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Unit

1

1. Introduction
2. Grammar and Usage
 - (i) Subject-Verb Agreement
3. Vocabulary
4. Composition
 - (i) About Narrative Compositions
 - (ii) A narrow escape (with commentary)
 - (iii) A forgiving employer
5. Progress Test – 1

1 Introduction

Your aim is to express yourself correctly, using the right words and conveying your ideas clearly. In this unit you are making the right beginning to acquire proficiency in writing and speaking. Writing is a skill that anyone with determination can develop, provided there is the right guidance. One of the aims of this unit is to make you familiar with subject-verb agreement. The brief explanation and the exercises on this topic will enable you to get over a common mistake of students. Words are the means by which we express our own ideas and understand the ideas of others. To improve your word power, the vocabulary part of this unit explains words that are sometimes confused. You can avoid confusion by studying these words and doing the exercise based on it. Composition is an important part of your examination and in this unit, the narrative composition, which many choose but some avoid, is explained. Model essays are provided. The unit concludes with a test.

In the above sentences, the subject is singular and the verb is also singular. Subject and verb are, therefore, in agreement.

★ In the following sentences both the subject and the verb are plural.

Examples:

Prices ARE not the same in all the shops.

They BECOME more and more studious.

He and his wife ARE a happy pair.

The train and the bus WERE nearly in collision.

(b) *Replacing the plural subject and verb with a singular subject and verb, rewrite each of the following sentences.*

Examples:

A. We often visit our grandparents.

B. He often visits his grandparents.

1. My friends live in a different housing estate.

2. My sisters sing in the church choir.

3. Birds migrate during certain seasons.

4. Do they think that the boy is a fool?

5. They want to buy clothes for their children. Because the children are going to a party.

6. They live in flats which were built by the Housing and Development Board.

7. My brothers like to play badminton, but my sisters like to read.

8. They have breakfast at seven o'clock and have our dinner in the evening.

9. They queue up to buy stamps in order to post their letters.

10. They go to school by bus and return on foot.

★ **There are some sentences in which it is likely that students go wrong or break the rule regarding subject-verb agreement. An explanation is given about the tendency to go wrong.**

1. Fish and chips is his usual dinner. ('are' is not used as the verb because a few common expressions like *bread and butter* and *salt and vinegar* are regarded as singular, even though they contain a plural noun.)

2. One kilogram of onions costs more than a dollar. (In a sentence like this, the subject-word is the first noun.)

3. The father, with the mother, was present at the party. (The sentence means that the father was present with the mother. If two nouns are joined by *with*, *along with*, *together with*, *as well as*, the first noun acts as the subject-word.)

4. Neither the credit card nor the cash card is acceptable. (Both subjects are singular.)

4. He has found one of the books that was misplaced.

5. Neither of the two girls want to be transferred.

6. When there is inflation, a person ought to spend their money wisely.

7. Many people like to read about China and their people.

8. We each was given breakfast.

9. One or the other are right.

10. Bread and butter make good breakfast.

3 Vocabulary

There are certain words that are sometimes confused. The words listed here have meanings other than those given. Try to avoid confusion by studying these words and their meanings.

1. *adapt*: adjust ; modify ; alter

Animals that cannot *adapt* themselves to the environment are destined to perish.

Man is said to be the least *adaptable* of creations. He adapts the environment to suit him.