(was, were), Answers and Teaching Tips

1. When Harold and Guillermo (were) running to the gym, the coach yelled at them to slow down.

**Tip:** When you have two singular subjects joined by the conjunction “and,” the verb must be plural because the subject is plural: “They were running....”

2. Katrina was disappointed because Dr. Girourd and Dr. Kutner (were) closing their practice.

**Tip:** “Dr. Girourd and Dr. Kutner” is the subject of the verb.

3. Although we (were) not chosen for the all-star game, we practiced every day.

**Tip:** The pronoun “we” is plural, thus “were.”

4. Three players (were) running to the locker room when the game started.

5. Seven patients (were) waiting to see the dentist when the alarm rang.

6. Marie was concerned because she did not know where Harold and Maude (were) hiding.

7. The alligators (were) getting restless because they noticed a disturbance in the water.

8. Part of the shipment (was) missing, so Mr. Peters returned the order.

9. While Shirley slept late, both alarm clocks in the bedroom (were) on mute.

**Tip:** Despite the prepositional phrase “in the bedroom,” the word “clocks,” which is plural, is the subject of the verb “were.”

10. The flock of birds (was) flying south for the winter.

**Tip:** The word “flock” (singular) is the subject, thus “was.”

11. Anyone who ate the oysters (was) asked to visit the infirmary.

**Tip:** Some pronouns, called indefinite pronouns, are always singular. These pronouns include: anyone, anybody, another, anything, each, either, neither, someone, somebody, something, one, everyone, everybody, everything, no one, nobody, and nothing.

12. Mr. Simmons or the two science teachers (were) going to call the state legislators.

**Tip:** When a compound subject is separated by the word “or,” the verb form is ruled by the subject that is closer to the verb. In this case, the word “teachers” (plural) is closer, thus “were.”
13. The two science teachers or Mr. Simmons (was) going to call the state legislators.

**Tip:** When a compound subject is separated by the word “or,” the verb form is ruled by the subject that is closer to the verb. In this case, the subject, “Mr. Simmons,” (singular) is closer, thus “was.”

14. The cats that hid in the old house (were) meowing all night.

**Tip:** The relative clause “that hid in the old house” merely interrupts the subject “cats,” which is plural, from the verb ’were.’ Some students may look at the word “house” and think the verb that follows should be singular.

15. Each of the swimmers (was) standing on the platform and ready for the race.

**Tip:** The word “each” is one of those indefinite pronouns that is always singular. Some students get confused with a prepositional phrase “of the swimmers” coming between the subject “each” and the verb “was.”

16. There (were) only three milk cartons in the refrigerator.

**Tip:** After the word “There” at the beginning of a sentence, some students get confused with what form of the verb to use. They must look beyond the verb. “Three milk cartons” is the subject of the verb “were.”

If the sentence had referred to only ONE milk carton, the sentence would read “There **was** only ONE milk carton in the refrigerator.”

17. The Prince and The Pauper (was) my favorite book when I was a child.

**Tip:** The Prince and The Pauper is a book; it is singular, thus requiring the singular form, “was.”

18. A prince and a pauper (were) standing next to each other on the bridge.

**Tip:** In this case, a prince and a pauper are two singular subjects joined by the word “and.” The compound subject is plural, thus requiring the plural form, “were.”

19. Ramon and Alexandra (were) applying for the same teaching position.

**Tip:** When you have two singular subjects joined by the conjunction “and,” the verb must be plural because the subject is plural: “They were applying....”

20. None of the students (were) asked to evaluate the instructor.

**Tip:** Some words including “none,” “any,” “all,” “more,” “most,” and “some” require either a singular verb or a plural verb, depending on their use in the sentence. In these instances, the object of the preposition may be useful in determining whether the verb is singular or plural.

