EXERCISE G1-1  

**Subject-verb agreement: Guided practice**

Circle the correct verb from each pair in parentheses. The numbers in the margin refer to relevant rules in section G1 of *A Writer’s Reference*, Seventh Edition. The first selection has been made for you; answers to this exercise appear in the back of this book.

Before reaching college, nearly everyone already (knows / know) several facts about fables. Most students know, for example, that fables are short stories that (conveys / convey) a moral. They also know that fables nearly always have animal characters but that animal characters alone (is / are) not a signal that the story is a fable. They know of Aesop, to whom most familiar fables in Western culture (is / are) attributed. They know that there (is / are) generally only two or three characters in an Aesop fable and that a crowd of observers almost never (has / have) a role in his stories.

Most adults recognize that the subject matter of Aesop’s fables is nearly always the same. Once in a while, but not often, politics (is / are) highlighted in a story. Usually, however, Aesop’s fables point out the value of common sense or make gentle fun of human failings. Since neither foolish behavior nor human failings (seems / seem) to be in short supply, Aesop’s stories continue to be told. Besides, they attract a wide audience: Adults and children both (enjoy / enjoys) them. Everyone who has gone to school (is / are) supposed to know some of Aesop’s fables. “The Fox and the Grapes,” for instance, (is / are) familiar to many children as a story long before they understand its meaning.
EXERCISE G1-2  Subject-verb agreement

To read about this topic, see section G1 in A Writer’s Reference, Seventh Edition.

Verbs in the following sentences are italicized. Underline the simple subject (or simple subjects) of each verb, and edit the verb to make it agree with the subject. Keep all verbs in the present tense. Do not change the three correct sentences. Example:

Many of the morals or wise sayings from fables has become a part of our language.

1. Phrases like “a wolf in sheep’s clothing” is used and understood by many people.
2. The expression “a wolf in sheep’s clothing” comes from one of Aesop’s fables.
3. A flock of sheep and a hungry wolf is the main characters in the story.
4. After killing a sheep for their supper, the shepherd and his helpers forgets about the skin from the sheep.
5. The wolf, finding the discarded skin, cover himself with it.
6. Joining the flock, he pretends to be a mother looking for her lamb.
7. The flock accept him as a sheep.
8. Neither the sheep nor the shepherd notice the wolf at first.
9. Luring a lamb from the flock each day, the wolf feeds himself very well for a while.
10. Everyone hearing the story understand its warning: to beware of people pretending to be what they are not.
EXERCISE G1-3 ◊ Subject-verb agreement

To read about this topic, see section G1 in A Writer’s Reference, Seventh Edition.

Each of the following sentences has two subjects and verbs (some of the subject-verb pairs are in subordinate structures). The simple subjects are italicized. Edit each incorrect verb to make it agree with its subject. Keep all verbs in the present tense. One subject-verb pair in each sentence is correct. Example:

*Sour grapes* are a common expression, but not *everyone* knows the origin of that phrase.

1. Aesop’s *story* “The Fox and the Grapes” tells about a fox *who* try unsuccessfully to get some grapes.
2. There are a big *bunch* of grapes hanging over the top of a wall, and the *fox* is hot and thirsty.
3. A favorite *food* of his are grapes, and *he* leaps up to get some—without success.
4. Hoping that no *crowd* of friends are watching, the *fox* takes a running leap for the top of the wall.
5. Unsuccessful, the *fox* in the story tries again and again with the same result; neither his *cleverness* nor his high *leaps* is successful.
6. Embarrassed, the *fox* fears that *news* of his failures are going to give his friends something to tease him about.
7. The fox’s *pride* and his *self-confidence* has suffered, so he claims not to want the grapes anyway.
8. The *fox*, stalking proudly off with his nose in the air, say that the *grapes* are sour.
9. *Everyone* know that the *fox* does not believe his own words.
10. To save their pride, *people* often pretends not to want what *they* cannot get.
EXERCISE G1-4  Subject-verb agreement: Guided review

Circle the correct verb from each pair in parentheses. The numbers in the margin refer to relevant rules in section G1 of A Writer's Reference, Seventh Edition. The first selection has been made for you.

From one of Aesop's lesser-known fables (comes / come) the question “Who's going to bell the cat?” The fable “Belling the Cat” describes the long battle between mice and cats. G1-g

In the story, a committee of mice is appointed to find a way to keep the cat from killing so many mice. Everyone on the committee (tries / try) to solve the problem. G1-e

There (is / are) many committee meetings and much discussion, but in the end neither the committee nor its chairperson (is / are) able to make any good suggestions. Finally, the time comes for the committee to make its report at a public meeting. Embarrassed, the committee (reports / report) its failure. G1-f

At first, there is only silence; no one wants to accept the committee's report as the final word on the problem. Then a little pip-squeak among the mice (suggests / suggest) tying a bell on the cat. The young mouse makes quite a speech in favor of his idea. According to that mouse, statistics (shows / show) that no mice have ever been captured by a noisy cat. The mouse points out that his solution would not cost much; a bell and a string (is / are) all the equipment needed to give the mice warning of the cat's approach. The mouse who makes the suggestion gets a round of applause. The committee members, who (wishes / wish) that they had thought of the idea, are silent. G1-i

Then a wise old mouse asks, “Who will bell the cat?” The experienced mice and the young pip-squeak (is / are) silent. G1-c

It is easy to make suggestions that other people (has / have) to carry out. G1-a