

Grammar

#1: Subject-verb agreement

In English grammar, the *main verb* of a sentence must match the *main subject* of the sentence. We call this *subject-verb agreement*.

When the subject is “**I**” or “**you**” or a **plural subject**, the verb does not have an “s”.

I eat	You eat	We eat	They eat	Two people eat
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When the subject is “**he**”, “**she**”, “**it**” or a **person’s name**, the verb must have an “s”.

He eats	She eats	It eats	Fraser eats
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Irregular (special) verbs:

<u>subject</u>	be	have
I	am	have
You	are	have
He / She / It	is	has
We / They	are	have

Sometimes a sentence is very simple, and it is easy to make subject–verb agreement:

Fraser is Canadian. He likes Thai food.

But sometimes a sentence may have many nouns or verbs. You have to know which nouns are the main subjects of a sentence and which verbs are the main verbs.

I think the price of Thai food and other kinds of Thai goods is very expensive in Japan.

Read a paragraph about Fraser. Fix the subject-verb agreement mistakes.

Fraser Gould was born in Nova Scotia, Canada about 30 years ago. He have a younger sister but no brothers. He grew up in a very rural area and in his childhood he spent a lot of time outdoors and working on farms. He has always loved sports. His favorite sport are basketball, but he also play on soccer and futsal teams. Besides sports, Fraser have many other hobbies. He especially enjoy traveling and has backpacked through many Asian countries. Fraser currently live in Kodaira, Tokyo and am a part time English teacher at Musashino, Seisen and Komazawa Universities. Do you think students likes Fraser’s lessons?

Choose the correct verb form:

1. One of my friends has/have been sick recently.
2. Fifty years is/are a long time to live in the same place.
3. Collecting old stamps are/is my friend's hobby.
4. My father's glasses were/was on the desk.
5. None of my friends live/lives in Cambodia.
6. The famous director and actor, Ron Howard, are/is in Japan for a visit.
7. My mother, as well as my father, prefer/prefers coffee to tea.
8. The price of these jeans was/were very expensive.
9. Canadian people are/is generally very friendly.
10. One of the best things about Thailand are/is the food.
11. I need to develop/develops some photos.
12. Tropical fish has/have always been pets that is/are easy to care for.
13. My friend likes/like hip hop music, but I prefers/prefer pop.
14. If students don't understand a word, they should ask/asks someone for help.
15. Last week there was/were many rainy days.

#2: Singular/Plural Nouns

Do you know the following pairs of words?

money – coin
furniture – sofa
shirt – clothes
water – cup

news – story
song – music
equipment – tool
electricity – light

job – work
traffic – car
idea – thinking
sausage – meat

Please write the words above in the correct column – countable or uncountable nouns.

COUNTABLE NOUNS	UNCOUNTABLE NOUNS

Usually, we add an **s** or **es** to countable nouns to make the plural form. If the noun ends with a **y**, we change the **y** to **ies**.

sofa → sofas

bus → buses

story → stories

If the singular noun ends with an **f** or **fe**, we must change it to **ves** to make the plural noun.

knife → knives

half → halves

A few singular nouns don't change when they become plural nouns.

one fish → many fish

one sheep → many sheep

Some countable nouns become a new word when we make the plural form. What is the plural form of the following nouns?

man _____ woman _____

child _____ person _____

Some nouns have special rules, so be careful when you are writing plural nouns!

Here is a paragraph with some singular/plural noun mistakes. There are six mistakes in the paragraph. Can you find them?

Racial Discrimination in Japan

Japan has a reputation as a generous country that helps poorer foreign country by giving them food and moneys. However, some persons are saying that racial discrimination is a problem in Japan. In Japan, it is common for landlords to refuse to rent their apartments to foreigners and some shop refuse to give service to foreigners. In most countries, this kind of discriminations are illegal, but there is very little legal protection for foreigners in Japan. If Japan wants to be a true international country, some experts say it has to take step to stop racial discrimination.

Do you know these words?

Reputation means _____.

Generous means _____.

Racial discrimination means _____.

Landlord means _____.

Legal protection means _____.

Illegal means _____.

Two common kinds of error when writing paragraphs:

- 1) Subject and verb agreement error
- 2) Singular/Plural error
- 3) Verb tense error

Please read the following sentences carefully. Decide if there are any errors. What kind of errors are they? Rewrite the sentence if necessary.

1) Fraser is born in Nova Scotia, Canada.

2) The aquarium has many kinds of tropical fishes.

3) While he was a high school student, Eric enjoyed playing many kinds of sport.

4) I really love playing team sports, especially basketball.

5) There are always many childs playing in the school yard.

6) My friends often goes to FC Tokyo soccer games.

7) Someday, I hope to run my own daycare center.

8) English is a very difficult language to learn because the grammars are so different from Japanese.

9) Earthquake are very scary experiences for many foreigners who come to Japan.

10) I am looking forward to studying English writing with Fraser this year, and so am my classmates.

Read the short essay about Fraser. The essay has six grammar mistakes (two mistakes in each paragraph). Can you find the mistakes?

All About Me

My full name is Russell Fraser Gould, but most people call me Fraser. I'm an instructor at Musashino and Seisen Universities. I think I'm a nice guy, but some of my students say that I'm too strict. If my friends described my personality, they'd probably says that I'm cheerful, outgoing and energetic. I think I'm also pretty funny. I love to tell joke. Of course I'm not perfect – my girlfriend says that I'm impatient and sometimes very stubborn. I guess I agree.

I have lived in Japan for many years now, so I'm used to standing out in a crowd. I'm tall and have an average build. I have a light complexion, which means that I get sunburned easily in the summer. Ouch! I had short, wavy brown hairs and blue eyes. My hair is becoming thin, and unfortunately, I think I'll be bald in a few years. I am not looking forward to that!

I have many hobbies and interests. Most people know that I am a semi-professional magician. Magic has been a hobby of mine since high school. Perhaps sports are my most important hobby, though. Sports help relieve my stress and keep me in good health. My favorite sport have always been basketball, but recently I have joined a soccer team and a futsal team, so I spend more time playing those sports than basketball. In the winter I also enjoy snowboarding, and when I traveled abroad I often go scuba diving. I hope sports help me stay young and in good shape.

verb-subject agreement mistake	singular/plural mistake	verb tense mistake
1)	1)	1)
2)	2)	2)