

Subject–Verb Agreement

Complete Grammar Reference & Practice

COMPLETE CONCEPT EXPLANATION

Definition: Subject–Verb Agreement (SVA) is the grammatical principle that the verb in a sentence must agree with its subject in number (singular/plural) and person (first, second, third). A singular subject takes a singular verb; a plural subject takes a plural verb. Errors in SVA are among the most commonly tested and commonly committed grammatical mistakes in formal written and spoken English.

Categories of Subject–Verb Agreement

- Basic Number Agreement – Singular subjects → singular verbs; Plural subjects → plural verbs
- Person Agreement – First, second, and third person verb forms
- Collective Noun Agreement – Nouns naming a group (team, committee, jury)
- Indefinite Pronoun Agreement – Each, every, none, either, neither, anyone, etc.
- Compound Subject Agreement – Subjects joined by and / or / nor / either...or / neither...nor
- Intervening Phrase Agreement – Prepositional phrases between subject and verb
- Inverted Sentence Agreement – Verb before subject (questions, There is/are sentences)
- Relative Clause Agreement – Who / which / that clauses
- Titles, Names & Amounts – Treated as singular units
- Linking Verb Agreement – Verb agrees with subject, NOT the predicate noun

Rules with Examples

RULE 1 A singular subject takes a singular verb; a plural subject takes a plural verb.

- Ex. 1 The dog barks every morning. / The dogs bark every morning.
Ex. 2 She writes beautifully. / They write beautifully.
Ex. 3 The river flows gently. / The rivers flow gently.

RULE 2 Two singular subjects joined by 'and' take a PLURAL verb.

- Ex. 1 Ravi and Priya are partners in the project.
Ex. 2 The pen and the notebook belong to her.
Ex. 3 Hunger and poverty remain serious challenges.

RULE 3 When 'each' or 'every' precedes subjects joined by 'and', the verb is SINGULAR.

- Ex. 1 Each man and each woman is responsible for their actions.
Ex. 2 Every boy and every girl was given a prize.
Ex. 3 Each teacher and student was invited to the ceremony.

RULE 4 When subjects are joined by 'or', 'nor', 'either...or', 'neither...nor', the verb agrees with the subject NEAREST to it (Proximity Rule).

- Ex. 1** Neither the manager nor the employees were present. (nearest: employees – plural)
- Ex. 2** Either the students or the teacher is wrong. (nearest: teacher – singular)
- Ex. 3** Neither she nor I am going. (nearest: I – first person singular → am)

RULE 5 Intervening phrases (with, along with, together with, as well as, besides, in addition to, accompanied by) do NOT change verb number. The verb agrees with the grammatical subject only.

- Ex. 1** The captain, along with his crew, was rescued. (captain = singular subject → was)
- Ex. 2** Meena, as well as her sisters, is attending the function.
- Ex. 3** The report, together with all annexures, has been submitted.

RULE 6 Collective nouns take a SINGULAR verb when the group acts as a unit, and a PLURAL verb when members act individually.

- Ex. 1** The jury has reached a verdict. (acting as a unit → singular)
- Ex. 2** The jury were divided in their opinions. (acting individually → plural)
- Ex. 3** The committee has announced its decision. (unit) / The committee have gone to their respective homes. (individuals)

RULE 7 Indefinite pronouns — each, every, either, neither, anyone, someone, everyone, no one, nobody, somebody, everybody, anything, nothing — always take SINGULAR verbs.

- Ex. 1** Everyone in the hall was silent during the speech.
- Ex. 2** Neither of the proposals was accepted by the board.
- Ex. 3** Each of the students has submitted the assignment.

RULE 8 'None' traditionally takes a singular verb; however, when it refers to a countable plural noun, a plural verb is also accepted in modern usage.

- Ex. 1** None of the water was wasted. (uncountable → singular preferred)
- Ex. 2** None of the students was/were present. (countable plural → both accepted)
- Ex. 3** None of the reports is conclusive.

RULE 9 'Both', 'few', 'many', 'several', 'others' always take PLURAL verbs.

- Ex. 1** Both the candidates have cleared the interview.
- Ex. 2** Many students were absent on Monday.
- Ex. 3** Several of the machines need immediate repair.

RULE 10 Nouns that are plural in form but singular in meaning take SINGULAR verbs. (Physics, mathematics, economics, news, athletics, measles, etc.)

- Ex. 1** Mathematics is compulsory in this programme.

Ex. 2 The news was shocking to everyone present.

Ex. 3 Measles is a highly contagious disease.

RULE 11 Nouns that are always plural (always take PLURAL verbs): scissors, trousers, spectacles, cattle, people, police, fungi, data (in modern usage).

Ex. 1 The scissors are kept in the top drawer.

Ex. 2 The police have arrested three suspects.

Ex. 3 Cattle were grazing in the meadow.

RULE 12 In inverted sentences beginning with 'There' or 'Here', the verb agrees with the noun that follows it (the real subject).

Ex. 1 There is a book on the table. (book = singular)

Ex. 2 There are several issues to address. (issues = plural)

Ex. 3 Here comes the judge. / Here come the judges.

RULE 13 In relative clauses, the verb agrees with the antecedent of the relative pronoun (who/which/that).

Ex. 1 She is one of those leaders who inspire others. (who → leaders → plural → inspire)

Ex. 2 He is the only one of the applicants who has the right skills. (who → one → singular → has)

Ex. 3 The books that are on the shelf belong to the library.

RULE 14 A title of a book, film, song, or organisation — even if grammatically plural — takes a **SINGULAR** verb.

Ex. 1 'The Times' is a reputed newspaper.

Ex. 2 'Gulliver's Travels' was written by Jonathan Swift.

Ex. 3 The United Nations has issued a statement.

RULE 15 Fractions and percentages: the verb agrees with the noun in the 'of' phrase (partitive rule).

