"The beautiful part of writing is that you don't have to get it right the first time, unlike, say, a brain surgeon."

—Robert Cormier, writer



Chapter 10

Subject–Verb Agreement

OBJECTIVES

When you have completed the materials in this chapter, you will be able to do the following:

LEVEL 1
- Locate the subjects of verbs despite prepositional phrases, intervening elements, and inverted sentence structure.
- Make verbs agree with subjects joined by *and*, with company and organization names, and with titles.

LEVEL 2
- Make verbs agree with subjects joined by *or* or *nor*.
- Select the correct verbs to agree with indefinite pronouns and collective nouns.

LEVEL 3
- Make verbs agree with *a number/the number*, quantities and measures, fractions and portions, and *who* and *that* clauses.
- Achieve subject–verb agreement with phrases and clauses as subjects and with subject complements.

© Getty Images/Brand X Pictures/Jupiterimages

Pretest

Underline the letter representing the correct answer.

1. There (a) is, (b) are six items on today's agenda.
2. The professor and her students (a) is, (b) are visiting the Federal Reserve tomorrow.
3. McDonald's (a) has, (b) have seen an increase in sales.
4. One of the plant supervisors (a) plan (b) plans to implement a new safety program.
5. The head surgeon, along with her entire operating room team, (a) was, (b) were given training on the newest laser technology.
6. Neither the supervisor nor members of his team (a) is, (b) are satisfied with the level of service.
7. Neither the members of his team nor the supervisor (a) is, (b) are satisfied with the level of service.
8. Everyone (a) is, (b) are welcome to attend the grand-opening ceremony.
9. The team (a) has, (b) have developed a new marketing plan.
10. The number of e-mail messages (a) is, (b) are increasing daily.

Writing isn't brain surgery, but at times it can seem every bit as difficult. Fortunately, you have the ability to edit your writing. One important item to test for during editing is subject–verb agreement. Subjects must agree with verbs in number and person. Beginning a sentence with *He don't* damages the credibility and effectiveness of a writer or speaker.

If an error is made in subject–verb agreement, it can generally be attributed to one of three lapses: (a) failure to locate the subject, (b) failure to recognize the number (singular or plural) of the subject after locating it, or (c) failure to recognize the number of the verb. Suggestions for locating the true subject and determining the number of the subject and its verb follow.

Study Tip

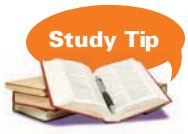
This is one of the most important chapters in the book. Nothing reveals a person's education, or lack thereof, so quickly as verbs that don't agree with subjects. Study this chapter carefully to ensure that you sound educated and professional on the job.

LEVEL 1

Locating Subjects

All verbs have subjects. Locating these subjects can be difficult, particularly when (a) a prepositional phrase comes between the verb and its subject, (b) an intervening element separates the subject and verb, (c) sentences begin with *there* or *here*, and (d) sentences are inverted. You practiced locating subjects in Chapter 3, but because this is such an important skill, we provide additional instruction here.

1. b 2. b 3. a 4. b 5. a 6. b 7. a 8. a 9. a 10. a



One of the most important things to remember is that sentence subjects are *not* found in prepositional phrases. Occasionally a prepositional phrase may help to determine whether an indefinite pronoun, portion, or fraction is singular or plural. But the object of the preposition cannot function as the subject of a verb.

Prepositional Phrases

Subjects of verbs are not found in prepositional phrases. Therefore, you must learn to ignore such phrases in identifying subjects of verbs. Some of the most common prepositions are *of, to, in, from, for, with, at,* and *by*. Notice in these sentences that the italicized prepositional phrases do not contain the subjects of the verbs.

Each *of our employees* is trained to process returns. (The verb *is* agrees with its singular subject *Each*.)

It appears that the invoice *for the two shipments* was lost. (The verb *was* agrees with its singular subject *invoice*.)

The online version *of the magazine's college rankings* is available at its Web site. (The verb *is* agrees with its singular subject *version*.)

Some of the less easily recognized prepositions are *except, but, like,* and *between*. In the following sentences, distinguish the subjects from the italicized prepositional phrases.

All managers *but Daniel* are attending the leadership workshop. (The verb *are* agrees with its plural subject *managers*.)

Everyone *except the managers* is a member of the union. (The verb *is* agrees with its singular subject *everyone*.)

Intervening Elements

Groups of words introduced by expressions such as *along with, as well as, in addition to, such as, including, together with, plus,* and *other than* do NOT contain sentence subjects.

Her favorite movie star, *as well as other local celebrities*, is scheduled to attend the fund-raiser.

In this sentence the writer has elected to emphasize the singular subject *star* and to de-emphasize *other local celebrities*. The writer could have given equal weight to these elements by writing *Her favorite movie star and other local celebrities are scheduled to attend the fund-raiser*. Notice that the number (singular or plural) of the verb changes when both *star* and *celebrities* are given equal emphasis. Study these additional examples:

Our president, *together with her entire staff of employees*, agrees that the company will rebound. (The singular subject *president* agrees with the singular verb *agrees*.)

Entrepreneurs *such as Debbi Fields* have started companies based on a single idea. (The plural subject *entrepreneurs* agrees with the plural verb *have*.)

Our job application *plus three important employment documents* is available on our Web site. (The singular subject *application* agrees with the singular verb *is*.)



Skillful writers avoid starting sentences or clauses with *there*, a word-wasting filler. Usually sentences can be rewritten without it.

Sentences Beginning With *there* and *here*

In sentences beginning with *there* or *here*, look for the true subject AFTER the verb. The words *here* and *there* are function words that are not classified as subjects.

There are several ways to contact our Customer Service Department. (The plural subject *ways* follows the verb *are*.)

Here is the fuel oil consumption report. (The singular subject *report* follows the verb *is*.)

Be especially careful when using contractions. Remember that *here's* is the contraction for *here is*; therefore, it should be used only with singular subjects. Likewise, *there's* is the contraction for *there is* and should also be used only with singular subjects.

Incorrect: Here's the items you ordered. (The plural subject *items* does not agree with the verb *is*.)

Correct: Here are the items you ordered. (The plural subject *items* agrees with the verb *are*.)

Incorrect: There's three reasons you should hire me for the proofreader position. (The plural subject *reasons* does not agree with the verb *is*.)

Correct: There are three reasons you should hire me for the proofreader position. (The plural subject *reasons* agrees with the verb *are*.)

Inverted Sentence Order

Look for the subject after the verb in inverted sentences and in questions.

Related to everyday business are law and ethics. (Verb precedes plural subject.)

On the president's advisory team are several prominent economists. (Verb precedes plural subject.)

Have the product specifications been submitted? (Subject separates verb phrase.)

How important are salary, benefits, and job security? (Verb precedes subjects.)

Basic Rules for Subject–Verb Agreement

Once you have located the sentence subject, decide whether the subject is singular or plural and select a verb that agrees in number. Basic challenges occur when you have compound subjects joined by *and*, when your subject is a company or organization, and when your subject is a title of a publication or song.

Subjects Joined by *and*

When one subject is joined to another by the word *and*, the subject is generally plural and thus requires a plural verb.

Mark Zuckerberg and Tom Anderson are two influential people in the world of social networking.

The proposed law and its amendment are before the legislature.

