

## Find the word!

- Match the sentences in the list to the Lego constructions (**see the model sentence**).
- Each construction has a letter pasted underneath. Once you have matched all the constructions to the sentences, flip the constructions and write the letters in the boxes to the left to reveal the word.

**Pink** = subject

**Green** = verbal

**Blue** = object

**Red** = adverbial

**White** = subject predicative

The **orange** block indicates the beginning of the sentence.

Open the door carefully!

The big, friendly giant hates snozzcumbers.

Go tomorrow.

Sophie is a lovely person.

The zombies always enjoy brains.

Do you often eat brains?

Did the Queen of England arrive yesterday?

Is she the giant's closest friend?

## Learner writing: Concord between subject and verbal

1. For example, there have been a focus on working with parents.
2. Jenny and her husband was coming to dinner.
3. He meet a girl, Allie, a rich woman who's studing to be a good wife
4. Drinking in Sweden has dicreased among younger people, but health problems related to alcohol consumption has not.
5. Also, children from families with alcohol abuse is in a greater risk.
6. He found his uncles car and there was gunholes in it.
7. The population have increased a lot.
8. There are a very fine line between genius and insanity.
9. That he couldn't find the answers were frustrating.
10. After beating Abdul, who are brought to tears after having his toe stepped on by Sir Cedric, Hubert is knighted.
11. She thinks everybody are talking about her.



Source for most examples: Johansson, E. (n.d.). *Concord errors in written production of Swedish learners of English*. Kandidatuppsats. Retrieved from [https://gupea.ub.gu.se/bitstream/2077/29471/1/gupea\\_2077\\_29471\\_1.pdf](https://gupea.ub.gu.se/bitstream/2077/29471/1/gupea_2077_29471_1.pdf).

1. **Identify** instances in these sentences where the standard patterns for subject-verbal concord in English are not used.
2. **Describe** to each other (and try to agree on) what the problem is, in each case. Use grammatical terminology!
3. **Explain** why you think the writer wrote the sentence like this.

# Corpus of American Soap Operas

<https://www.english-corpora.org/soap/>

- Find the **clause pattern** for each of the underlined sentences below (only the underlined part).
- Are the sentences **interrogative** or **declarative**?
- There are two **imperative** sentences in the extracts (not underlined), can you spot them?

## 1

Edmund: Did they get to the yacht yet?

Derek: No, it's still burning out of control.

Maria: Thanks.

## 2

Joe: We just got an emergency call about the crash.

Erica: Oh, God, Joe! Is it the baby? Did they find Bianca's baby?

## 3

Dixie: What does that mean? Does that mean he was drugged?

Chris: It looks that way.

Tad: Well, what did they find in his system?

## 4

J.R.: He wouldn't hurt me. My father – he can't be behind this.

Amanda: Did they tell you that?

J.R.: My father hates me, but he – he doesn't hate me enough to torture me.

## 5

Di: Come out before a bug crawls up your pants.

David: Shh! Keep your voice down.

Di: Oh, that's good – advice from the guy who hides in the bushes at his enemy's house. Did they revoke your brains when they revoked your license?

David: All right, yes, I know it was a risky move, but I had to come. I have big news.

## Find the word!

- With the puzzle pieces:

1. Make **an imperative sentence** using five pieces;

Check your sentence by reading the letters pasted to the back of each piece. The sentence will form a word (read backwards).

Write the word here:

— — — — —

2. **Add** one piece to make **a declarative sentence**;

Check your sentence again by reading the letters pasted to the back of each piece.

Write the word here:

— — — — —

3. **Add** another piece to make **an interrogative sentence**.

Check your sentence again, and write the word here:

— — — — —

**NB! Two of the pieces do not belong in either of the sentences!**

**When are you are done, and if you have some minutes to spare:**

- Describe the three words you found by piecing together the sentences:
  - Which word class do they belong to?
- Explain why the two pieces you chose not to use do not belong in any of the sentences.

## Fronting

Identify examples of **fronting** in the sentences below, and discuss how fronting can be used in English. Use grammatical terminology to describe the word order in each of the sentences where fronting occurs.



- a. He did not have time to drink his beer. The elevator doors hissed open, and out walked Nat Dickstein.
- b. He did not know when he would see her again. But see her again he would.
- c. They wanted a full-scale inquiry. This the police refused to provide.
- d. Uncommonly nice claret you have there.
- e. Dinner they had occasionally, but breakfast they never missed.
- f. We wanted to give them a fright, and frightened they were.
- g. Attitudes will not change overnight, but change they will.