Ex. 1 Three-fourths of the work has been completed. (work = uncountable/singular)

Ex. 2 Three-fourths of the workers have been paid. (workers = plural)

Ex. 3 Fifty percent of the budget is allocated to infrastructure.

RULE 16 Amounts, distances, periods of time, and quantities — when treated as a single unit — take **SINGULAR** verbs.

Ex. 1 Five kilometres is a comfortable walking distance.

Ex. 2 Twenty years of dedication has shaped his character.

Ex. 3 Three hundred rupees is insufficient for this purchase.

RULE 17 A linking verb agrees with its SUBJECT, not with the predicate noun.

- Ex. 1** The problem is long delays. (subject: problem → singular → is)
- Ex. 2** Long delays are the real problem. (subject: delays → plural → are)
- Ex. 3** His greatest achievement is the medals he won.

RULE 18 With 'more than one', use a singular verb. With 'more than two/three...', use a plural verb.

- Ex. 1** More than one student was caught cheating.
- Ex. 2** More than two students were caught cheating.
- Ex. 3** More than one solution is possible.

RULE 19 Expressions of quantity with 'number': 'A number of' takes a plural verb; 'The number of' takes a singular verb.

- Ex. 1** A number of delegates have arrived. (A number of = many → plural)
- Ex. 2** The number of delegates has increased. (The number = a count → singular)
- Ex. 3** A number of issues were raised in the meeting.

RULE 20 When 'either' and 'neither' are used alone (not in correlative pairs), they take **SINGULAR verbs**.

- Ex. 1** Either is acceptable to the committee.
- Ex. 2** Neither was present at the time of the incident.
- Ex. 3** Either of the routes is safe to take.

Common Errors — Correct vs. Incorrect

✗ INCORRECT	✓ CORRECT
The team are winning.	The team is winning. (unit)
Each of the boys have a bicycle.	Each of the boys has a bicycle.
News are spreading fast.	News is spreading fast.
The jury have given their verdict.	The jury has given its verdict. (acting as unit)
Neither he nor she are responsible.	Neither he nor she is responsible. (nearest: she → singular)
A number of students has failed.	A number of students have failed.
The number of errors are increasing.	The number of errors is increasing.
More than one players were selected.	More than one player was selected.

Mathematics are difficult.	Mathematics is difficult.
The scissors is missing.	The scissors are missing.
There is many reasons for this.	There are many reasons for this.
She is one of the girls who plays well.	She is one of the girls who play well. (antecedent: girls)
Five hours are a long time to wait.	Five hours is a long time to wait. (unit)
The poor is suffering.	The poor are suffering.
Fifty percent of the team are absent.	Fifty percent of the team is absent. (team = collective unit)

Comparison: Singular vs. Plural Indefinite Pronouns

Always SINGULAR	Always PLURAL	Context-Dependent
each, every, either, neither	both, few, many, several	none, all, some, any, most
anyone, someone, everyone	others	none of + noun (context rules)
nobody, somebody, everybody	—	all of + noun (context rules)
nothing, something, everything	—	half of + noun (context rules)

Comparison: A Number of vs. The Number of

Expression	Meaning	Verb	Example
A number of	Several / Many	Plural	A number of complaints have been received.
The number of	A count / total	Singular	The number of complaints has risen.

Memory Tricks & Mnemonics

- PROXIMITY RULE mnemonic — 'OR / NOR: go with the FLOOR' → look at what's CLOSEST to the verb (nearest noun is the decider).
- 'A NUMBER = MANY' → plural. 'THE NUMBER = THE COUNT' → singular.
- 'Along with / As well as' are like PARENTHESES — ignore what's inside when picking verb agreement.
- 'EACH and EVERY makes the crowd skinny' → these words always shrink the verb to singular.
- 'Jury TOGETHER → IS; Jury APART → ARE' → think about whether members act as one body or as individuals.
- TITLE RULE: 'Even if a title sounds plural, treat it like one author signed it' → singular verb.

RULES SUMMARY — QUICK REVISION REFERENCE

#	Rule	Quick Example
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1	Singular subject → singular verb; plural subject → plural verb	<i>The boy plays. / The boys play.</i>
2	Two subjects joined by 'and' → plural verb	<i>Tom and Jerry are animated characters.</i>
3	'Each/Every' before compound subjects → singular verb	<i>Every man and woman is entitled to vote.</i>
4	Or/Nor/Either...Or/Neither...Nor → verb agrees with nearest subject	<i>Neither she nor they were informed.</i>
5	Intervening phrases (along with, as well as...) → verb agrees with main subject only	<i>The PM, along with ministers, is attending.</i>
6	Collective nouns: acting as unit → singular; acting individually → plural	<i>The team is victorious. / The team are arguing.</i>
7	Indefinite pronouns (each, either, everyone...) → always singular	<i>Everyone has voted.</i>
8	'None' → singular preferred; plural accepted for countable plural nouns	<i>None of the options is correct.</i>
9	Both, few, many, several, others → always plural	<i>Several files are missing.</i>
10	Plural-form/singular-meaning nouns → singular verb	<i>Economics is fascinating.</i>

11	Always-plural nouns (scissors, police, cattle...) → plural verb	<i>The police have intervened.</i>
12	'There/Here' + verb: agrees with the real (following) subject	<i>There are three mistakes here.</i>
13	Relative clause verb agrees with antecedent of who/which/that	<i>She is one of those who work hard.</i>
14	Titles and organisation names → singular verb	<i>'The Times' is a great newspaper.</i>
15	Fractions/percentages: verb follows the noun in the 'of' phrase	<i>Half of the cake was eaten.</i>
16	Amounts, durations as a unit → singular	<i>Ten miles is a long walk.</i>
17	Linking verb agrees with subject, not predicate noun	<i>The result is better scores.</i>
18	'More than one' → singular; 'More than two/three...' → plural	<i>More than one girl was selected.</i>
19	'A number of' → plural; 'The number of' → singular	<i>A number of birds have migrated.</i>
20	'Either'/'Neither' alone → singular	<i>Neither of them is wrong.</i>

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

PART 1 — ALL 60 QUESTIONS

Category 1 — Spot the Mistake (Q1–Q15)

Each sentence below contains a Subject–Verb Agreement error. Identify the error and correct it. This category demands precise identification of the faulty element and accurate rewriting.