Subjects joined by *and* are singular and thus take singular verbs in only two cases: (1) when the words are preceded by *each* or *every* and (2) when the words represent a single person or thing.

Each letter and memo requires a manager's signature. (Think *Each individual letter and each individual memo is . . .*)

Every man, woman, and child is eligible for a free birthday meal. (Think *Every single man, every single woman, and every single child is . . .*)

Macaroni and cheese is their daughter's favorite meal. (Words represent one dish.)

His wife and best friend is Christina. (Words represents one person.)



To help you select correct verbs, temporarily substitute *it* or *he* for singular subjects or *they* for plural subjects. Then you can more easily make verbs agree with their subjects.

Company and Organization Names

Even though they may appear to be plural, company and organization names, including names of sports teams and musical groups, are generally considered singular; therefore, they require singular verbs.

US Airways offers the lowest fare to New York City.

Richards, Bateman, and Richards, Inc., is offering the bond issue.

The San Francisco 49ers was recognized for strong recruiting.

Coldplay has just announced its summer concert calendar.

Titles

Titles of publications and of artistic works such as songs are singular; therefore, they require singular verbs.

Seven Secrets to Successful Investing was an instant best seller.

"Clocks" is one of Coldplay's most popular songs.

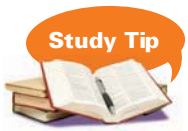
Now complete the reinforcement exercises for Level 1.

LEVEL 2

Special Rules for Subject–Verb Agreement

Making sure your subjects agree with your verbs sometimes requires the application of special rules. This is especially true when dealing with subjects joined by *or* or *nor,* indefinite pronouns as subjects, and collective nouns as subjects.

Subjects Joined by *or* or *nor*



Unlike subjects joined by *and*, subjects joined by *or* or *nor* require a choice between Subject No. 1 and Subject No. 2.

When two or more subjects are joined by *or* or *nor*, the verb should agree with the closer subject (the subject that follows *or* or *nor*).

Neither the webmaster nor the clerks know the customer's password.

Neither the clerks nor the webmaster knows the customer's password.

Either Marcia or you are in charge of planning the event.

Either you or Marcia is in charge of planning the event.

Indefinite Pronouns as Subjects

As you learned in Chapter 7, some indefinite pronouns are always singular, whereas other indefinite pronouns are always plural. In addition, some may be singular or plural depending on the words to which they refer.

Always Singular			Always Plural	Singular or Plural
anyone	every	nobody	both	all
anybody	everyone	nothing	few	more
anything	everybody	someone	many	most
each	everything	somebody	several	some
either	neither	something		any
				none

Singular indefinite pronouns require singular verbs. Ignore any prepositional phrases that follow the indefinite pronoun.

Either of the two ideas is acceptable.

Somebody on the committee has to take the minutes.

Each of our employees is eligible for promotion.

Everybody possesses the ability to succeed.

Plural indefinite pronouns require plural verbs.

Both of the candidates are qualified.

Few interviewees send thank-you notes after job interviews.

Many of our politicians are working hard to represent their constituents.

Several Web sites offer online technical support.

Some indefinite pronouns can be **singular** or **plural.** These indefinite pronouns, including *all, more, most, some, any*, and *none*, provide one of the few instances in which prepositional phrases become important in determining agreement. Although the prepositional phrase does not contain the subject of the sentence, it does contain the noun to which the indefinite pronoun refers. If that noun is singular, use a singular verb. If the noun is plural, use a plural verb.

Some of the report is controversial. (*Some* is singular because it refers to *report*.)

Some of the managers agree that the company needs reorganizing. (*Some* is plural because it refers to *managers*.)

Most of the work is completed. (*Most* is singular because it refers to *work*.)

Most of the applicants are women. (*Most* is plural because it refers to *women*.)

The indefinite pronouns *anyone* and *everyone* are spelled as two words when followed by *of* phrases.

Every one of us should attend the budget development meeting.

Any one of those Web sites can be used to book air and hotel reservations.

Collective Nouns as Subjects

Collective nouns such as *faculty, committee, team, audience, group, jury, crowd, class, board, flock*, and *council* may be singular or plural depending on how they are used in a sentence. When a collective noun operates as a single unit, its verb should be singular. When the elements of a collective noun operate separately, the verb should be plural.

The team has carefully studied the opponent's videos. (*Team* is operating as a single unit.)

The team were still dressing when the reporter entered the locker room. (*Team* members were acting separately. Although technically correct, the sentence would be less awkward if it read *The team members* were still dressing . . .)



In America collective nouns are almost always considered to be singular (*The staff is . . .*). In Britain, however, collective nouns are usually plural (*The staff are . . .*).

The city council has unanimously approved the parking fee increase. (*Council* is operating as a single unit.)

The city council were sharply divided over the increase in parking fees. (*Council* members were acting separately. Although technically correct, the sentence would be less awkward if it read *The city council members* were sharply divided . . .)

Now complete the reinforcement exercises for Level 2.

LEVEL 3

Additional Rules for Subject–Verb Agreement

In some instances it is difficult to know whether a subject is singular or plural. This is especially true when the word *number* is the subject of a sentence; when the subject is a quantity, measure, fraction, or portion; and when the subject is a phrase or clause. *Who* and *that* clauses and subject complements present additional challenges. Here are a few rules to guide you in selecting appropriate verbs for such subjects.

The Distinction Between *the number* and *a number*

When the word *number* is the subject of a sentence, its article (*the* or *a*) becomes significant. *The* is specific and therefore implies *singularity*; *a* is general and therefore implies *plurality*. This means that *the number* is singular and *a number* is plural. Ignore any prepositional phrases that follow.

The number of times you have been late to work is unacceptable. (Singular)

The number of requests for registered domain names is growing annually. (Singular)

A number of items are included on today's agenda. (Plural)

A number of stocks are traded daily. (Plural)

Quantities and Measures

When they refer to *total* amounts, quantities and measures are singular. If they refer to individual units that can be counted, quantities and measures are plural.

Forty dollars is all you will pay for monthly Internet access. (The quantity is expressed as a total amount.)

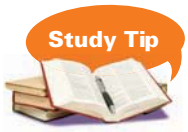
Forty dollars were laid out on the table during the demonstration. (The quantity is expressed as individual units. Although technically correct, the sentence would be less awkward if it read *Forty dollar bills* were laid out . . .)

Three years is the period of the loan. (The quantity is expressed as a total amount.)

Three years are needed to renovate the property totally. (The quantity is expressed as individual units.)

Fractions, Portions, and Percentages

Fractions, portions, and percentages may be singular or plural depending on the nouns to which they refer. To determine whether the subject is singular or plural, look at the prepositional phrase that follows.



When the preposition *of* follows a fraction (*three fourths of . . .*), do not hyphenate the fraction.

One third of the contract was ratified. (The fraction *one third* is singular because it refers to *contract*.)

Only one third of voters approve of the new federal budget. (The fraction *one third* is plural because it refers to *voters*.)

A majority of the report discusses the pros and cons of the proposal. (The subject *majority* is singular because it refers to *report*.)

A majority of employees agree with the proposal. (The subject *majority* is plural because it refers to *employees*.)

A percentage of the budget is allocated to employee benefits. (The subject *percentage* is singular because it refers to *budget*.)

