



## Exercise - Subject-verb agreement

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### Introduction

In academic writing special care is needed to ensure that your verb agrees with the subject. This is called subject-verb agreement.

**Rule:** When the noun or pronoun, as subject of the sentence, is singular, the verb that refers to it is singular; when the noun or pronoun is plural, the verb is plural.

### Definitions

Subject	The subject acts as the 'doer' or agent of an action.
Noun	A noun refers to a person, thing or animal.
Pronoun	A pronoun is a word which substitutes for a noun or a noun phrase. Pronouns include words such as I, you, it, their, ours and mine.
Verb	A verb refers to an action or state.
Singular	When a noun indicates one only, it is singular.
Plural	When a noun indicates more than one, it is plural.

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### Further information

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## Exercise A

- Underline the subject of each sentence
  - **Highlight** the correct pronoun, noun or verb
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**Example:** A high number of Applied Social Studies (ASS) students are interested in improving **their** writing skills and have decided to continue joining the writing skills programme delivered by the PAD Team.

1. Sociology students (is, are) all required to understand the differences between quantitative and qualitative research methods.
2. Some people argue that teenagers act purely in response to (her, their) peers.
3. Marx and Weber (observe, observes) the economic aspect of stratification.
4. The two articles (offer, offers) contrasting arguments on the underlying causes of poverty.
5. Most measures of socioeconomic status (include, includes) income or education.

## Exercise B

- Underline the subject of each sentence
- **Highlight** the correct verb tense when referring to the same time period as demonstrated by the **highlighted word**

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**Example:** That distinguished sociology professor **has written** a well-known article on applied social studies. Not to mention, her arguments on human behaviour **have been quoted** extensively.

1. It **is** not easy to define what it (means, meant) to live in post-modern society.
2. The Investigating Social Life handbook **outlines** the aims of the unit, learning development and core learning outcome and the teaching programme. Further it (covers, covered) the key texts and other recommended reading as well as assessment tasks and referencing guidelines.
3. Many people **are** fascinated by sociology because it (studies, studied) human social behaviour.
4. When emigrating to another society people **need** to follow the written rules. In addition to that, they (are required, were required) to respect the unwritten norms of that society.
5. The students **will** work on their enquiry skills through assessment techniques focussed on gaining knowledge and understanding of methodology and of social enquiry. They (will, would) also need to access a range of online and off-line sources from the academic literature on research methodology, social theory and social enquiry.

## Answers - Exercise A

1. Sociology students **are** all required to understand the differences between quantitative and qualitative research methods.
  2. Some people argue that teenagers act purely in response to **their** peers.
  3. Marx and Weber **observe** the economic aspect of stratification.
  4. The two articles **offer** contrasting arguments on the underlying causes of poverty.
  5. Most measures of socioeconomic status **include** income or education.
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## Answers - Exercise B

1. It **is** not easy to define what it **means** to live in post-modern society.
2. The Investigating Social Life handbook **outlines** the aims of the unit, learning development and core learning outcome and the teaching programme. Further it **covers** the key texts and other recommended reading as well as assessment tasks and referencing guidelines.
3. Many people **are** fascinated by sociology because it **studies** human social behaviour.
4. When emigrating to another society people **need** to follow the written rules. In addition to that, they **are** required to respect the unwritten norms of that society.
5. The students **will** work on their enquiry skills through assessment techniques focussed on gaining knowledge and understanding of methodology and of social enquiry. They **will** also need to access a range of online and off-line sources from the academic literature on research methodology, social theory and social enquiry.