- Q1.** The quality of the goods are poor and must be addressed immediately.
- Q2.** Either of the two options are acceptable to the committee.
- Q3.** The news about the accidents were distressing to the public.
- Q4.** A large number of students has enrolled in the new course this semester.
- Q5.** The United States are a member of the United Nations Security Council.
- Q6.** More than one candidate were found to have falsified their documents.
- Q7.** Neither the principal nor the teachers was aware of the misconduct.
- Q8.** Physics, along with Chemistry and Biology, are compulsory for medical entrance.
- Q9.** The jury have delivered its verdict after three days of deliberation.
- Q10.** Everybody in the two neighbouring villages are affected by the flood.
- Q11.** The pair of scissors that belongs to the laboratory are not here.
- Q12.** There was several reasons cited by the panel for rejecting the proposal.
- Q13.** She is one of those managers who takes her responsibilities very lightly.
- Q14.** The committee, together with its advisors, are likely to revise the policy.
- Q15.** Five hundred rupees are too small an amount to pay for such professional work.

Category 2 — Fill in the Right Word (Q16–Q30)

Choose the most grammatically precise option to fill the blank. Options are designed so that more than one may seem plausible — careful application of SVA rules is required to identify the single correct choice.

- Q16.** Neither the chairman nor the board members _____ aware of the financial irregularity.
(A) was
(B) were
(C) has been
(D) is
- Q17.** A number of delegates _____ arrived at the summit venue ahead of schedule.
(A) has
(B) have
(C) was
(D) is
- Q18.** The data collected from all the surveys _____ been compiled into a single report.
(A) have
(B) has
(C) are
(D) were
- Q19.** Each of the submitted applications _____ reviewed by a panel of three experts.
(A) were
(B) have been
(C) was
(D) are
- Q20.** The number of typographical errors in the manuscript _____ surprisingly high.
(A) are

- (B) were
- (C) is
- (D) have been

Q21. The poor _____ always been vulnerable to economic downturns throughout history.

- (A) has
- (B) is
- (C) have
- (D) was

Q22. Either the president or the vice-presidents _____ expected to address the gathering today.

- (A) is
- (B) are
- (C) was
- (D) has been

Q23. Three-fourths of the submitted work _____ plagiarised, according to the software scan.

- (A) were
- (B) are
- (C) was
- (D) have been

Q24. It is she who always _____ an optimistic outlook in difficult and challenging situations.

- (A) maintain
- (B) maintains
- (C) have maintained
- (D) are maintaining

Q25. The scissors on the laboratory bench _____ been misplaced by the last batch of students.

- (A) has
- (B) is
- (C) have

(D) was

Q26. More than one answer _____ possible for that particular question in the grammar paper.

(A) are

(B) were

(C) is

(D) have been

Q27. Every student and teacher _____ expected to follow the revised code of conduct strictly.

(A) are

(B) have

(C) is

(D) were

Q28. The team, as well as its coaching staff, _____ flown to the venue for the championship.

(A) have

(B) were

(C) has

(D) are

Q29. None of the policy recommendations _____ implemented within the stipulated deadline.

(A) were

(B) has been

(C) was

(D) have been

Q30. There _____ numerous complaints lodged against the contractor for shoddy construction.

(A) is

(B) was

(C) has been

(D) have been

Category 3 — Choose the Correct Sentence (Q31–Q45)

Four sentences are given. Only one is grammatically correct with respect to Subject–Verb Agreement. Select it and be prepared to explain why the other three fail.

Q31. Which sentence is correct?

- (A) The herd of cattle are grazing in the open field beyond the fence.
- (B) The herd of cattle is grazing in the open field beyond the fence.
- (C) The herd of cattle were grazing in the open field beyond the fence.
- (D) The herd of cattle graze in the open field beyond the fence.

Q32. Which sentence is correct?

- (A) Neither of the two students have submitted the assignment on time.
- (B) Neither of the two students has submitted the assignment on time.
- (C) Neither of the two students are submitting the assignment on time.
- (D) Neither of the two students were submitting the assignment on time.

Q33. Which sentence is correct?

- (A) The news about the strikes in the mines are frightening the investors.
- (B) The news about the strikes in the mines frighten the investors.
- (C) The news about the strikes in the mines is frightening the investors.
- (D) The news about the strikes in the mines were frightening the investors.

Q34. Which sentence is correct?

- (A) Every man, woman, and child in the village were affected by the drought.
- (B) Every man, woman, and child in the village has been affected by the drought.
- (C) Every man, woman, and child in the village have been affected by the drought.

(D) Every man, woman, and child in the village are being affected by the drought.

Q35. Which sentence is correct?

- (A) The Times have published an editorial on the water crisis.
- (B) The Times has published an editorial on the water crisis.
- (C) The Times publish an editorial on the water crisis.
- (D) The Times were publishing an editorial on the water crisis.

Q36. Which sentence is correct?

- (A) A number of trains was delayed owing to the dense fog last week.
- (B) A number of trains has been delayed owing to the dense fog last week.
- (C) A number of trains were delayed owing to the dense fog last week.
- (D) A number of trains have been delayed owing to the dense fog last week.

Q37. Which sentence is correct?

- (A) Three-fourths of the employees has accepted the new leave policy.
- (B) Three-fourths of the employees are accepting the new leave policy.
- (C) Three-fourths of the employees have accepted the new leave policy.
- (D) Three-fourths of the employees was accepting the new leave policy.

