

# Indefinite Pronouns as Subjects

Teaching

When used as subjects, some indefinite pronouns are always singular and some are always plural. Others can be singular or plural depending on how they are used.

## Indefinite Pronouns

Always Singular					Always Plural	Singular or Plural	
another	each	everything	no one	someone	both	all	most
anybody	either	much	nothing	something	few	any	none
anyone	everybody	neither	one		many	more	some
anything	everyone	nobody	somebody		several		

Each of our watches **shows** a different time.

Several of our watches **are** ten minutes ahead of the others.

All of our plans **depend** on coordination. (There are many plans.)

All of our timing **is** going haywire. (The timing is considered as one quantity.)

### A. Identifying Indefinite Pronouns

In each sentence, underline the indefinite pronoun subject and the verb. On the line, label the subject as **Singular** or **Plural**. If the pronoun can be either singular or plural, draw two lines under the word naming the person(s) or thing(s) it refers to.

**EXAMPLE** Some of the planning was completed a month ago. *Singular*

Some of the plans were copied from an earlier project. *Plural*

- None of the runners are nationally known. \_\_\_\_\_
- Most of the race is uphill. \_\_\_\_\_
- Several of the best runners have not shown up. \_\_\_\_\_
- Some of the spectators have run onto the track. \_\_\_\_\_
- All of the judges' watches were synchronized. \_\_\_\_\_
- None of the track is free of debris. \_\_\_\_\_

### B. Making Indefinite Pronouns and Verbs Agree

In each sentence, underline the indefinite pronoun used as the subject. Then underline the verb form in parentheses that agrees with the subject.

- Nobody among the runners (was, were) penalized due to the defective clock.
- Neither of the winners, male or female, (was, were) affected.
- Several of the slower runners (is, are) filing a complaint.
- Most of the judges (think, thinks) the results were accurate.
- Few of the races that I've run in (have, has) reported accurate results except for the winners.
- Some of the complaints (were, was) bizarre.
- But no one (was, were) complaining about the food and drinks afterwards.
- Anything out of the ordinary affecting a race always (cause, causes) controversy.
- One of the runners (was, were) saying that all the ruckus made it more fun.



# Indefinite Pronouns as Subjects

## More Practice

### A. Making Verbs Agree with Indefinite Pronoun Subjects

In each sentence, underline the indefinite pronoun used as the subject. Also underline the verb. If the verb agrees with the subject, write **Correct** in the blank. If it does not agree, write the correct verb in the blank.

1. Anybody interested in police work needs to pass a comprehensive exam. \_\_\_\_\_
2. Some of the songs by Irving Berlin has become classics. \_\_\_\_\_
3. According to the magazine article, one of those stars are a supernova. \_\_\_\_\_
4. Neither of the islands have been inhabited for years. \_\_\_\_\_
5. Many of the flowers in Hawaiian tourist hotels have been imported. \_\_\_\_\_
6. Somebody able to speak two languages fluently are bilingual. \_\_\_\_\_
7. Most of the teas come from China, India, and Japan. \_\_\_\_\_
8. None of the astronomers knows much about the new space telescopes. \_\_\_\_\_
9. Everything in the exhibit of Egyptian sculptures were fascinating. \_\_\_\_\_
10. Most of the glaciers in Europe is in the French and Swiss Alps. \_\_\_\_\_
11. Either of these encyclopedias give information about the Tony Award. \_\_\_\_\_
12. Each of the candidates was well qualified to run for governor. \_\_\_\_\_

### B. Using Verbs with Indefinite Pronoun Subjects

For each numbered sentence, write the correct present tense form of the verb on the appropriate line.

If football is a game of inches, running is a game of seconds and split seconds. **(1)** Everything (depend) on the accuracy and precision of the timing. **(2)** But nobody really (believe) in numbers that are in hundredths of a second. **(3)** Anybody who has ever operated a stopwatch (know) it takes a few hundredths just to push the button. **(4)** And do you suppose all of the officials (have) the same reaction time? **(5)** Some of the officials no longer (have) to rely on their reactions. **(6)** Several of the more important races now (use) electronic sensors at the starting and finish lines. **(7)** But all of the others (rely) on the fallible eye and perhaps slow thumb of a human race official.

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|----------|----------|
| 1. _____ | 5. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 6. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 7. _____ |
| 4. _____ |          |

# Indefinite Pronouns as Subjects

*Application*

## A. Checking Agreement of Verbs with Indefinite Pronoun Subjects

Proofread this paragraph for errors in subject-verb agreement. Underscore any verb that does not agree with its subject.

Not everyone with a large accumulation of objects are a collector. A few of the real collectors, with luck and skill, has gathered objects worth a fortune. Most of the collectors, though, pursue their hobby for fun. Anybody with an interest in this pastime needs space to house a collection. Nearly everything in the world—buttons, posters, glass, china, records, clocks, rocks—have been collected by someone. Some of these things are easier to store and display than others. Most of a collection of buttons, for example, fit easily into a box. On the other hand, very few of someone's antique cars fit into one garage. Both of these items has proved rewarding to collect. Each of the items possess a value to the collector beyond its monetary worth.

## B. Using Verbs Correctly with Indefinite Pronouns as Subjects

Do you have a collection? If so, what do you collect? If not, might you collect something in the future, or do you intentionally avoid starting a collection? Write a paragraph or more about your collection or your opinions on collecting. Use at least five of the phrases below as subjects of sentences. You may use the phrases in any order and write additional sentences as well. Make sure each verb is in the present tense and agrees with its subject.

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|-----------------------|------------------------|
| Any of the things     | Few of the objects     |
| Either of the sources | Most of the fun        |
| All of the money      | Some of the collectors |

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