

Explanation: In the first example, *friends* (plural) is closest to the verb, in the second example *coach* (singular) is closest to the verb.

3. When compound subjects are connected with phrases such as *in addition to*, *as well as*, *with*, *along with*, *together*, *with*, *no less than*, *rather than*, *like*, and similar phrases, the verb agrees with the first subject.

Example 1: John, along with his friends, *is* going to the party.

Example 2: The soldiers, as well as the General *are* well- trained.

Example 3: the disks, in addition to the manual, *are* available for sale

4. Use a singular pronoun when you refer to words such as *everyone*, *everybody*, *each*, *every*, *anyone*, *anybody*, *nobody*, *no one*, *one*, *each*, *either*, and *neither*.

Example 1: everyone should take *his* coat (not their).

Example 2: Each woman brought *her* child (not their).

Example 3: We heard that none of the men neglected to bring *his* ticket (not their).

5. Collective nouns represent names of a fruit or people or things. These are usually considered singular in form

Example 1: The junior class *is* sponsoring the five drivers.

Common collectives include: assembly, association, audience, board, cabinet, class, commission, committee, company, corporation, council, counsel, couple, crowd, department, family, firm, group, jury, majority, minority, number, and pair press public, staff, team, United States (and names of other countries).

6. Difference between *a number* and *the number*. The phrase *a number of* means a lot of and hence refers to many items. Therefore it is considered plural. The phrase *the number of* denotes the quantity and hence is considered singular. Similarly *a variety* and *a majority* are considered plural, while *the variety* and *the majority* are considered singular.

Example 1: A number of students *are* absent.

Example 2: The number of students *is* twenty.

7. Special words such as police, deer, fish, and sheep can be both singular and plural. Hence you need to pay attention to the meaning of the sentence to determine whether these are referring to a singular or plural subject.
8. Words like data, criteria, alumni and media are incorrectly taken to be singular while they actually represent plural. Singular forms of these words are datum, criterion, alumnus and medium.

9. When an action is the subject of the sentence, the subject is singular.

Example 1 : The growing of flowers *is* helpful for the Environment.

Example 2 : Teaching students *is* a satisfying career.

When to use the Perfect Tenses

Present perfect: use the present for an action begun in the past and extended to the present.

Example: I am glad you are here at last; I have waited an hour for you to arrive.

Explanation: In this case, I waited would be incorrect. The action have waited (present perfect) began in the past and extends to the presents.

Past Perfect: Use the Past Perfect for an action begun and completed in the past before some other past action.

Example: The foreman asked what had happened to my eye.

Explanation: In this case, what happened would be incorrect? The action *asked* and the action *had happened* (past Perfect) are used because one action (regarding the speaker's eye) is "more past" than the other (the foreman's asking).

Future Perfect: Use the Future Perfect for an action begun at any time and completed in the future.

Example: When I reach Chicago tonight, my uncle will have left for Los Angeles.

Explanation: In this case the action *will have left* is going to take place before the action *reaches*, although both actions will occur in the future. When there are two future actions, the action completed first is expressed in the future perfect tense.

Verb Tense Exercise

1. When he spoke, all the people ____ him. (cheer, have cheered, cheered)
2. Since he ____ late, he didn't receive gift. (is, was, be)
3. I am told that you ____ the job. (had completed, have completed)
4. I was told that you ____ the job. (had completed, have completed)
5. We were taught that vitamins ____ important for our well being. (are, were)

Answers

1. *Cheered*
2. *Was*
3. *Have completed*
4. *Had completed*
5. *Are* (when your are expressing a permanent fact, the present tense is used.

Rule 3: The Subjunctive Mood

The subjunctive expresses a condition contrary to fact, a wish, a supposition, or an indirect command. Although it is going out of use in English, the subjunctive can still be seen in the following forms:

- To express a wish not likely to be fulfilled or impossible to be realized.
Example: I wish it *were* possible for us to approve his transfer at this time. (It is not possible.)

- In a subordinate clause after a verb that expresses a command, a request, or a suggestion.
Example: He asked that the report *be submitted* in duplicate.
Example: It is recommended that this office *be responsible* for preparing the statements.
Example: We suggest that he *be relieved* of the assignment.
- To express a condition known or supposed to be contrary to fact
Example : if I *were* in St. Louis, I should be glad to attend
Example : If this *were* a simple case, we would easily agree on a solution
Example : If i were you, i should not mind the assignment.
- After *as if* or *as though*. In formal writing and speech, *as if* and *as though* are followed by the subjunctive, since they introduce as supposition something not factual. In informal writing and speaking, the indicative is sometimes used.
Example: He talked as if he were an expert on taxation. (He's not)
Example: This report looks as though it were the work of a college freshman.

Caution: Avoid shifts in mood. Once you have decided on the mood that properly express your message, use that mood throughout the sentence or the paragraph. A shift in mood is confusing to the listener or reader; it indicates that the speaker or writer himself has changed his way of looking at the condition.