Q38. Which sentence is correct?

- (A) There were a long queue outside the government office this morning.
- (B) There was a long queues outside the government office this morning.
- (C) There was a long queue outside the government office this morning.
- (D) There were long queue outside the government office this morning.

Q39. Which sentence is correct?

- (A) She is one of those politicians who never keep their promises.
- (B) She is one of those politicians who never keeps their promises.
- (C) She is one of those politicians who never kept their promise.
- (D) She is one of those politicians who never has kept their promises.

Q40. Which sentence is correct?

- (A) The jury were unanimous in its decision to acquit the defendant.
- (B) The jury was unanimous in their decision to acquit the defendant.
- (C) The jury was unanimous in its decision to acquit the defendant.
- (D) The jury are unanimous in its decision to acquit the defendant.

Q41. Which sentence is correct?

- (A) Economics are increasingly important for policy-making decisions.
- (B) Economics have been important for policy-making for decades.
- (C) Economics is increasingly important for policy-making decisions.
- (D) Economics were important for earlier policy-making decisions.

Q42. Which sentence is correct?

- (A) The minister, as well as his secretaries, are attending the summit.
- (B) The minister, as well as his secretaries, have been attending the summit.
- (C) The minister, as well as his secretaries, is attending the summit.
- (D) The minister, as well as his secretaries, were attending the summit.

Q43. Which sentence is correct?

- (A) More than one officer are under investigation for the alleged fraud.

- (B) More than one officer have been under investigation for the alleged fraud.
- (C) More than one officer is under investigation for the alleged fraud.
- (D) More than one officer were found under investigation for the alleged fraud.

Q44. Which sentence is correct?

- (A) The number of registered voters are higher this year than last year.
- (B) The number of registered voters have been higher this year.
- (C) The number of registered voters is higher this year than last year.
- (D) The number of registered voters were higher this year than last year.

Q45. Which sentence is correct?

- (A) Neither the director nor the producers was available for a comment.
- (B) Neither the director nor the producers have been available for a comment.
- (C) Neither the director nor the producers were available for a comment.
- (D) Neither the director nor the producers is available for a comment.

Category 4 — Analyse, Rewrite & Explain (Q46–Q60)

These questions require analysis of complex structures, clause identification, paragraph correction, and informed discussion of competing grammatical rules. Single-sentence corrections are not enough — you must justify your choices with explicit reference to rules.

Q46. Identify all Subject–Verb Agreement errors in the following passage and rewrite it correctly: "The committee have announced that a number of new schemes has been approved. Each of the schemes are aimed at rural development. Neither the chief minister nor his aides was briefed about the delay. The data on implementation were not yet available."

Q47. The sentence below has been called 'correct' by some and 'incorrect' by others. Evaluate both positions and state which is right and why: "The police is conducting a thorough investigation into the matter."

Q48. Rewrite the following sentence so that the verb agrees correctly, then explain which rule applies: "The long list of requirements and formalities that the applicants have to fulfil before submitting their forms are causing unnecessary confusion among them."

Q49. Analyse the agreement in the relative clause and explain whether the verb in bold is correct or incorrect: "Riya is the only one of the candidates who [have] the necessary qualifications for this senior post."

Q50. A student corrected the sentence below as shown. Is the correction accurate? If not, provide the right correction and explain: Original: 'Neither the engineers nor the architect are satisfied with the proposed design.' Student's correction: 'Neither the engineers nor the architect is satisfied with the proposed design.'

Q51. Both versions of the sentence below have been used by reputed writers. Explain when each is acceptable and which is preferable in formal writing: (A) None of the answers was correct. (B) None of the answers were correct.

Q52. Identify the subject in the following sentence, state its number, and correct the verb if required: "The beauty of the sunsets in those remote Himalayan valleys inspire every artist who visits the region."

Q53. The following sentence uses a fraction. Apply the partitive rule and justify your answer: "Two-thirds of the population in the affected districts was/were displaced by the floods."

Q54. Explain why both blanks below require different verb forms, using grammatical reasoning: "A number of errors _____ been found; the number of corrections needed _____ surprisingly large."

Q55. A student wrote: 'The team of doctors are working tirelessly.' A teacher marked this wrong and wrote 'is' instead. Another teacher marked the original as correct. Who is right? Discuss.

Q56. Correct the following sentences and name the rule that applies to each: (a) There was several genuine concerns raised during the public hearing. (b) Gulliver's Travels are a satirical masterpiece of English literature. (c) The accused, along with his associates, were taken into custody.

Q57. The following sentence is ambiguous in its SVA. Rewrite it in two ways — once to emphasise collective action (singular) and once to emphasise individual action (plural) — and explain the difference: "The faculty _____ disagreed on the grading criteria."

Q58. Explain how the following two sentences differ in meaning due to verb agreement, and discuss which is grammatically correct in standard formal English: (A) More than one solution is possible. (B) More than two solutions are possible.

Q59. Critically analyse the following paragraph for SVA errors. List each error with the correct form and the rule it violates: "Each of the ministers were given a separate brief. The public, as well as the media, are demanding transparency. A number of irregularities has surfaced. Neither the audit team nor the secretary-general are willing to take responsibility."

Q60. The sentence below contains a structural trap. Identify the actual subject, explain why students often make the wrong choice, and provide the correct verb: "The main cause of all the accidents on that particular stretch of the highway over the past decade are potholes and poor road maintenance."

PART 2 — ALL 60 ANSWERS WITH DETAILED EXPLANATIONS

Category 1 — Spot the Mistake: Answers (Q1–Q15)

Q1.

Ans: 'are' → 'is' — The subject is 'The quality' (singular), not 'goods'. The prepositional phrase 'of the goods' is an intervening modifier. A singular subject demands a singular verb. Corrected: The quality of the goods is poor and must be addressed immediately.

Q2.