A percentage of the proceeds go to charity. (The subject *percentage* is plural because it refers to *proceeds*.)

Who and *That* Clauses

Verbs in *who* and *that* clauses (known as **relative pronoun clauses**) must agree in number and person with the nouns to which they refer. In *who* and *that* clauses introduced by *one of*, the verb is usually plural because it refers to a plural noun.



For sentences with *one of those who* clauses, begin reading with the word *of*: *Of those people who are late sleepers, John is one.* The verb will always be plural. However, if the sentence is limited by *only one*, the verb is always singular.

Susan Lamb is *one of* those managers who always get excellent results from their employees. (Read: Of those managers who always get excellent results from their employees, Susan Lamb is one. Note that the pronoun *their* also must agree with its antecedent.)

To Kill a Mockingbird is *one of* those books that have an influence on readers of all ages. [Read: Of those books that have an influence on readers of all ages, *To Kill a Mockingbird* is one.]

In *who* and *that* clauses introduced by *the only one of*, the verb is singular.

Maria is *the only one of* our employees who is certified to give CPR. (The adverb *only* makes the *who* clause singular.)

To Kill a Mockingbird is *the only one of* those books that is read in high school classes today. (The adverb *only* makes the *that* clause singular.)

Verbs must agree in person with the nouns or pronouns to which they refer. Identifying the subject can be even trickier when pronouns are combined with *who* clauses.

It is you who are responsible for booking our flights.

Could it be I who am to blame?

Was it you who were on the phone?

Phrases and Clauses as Subjects

Use a singular verb when the subject of a sentence is a phrase or clause.

Learning about different cultures is fascinating.

That verbs must agree with subjects is accepted.



Each year approximately 10,000 new words are introduced to the English language. Of those, about 1,000 are widely used, and roughly 200 of those words become a part of our permanent vocabulary.

Subject Complements

In Chapter 8 you learned that linking verbs are followed by complements. Although a complement may differ from the subject in number, the linking verb should always agree with the subject. To avoid awkwardness, reword sentences so that subjects and complements agree in number.

Awkward: The best part of the Web site is the graphics and video. (Although the singular subject *part* agrees with the singular verb *is*, it sounds awkward because of the plural complement *graphics and video*.)

Better: The best parts of the Web site are the graphics and video. (The plural subject agrees with the plural complement.)

Awkward: The reason for his bankruptcy was poor management and decision making.

Better: The reasons for his bankruptcy were poor management and decision making.

Now complete the reinforcement exercises for Level 3.

Spot the BLOOPER

Using the skills you are learning in this class, try to identify why the following items are bloopers. Consult your textbook, dictionary, or reference manual as needed.

Blooper 1: Tourism ad for Australia that appeared in the *San Francisco Chronicle*: "If you have just one spare hour, a tour of the world-famous [Sydney] Opera House are a must."

Blooper 2: Message printed on a Gap T-shirt: "The Days of This Society Is Numbered."

Blooper 3: Official banner welcoming Super Bowl fans to Tampa: "Welcome to Downtown Tampa: There's so many reasons to like it."

Blooper 4: Headline in the *Sun-Sentinel* [Fort Lauderdale]: "Plenty of Florida children needs homes."

Blooper 5: Letter to the editor in the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution:* "Why has the Atlanta Public Schools made steady progress?"

Blooper 6: From an Associated Press article: "Education and employer training is often the biggest need in an independently owned business."

Blooper 7: Headline from the Santa Barbara [California] *News-Press:* "Adding Rental Units Transform Home."

Blooper 8: Article about Meryl Streep in *Parade* magazine: "She's one of the few stars who hasn't nipped and tucked herself into an unrealistic image of youth."

Blooper 9: In an article in *The Times-Union* [Albany, New York], the interim superintendent of schools said: "A large number of students arrives without the basic skills we expect them to have."

Blooper 10: Headline in the *San Francisco Chronicle:* "One in 11 Have Trouble Speaking California's Official Language."

FAQs

Answered by Dr. Guffey and Professor Seefer


Dr. Guffey


Professor Seefer

Question	Answer
Q: In a *New York Times* article about singer Michael Jackson and his fight with Sony Music Group, I saw this sentence: *Owning those rights are valuable because once Mr. Jackson owns them outright, he does not have to split royalty payments with Sony as he does now.* It seems to me the phrase *owning those rights* is singular and the verb should be *is*. Am I right?	**A:** Absolutely! When they act as sentence subjects, phrases and clauses are singular. You deserve a good grammar award!
Q: My uncle insists that *none* is singular. My English book says that it can be plural. Who's right?	**A:** Times are changing. Several years ago *none* was almost always used in a singular sense. Today, through usage, *none* may be singular or plural depending on what you wish to emphasize. For example, *None are more willing than we*. But, *None of the students is* (or *are* if you wish to suggest many students) *failing*.
Q: Please help me with this sentence that I am transcribing for a medical laboratory: *A copy of our analysis, along with our interpretation of its results, (has* or *have) been sent to you.*	**A:** The subject of your sentence is *copy*; thus the verb must be *has*. Don't let interrupting elements obscure the real sentence subject.
Q: I'm never sure how to handle words that are used to represent quantities and proportions in sentences. For example, what verb is correct in this sentence: *A large proportion of voters (was* or *were) against the measure.*	**A:** Words that represent fractional amounts (such as *proportion, fraction, minimum*, and *majority*) may be singular or plural depending on the words they represent. In your sentence *proportion* represents *voters*, which is plural. Therefore, use the plural verb *were*.
Q: What part of speech is *there* when it begins a sentence, such as *There are two vice presidents*?	**A:** The word *there* generally is classified as an adverb. But in this position, the word *there* functions as a pronoun. *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* calls *there* a "function" word when it replaces the grammatical sentence subject.

Question	Answer
Q: In a recent *Wall Street Journal* article, I saw this sentence: *At issue is other tax breaks, especially Hope and Lifetime Learning education tax credits.* I don't usually question the *Journal*, but this sentence is weird. What is its problem?	**A:** Because the sentence order is inverted, the writer had trouble making the subject and verb agree. By moving the subject to the beginning, you can see that it is plural. And a plural subject always demands a plural verb: *Other tax breaks . . . are at issue.*
Q: I have a lot of trouble with verbs in sentences like this: *He is one of the 8 million Americans who (has* or *have) a drinking problem*.	**A:** You're not alone. Make your verb agree with the plural noun following *one of* (*Americans*). One easy way to work with sentences like this is to concentrate on the clause that contains the verb: *Of the 8 million Americans who have a drinking problem, he is one*.
Q: When writing e-mail messages, I often type in all capital letters. My boss just told me that I should stop this practice. Why?	**A:** Your boss is correct. Typing in all caps is often referred to as *shouting*. Because many people are offended by these types of messages, writing in all caps should be avoided. In addition, messages written in all caps or in all lowercase letters are difficult to read and look unprofessional. On the job, business communicators want their messages to be as professional and as easy to read as possible. Therefore, always use standard upper- and lowercase letters when writing your e-mail messages.
Q: I confuse *i.e.* and *e.g.* What's the difference?	**A:** The abbreviation *i.e.* stands for the Latin *id est*, meaning "that is" (*The package exceeds the weight limit, i.e., 5 pounds*). The abbreviation *e.g.* stands for the Latin *exempli gratia*, meaning "for the sake of example" or "for example" (*The manufacturer may offer a purchase incentive, e.g., a rebate or discount plan*). Notice the use of a comma after *i.e.* and *e.g.* Also notice that both abbreviations are written using lowercase letters and periods.
Q: I included this sentence in a job acceptance letter to my new employer: *I am anxious to begin my new position with Miller and Associates*. Is this sentence acceptable?	**A:** Have you mailed this letter yet? If not, you should change *anxious* to *eager* before doing so. *Anxious* is an adjective meaning "worried or apprehensive" (*Maggie is anxious about getting her biopsy results*). *Eager* is an adjective meaning "anticipating with enthusiasm" (*Stan is eager to get started on the new project*). Our guess is that you are eager to begin your new position!

