

## SUBJECTS AND FINITE VERBS

### GUIDELINES FOR PRACTICE SENTENCES

1. Print this file and place the answer pages to the side.
2. Cover the answer pages with a sheet of paper, and slide the paper down as you complete each practice sentence.
3. Use colored markers and a highlighter to work on each practice sentence.

Feel free to write to me (dr\_ron@grammar-once-and-for-all.com) if you have any questions or problems.

### Directions

1. Color each subject of a finite verb **blue**, and **highlight** the main word of the subject. If the subject consists of only one word, that word is the main word:

**Bugs** bug me.

The latest fashion **rage** will be purple pajamas.

The **road** to Hollywood goes over the mountain of broken dreams.

**Angie**, **Jacob**, and **Brigid**, had been baking cookies and discussing ethics.

2. Color each finite verb **red** (both main verb and any auxiliary verbs). **Highlight** the main verb:

**Bugs bug** me.

The latest fashion **rage will be** purple pajamas.

The **road goes** over the mountain of broken dreams.

**Angie**, **Jacob**, and **Brigid had been baking** cookies and **discussing** ethics.  
[The auxiliary verb *had been* serves for both main verbs.]

There will be other functions present in the sentences besides subjects and finite verbs. Part of what you're trying to do at this point is to distinguish subjects and finite verbs from other sentence elements. You'll find it most helpful to read the sentences aloud and listen to your voice.

**Subjects and Finite Verbs: Sentences 1 - 9**

1. The wind blew; the feathers flew.
2. Something certainly smells.
3. The writhing coordinator had already put Fang in his pocket.
4. Then he suddenly recognized his mistake.
5. Did you laugh or giggle?
6. Ms. Beebs and Charlie would never levitate on Sundays.
7. Your papa perceived your passion for possums.
8. All afternoon they will be hissing melodically.
9. Most marsupials don't have a well-developed sense of irony.

**Subjects and Finite Verbs: Sentences 10 - 17**

10. Quit it, your Majesty!

11. Don't tell me to migrate—you migrate!

12. The entire flock might have been trampled.

13. All seven dwarfs can't conveniently take a bath together.

14. Today your goat should play in the moat.

15. Those "Welcome-to-the-mosh-pit" T-shirts were manufactured out in the boondocks.

16. Licking mayonnaise off your sleeve requires a firm tongue.

17. Little Miss Muffet's tuffet was finally auctioned last week for twenty-three thousand dollars.

**Subjects and Finite Verbs: Answers to sentences 1 – 9**

1. The **wind** **blew**; the **feathers** **flew**.
  
2. **Something** certainly **smells**.
  
3. The writhing **coordinator** **had** already **put** Fang in his pocket.
  
4. Then **he** suddenly **recognized** his mistake.
  
5. **Did you laugh** or **giggle**?  
[*Laugh* and *giggle* are coordinate main verbs: the subject of both verbs is *you*. *Did* serves as the auxiliary verb for both main verbs.]
  
6. **Ms. Beebs** and **Charlie** **would** never **levitate** on Sundays.
  
7. Your **papa** **perceived** your passion for possums.
  
8. All afternoon **they** **will be** **hissing** melodically.
  
9. **Most marsupials** **don't** **have** a well-developed sense of irony.

**Subjects and Finite Verbs: Answers to sentences 10 - 17**

10. **Quit** it, your Majesty!

[*Your Majesty* isn't the subject of *quit*. Rather, it's a phrase that names the person spoken to.]

11. **Don't tell** me to migrate—**you migrate!**

[Two imperative verbs: *don't tell* and *migrate*. In the second part of the sentence, *you* is the subject of *migrate*. The stresses are on *me* and *you*: *Don't tell me to migrate—you migrate!*

12. The entire **flock** might have been **trampled**.

13. All seven **dwarfs** can't conveniently **take** a bath together.

14. Today **your goat** should **play** in the moat.

15. Those "Welcome-to-the-mosh-pit" **T-shirts** were **manufactured** out in the boondocks.

16. **Licking** mayonnaise off your sleeve **requires** a firm tongue.

[If you ask **what** requires a firm tongue? the answer is *Licking mayonnaise off your sleeve*. The main word of the phrase is *licking*.]

17. Little Miss Muffet's **tuffet** was finally **auctioned** last week for twenty-three thousand dollars.