Not: it is requested that a report for the proceedings be prepared and copies should be distributed to all members. (*Be* is subjunctive; *should be* indicative.)

But : It is requested that a report of the proceedings be prepared and that copies be distributed to all members.

Subjunctive Mood Exercise

1. If mark ____ to win the student council presidency, the entire school would be surprised. (was, were)
2. If he ____ to go to the party, he would be welcome. (was, were)
3. The principal asked that the coach ____ present when the award was given. (be, should be)
4. The team played as if the game ____ the final game in the play-offs. (was, were)

Answers and Explanations

1. Were. The sense of the sentence tells you that Mark is unlikely to win, so the subjunctive is correct.
2. Was. There is nothing conditional about the construction. It is a simple statement.
3. Be. The statement expresses a request, so the conditional is correct.
4. Were. The phrase as if signals the need for the subjunctive mood.

Basic Rule 6 – Who vs. whom:

Students often encounter difficulty in deciding whether to use who or whom. Two sentence patterns in particular lead to confusion with these words: when they begin a question and when they introduce a dependent clause. Deciding on the appropriate pronouns required grammatical analysis, noting the differences between subjective personal pronouns (Pronouns that perform an action) and objective personal pronouns (Pronouns that receive an action).

1. Introduction of a question:

when the answer to the question begins with a subjective personal pronouns (e.g., he/she/they), use *who*

Example: who is the best pitcher on the team? He is the best pitcher on the team. (*He* is subjective; therefore, *who* is correct.)

When the answer to the question is an objective personal pronoun (e.g., her/him/them), use *whom*.

Example: For whom did you vote? I voted for her. (*Her* is objective; therefore, *who* is correct.)

2. Introduction of a Dependent Clause

when the pronoun acts as the subject of the clause, use *who*.

Example: He is a wonderful man who is destined for great things. (*Who* is the subject of the clause “who is destined for great things” or “he is destined for great things”.)

When the Pronouns acts as the object of the clause use *whom*.

Example: the man at the door was not whom she had expected. (*Whom* is the object of the clause “whom she had expected” or “she had expected him/ her”.)

Test yourself (who/ whom)

1. Research has shown that children (who/whom) have been overprotected often become adults for (who/whom) life is difficult beyond the family circle.
2. Parents often transmit to their children ideas about (who/whom) to respect in society.
3. (who/whom) was at the game last night?
4. Ray, (who/whom) we all know and love, will not be attending this week’s meeting.
5. To (who/whom) did you speak about the job opening?

Answer: 1.who, whom 2. Whom 3.who 4. Whom 5.whom

Pronouns Exercise

Directions: Some of the following sentences contain misused pronouns.

Make all corrections. If the sentence is correct. Indicate by marking with a C.

1. We are happy that Bob, Bill and he are going to be there.
2. I know that us men will be able to complete the job by next week.
3. Whoever is here will see Mr. Smyth and me.

Test yourself: which word-*bad* or *badly*- belongs in each blank below?

1. I felt ____ about eating the last slice of fruitcake.
2. My two year old daughter ate her fruitcake ____, crumbling it onto the floor, mashing it in her hair, and squeezing it between her fingers before putting tiny morsels in her mouth.
3. That fruitcake didn't taste as ____ as I thought it would.
4. Right after he ate the fruitcake, he looked ____ and ran out of the room quickly.
5. He made her feel ____ when he told her how ____ she cooks.

Answers and Explanations

1. I felt BAD about eating the last slice of fruitcake. (Here feel isn't an action verb.)
2. My two year old daughter ate her fruitcake BADLY, crumbling it onto the floor, mashing it in her hair, and squeezing it between her fingers before putting tiny morsels in her mouth. (Here ate is an action verb.)
3. That fruitcake didn't taste as BAD as I thought it would. (The fruitcake didn't perform the action of tasting.)
4. Right after he ate the fruitcake, he looked BAD and ran out of the room quickly. (Here looking describes a state of being, not the action of gazing upon something.)
5. He made her feel BAD when he told her how BADLY she cooks. (Feelings in this context is not an action but cooking is.)

Rule 7: Modifiers

Basic rule 1: Modifiers should be placed as close as possible to the words they modify. This is true whether the modifier is a single word, a phrase, or a clause.

Incorrect: I bought a piano from an old lady with intricate carvings.
(Who or what had the carvings? The original sentences make it sound as if the old lady had carvings.)

Correct: I bought a piano with intricate carvings from an old lady.

Incorrect: I read about the destruction of Rome in my history class.

Correct : In my history class, I read about the destruction of Rome

The word *only* often causes confusion. Examine the following sentences.

- Only he bought the book.
- He only bought the book.
- He bought the only book.

All three sentences are possible, but a different meaning is conveyed in each, depending on the positioning of the word *only*.

Sometimes a problem is created by the placement of a participle phrase.

Example: Answering the doorbell, the cake remained in the oven. (The cake answered the doorbell?)