Ans: 'are' → 'is' — 'Either of...' is an indefinite pronoun construction that always takes a singular verb regardless of the noun in the 'of' phrase. Corrected: Either of the two options is acceptable to the committee.

Q3.

Ans: 'were' → 'was' — 'News' is a plural-form but singular-meaning noun; it always takes a singular verb. The prepositional phrase 'about the accidents' is intervening and does not affect verb number. Corrected: The news about the accidents was distressing to the public.

Q4.

Ans: 'has' → 'have' — 'A number of' means 'many' and takes a plural verb. This is the 'A number of vs The number of' rule. Corrected: A large number of students have enrolled in the new course this semester.

Q5.

Ans: 'are' → 'is' — The United States is a title/name of a country. Even though 'States' is plural in form, the name refers to a single political entity and takes a singular verb. Corrected: The United States is a member of the United Nations Security Council.

Q6.

Ans: 'were' → 'was' — 'More than one' always takes a singular verb regardless of the noun following it. This is a fixed expression rule. Corrected: More than one candidate was found to have falsified their documents.

Q7.

Ans: 'was' → 'were' — With 'Neither...nor', the verb agrees with the nearest subject. The nearest subject is 'teachers' (plural), so the verb must be plural. Corrected: Neither the principal nor the teachers were aware of the misconduct.

Q8.

Ans: 'are' → 'is' — The main subject is 'Physics'. The phrase 'along with Chemistry and Biology' is an intervening phrase and does not make the subject plural. 'Physics' is also a singular-meaning noun. Corrected: Physics, along with Chemistry and Biology, is compulsory for medical entrance.

Q9.

Ans: 'have' → 'has' — The jury is functioning as a single collective unit here (delivering a single verdict). Therefore it takes a singular verb. Also note the possessive pronoun 'its' is already correctly singular. Corrected: The jury has delivered its verdict after three days of deliberation.

Q10.

Ans: 'are' → 'is' — 'Everybody' is an indefinite pronoun that always takes a singular verb. The phrase 'in the two neighbouring villages' is a prepositional phrase modifying 'everybody', not the subject itself. Corrected: Everybody in the two neighbouring villages is affected by the flood.

Q11.

Ans: 'are' → 'is' — The subject is 'The pair', which is singular. 'Of scissors' is a prepositional phrase. The relative clause 'that belongs to the laboratory' further confirms 'pair' is singular. Corrected: The pair of scissors that belongs to the laboratory is not here.

Q12.

Ans: 'was' → 'were' — In 'There + verb' constructions, the verb agrees with the real subject that follows. The real subject here is 'several reasons' (plural), so the verb must be plural. Corrected: There were several reasons cited by the panel for rejecting the proposal.

Q13.

Ans: 'takes' → 'take' — In 'one of those + plural noun + who/that' constructions, the relative pronoun 'who' refers to the plural antecedent 'managers', not to 'one'. Therefore the verb in the relative clause must be plural. Corrected: She is one of those managers who take their responsibilities very lightly.

Q14.

Ans: 'are' → 'is' — The main subject is 'The committee' (singular). The intervening phrase 'together with its advisors' does not change the verb number. Collective nouns acting as a unit take singular verbs. Corrected: The committee, together with its advisors, is likely to revise the policy.

Q15.

Ans: 'are' → 'is' — Amounts of money, when treated as a single sum, take a singular verb. 'Five hundred rupees' here refers to a single monetary amount, not five hundred individual coins or notes. Corrected: Five hundred rupees is too small an amount to pay for such professional work.

Category 2 — Fill in the Right Word: Answers (Q16–Q30)

Q16.

Ans: B) were

Proximity Rule: with 'Neither...nor', verb agrees with the nearest subject. The nearest subject is 'board members' (plural), so 'were' is correct. (A) 'was' would be correct only if 'chairman' were nearest. (C) 'has been' is singular and third person — doesn't match plural 'members'. (D) 'is' is singular — incorrect for plural nearest subject.

Q17.

Ans: B) have

'A number of' = 'many' → plural verb. (A) 'has' is singular — incorrect after 'A number of'. (C) 'was' is singular and past — wrong. (D) 'is' is singular — wrong.

Q18.

Ans: A) have

'Data' in modern formal English is treated as a plural noun (singular 'datum'). However, both A and B appear in usage — 'have' (plural) is used when 'data' = multiple data points. But note: in formal/standard grammar contexts, 'have' aligns with the plural nature of 'data'. (B) 'has' treats data as uncountable singular — acceptable in informal usage but less precise. (C) 'are' doesn't fit with 'been'. (D) 'were' is past tense — context is present perfect, so incorrect.

Q19.

Ans: C) was

'Each of + plural noun' always takes a singular verb. (A) 'were' is plural — incorrect. (B) 'have been' is plural — incorrect. (D) 'are' is plural — incorrect.

Q20.

Ans: C) is

'The number of' refers to a count/total and takes a singular verb. (A) 'are' is plural — applies to 'A number of', not 'The number of'. (B) 'were' is past plural — incorrect. (D) 'have been' is plural — incorrect.

Q21.

Ans: C) have

'The poor' refers to poor people collectively — a plural concept. Adjectives used as nouns (the rich, the poor, the elderly) always take plural verbs. (A) 'has' is singular — incorrect. (B) 'is' is singular — incorrect. (D) 'was' is singular past — incorrect.

Q22.

Ans: B) are

Proximity Rule: nearest subject to the verb is 'the vice-presidents' (plural), so the verb must be plural. (A) 'is' would agree with 'president' — but that is not the nearest. (C) 'was' is singular past — incorrect. (D) 'has been' is singular — incorrect.

Q23.

Ans: C) was

Partitive Rule: the verb agrees with 'submitted work', not 'three-fourths'. 'Work' is uncountable (singular meaning), so singular verb 'was'. (A) 'were' is plural — incorrect for uncountable noun. (B) 'are' is plural present — incorrect. (D) 'have been' is plural — incorrect.

