

# VERB AGREEMENT

SOMETIMES SIMPLE... BUT NOT ALWAYS

RULES OF THUMB, 9E, P. 54-55

# THE BASICS

- A SENTENCE'S SUBJECT AND VERB SHOULD AGREE
- A **SINGULAR** SUBJECT NEEDS A **SINGULAR** VERB
  - The bird sings sweetly all morning.
- A **PLURAL** SUBJECT NEEDS A **PLURAL** VERB
  - The birds sing sweetly all morning.
  - The bird and the bee sing sweetly.
- SO WHY IS IT COMPLICATED?

# SOMETIMES INTERVENING WORDS MIGHT DISTRACT YOU

- AN INSERTED WORD OR PHRASE MAY DISTRACT YOU
  - My **sister**, rather than my brothers, **buys** me a sweater.
  - Several **reasons** for the earthquake **are** described.
- AN *OF* PHRASE MAY COME IN THE MIDDLE
  - One of my best friends **is** from Hawaii.
  - The **point** of all his complex arguments **is** that we should defend the rights of refugees.

# SPECIAL CASE: *THERE WAS, THERE WERE, THERE IS, THERE ARE*

- IN THESE SENTENCE TYPES, THE SUBJECT COMES **AFTER** THE VERB (*WAS/WERE/IS/ARE*)
  - There **is one way** to reach the pizzeria from home.
  - There **are two ways** to reach the pizzeria from campus.

# SPECIAL CASE: *-ONE*, *-BODY*, AND SINGULAR GROUPS

- **-ONE** AND **-BODY** WORDS ARE SINGULAR
  - Somebody has left a book on the floor.
  - Everyone has gone to the library.
- SOME GROUP WORDS ARE SINGULAR
  - My family eats dinner together on Thursdays.
  - A million dollars was donated to the foundation.

# SPECIAL CASE: *OR*, *NOR*, AND EXCEPTIONS

- WHEN *OR* OR *NOR* JOIN TWO SUBJECTS, THE SUBJECT NEARER TO THE VERB AGREES WITH IT
  - Neither the actors nor the director was satisfied with the scene. BUT Neither the director nor the actors were satisfied.
- BUT IF *NEITHER* OR *EITHER* IS THE SUBJECT, IT IS SINGULAR.
  - Of the two books, neither interests me.
  - Either is fine.

# PRE QUIZ REVIEW

- Example:
  - One of the guitarists always come in late.
  - HINT: **One of the guitarists always come in late.**

# PRE QUIZ REVIEW

- Example:
  - One of the guitarists always come in late.
  - HINT: One of the guitarists always **come** in late.
  - **CORRECTED:** One of the guitarists always **comes** in late.



# PRE QUIZ REVIEW

- A) The soprano and the tenor has placed in the final singing competition.
  - HINT: The soprano and the tenor has placed in the final singing competition.

# PRE QUIZ REVIEW

- A) The soprano and the tenor has placed in the final singing competition.
  - HINT: The soprano and the tenor has placed in the final singing competition.
  - HINT: The soprano and the tenor **have** placed in the final singing competition.

# PRE QUIZ REVIEW

- Either the soprano or the tenor has placed in the final singing competition.
  - **HINT: Either the soprano or the tenor has placed in the final singing competition.**

# PRE QUIZ REVIEW

- B) Either the soprano or the tenor has placed in the final singing competition.
  - HINT: Either the soprano or the tenor has placed in the final singing competition.
  - **NO CORRECTION NEEDED**

# PRE QUIZ REVIEW

- c) Running five laps around the football fields take a long time.
  - HINT:
  - CORRECTED:

# PRE QUIZ REVIEW

- c) Running five laps around the football fields take a long time.
  - HINT: **Running** five laps around the football fields **take** a long time.
  - **CORRECTED:**

# PRE QUIZ REVIEW

- c) Running five laps around the football fields take a long time.
  - HINT: **Running** five laps around the football fields **take** a long time.
  - **CORRECTED:** **Running** five laps around the football fields **takes** a long time.

# PRE QUIZ REVIEW

- d) One way we can keep our classrooms clean is to throw away our trash.
  - HINT:
  - CORRECTED:



# PRE QUIZ REVIEW

- d) One way we can keep our classrooms clean is to throw away our trash.
  - HINT: **One way** we can keep our classrooms clean **is** to throw away our trash.
  - **CORRECTED:**

# PRE QUIZ REVIEW

- d) One way we can keep our classrooms clean is to throw away our trash.
  - HINT: **One way** we can keep our classrooms clean **is** to throw away our trash.
  - **NO CORRECTION NEEDED**

# PRE QUIZ REVIEW

- e) Only one of the students have come to class very late today
  - HINT:
  - CORRECTED:

# PRE QUIZ REVIEW

- e) Only one of the students have come to class very late today.
  - HINT: Only **one** of the students **have** come to class very late today.
  - **CORRECTED:**

# PRE QUIZ REVIEW

- e) Only one of the students have come to class very late today.
  - HINT: Only **one** of the students **have** come to class very late today.
  - **CORRECTED:** Only **one** of the students **has** come to class very late today.

# ADDITIONAL PRACTICE?

- VISIT THE *RULES OF THUMB* WEBSITE

[http://highered.mheducation.com/sites/0073405965/student\\_view0/index.html](http://highered.mheducation.com/sites/0073405965/student_view0/index.html)

