

Subject/Verb Agreement: The Rules

Singular

The subject and the verb of a sentence must always agree for the sentence to be grammatically correct.

What do you notice about the subject and verb in these sentences?

Thomas likes milk. A hen lays eggs.

In these examples, with a **singular subject**, the **verb ends with an 's'**. A **singular** (one) **subject** is always followed by the singular form of the **verb**.

Subject/Verb Agreement: The Rules

Plural

What do you notice about the subject and verb in these sentences?

The cats chase the mice. The children follow the Pied Piper.

In these examples, with a **plural subject**, the **verb does not end with an 's'**. A **plural** (more than one) **subject** is always followed by the plural form of the **verb**.

Subject/Verb Agreement: Exceptions to the Rules

If the subject of the sentence is **'I'** or **'you'** then the rules are different.

Although the pronouns 'I' and 'you' can both refer to a **singular subject**, when used in a Subject/Verb agreement the **verb should not have an 's' on the end**, as it usually would when paired with a singular subject.

For example, **I walk the dog. You walk the dog.** versus

Susan walks the dog.

Subject/Verb Agreement: The Rules

	Singular	Plural
	becomes	become
	catches	catch
	drinks	drink
ıe)	flies	fly
ısed	forgives	forgive
l).	goes	go
	hides	hide
	leads	lead
	rides	ride
	seeks	seek
	springs	spring
eir	tears	tear
n	writes	write

To help with correct verb agreement, the basic rule is:

If the subject is singular (one) the verb must be singular.
If the subject is plural (more than one) the verb must be plural.
If the subject is 'I' or 'you' the verb used must be plural (without 's' on the end).

To form the plural of a verb in the present tense, you should remove the s (or sometimes 'es' or 'ies') from the singular form.

Here are some examples of verbs in their present tense singular and plural form...

Subject/Verb Agreement: The Tricky Bits

The verb 'to be' follows a different rule when it comes to subject/verb agreement. The irregular verb forms of 'to be' are very commonly misused.

Where there is one subject (singular), the correct use of 'to be' is either is, am or was...

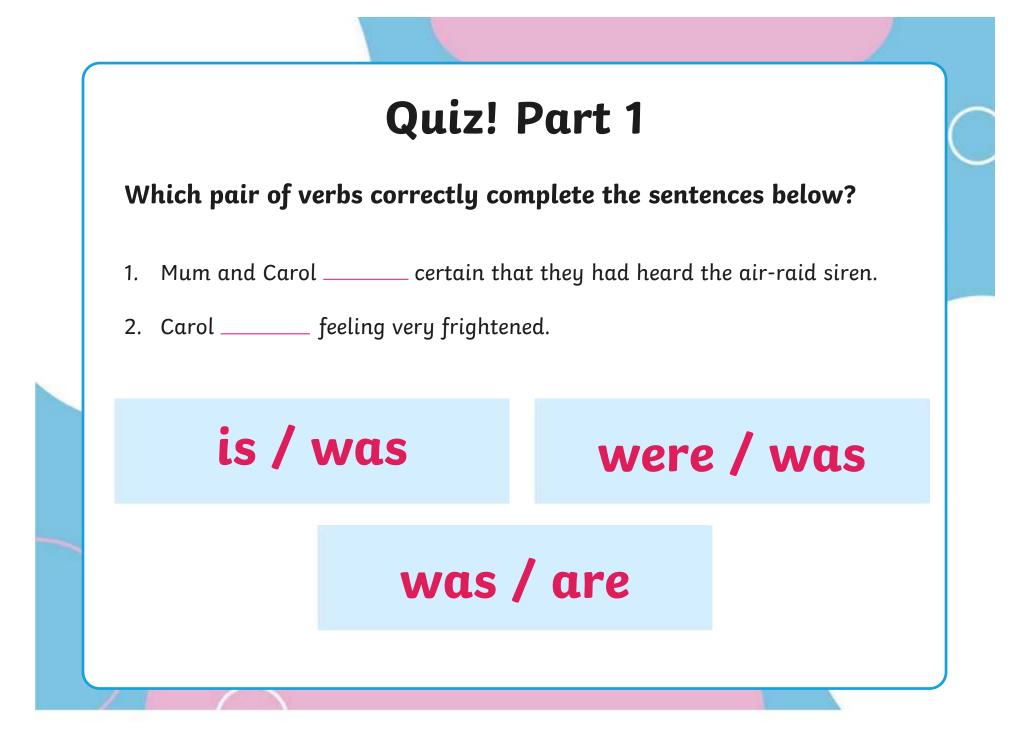
I am/wasI am/I was feeling excited.He is/wasHe is/He was very gentle.She is/wasShe is/She was playing tennis.It is/wasIt is/It was a bright summer's day.