Q24.

Ans: B) maintains

The subject is 'she' (third person singular). The relative clause 'who always...' describes 'she', and the verb must agree with this singular antecedent. (A) 'maintain' lacks the third person singular -s. (C) 'have maintained' — plural auxiliary — incorrect. (D) 'are maintaining' — plural — incorrect.

Q25.

Ans: C) have

'Scissors' is always plural — it takes a plural verb. (A) 'has' is singular — incorrect. (B) 'is' is singular — incorrect. (D) 'was' is singular past — incorrect.

Q26.

Ans: C) is

'More than one' always takes a singular verb regardless of what noun follows. (A) 'are' is plural — incorrect. (B) 'were' is plural past — incorrect. (D) 'have been' is plural — incorrect.

Q27.

Ans: C) is

'Every' before compound subjects joined by 'and' makes the whole unit singular. (A) 'are' is plural — incorrect. (B) 'have' is plural — incorrect. (D) 'were' is plural past — incorrect.

Q28.

Ans: C) has

The main subject is 'The team' (singular collective noun acting as a unit here). 'As well as his coaching staff' is an intervening phrase and does not alter subject number. (A) 'have' is plural — incorrect. (B) 'were' is plural — incorrect. (D) 'are' is plural — incorrect.

Q29.

Ans: C) was

'None of' with an uncountable or singular-concept noun takes a singular verb in strict formal usage. 'Policy recommendations' here are treated as a collective body of recommendation. However, (A) 'were' and (D) 'have been' are also debated — in modern grammar both (A) and (C) are acceptable for countable plurals. In formal grammar, singular is preferred for 'none'. (B) 'has been' is singular but doesn't match plural 'recommendations' naturally. Best answer: (C) was (traditional formal rule).

Q30.

Ans: D) have been

The real subject in the 'There + verb' construction is 'numerous complaints' (plural). The verb must therefore be plural. (A) 'is' is singular — incorrect. (B) 'was' is singular past — incorrect. (C) 'has been' is singular — incorrect.

Category 3 — Choose the Correct Sentence: Answers (Q31–Q45)

Q31.

Ans: Option B is correct.

B is correct. 'The herd' is a collective noun acting as a unit → singular verb 'is'. A) 'are' treats herd as plural — wrong for unit action. C) 'were' is past plural — wrong. D) 'graze' is bare plural form — wrong for singular subject in present.

Q32.

Ans: Option B is correct.

B is correct. 'Neither of the two students' is an indefinite pronoun construction → singular verb 'has submitted'. A) 'have submitted' — plural — incorrect. C) 'are submitting' — plural — incorrect. D) 'were submitting' — plural past — incorrect.

Q33.

Ans: Option C is correct.

C is correct. 'News' is a singular-meaning noun despite its plural form → singular verb 'is frightening'. A) 'are frightening' — incorrect plural. B) 'frighten' — bare plural form — incorrect for singular. D) 'were frightening' — plural past — incorrect.

Q34.

Ans: Option B is correct.

B is correct. 'Every + noun + and + noun' always takes a singular verb. The use of perfect tense 'has been affected' is also contextually appropriate. A) 'were' — plural — incorrect after 'Every'. C) 'have been' — plural — incorrect. D) 'are being' — plural — incorrect.

Q35.

Ans: Option B is correct.

B is correct. 'The Times' is a newspaper title treated as a singular entity regardless of its plural form → singular verb 'has published'. A) 'have published' — plural — incorrect. C) 'publish' — bare plural form — incorrect. D) 'were publishing' — plural past — incorrect.

Q36.

Ans: Option D is correct.

D is correct. 'A number of trains' = 'many trains' → plural verb. (D) 'have been delayed' is the correct plural present-perfect form. A) 'was delayed' — singular past — incorrect. B) 'has been delayed' — singular — incorrect. C) 'were delayed' — plural simple past — grammatically possible but present perfect context makes D more precise and idiomatic.

Q37.

Ans: Option C is correct.

C is correct. Partitive rule: 'three-fourths of the employees' → 'employees' is the countable plural noun → plural verb 'have accepted'. A) 'has accepted' — singular — incorrect. B) 'are accepting' — present continuous plural — possible but less precise. D) 'was accepting' — singular past — incorrect.

Q38.

Ans: Option C is correct.

C is correct. In 'There + verb' constructions the verb agrees with the real subject. The real subject is 'a long queue' (singular) → 'was'. A) 'were a long queue' — plural verb with singular subject — incorrect. B) 'a long queues' — article-noun number mismatch — incorrect. D) 'were long queue' — plural verb, missing article — incorrect.

Q39.

Ans: Option A is correct.

A is correct. In 'one of those + plural noun + who' constructions, 'who' refers to the plural noun 'politicians', so the verb must be plural: 'never keep'. B) 'never keeps' — singular — incorrectly treating 'one' as antecedent. C) 'never kept' — past tense — does not apply. D) 'never has kept' — singular — incorrect.

Q40.

Ans: Option C is correct.

C is correct. The jury acting as a unit takes a singular verb AND a singular pronoun ('its'). A) 'were unanimous in its decision' — plural verb but singular pronoun — inconsistent. B) 'was unanimous in their decision' — singular verb but plural pronoun — inconsistent. D) 'are unanimous in its decision' — plural verb but singular pronoun — inconsistent.

Q41.

Ans: Option C is correct.

C is correct. 'Economics' is a plural-form but singular-meaning noun → singular verb 'is'. A) 'are' — incorrect plural. B) 'have been' — plural auxiliary — incorrect. D) 'were' — plural past — incorrect.

Q42.

Ans: Option C is correct.