NAME _____

10 Reinforcement Exercises

LEVEL 1

Online Homework Help! For immediate feedback on odd-numbered items, go to **www.meguffey.com.**

A. (Self-check) Select the correct word to complete each sentence below. Write the corresponding letter in the space provided.

1. Presenting today (a) is, (b) are two investment experts, Yukie Tokuyama and Eric Freidenreich. _____
2. The word *ginormous*, along with several other words, (a) was, (b) were added to the dictionary in 2009. _____
3. Here (a) is, (b) are three possibilities for improving employee morale. _____
4. One of the first computer viruses (a) was, (b) were the "elk cloner," which was written by a ninth-grade student in 1982. _____
5. Every man, woman, and child in the country (a) is, (b) are to be counted in the census. _____
6. There (a) is, (b) are three primary reasons to invest in foreign securities. _____
7. Addressing the conference (a) is, (b) are employees of the Federal Reserve. _____
8. Southwest Airlines (a) is, (b) are known for a fun culture that motivates employees. _____
9. A set of guidelines for protecting network security (a) was, (b) were developed. _____
10. *Freakonomics* by Steven D. Levitt and Stephen J. Dubner (a) appear, (b) appears to be one of the best-selling economics books of all time. _____

Check your answers below.

B. In the following sentences or groups of words, underline the simple subject(s).

Example: the <u>controller</u> and the <u>treasurer</u> of the county

1. A directory of e-mail addresses is on my computer.
2. the network administrator together with her staff
3. other services such as Web hosting and HTML coding
4. the production cost and the markup of each item
5. one of the many reasons for developing excellent communication skills
6. current emphasis on product safety and consumer protection
7. Farkas, Evans, & Everett, Inc., an executive placement service

1. b 2. a 3. b 4. a 5. a 6. b 7. b 8. a 9. a 10. b

8. the anger and frustration of the passengers
9. the lead actor, as well as those in supporting roles
10. the time and money involved in the project



C. For each of the following sentences, circle the sentence subject. Then cross out any phrases that separate the verb from its subject. Choose the correct verb and write the corresponding letter in the space provided.

Examples: The (faculty advisor) ~~along with club members~~, (a) is, (b) are here. a

Our (catalog) ~~of wireless devices~~ (a) is, (b) are being sent to you. a

1. Compensation, along with benefits and time off, (a) is, (b) are generally discussed after a job offer is made. _____
2. Now, just in time for the holidays, (a) comes, (b) come a variety of accessories made from recyclable materials. _____
3. The use of cell phones and pagers (a) is, (b) are not allowed during meetings. _____
4. A bachelor's degree from an accredited institution and three years of experience, (a) is, (b) are required for this position. _____
5. Everyone except temporary workers employed during the last year (a) has, (b) have become eligible for retroactive benefits. _____
6. The wingspan on each of Boeing's latest passenger planes (a) is, (b) are longer than the Wright brothers' first flight. _____
7. All cooperatives except the Lemon Growing Exchange (a) has, (b) have been able to show a profit for participating members. _____
8. Although the economy seems to be booming, only one of the major automobile manufacturers (a) has, (b) have been able to show profits. _____
9. Successful entrepreneurs such as Donald Trump (a) seem, (b) seems to possess enormous energy and passion. _____
10. The range of prices for these models (a) make, (b) makes it difficult to provide complete information online. _____



D. Select the correct verb and write its letter in the space provided.

1. Bacon and eggs (a) is, (b) are the most popular breakfast item on the menu. _____
2. Each office and conference room (a) was, (b) were retrofitted for earthquake safety. _____
3. The book *EcoBarons* (a) discusses, (b) discuss business leaders who are working to save the planet from ecological destruction. _____
4. The New Orleans River Kings (a) was, (b) were a popular jazz band in the 1920s. _____
5. Here (a) is, (b) are a complete list of product features. _____
6. On the southern shore of Hawaii (a) is, (b) are numerous windmill farms. _____
7. Some managers think that grammar and punctuation (a) doesn't, (b) don't matter. _____
8. Janet (a) doesn't, (b) don't mind working extra hours this weekend. _____
9. Our governor, along with top congressional leaders, (a) is, (b) are protesting the budget cuts. _____
10. Sam and Lynne (a) is, (b) are both able to attend the meeting. _____

11. Cisco Systems (a) has, (b) have found a way to restructure its finances. _____

12. Lying on my desk (a) is, (b) are my itinerary and plane tickets. _____

13. Hunter, Knapp, and Huynh, Inc., a legal firm in Oklahoma City, (a) specializes, (b) specialize in patent law. _____

14. Considerable time and effort (a) was, (b) were spent on developing the plans. _____

15. How essential (a) is, (b) are experience and education in this field? _____

16. The Rolling Stones (a) have, (b) has been a popular rock band since 1962. _____

17. Biscuits and gravy (a) is, (b) are a popular dish in the South. _____

18. The New York Knicks (a) is, (b) are probably the most experienced team in the NBA. _____

19. Every online order and return (a) is, (b) are processed within one day. _____

20. Bruce Springsteen's "Streets of Philadelphia" (a) were, (b) was awarded an Oscar for Best Song in 1993. _____

LEVEL 2



A. (Self-check) Select the correct form or verb.

1. Everyone except a few employees (a) admit, (b) admits that the new CEO is doing a good job. _____

2. Either the AMC Pacer or the Yugo (a) is, (b) are considered to be the worst car of all time. _____

3. No one but the Human Resources director and a few managers ever (a) talk, (b) talks about balancing work and family issues. _____

4. Each of the research studies (a) concludes, (b) conclude that the U.S. workplace is safer than it has ever been. _____

5. The union (a) has, (b) have to vote on the proposed contract. _____

6. Every one of the new start-up companies (a) is, (b) are seeking venture capital. _____

7. Neither the employees nor their supervisor (a) think, (b) thinks the theft was an inside job. _____

8. (a) Everyone, (b) Every one of the sales reps made quota this month. _____

9. All that work (a) is, (b) are yet to be logged in. _____

10. Many surgeons, including Dr. Lisa Hudson, (a) listen, (b) listens to classical or rock music while operating. _____

Check your answers below.