1. Explore **the Scots syntax atlas** (link here: <https://hegela.com/links/>), and discuss what you can see and hear there (click 'next' in the story frame to move forward).
2. Discuss:

What are some arguments for and against **focusing on subject-verbal agreement in an English subject classroom in Norway**? Do you agree with Flognfeldt and Lund (quote below)?

“This is a kind of language mistake that worries a lot of teachers. It is perhaps more of a frustration than a serious problem, because it won’t hinder communication between people, unless it happens so often that the person you are talking or writing to starts getting annoyed by it”

(Flognfeldt & Lund, 2021, p. 198).



## Corpus tasks

Search for *there's* in the spoken section of the Corpus of Contemporary English (<https://www.english-corpora.org/coca/>):

1. Type in *there 's* in the search box. You need to add a space between *there* and *'s*.
2. Click “Sections”, and click “Spoken” in the box to the left.
3. Click “Find matching strings”

Study the results. What is the real subject in the examples? Are these subjects singular or plural?

The screenshot shows the COCA search interface. At the top, there are tabs: List (selected), Chart, Word, and Browse +. Below the tabs is a search box containing 'there 's' and a placeholder '[POS]?'. Below the search box are two buttons: 'Find matching strings' and 'Reset'. Below the buttons is a section labeled 'Sections' with a checkbox. To the right of the checkbox are links: 'Texts/Virtual', 'Sort/Limit', and 'Opt'. Below the 'Sections' checkbox are two columns of text. Column 1 is labeled '1' and contains a list of sections: IGNORE, ----, TV/MOVIES, BLOG, WEB-GENL, SPOKEN (highlighted), FICTION, MAGAZINE, NEWSPAPER, and ACADEMIC. Column 2 is labeled '2' and contains a list of sections: IGNORE, ----, TV/MOVIES, BLOG, WEB-GENL, SPOKEN, FICTION, MAGAZINE, NEWSPAPER, and ACADEMIC.

Use the British National Corpus (<https://www.english-corpora.org/bnc/>) to do the following:

1. Search for *everybody has*, and note down the number of times this combination occurs in the corpus.
  2. Then, search for *everybody have* and note down the number of times this combination occurs.
  3. Click on *everybody have* to find examples from the corpus. *Everybody* is a third-person singular indefinite pronoun, and should have the s-form of the verb in the present tense. How can we explain the use of *have* with *everybody* here?
- 
4. Search for *we were* and then *we was* in the same corpus, and discuss your results. Note down at least one example of each combination to share with the rest of the group.

## Collective nouns

### Collective nouns: Unit reading and distributive reading

The following examples are taken from *the British National Corpus* + one example from *the Corpus of Contemporary American English* (from an interview with the British politician Nigel Farage).

**Explain** the use of the verb form in these examples. Is there a difference in meaning between *my family are* and *my family is*? Could a single/plural verb form have been used instead?

- a) And in fact, I get an awful lot of support from friends (pause) erm, not family because **my family are**n't, weren't aware of it, erm but I mean, really it came from fre--, really close friends that I could sit down and talk to (pause) and that could understand me and accept me,
- b) And, quite honestly I'd (pause) **my family are** quite happy where they are.
- c) He swooped about, holding an imaginary partner, and John said to Anne, ' You must think **my family are** cracked.' You haven't met my brothers,' she laughed.
- d) Holding son Alejandro in his arms, Peres told interviewers: ' **My family are** my life -- and now they are free.'
- e) He recalls visiting a working men's club 200 yards from Miliband's constituency office. " I had no problem there at all. My background isn't particularly posh or non-posh. If you go back a few generations, **my family are** very modest they've been postmen and so on."
- f) As always, **my family is** devoted to carrying out its duty. I am anxious that my grandsons, Prince William and Prince Harry, should grow up in as happy and stable an environment as possible because they represent not just my family's future, but a continuation of a tradition which has bound the British people together for centuries.
- g) Oh yes, **my family is** much better than yours. I do not want my new friends to know I am connected to a boring man like you. From now on I will publish everything as Gina Buffon. I do not want to take your silly name any longer.
- h) Particularly popular with the Scottish galleries, guitar- playing Tom resigned from Kansas City Country Club after a businessman was denied membership, apparently because he was Jewish.' I can't live with that because **my family is** Jewish,' said Tom, born in Kansas 41 years ago.