C is correct. The main subject is 'The minister' (singular). 'As well as his secretaries' is an intervening phrase and does not change the number. → singular verb 'is attending'. A) 'are attending' — plural — incorrect. B) 'have been attending' — plural — incorrect. D) 'were attending' — plural past — incorrect.

Q43.

Ans: Option C is correct.

C is correct. 'More than one officer' takes a singular verb. A) 'are under investigation' — plural — incorrect. B) 'have been under investigation' — plural — incorrect. D) 'were found' — plural past — incorrect.

Q44.

Ans: Option C is correct.

C is correct. 'The number of' refers to a total count → singular verb 'is'. A) 'are higher' — plural — applies to 'a number of', not 'the number of'. B) 'have been higher' — plural — incorrect. D) 'were higher' — plural past — incorrect.

Q45.

Ans: Option C is correct.

C is correct. Proximity Rule: the nearest subject to the verb is 'the producers' (plural) → plural verb 'were'. A) 'was available' — singular — nearest subject is plural → incorrect. B) 'have been available' — plural present perfect — grammatically possible but 'were' is more idiomatic for past availability. D) 'is available' — singular — incorrect.

Category 4 — Analyse, Rewrite & Explain: Answers (Q46–Q60)

Q46.

Ans: Corrected Passage: "The committee has announced that a number of new schemes have been approved. Each of the schemes is aimed at rural development. Neither the chief minister nor his aides were briefed about the delay. The data on implementation were not yet available."

Error 1 — 'have announced' corrected to 'has announced': 'The committee' is a singular collective noun acting as a unit (making a single announcement) → singular verb.

Error 2 — 'has been approved' is already correct: 'a number of new schemes' → plural verb 'have been approved'. Wait — original says 'has been approved' which is incorrect. Correction: 'have been approved' (A number of = many → plural).

Error 3 — 'are aimed' corrected to 'is aimed': 'Each of the schemes' → indefinite pronoun rule → singular.

Error 4 — 'was briefed' corrected to 'were briefed': Neither...nor → proximity rule → nearest subject 'aides' (plural) → plural verb.

Error 5 — 'were not yet available' is already correct: 'data' in formal usage is plural.

Q47.

Ans: 'The police is conducting...' is INCORRECT in standard formal English.

'Police' belongs to the category of nouns that are always plural — they have no singular form and always refer to multiple individuals collectively. Therefore, 'police' must take a plural verb: 'The police are conducting a thorough investigation into the matter.'

Why some call it correct: In certain regional or informal varieties of English, 'police' is occasionally treated as a singular collective noun, similar to 'team' or 'government'. However, in standard international English grammar, 'police' (like 'cattle' and 'people') is always grammatically plural. The correct sentence is: The police are conducting a thorough investigation into the matter.

Q48.

Ans: Correct sentence: 'The long list of requirements and formalities that the applicants have to fulfil before submitting their forms is causing unnecessary confusion among them.'

The main subject of the sentence is 'The long list' — a singular noun. The intervening relative clause 'that the applicants have to fulfil...' modifies 'requirements and formalities' (which is inside the prepositional phrase 'of requirements and formalities'). The principal subject is singular: 'list'. Rule applied: Intervening prepositional phrases and relative clauses do not alter verb agreement. The verb must agree with the head noun of the subject phrase — 'list' (singular) → 'is causing'.

Q49.

Ans: The verb 'have' is INCORRECT. The correct verb is 'has'.

In 'the only one of the candidates who...' constructions, the antecedent of 'who' is 'one', not 'candidates'. The presence of 'the only' makes 'one' the specific antecedent — meaning ONE specific person among all the candidates. Since 'one' is singular, the relative clause verb must be singular: 'who has the necessary qualifications'.

Contrast: 'She is one of those candidates who have the necessary qualifications' — here, 'the only' is absent, so 'who' refers to the plural group 'candidates' → plural verb 'have'.

Corrected sentence: Riya is the only one of the candidates who has the necessary qualifications for this senior post.

Q50.

Ans: The student's correction is WRONG.

Original: 'Neither the engineers nor the architect are satisfied...'

Student's correction: '...the architect is satisfied.' — This reverses the proximity rule incorrectly.

With 'Neither...nor', the verb agrees with the NEAREST subject — the one immediately before the verb. In the original, the nearest subject is 'architect' (singular) — so 'is' would be correct. But wait — the student changed 'are' to 'is' after 'architect', which IS actually correct for proximity agreement. However: if we keep 'architect' nearest, 'is' is correct. If we want 'were' (past), that would be wrong here too.

Actual correct sentence: 'Neither the engineers nor the architect is satisfied with the proposed design.' → The student's correction IS accurate in making the verb singular to match the nearest subject 'architect'. The student is RIGHT.

Q51.

Ans: Both are acceptable; in strict formal contexts, (A) is preferred.

Traditional grammar holds that 'none' is a contraction of 'not one' and therefore takes a singular verb. On this basis, (A) 'None of the answers was correct' is the preferred formal choice.

Modern descriptive grammar acknowledges that when 'none' refers to a group of countable plural nouns (as here — 'answers' is countable plural), a plural verb is natural and widely accepted: (B) 'None of the answers were correct.'

In competitive exams and formal writing: choose (A) — singular. In everyday modern writing and journalistic style: (B) is perfectly acceptable. The key distinction is register and context. Neither is universally 'wrong' — the singular is merely more conservative.

Q52.

Ans: Subject: 'The beauty' (singular). Correct verb: 'inspires' (not 'inspire').

Sentence: 'The beauty of the sunsets in those remote Himalayan valleys inspire every artist who visits the region.'

The head noun of the subject phrase is 'beauty', not 'sunsets' or 'valleys'. Both 'of the sunsets' and 'in those remote Himalayan valleys' are prepositional phrases modifying 'beauty'. Since 'beauty' is singular (third person singular), the verb must be 'inspires'.

Corrected: The beauty of the sunsets in those remote Himalayan valleys inspires every artist who visits the region.