B. Choose the correct answer.

1. The Department of Labor (a) report, (b) reports that unemployment is the highest it has been in decades. _____

2. Neither Brenda DeLee nor Robert Eustes (a) is, (b) are afraid of hard work. _____

3. (a) Everyone, (b) Every one of the résumés contained grammatical errors. _____

4. Several of the proposals (a) contains, (b) contain complex formulas. _____

1. b 2. a 3. b 4. a 5. a 6. a 7. b 8. b 9. a 10. a

5. Either the owner or her partners (a) is, (b) are responsible for the taxes. _____
6. Either the partners or the owner (a) was, (b) were contacted by the IRS. _____
7. The group of players, coaches, and fans (a) plan, (b) plans to charter a plane. _____
8. The group (a) is, (b) are taking their seats on the plane. _____
9. (a) Is, (b) Are either of the clients satisfied with our marketing campaign? _____
10. Something about these insurance claims (a) appear, (b) appears questionable. _____
11. An online version of *U.S. News & World Report*'s college rankings (a) is, (b) are now available. _____
12. The faculty (a) agrees, (b) agree that student learning is paramount. _____
13. The faculty (a) was, (b) were taking their seats when the dean entered the room. _____
14. Most of the adults using Twitter (a) accesses, (b) access the Internet wirelessly. _____
15. Most of the blog (a) is, (b) are dedicated to discussing online marketing strategies. _____
16. (a) Anyone, (b) Any one of these messages could be considered spam. _____
17. (a) Anyone (b) Any one can see that we need to hire more sales reps. _____
18. Everything about the contract clauses (a) seems, (b) seem debatable. _____
19. None of the passengers (a) is, (b) are upset with the new regulations. _____
20. None of the contract (a) deals, (b) deal with monetary issues. _____

C. Writing Exercise. Use your imagination in expanding the following sentences. When necessary, select the correct verb form first.

1. The staff is _____
2. The staff are _____
3. Our city council (has, have) _____
4. Not one of the plans (was, were) _____
5. Some of the jury members (believe, believes) _____
6. Some of the proposal (need, needs) _____
7. Somebody in the theater filled with patrons (was, were) _____
8. Either Anne or you (is, are) _____
9. Either you or Anne (was, were) _____
10. Everything about the speeches (was, were) _____

LEVEL 3

A. (Self-check) For each sentence write the letter corresponding to the correct answer in the space provided.

1. The number of companies using Google to perform background checks on potential employees (a) is, (b) are growing. _____
2. A number of companies (a) is, (b) are also using social networking sites to investigate applicants. _____
3. Laury Fischer is one of those teachers who (a) has, (b) have earned the respect of their students. _____
4. Fifteen feet of pipe (a) is, (b) are exactly what was specified. _____
5. Didn't you know it is you who (a) has, (b) have been chosen for the promotion? _____
6. A large percentage of the donation (a) go, (b) goes to fight homelessness. _____
7. She is the only one of the service reps who (a) speak, (b) speaks three languages. _____
8. Whoever is named for the job (a) has, (b) have my approval. _____
9. To take online classes while working full-time (a) is, (b) are challenging. _____
10. The hardest part of the job (a) is, (b) are the bending and lifting. _____

Check your answers below.

B. Select the correct verb.

1. Two hundred dollars (a) is, (b) are required as a down payment to hold the conference facility. _____
2. One hundred pennies (a) is, (b) are needed to make one dollar. _____
3. Our latest advertisements featuring the new digital media server (a) is, (b) are being broadcast on all major networks. _____
4. Is it he who (a) is, (b) are the new account representative? _____
5. Michael is the only one of the lab assistants who (a) was, (b) were able to repair the malfunctioning machine. _____
6. Michael is one of those lab assistants who (a) is, (b) are valued as employees. _____
7. "My Way" is one of those songs that (a) continues, (b) continue to sound fresh year after year. _____
8. Sixty days (a) is, (b) are the period of the loan. _____
9. Sixty days (a) is, (b) are reserved during the year for staff meetings. _____
10. At the rear of the building complex (a) is, (b) are the quality control lab and the science department. _____
11. Only a fraction of the conference delegates (a) was, (b) were unable to find accommodations at the Mandalay Bay resort. _____
12. Only a fraction of the conference room (a) was, (b) were set up by the time the meeting was scheduled to begin. _____
13. Keeping your skills up-to-date (a) is, (b) are important in today's economy. _____

1. a 2. b 3. b 4. a 5. b 6. b 7. b 8. a 9. a 10. a (Better: *The hardest parts of the job are . . .*)

14. Over three fourths of the individuals attending the lecture series (a) is, (b) are college students. _____

15. Over three fourths of the contract (a) has, (b) have been ratified. _____

16. A number of women with MBAs (a) chooses, (b) choose to stay home to raise their children. _____

17. The number of women with MDs or law degrees who choose to stay home to raise a family (a) is, (b) are much lower. _____

18. Collaborating online with colleagues (a) is, (b) are easier than ever before. _____

19. A large percentage of younger employees (a) is, (b) are using social networks to collaborate and share knowledge in the workplace. _____

20. A large percentage of each day (a) is, (b) are spent online. _____

C. Writing Exercise. Some subject–verb constructions are grammatically correct but sound incorrect. Revise the following correct sentences so that they are not only correct but sound so. **Hint:** Make the subject and its complement agree in number.

Example: The best part of my job is meeting people and learning new things.

The best parts of my job are meeting people and learning new things.

1. The most important trait I have to offer an employer is energy and enthusiasm.

_____

2. The best part of my job is preparing and analyzing financial statements.

_____

3. The principal task in this office is abstracts and affidavits.

_____

4. The primary reason for his wealth is wise stock and other investment choices.

_____

5. The main objective this fiscal year is to increase sales and decrease expenses.

_____

For further practice in subject–verb agreement, write sentences using the following words as subjects of present-tense, present–progressive, or present–perfect verbs. See the tables in Chapter 9 if necessary. Your sentences should be complete.

Example: The number of voters is increasing rapidly as we approach the election date.

6. A number of businesses _____

_____

7. The number of businesses _____

_____

8. Every one of the students _____

_____

9. Some of the employees _____

_____

10. Some of the plan _____

_____



D. Skill Maximizer. To offer extra help in areas that cause hesitation for business and professional writers, this proficiency exercise reviews subject–verb agreement. Underline any subject–verb problem and write an improved form(s) in the space provided. Each sentence has one error.

