PLURAL AGREEMENT**. Can you see how pairs of words in each of these sentences don't agree?

AGREEMENT PROBLEM #3:

Something is wrong in the following pairs of sentences. One of the words is written incorrectly because it doesn't agree or go together with another word. Underline the words that don't agree and make corrections.

- incorrect* 1. My father taught me everything that I know. She has always helped me in every way.
- incorrect* 2. American people can seem a little unfriendly at first. He may not seem as warm as people from your own country.
- incorrect* 3. Adelle, my mother's sister, is an artist. His paintings can be seen in many galleries in San Francisco.
- incorrect* 4. The Language Institute is a very famous language school. He has many students from many different countries.

Check your answers on page 92.

THINK ABOUT IT

All of the groups of sentences above have a problem with agreement between a **noun** and another word that **refer** to each other: **REFERENCE AGREEMENT**. Can you see why they don't agree?

What Is Agreement?

Usually, in English, **agreement** happens when two people think the same way, their ideas are the same, or their ideas match.

When we talk about **agreement in writing**, it means that two or more words or ideas in your writing must match, or be the same in some way. If the words or ideas in your writing do not agree, your writing seems strange and sometimes the reader finds it difficult to clearly understand what you want to say.

To have agreement in your writing, you have to be able to look at the **whole** of your writing as well as each **individual word**.

You have to see the relationship among the words in a sentence, or the relationship among the words in different sentences.

TAKING A CLOSER LOOK

Let's take a closer look now at each of the three agreement problems. First, let's look at agreement of subjects and verbs.

Agreement

All subjects
They are

Let's look

first-person

second-person

third-person

This is in

Subject-Verb

When the
subject/verb

1. I like

2. We are

3. You are

4. They are

1. Underline

2. Circle

I

Check your

In the same
it), the verb
an -s at the

¹ He and she
call a pet dog
human quality

RULE #3: PRONOUN REFERENCE AGREEMENT

a) If one word refers to another word in that sentence or another sentence, it must agree with that word:

- 1) PLURAL or SINGULAR
- 2) MASCULINE (he), FEMININE (she), OR NEUTER (it, they)
- 3) FIRST, SECOND, OR THIRD PERSON

he him	masculine singular human ³
she her	feminine singular human ³
it	object/animal/abstract idea singular
they them	plural object/animal/human
this that	singular
these those	plural

Sentence-Level Editing Exercise

Something is wrong with agreement in all of the following sentences. See if you can figure out why these sentences are wrong and make corrections.

1. That was the first time I made furniture by myself. I enjoyed making them and I felt happy.
2. When I first came here, I didn't like the food. Now I like them very much.
3. The people who lives there aren't very friendly, but it doesn't matter.
4. Chinese food are delicious. I'm sure you will like it.
5. You can find many kind of people living together there.
6. Any person whose parents are old worry about their health.
7. There are six new building on that street.
8. If you go to school for a long time, he can get very bored.
9. I put my shoes and socks in the drawer. When I came back, I couldn't find it.
10. Everyone want to have good healths.
11. Count your money carefully before you put them in your wallet.
12. Every people should help improve their countries.

Check your answers on page 99.

³See footnote on page 67.

Paragraph-Level Editing Exercise

There are some errors in these paragraphs concerning agreement. Make corrections and compare your corrections with those on page 100.

I. There are many problem at my school, but one problem is the examination to test foreign students. There are two kind of tests: the oral test and the reading test. These test cannot prove the ability of the students because the student simply mark an answer on the answer sheet. For example, in the oral test, you listen to a conversation on a tape and mark the right answer for three or four choice. Sometimes, if the student don't understand the conversation, you can guess. If you get many right answer by guessing, the school will put you in a high-level class. The class will be very difficult because you will see that everyone understand except for you.

II. Usually the word "Africa" make people think about a jungle full of wild animal. Some city in Africa surprise people with this kind of prejudice when they visit it. For example, Abidjan, the capital of the Ivory Coast in West Africa, is as modern as New York. The ten communities of this city has modern high-rise building. They are used for apartment and offices. There are a Hilton Hotel, too, which attract many tourists. Abidjan have many beaches and special area for fun. There isn't a subway in Abidjan, but there is plenty of buses, taxis, and boats for transportation. The people of Abidjan are very proud of their cities. Anyone who really want to know Africa today should visit it.

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III. In our modern society, technology has been an important help. Technology help people to do less work than before, but at the same time it make people more knowledgeable. In many countries, however, farm workers has to perform strong manual labor because he don't have adequate technology. This people needs to learn more about modern technology. In addition, they need moneys so that he can buy special equipment. I think that foreign people should study in this country and then return to their countries to help their society.