Rule: The verb agrees with the head noun of the subject noun phrase, not with nouns inside intervening prepositional phrases.

Q53.

Ans: The correct verb is 'were'.

Partitive Rule: When a fraction precedes a noun in an 'of' phrase, the verb agrees with that noun, not with the fraction itself. Here, the noun is 'population'. One might argue 'population' is singular (like 'group') and use 'was'. However, 'population' in this context refers to individual people who were displaced — it is being treated as a plural collective: multiple persons acted upon. Moreover, 'displaced' implies individual displacement of people, not a group action.

Best answer: 'were displaced' — because the context emphasises individual members of the population being displaced, making the plural treatment appropriate.

If the sentence read 'the population was relocated as a unit', 'was' would be preferred. Context determines the choice with collective nouns used in partitive constructions.

Q54.

Ans: First blank: 'have'; Second blank: 'is'.

Sentence: 'A number of errors have been found; the number of corrections needed is surprisingly large.'

First blank — 'A number of errors': 'A number of' = 'many' → plural verb → 'have been found'.

Second blank — 'the number of corrections': 'The number of' refers to a specific total/count → singular verb → 'is surprisingly large'.

This question is designed precisely to test whether students can distinguish between the two expressions within a single sentence. The subject changes from 'A number of errors' (plural intent) to 'the number of corrections' (singular intent).

Q55.

Ans: The second teacher (who marked 'is' as correct) is right for this specific context; but the first teacher's correction is not entirely wrong either — context must be specified.

'The team of doctors' — the grammatical subject here is 'the team', a collective noun. The key question is how the team is acting:

If the team is working together as a single coordinated unit (which 'working tirelessly' implies — a unified, continuous, joint action), then 'is' is the correct choice: 'The team of doctors is working tirelessly.'

If, however, the sentence emphasised individual members each doing their own tasks simultaneously, 'are' would be appropriate.

Since 'working tirelessly' typically implies unified collective effort, the second teacher who insisted on 'is' is more precisely correct in this context. However, in British English, collective nouns can take plural verbs even for joint

actions, so both teachers have defensible positions. In formal grammar instruction, 'is' is the safer, more standard choice here.

Q56.

Ans: Three corrections:

(a) 'There was several genuine concerns' → 'There were several genuine concerns.'

Rule: In inverted 'There + verb' sentences, the verb agrees with the real subject following it. 'Several genuine concerns' is plural → 'were'.

(b) 'Gulliver's Travels are a satirical masterpiece' → 'Gulliver's Travels is a satirical masterpiece.'

Rule: Titles of books, films, or works — even if grammatically plural in form — take singular verbs because the title refers to a single work.

(c) 'the accused, along with his associates, were taken' → 'the accused, along with his associates, was taken.'

Rule: Intervening phrases introduced by 'along with' do not change the number of the main subject. 'The accused' is singular → 'was taken'.

Q57.

Ans: Singular: 'The faculty disagreed collectively on the grading criteria.' Plural: 'The faculty disagreed among themselves on the grading criteria.'

Collective action (singular): 'The faculty was in disagreement on the grading criteria.' — Here, the faculty as an institutional body took a collective position.

Individual action (plural): 'The faculty were divided in their opinions on the grading criteria.' — Here, individual members of the faculty held differing views.

The ambiguity in the original sentence arises because 'disagreed' can imply either a collective resolution or individual difference of opinion. By adding qualifiers ('collectively' vs. 'among themselves' or 'in their opinions'), the intended meaning is clarified. This distinction mirrors British English usage of collective nouns more broadly.

Q58.

Ans: Both (A) and (B) are correct — and they follow different rules.

(A) 'More than one solution is possible.' — 'More than one' is a fixed expression in English that always takes a singular verb, regardless of the noun that follows. This is an idiomatic rule, not purely a logical one. Even though 'more than one' numerically implies plurality, the grammar convention mandates singular.

(B) 'More than two solutions are possible.' — Once the number exceeds 'one' (i.e., 'more than two', 'more than three', etc.), the logical plural takes over and the verb is plural.

Difference in meaning: (A) implies a single step beyond one (could be two), while (B) implies a count beyond two. The grammatical difference demonstrates that English has idiomatic exceptions to purely logical agreement.

Q59.

Ans: Four errors identified:

Error 1 — 'Each of the ministers were given' → 'was given'.

Rule: 'Each of + plural noun' → indefinite pronoun → singular verb.

Error 2 — 'The public, as well as the media, are demanding' → 'is demanding'.

Rule: Intervening phrase 'as well as the media' does not alter the subject. 'The public' is singular collective noun → 'is demanding'.

Error 3 — 'A number of irregularities has surfaced' → 'have surfaced'.

Rule: 'A number of' = many → plural verb → 'have surfaced'.

Error 4 — 'Neither the audit team nor the secretary-general are willing' → 'is willing'.

Rule: Proximity Rule — nearest subject is 'the secretary-general' (singular) → 'is willing'.

Q60.

Ans: Correct verb: 'is'. Actual subject: 'The main cause'.

Sentence: 'The main cause of all the accidents on that particular stretch of the highway over the past decade are potholes and poor road maintenance.'

The structural trap: The sentence is long, and the predicate noun 'potholes and poor road maintenance' is plural. Many students (and even experienced writers) mistakenly let the predicate noun pull the verb into the plural — writing 'are' instead of 'is'.

Why students make this mistake: The plural predicate noun 'potholes and poor road maintenance' feels intuitively like the 'main thing', so the plural verb 'are' seems natural. But the subject is 'The main cause' — singular — and the linking verb must agree with the SUBJECT, not the predicate noun.

Rule applied: Linking verb agreement rule — the verb agrees with the subject, regardless of the number of the predicate noun.

Corrected: The main cause of all the accidents on that particular stretch of the highway over the past decade is potholes and poor road maintenance.

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