1. There's many advantages to earning a college degree. _____
2. Corned beef and cabbage are a traditional Irish dish. _____
3. *Marvels of the Seven Seas* have numerous photographs depicting marine life in its natural habitat. _____
4. Persistent inflation and interest rate worries often causes stock prices to drop. _____
5. Was any of the members of the organization present for the final vote? _____
6. After several days of deliberation, the jury has announced their verdict. _____
7. Neither the defendant nor the plaintiffs was satisfied with the judgment. _____
8. Are either of the applicants available to interview on Friday? _____
9. Preparing the dinner for the annual banquet is gourmet chefs from around the world. _____
10. Globalization and the changing ethnic composition of America is causing many organizations to embrace diversity programs. _____
11. The use of UPC scanning devices, computer databases, and thermal-imaging receipts are everywhere in the retail industry. _____
12. One of the problems, in addition to those already mentioned, seem to be resistance to change. _____
13. Both a written proposal and an oral presentation is required for this project. _____
14. If the level of antioxidants in your diet are low, you may be susceptible to health problems. _____
15. A host of ethical issues surround business including economic justice, marketing irregularities, executive compensation, and whistle-blowing. _____
16. Dell Computers, along with many other technology companies, are outsourcing thousands of customer support jobs to India. _____
17. Any one of the stockholders have the right to delegate his or her proxy. _____
18. Mike is one of those accountants who strives for accurate and objective financial statements. _____
19. Kirsty is the only one of our accountants who have access to all financial data. _____
20. Everyone of the books she read last year discussed business concepts. _____

E. FAQs About Business English Review. In the space provided, write the correct answer choice.

1. Horns blow in different keys and tones; (a) e.g., (b) i.e., American car horns beep in the tone of F. _____
2. Mosquito sprays block the mosquito's sensors so that the mosquitoes don't know you are there; (a) e.g., (b) i.e., the sprays hide you. _____
3. We have (a) alot, (b) allot, (c) a lot of work to do before the end of the day. _____
4. Winning both Boeing contracts (a) is, (b) are important because the contracts will generate $57 million in revenues. _____
5. A group of photographers (a) was, (b) were waiting outside the building when we made the announcement. _____
6. None of the tourists (a) was, (b) were dressed appropriately to enter the temple. _____
7. None of the building (a) is, (b) are accessible to nonemployees. _____
8. There (a) was, (b) were a few team members still not in agreement. _____
9. Paul is (a) anxious, (b) eager for his upcoming vacation to Bermuda. _____
10. Marta is (a) anxious, (b) eager about the upcoming exam because she didn't study for it. _____



Learning Web Ways

Today social networking is used for much more than just socializing. Companies have discovered that sites such as Facebook, MySpace, and LinkedIn can be powerful tools for marketing, recruiting, and communication. To become familiar with one of the most popular social networking areas, you will visit the Facebook site.

Goal: To learn about social networking.

1. In the address bar of your Web browser, enter the following URL: **http://www.facebook.com**.
2. Enter your name, e-mail address, password, gender, and birth date to create your account if necessary. Click **Sign Up**. If you already have a Facebook account, simply log on.
3. Take a few minutes to start getting your Facebook page set up. Upload a profile photo, enter some information about yourself, and set your security settings to ensure your privacy. If you need help at any time, click **Help** at the bottom of the page.
4. Use the **Search** tool at the top of the screen to search for people, groups, and fan pages. Any of the following may have Facebook pages you can join: your college, your employer, a college you would like to attend, a company you would like to work for, your sorority or fraternity, a student club you belong to, a professional organization you would like to join, a charitable organization, and so on.
5. Click the link for your name at the top of the page to return to your personal Facebook page. Print a copy of this page.
6. Log out of Facebook by clicking **Logout** at the top of the screen. Close your browser.
7. After logging out, write a brief summary (no more than one page) about how Facebook could be used for academic and professional purposes.
8. Submit your summary and your printout to your instructor.

Chat About It



Your instructor may assign any of the following topics for you to discuss in class, in an online chat room, or on an online discussion board. Some of the discussion topics may require outside research. You may also be asked to read and respond to postings made by your classmates.

Discussion Topic 1: A study tip in this chapter said the following: "Nothing reveals a person's education, or lack thereof, so quickly as verbs that don't agree with subjects." Do you agree with this statement? Why or why not?

Discussion Topic 2: What have you learned so far in this class that will help you sound educated and professional on the job? Why do you think it is important to sound this way in the workplace?

Discussion Topic 3: You learned in this chapter that American and British English rules treat collective nouns differently. Americans generally treat collective nouns as singular, whereas the English generally treat collective nouns as plural. What do you think accounts for this difference? What other differences have you noticed between American and British English?

Discussion Topic 4: In this chapter you learned that each year approximately 10,000 new words are introduced to the English language. Of those, about 1,000 are widely used, and roughly 200 of those words become a part of our permanent vocabulary. Why do you think so many words are added that never become a permanent part of our vocabulary?

Discussion Topic 5: American novelist Charlotte Perkins Gilman said, "Life is a verb." What do you think she meant by this? Do you agree? Why or why not? Share your opinions and thoughts with your classmates.

Posttest

Underline the letter representing the correct answer.

1. Banana leaves and coconut husks (a) is, (b) are being used as materials in carpets and seat cushions for cars.
2. Everyone except the president and other management members (a) is, (b) are eligible for early retirement.
3. The cost of supplies, along with service and equipment costs, (a) is, (b) are a major problem.
4. There (a) is, (b) are many ways we can use Facebook as a professional communication tool.
5. Appearing next on the program (a) was, (b) were Dr. Gwen Hester and Professor Michele Koci.
6. A number of surprising events (a) is, (b) are creating spikes in the stock market.
7. Starbucks (a) has, (b) have launched an "I'm In" campaign to encourage national service.
8. Neither the CFO nor members of his staff (a) are, (b) is surprised by the revenue declines.
9. The research team (a) has, (b) have determined that the number one feature women want in a vehicle is extra storage.
10. The number of union strikes in the United States (a) is, (b) are decreasing.

1. b 2. a 3. a 4. b 5. b 6. b 7. a 8. a 9. a 10. a

Unit Review

Chapters 8–10

3

NAME_____

Reread Chapters 8–10. Then test your comprehension of those chapters by completing the exercises that follow. Check your answers at the end of the book.

LEVEL 1

In the blank provided, write the letter of the word or phrase that correctly completes each of the following sentences.

1. How important (a) is, (b) are seat comfort and legroom on flights? _____

2. In the sentence *An additive makes natural gas smell like rotten eggs,* the verb *smell* is (a) transitive, (b) intransitive, (c) linking, (d) helping. _____

3. In the sentence *We listened carefully to the president's address,* the verb *listened* is (a) transitive, (b) intransitive, (c) linking, (d) helping. _____

4. In the sentence *Tom Langlois is the consultant*, the word *consultant* is (a) an object, (b) a linking verb, (c) a complement. _____

5. In the sentence *Maggie booked her flight*, the word *booked* is (a) transitive, (b) intransitive, (c) linking, (d) helping. _____

6. In the sentence *Women comprise just 34 percent of Silicon Valley's technical workforce*, the verb *comprise* is (a) present tense, (b) past tense, (c) future tense. _____

7. Google, along with other U.S. Internet companies, (a) is, (b) are required to abide by China's laws. _____

8. Every employee and supervisor (a) attend, (b) attends a team-building retreat every year. _____

9. In the sentence *The global economy will become strong over the next decade*, the verb *will become* is (a) present tense, (b) past tense, (c) future tense. _____

10. Olsen, Leung, and Miller, Inc., (a) is, (b) are moving to a new location. _____

11. In the sentence *Hill International built some of the tallest skyscrapers in the world*, the verb *built* is (a) present tense, (b) past tense, (c) future tense. _____

12. There (a) is, (b) are many kind words we will be able to say about him at his retirement dinner. _____

13. The tone and wording of a business message (a) are, (b) is very important. _____

14. What (a) is, (b) was the name of the sales rep who offered the discount? _____

15. *Economics in One Lesson* (a) help, (b) helps readers learn the basics of economics quickly and easily. _____

LEVEL 2

Write the letter of the word or phrase that correctly completes each of the following sentences.

