

SUBJECT-VERB AGREEMENT

THE SKILL

Subjects need to agree with their verbs. Okay, so what does that mean, exactly? You know that subjects can be either singular or plural. Well, verbs can also be singular or plural.

WHAT THESE QUESTIONS LOOK LIKE

The songs on Katy Perry's first pop (3) album was controversial.

3. A. NO CHANGE
 B. album were
 C. albums was
 D. album is

This question is designed to make you think the verb should agree with *album*. However, the subject is actually the plural noun *songs*, which makes **B** the correct answer. Subjects of sentences are **not** parts of prepositional phrases (this is a common trick on the ACT). In the example above, *album* is part of the prepositional phrase on Katy Perry's first pop album. Ignore this phrase to isolate the subject *songs*.

STRATEGIES TO WIN

It can be tempting to jump straight to the verb—that's usually all the ACT will underline. But remember, it's **subject-verb** agreement. So logically, the first step is to:

1. Find the **subject** (who or what is performing the action of the sentence?)
2. Then, locate your **verb**. Keep in mind that there may be more than one verb in a sentence—find the one that directly relates to the subject.
3. Determine if your subject is **singular or plural**, then select the verb that agrees.

Watch Out! ACT rarely places subjects and verbs side-by-side; that would be way too easy! Instead, they will often include the subject, then insert some additional information, and then give you the verb. They want you to assume that the verb should agree with the noun directly before it, but that may not be the case.

SUBJECT-VERB AGREEMENT PRACTICE

Teenage Dream

One of today's most popular and well-known pop **(1) stars are Katy Perry.** It is surprising, then, that she was not allowed to listen to pop music growing up. Born in 1984 as Katheryn Hudson, Katy grew up in her pastor parents' church, often performing gospel music. The support of **(2) her parents were** a contributing factor in the release of her first album, which focused on gospel music. The album was not very successful, though. Craving a larger stage for her vocal and songwriting talents, she changed her name to Katy Perry and moved to Los Angeles, ready to break onto the pop music scene.

Although a few record labels **(3) were interested** in the singer, at first Katy's search for stardom was slow. Katy finally hit it big with her first pop studio album released in 2008; the album launched three number-one hits for Perry. A string of hits continued, and in 2010 she set a huge record. Her third album, *Teenage Dream*, had five consecutive number-one singles, a streak of hits that **(4) was last accomplished by Michael Jackson.** Perry became the first female artist to set this record. She was also the only musician to spend over a year straight in Billboard's Top Ten. Her fourth album, *Prism*, debuted at number one in many countries including the U.S. with another number-one single with "Dark Horse."

Katy Perry's controversial lyrics, outlandish costumes, and **(5) funky hair continues** to keep people's attention. In addition to her prolific music career, she has launched two fragrances, lent her voice to the *Smurfs* movie, and even released her own theatrical documentary, *Katy Perry: Part of Me*.

1. A. NO CHANGE
B. stars is Katy Perry.
C. stars were Katy Perry.
D. stars do include Katy Perry.
2. F. NO CHANGE
G. her parents are
H. her parents was
J. her parents have been
3. A. NO CHANGE
B. was interested
C. is interested
D. were interesting
4. F. NO CHANGE
G. are last accomplished by Michael Jackson.
H. Michael Jackson was last accomplished by.
J. were last accomplished by Michael Jackson.
5. A. NO CHANGE
B. funky hair continue
C. funky hair is continuing
D. funky hair are continued