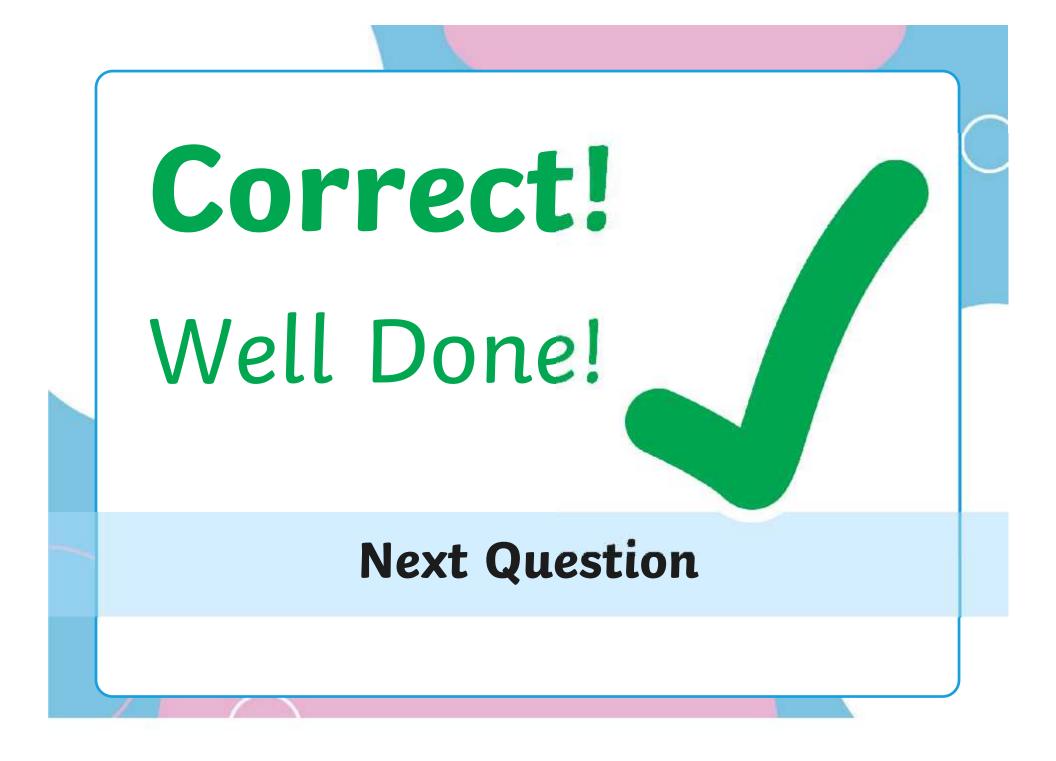
Subject/Verb Agreement: The Tricky Bits

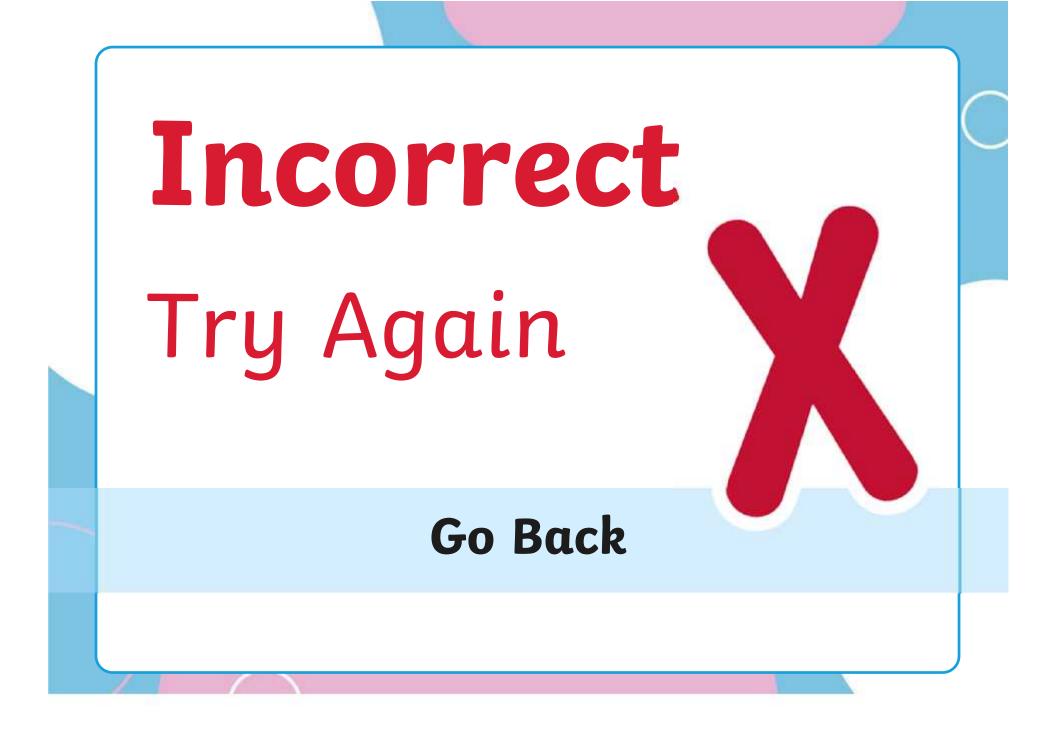
In the plural form, the correct use of 'to be' is either are or were...