16. The (a) active voice, (b) passive voice is known as the "voice of business." _____

17. She suggested that everyone (a) meet, (b) meets at the café after work. _____

18. He acts as if he (a) was, (b) were the only employee who had to work overtime. _____

19. In the sentence *The contract was approved yesterday*, the verb is in the (a) active, (b) passive voice. _____

20. In the sentence *"Freegans" search through dumpsters to find usable items*, the verb is in the (a) active, (b) passive voice. _____

21. Freegans recommend that any discarded item (a) are, (b) be reused to reduce waste. _____

22. Many items have (a) laid, (b) lain, (c) lay in trash bins that are quite valuable. _____

23. If you had (a) rode, (b) ridden the subway to work, you would have been on time. _____

24. In the sentence *Some homeowners are wondering how the bailout will affect them*, the verb *are wondering* is (a) past participle, (b) present participle. _____

25. We think that (a) everyone, (b) every one of the candidates is qualified for the position. _____

26. The jury (a) need, (b) needs more time to make a decision. _____

27. If I (a) was, (b) were qualified, I would apply for that position. _____

28. Either the teenager or his parents (a) is, (b) are using the car right now. _____

29. Neither the parents nor the teenager (a) is, (b) are staying home tonight. _____

30. In the sentence *The deficit has grown over the past decade*, the verb *has grown* is (a) past participle, (b) present participle. _____

LEVEL 3

In the blank provided, write the letter that correctly completes each sentence.

31. Nearly everyone objected to (a) Sara, (b) Sara's using her BlackBerry during the meeting. _____

32. The number of taxpayers who file online (a) is, (b) are growing rapidly. _____

33. A large percentage of people (a) is, (b) are simplifying their lives. _____

34. It looks as if three fourths of the proposal (a) has, (b) have yet to be written. _____

35. She is one of those executives who always (a) tell, (b) tells the truth. _____

36. Try (a) and, (b) to be on time for work from now on. _____

For each of the following groups of sentences, select the one that is most logically written.

37. (a) To qualify for a full scholarship, applications must be submitted by January 1.
(b) To qualify for a full scholarship, submit your application by January 1. _____

38. (a) Skilled at troubleshooting Web security problems, Maria Lyan was hired instantly by the personnel manager.
(b) Skilled at troubleshooting Web security problems, the personnel manager hired Maria Lyan instantly. _____

39. (a) Using two search tools, I finally located the Web site.
(b) Using two search tools, the Web site was finally located. _____

40. (a) The waiter served a bowl of soup to the woman that was steaming hot.
(b) The waiter served a bowl of soup that was steaming hot to the woman. _____

FAQs About Business English Review

41. We value one trait in our employees above all others, (a) i.e., (b) e.g., integrity. _____

42. State budget cuts will certainly (a) affect, (b) effect education adversely. _____

43. Chemist Laura Burns announced her (a) principle, (b) principal findings in a journal article. _____

44. Both plaintiffs and defendants were (a) all together, (b) altogether pleased with the out-of-court settlement. _____

45. Typing an e-mail message in all capital letters is known as (a) preening, (b) shouting, (c) efficiency. _____

46. Chuck is (a) eager, (b) anxious to earn his MBA degree. _____

47. Many notable celebrities attended the movie (a) premier, (b) premiere. _____

48. We trusted that Shannon would be (a) discrete, (b) discreet during the negotiations. _____

49. If everyone will (a) co-operate, (b) co operate, (c) cooperate, our meeting might end on time. _____

50. The executives of AIG are (a) suppose, (b) supposed to eliminate benefits. _____

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Writer's Workshop

NAME_____



Techniques for Effective Paragraphs

As you learned in the Writer's Workshop for Unit 2, the basic unit in writing is the sentence. The next unit is the paragraph. Although no rule regulates the length of paragraphs, business writers recognize the value of short paragraphs. Paragraphs with fewer than eight printed lines look inviting and readable, whereas long, solid chunks of print appear formidable. In this workshop you will learn writing techniques for organizing sentences into readable, coherent, and clear paragraphs. The first important technique involves topic sentences.

Organizing Paragraphs Around Topic Sentences

A well-organized paragraph has two important characteristics. First, it covers just one subject. For example, if you are writing about your booth at the Las Vegas computer expo, you wouldn't throw in a sentence about trouble with the IRS. Keep all the sentences in a paragraph related to one topic. Second, a well-organized paragraph begins with a topic sentence that summarizes what the paragraph is about. A topic sentence helps readers by preparing them for what follows.

Consider the following scenario. Assume your company promotes an extensive schedule of team sports for employees after hours. One group enjoys weekend bicycling. You have been assigned the task of writing an e-mail message to the members of this group stating that they must wear helmets when cycling. One paragraph of your message covers statistics about cycling accidents and the incidence of brain injury for unhelmeted riders. Another paragraph discusses the protection offered by helmets:

> *Helmets protect the brain from injury.* They spread the force of a crash from the point of impact to a wider area. When an accident occurs, an unhelmeted head undergoes two collisions. The first occurs when the skull slams into the ground. The second occurs when the brain hits the inside of the skull. A helmet softens the second blow and acts as a shock absorber. Instead of crushing the brain, the impact crushes the foam core of the helmet, often preventing serious brain injury.

Notice how the preceding paragraph focuses on just one topic: how helmets protect the brain from injury. Every sentence relates to that topic. Notice, too, that the first sentence functions as a topic sentence, informing the reader of the subject of the paragraph.

The best way to write a good paragraph is to list all the ideas you may include. Following is a rough draft of ideas for the preceding paragraph. Notice that the fourth item doesn't relate to the topic sentence. By listing the ideas to be included in a paragraph, you can immediately see what belongs—and what doesn't. Once the list is made, you can easily write the topic sentence.

Paragraph Idea List

1. Helmets spread force of impact.
2. Crashes cause two collisions, the first when the skull hits the ground and the second when the brain hits the skull.
3. The foam core of the helmet absorbs the impact.
4. ~~The federal government has issued biking regulations requiring helmets~~. [Cross out items that don't belong.]

Topic Sentence: Helmets protect the brain from injury.

Skill Check 3.1: Organizing a Paragraph

In a letter to the college president, the athletic director is arguing for a new stadium scoreboard. One paragraph will describe the old scoreboard and why it needs to be replaced. Study the following list of ideas for that paragraph.

1. The old scoreboard was originally constructed in the 1960s.

2. It is now hard to find replacement parts for it when something breaks.

3. The old scoreboard is not energy efficient.

4. Coca-Cola has offered to buy a new sports scoreboard in return for exclusive rights to sell soda on campus.

5. The old scoreboard should be replaced for many reasons.

6. It shows only scores for football games.

7. When we have soccer games or track meets, we are without any functioning scoreboard.

a. Which sentence should be the topic sentence? _____
b. Which sentence(s) should be developed in a different paragraph? _____
c. Which sentences should follow the topic sentence? _____

Writing Coherent Paragraphs

Effective paragraphs are coherent; that is, they hold together. **Coherence** is a quality of good writing that doesn't happen accidentally. It is consciously achieved through effective organization and through skillful use of three devices. These writing devices are (a) repetition of key ideas or key words, (b) use of pronouns that refer clearly to their antecedents, and (c) use of transitional expressions.

