

Grammar “Fix It” Exercise

(Trainer Key to Correct Answer)

1. Subject and verb must agree in person and number. Phrases that come between the subject and the verb do not affect the number of the verb. Therefore, “Identification of these risk factors has remained difficult” is the correct sentence.
2. Same thing. The correct sentence would read, “One in five cases contains more than three high risk factors.”
3. Agreement in number is the issue here. Two subjects joined by *and* are a compound subject and require a plural verb. Therefore, “Writing a report and submitting it to court are difficult tasks for new caseworkers.”
4. Agreement in number is the issue, but this is an exception to the rule. If two parts of a compound subject are seen as a unit, use the singular verb. Final Answer! “Bacon and eggs is . . .”
5. Every is an indefinite pronoun that is always singular. Therefore, it’s “Every man, woman, and child on our caseload is given . . . “
6. Collective nouns like family take either singular or plural verbs, but when the word refers to the group as a whole, use the singular verb. Therefore, “The Smith family was the last to be seen . . . “
7. *Measles* is a noun that is plural in form, but singular in meaning. Use the singular verb in this case. “Measles is a preventable disease.”
8. Subject and pronoun should agree. “The Democratic party has nominated its . . .”
9. Writers should express parallel thoughts in parallel construction. To correct this sentence the writer need only add “. . . in fall . . .”
10. Dangling modifier problem. It reads as though the cottage is doing the strolling. Fixing it can be done in several ways. One to consider, “As I was strolling down the lane . . .”
11. Complicated negative constructions burden the reader. Instead, “I could see it was a high risk case.”

Adapted from Write Right, Jan Venolia