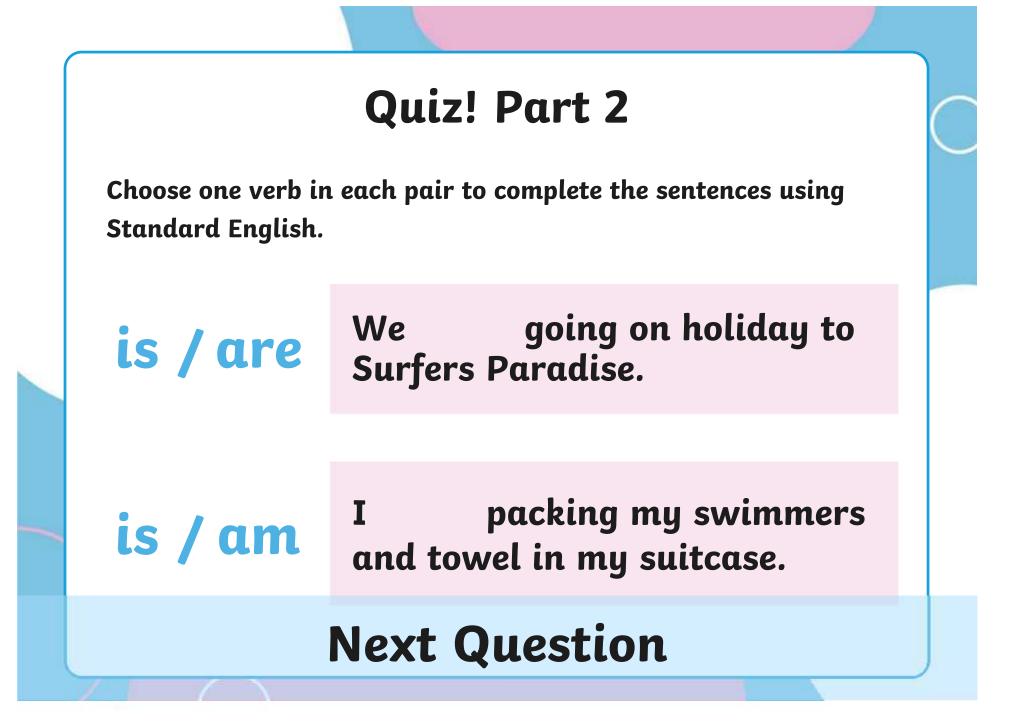
We are/were We are/We were excited. You are/were You are/You were all in deep trouble. They are/were They are/They were playing all day.

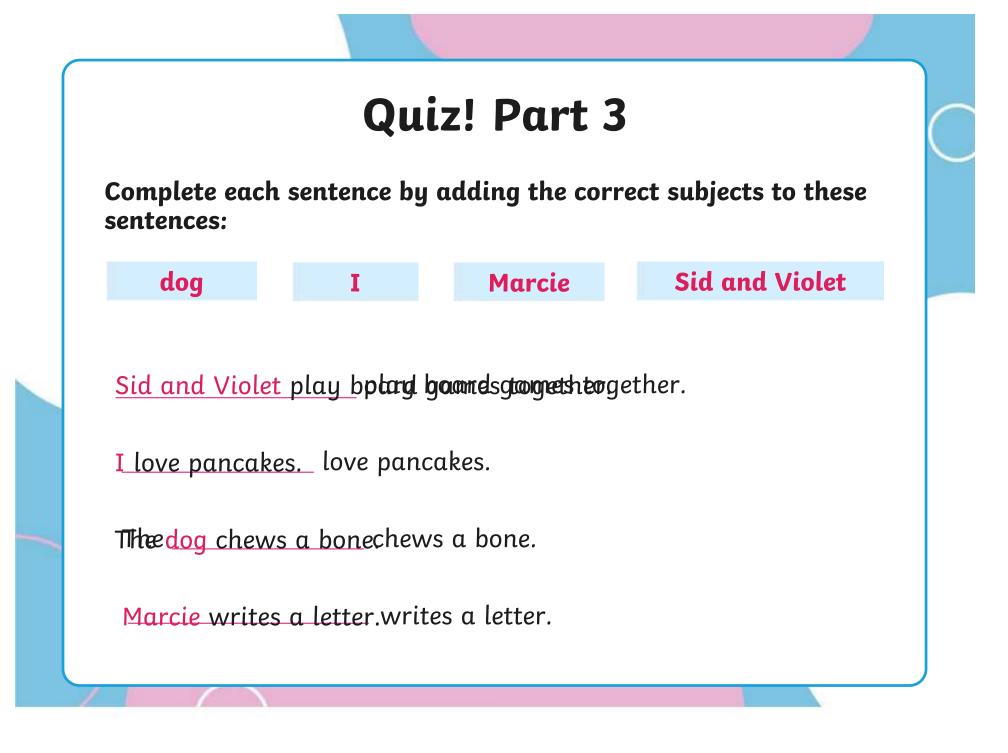
Now you have revised subject/verb agreement, could you answer some quick questions on the topic?











Are you feeling confident with subject/verb agreement?

