

Making the Parts Agree

Word Harmony

Areas of Concern

- Subject-Verb Agreement
- Pronoun Reference
- Tense Agreement
- Parallel Structure

Subject-Verb Agreement

- The verb must agree with the intended number of its subject.
 - The subject is not the object of the preposition:
 - Somewhere between these two *arguments* lies the **truth**.
 - The subject is not the predicate nominative:
 - The hidden **surprise** physicians fear most is rapidly growing *infections*.
 - The subject is not the object of a gerund:
 - **Creating** new investment *opportunities* is her goal.
 - The subject is not the expletive “there” or “here”:
 - *There* have been more than 100 **cases** reported.
 - The subject is not a parenthetical to the true subject:
 - The **legislation**, *as well as two resolutions*, was sent to the subcommittee.

More Subject-Verb Agreement

- Singular pronouns: each, either, anyone, everyone, much, no one, nothing, someone
- Definable units take singular verbs: units of money, measurement, time, organization, food, medical problems: Six hours of swimming has turned him into a prune.
- When all parts of a compound subject are singular and refer to one person or thing, the verb is singular: The president and CEO is Bob Smith.
- Plural pronouns: both, few, many, several
- There are exceptions: fractions, collective nouns, foreign plurals

Pronoun Reference

- A pronoun requires an antecedent. The antecedent will determine if the verb is singular or plural.
 - Just seconds after the officer told the reporter and the photographer to get out of the line of fire, she dashed to her car radio. [Unknown antecedent]

Tense Agreement

- Be careful with time shifting within a sentence
 - Although she was a reserve guard last year, Sue now rides the bench.

Parallel Structure

- She enjoys books, videos and surfing the Web. [Incorrect]
 - She enjoys reading books, watching video and surfing the Web. [Correct]
- She enjoys seeking new challenges and to rise to the top of her profession. [Incorrect]
 - She enjoys seeking new challenges and rising to the top of her profession. [Correct]