

## Subject-Verb Agreement & Verb Tense SAT Exercises

*Choose the correct answer from the following options*

1. The imprint of war was clearly evident on Rachel, both on her mind and her physical state. Rachel's scars that created a distinctive crosshatch pattern on her right ankle are from an incident three years ago. She had been shooting photographs in Iraq when an explosion occurred near the military base at which she had been stationed.
  - a. NO CHANGE
  - b. were**
  - c. was
  - d. have been

**B is the best answer choice**, as the subject "scars" agrees with the plural "were." Remember, interstitial clauses (that...) and phrases ("on her right ankle") do not determine the subject of the sentence. Furthermore, the past tense "were" is most appropriate and consistent because the paragraph is telling a story in the past tense. We can tell this from the sentence before ("was") and the sentence after, which is actually in the past perfect ("had been..."). Remember we only pair past perfect ("had" ) sentences with regular past. If we are in the regular present we would use present perfect or regular past to push an event into an earlier time or date. Choice A is correct in its Subject Verb agreement, but erroneously uses a present tense verb in a story that is in the past. Choice C makes a subject-verb agreement error, using a singular verb when a plural verb is most appropriate to the subject "scars." Choice D is awkward as present perfect tense ("have...") cannot be used for a specific, mentioned time in the past ("three years ago").

2. A research expedition in the Galapagos Islands have revealed that the Galapagos finches on each island exhibit characteristics distinct from those of finches on other nearby islands.
  - a. NO CHANGE
  - b. reveal
  - c. revealing
  - d. reveals**

**Choice D** is correct: it's the only choice that agrees with the singular subject "expedition." Choice C is a verbal or gerund, not a regular verb form, and thus cannot make a complete sentence. Choices A and B contain plural verbs not appropriate for a singular subject.

3. All potential spending sourced from local taxes are monitored closely by the city controller.
  - a. NO CHANGE
  - b. is**
  - c. have been
  - d. were

Choice B is best. “Is” agrees with the singular subject, “spending.” “-ing” words, or gerunds, are always singular nouns. Choices A, C, and D are all plural nouns and thus incorrect.

4. Since bees and other pollinators attract to bright, sweet-smelling flowers, evolution has long favored these types of plants.
- a. NO CHANGE
  - b. are attracting
  - c. **are attracted**
  - d. is attracted

**Choice C is correct.** It agrees with the plural subject “bees and other pollinators” and uses the proper, idiomatic verb phrase “are attracted to.” Choices A and B are incorrect because they would illogically imply that the flowers would gravitate toward the bees. These choices are also awkward: A includes the word “to” while choice B relies on a non idiomatic phrase “are attracting to.” Choice D is a singular verb, which does not match the plural subject.

5. Results have shown that surgeons performing surgery who have performed at least one surgery the day prior facilitate better surgical outcomes on average than those who have not performed surgery in the previous 24 hours.
- a. **NO CHANGE**
  - b. perform
  - c. performs
  - d. performed

**Choice A is best.** In light of the comparison in the sentence, only choice A “have performed” is appropriately parallel to “have not performed” in the last half of the sentence. The subject “surgeons...who” is plural and “have performed” is also plural. Though other choices may sound ok, only A is fully parallel in tense to the verb it is in parallel construction with in the sentence.

6. In addition to their environmental benefits, these investments in natural landmarks will likely also promote retail activity, which, in many cases, were key to the health of a local economy.
- a. **NO CHANGE**
  - b. are
  - c. has been
  - d. **is**

**Choice D is correct.** “Which” most often refers to what it touches. Here that is the singular noun “activity.” Thus the answer is the singular verb, “is.” To really be certain of the answer, though, we have to ask ourselves what is most likely to be “key to the health of a local economy”– would that be “these” particular investments (a very specific thing) OR the general idea of retail activity (a broader notion)? The latter makes much more sense, as it is in broader terms, and this broadness matches the broad idea of supporting “a” local economy (remember “a” is used to

speak of a non-specific notion). The phrase “in many cases” (denoting a broad idea that applies to many circumstances) further supports the notion that the word “which” must refer to the broader idea of “retail activity” as opposed to the investments. The investments seem specific to this particular situation, whereas the commentary on the impact of retail activity is appropriately a pattern that exists beyond this specific discussion. Thus the “which” is singular not plural. As a result, only choice D can be correct, as it is the only choice with a singular verb.

7. The Dole Pineapple Plantation, which is located on one of Hawaii’s many islands, is known for its maze constructed of pineapple plants.
- a. **NO CHANGE**
  - b. are known for its
  - c. is known for their
  - d. are known for their

**Choice A is best.** Here, we can look down and see two elements that must be sorted: is vs. are and its vs. their. We can start with subject verb agreement. “Plantation,” the subject, is singular, so “is” is correct. Because the “Plantation” is home to the maze, so the pronoun that refers to this singular subject must be the singular “its.”

8. However, most of the animals we see on Earth today, including insects and marine animals in the deep ocean, are not resembling the animals that lived thousands of years ago.
- a. NO CHANGE
  - b. will not resemble
  - c. have not resembled
  - d. **do not resemble**

**Choice D is most appropriate.** It correctly conveys the sense that this statement is a fact, as opposed to something subject to changing over time or whose state may “start” or “stop” with different conditions (A and C) or something that is a future prediction.

9. According to the research scientists, the increased levels of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere has been decreasing the concentration of nutrients in crops, a change that could lead to higher rates of malnutrition.
- a. NO CHANGE
  - b. **decrease**
  - c. has decreased
  - d. is decreasing

**Choice B is correct.** The subject “levels” agrees with the plural verb “decrease.” All other choices are singular verbs (“is” or “has”).

10. Most of the time, a nutrient deficiency of zinc, iodine or other minerals go unnoticed despite the detrimental effects on the body.
- a. NO CHANGE
  - b. goes**
  - c. have gone
  - d. are going

**Choice B is best.** The subject, “deficiency,” only matches a singular verb. Only choice B, “goes,” is a singular verb so it is correct.