Repetition of Key Ideas or Key Words. Repeating a key word or key thought from a preceding sentence helps guide a reader from one thought to the next. This redundancy is necessary to build cohesiveness into writing. Notice how the word *deal* is repeated in the second sentence.

> For the past six months, college administrators and Coca-Cola have been working on a *deal* in which the college would receive a new sports scoreboard. The *deal* would involve exclusive rights to sell soft drinks on the 12,000-student campus.

Use of Pronouns That Refer Clearly to Their Antecedents. Pronouns such as *this, that, they, these, those,* and *it* help connect thoughts in sentences. However, these pronouns are useful only when their antecedents are clear. Often it is better to make the pronoun into an adjective joined with its antecedent to ensure that the reference is absolutely clear. Notice how the pronoun *this* is clearer when it is joined to its antecedent *contract*.

Confusing: The Coca-Cola offer requires an exclusive contract committing the college for ten years without any provision preventing a price increase. *This* could be very costly to students, staff, and faculty.

Improved: The Coca-Cola offer requires an exclusive contract committing the college for ten years without any provision preventing a price increase. *This contract* could be very costly to students, staff, and faculty.

Avoid vague pronouns, such as *it* in the following example.

Confusing: Both Coca-Cola and PepsiCo offered to serve our campus, and we agreed to allow *it* to submit a bid.

Improved: Both Coca-Cola and PepsiCo offered to serve our campus, and we agreed to allow Coca-Cola to submit a bid.

Use of Transitional Expressions. One of the most effective ways to achieve paragraph coherence is through the use of transitional expressions. These expressions act as road signs. They indicate where the message is headed, and they help the reader anticipate what is coming. Some common transitional expressions follow:

although	furthermore	moreover
as a result	hence	nevertheless
consequently	however	of course
for example	in addition	on the other hand
for this reason	in this way	therefore

Other words that act as connectives are *first, second, finally, after, meanwhile, next, after all, instead, specifically, thus, also, likewise, as,* and *as if.*

The following paragraph achieves coherence through the use of all three techniques. (1) The key idea of *surprising battle* in the first sentence is echoed in the second sentence with repetition of the word *battle* coupled with *unexpected*, a synonym for *surprising*. (2) The use of a pronoun, *This*, in the second sentence connects the second sentence to the first. (3) The transitional words *however* and *as a result* in following sentences continue to build coherence.

> A *surprising battle* between two global cola giants was recently fought in Venezuela. *This battle* was *unexpected* because Venezuelans had always been loyal Pepsi drinkers. *However,* when the nation's leading bottler sold half of its interest to Coca-Cola, everything changed. *As a result*, Coca-Cola turned the Pepsi-drinking nation of Venezuela into Coke drinkers almost overnight.

Skill Check 3.2: Improving Paragraph Coherence

In the following space or on a separate sheet of paper, use the information from Skill Check 3.1 to write a coherent paragraph about replacing the sports scoreboard. Remember that this paragraph is part of a letter from the athletic director to the college president. Include a topic sentence. Strive to illustrate all three techniques to achieve coherence.

Developing Parallel Construction

Paragraph clarity can be improved by expressing similar ideas with similar grammatical structures. For example, if you are listing three ideas, do not use *ing* words for two of the ideas and a *to* verb with the third idea: *reading, eating, and studying* (not *to study*). Use adjectives with adjectives, verbs with verbs, phrases with

phrases, and clauses with clauses. In the following list, use all verbs: *the machine sorted, stamped, and counted* (not *and had a counter*). For phrases, the wording for all parts of the list should be matched; *safety must be improved in the home, in the classroom, and on the job* (not *for office workers*).

Poor: Ms. Tanaga is energetic, resourceful, and she can be relied on.

Improved: Ms. Tanaga is energetic, resourceful, and reliable. (Matches adjectives.)

Poor: The new shredder helped us save money, reduce pollution, and paper could be recycled.

Improved: The new shredder helped us save money, reduce pollution, and recycle paper. (Matches verb–noun construction.)

Skill Check 3.3: Improving Parallel Construction

Revise each of the following sentences to improve parallel construction.

1. Some airlines offer frequent fliers free upgrades, priority boarding, and they can call special reservation numbers.

_____

_____

2. Your job is to research, design, and the implementation of a diversity program.

_____

3. Few managers are able to write letters accurately, concisely, and with efficiency.

_____

4. The new software totals all balances, gives weekly reports, and statements are printed.

_____

5. Our objectives are to make our stock profitable, to operate efficiently, and developing good employee relations.

_____

_____

Writing Application 3.1

Revise the following paragraph. Add a topic sentence and improve the organization. Correct pronouns with unclear antecedents, wordiness, and misplaced verbal modifiers (which you learned about in Chapter 8). Add transitional expressions if appropriate.

> You may be interested in applying for a new position within the company. The Human Resources Department has a number of jobs available immediately. The positions are at a high level. Current employees may apply immediately for open positions in production, for some in marketing, and jobs in administrative support are also available. To make application, these positions require immediate action. Come to the Human Resources Department. We have a list showing the open positions, what the qualifications are, and job descriptions are shown. Many of the jobs are now open. That's why we are sending this now. To be hired, an interview must be scheduled within the next two weeks.

Writing Application 3.2

Revise the following poorly written paragraph. Add a topic sentence and improve the organization. Correct misplaced modifiers, pronouns with unclear antecedents, wordiness, and any other writing faults. Add transitional expressions if appropriate.

> As you probably already know, this company (Lasertronics) will be installing new computer software shortly. There will be a demonstration April 18, which is a Tuesday. We felt this was necessary because this new software is so different from our previous software. It will be from 9 to 12 a.m. in the morning. This will show employees how the software programs work. They will learn about the operating system, and this should be helpful to nearly everyone. There will be information about the new word processing program, which should be helpful to administrative assistants and product managers. For all you people who work with payroll, there will be information about the new database program. We can't show everything the software will do at this one demo, but for these three areas there will be some help at the Tuesday demo. Oh yes, Paula Roddy will be presenting the demonstration. She is the representative from Quantum Software.

Writing Application 3.3

Assume you work in the Human Resources Department of Bank of America. You must write an e-mail announcement describing a special program of classes for your employees. Use the following information to write a well-organized paragraph announcement. This information is purposely disorganized; you must decide how to best organize it. Add any information needed for clarity.

Explain that Bank of America will reimburse any employee the full cost of tuition and books if that employee attends classes. Describe the plan. Skyline Community College, in cooperation with Bank of America, will offer a group of courses for college credit at very convenient locations for our employees. Actually, the classes will be offered at your downtown and East Bay branches. Tell employees that they should call Jean Fujimoto at Ext. 660 if they are interested. You'd better mention the tuition: $180 for a semester course. Explain that we (Bank of America) are willing to pay these fees because we value education highly. However, make it clear that employees must receive a grade of C or higher before they are eligible for reimbursement of course and book fees. It might be a good idea to attach a list of the courses and the times that they will be offered. Include a deadline date for calling Jean.

Use the e-mail message in Figure 3.1 as a model as you compose your e-mail announcement. You can refer to an attached list of courses and time, but you do not have to prepare the actual attachment.

FIGURE 3.1
E-Mail Message