In this case, “students” is plural, so the correct form is **were**.
**Subject-Verb Agreement, Answers, (was, were), (have, has), and (do, does)**

(has, have), Answers and Tips

1. Because Mary Ellen **has** not finished her chores, she cannot go to the movies.

2. The auditorium **has** two hundred seats with a good view of the stage.

3. Burger King **has** seven hundred restaurant tables for sale at the city auction.

4. Unlike Kareem, Jason **has** to study very hard in order to get high marks in mathematics.

5. Marvin wants to visit Greece because he **has** never seen The Acropolis.

6. The children next door **have** planted a flower garden next to the fence.

**Tip:** “Children” is plural, thus “have.”

7. You **have** never finished your homework by the time your mother gets home.

8. The guests **have** not arrived yet.

9. Mercy Hospital **has** the state’s highest success rate with cancer patients.

10. Mariah and Jason **have** given twenty thousand dollars to charity.

11. The cat in the garage **has** a ball, some yarn, and a toy mouse to play with.

**Tip:** Despite the prepositional phrase “in the garage,” the subject of the verb “have” is “cat,” which is singular.

12. Rico and Marie **have** not returned my phone calls for over a month.

13. When Farah and Malik cook dinner, they always **have** enough food left over for the next day.

14. Under the car seat are two notebooks that my brother **has** been missing for three weeks.

**Tip:** “My brother” is the subject of the relative clause, thus “has.”
15. Curry (has) been a popular spice in Caribbean cooking for generations.

16. Thai food is characterized by spices that (have) a sharp, sweet taste and aroma.

**Tip:** Spices, which is plural, is the subject of the verb “have.”

17. French Euro Roast coffee and Sumatra coffee (have) been served at Starbuck’s for a long time.

18. Colin and Anna’s dog has chew toys that (have) been in the garage for weeks.

**Tip:** “Chew toys” (plural) is the subject of the verb “have.”

19. The toast at Rob’s Diner always (has) just enough butter to keep the crust moist.

20. The pictures from Diana’s photography class (have) been accepted by the gallery.

**Tip:** The prepositional phrase “from Diana’s photography class” merely separates the subject “pictures,” which is plural, from the verb, thus “The pictures have....”
(do, does), Answers and Teaching Tips

1. Uncle Sherman is upset because his car (does) not work.

2. Janice told me that the library (does) require two forms of identification to establish an account.

3. The manager informed me that Raheem and Carlos (do) not work at the plant anymore.

4. It will be strange if it (does) not snow until January.

5. The trailer (does) not have electricity and running water.

6. When the children attend the lectures on dinosaurs, they (do) learn a lot about nature.

7. Most rescue organizations (do) not have the proper equipment to deal with such a catastrophe.

**Tip:** Some pronouns, including any, all, none, more, most, and some can be singular or plural depending on how they are used in the sentence. In this case, “most rescue organizations” is plural, thus “do.”

8. Pedro enjoys solving problems, but he (does) not like to spend too much time on them.

9. The chef and the sous chef (do) not have a good working relationship.

10. While Mrs. Jenkins is gone, Mr. Jenkins (does) not clean the kitchen.

11. The chicken fries (do) not provide enough nutrition to sustain you.

12. Franklin and Jessica say that they (do) have enough cookies for the bake sale.

13. Everyone (does) not break the speed limit on Interstate 95.

14. Some people (do) not break the speed limit on interstate 95.

15. If any of the students (do) not understand, they should consult the instruction manual.
16. Either Carlos or the two brothers **(do)** the laundry for the entire family.

**Tip:** When a compound subject is separated by the word “or,” the verb form is ruled by the subject that is closer to the verb. In this case, the subject, “brothers,” (plural) is closer, thus “do.”

17. Either the two brothers or Carlos **(does)** the laundry for the entire family.

**Tip:** When a compound subject is separated by the word “or,” the verb form is ruled by the subject that is closer to the verb. In this case, the subject, “Carlos,” (singular) is closer, thus “does.”

18. Most of the students **(do)** their homework every day.

19. A pride of lions **(does)** not attack a human unless provoked.

**Tip:** “A pride” (singular) is the subject; “of lions” is a prepositional phrase that separates the subject from the verb, thus “A pride does not attack....”

20. Chemicals that **(do)** not contain carbon are called inorganic.