

AL

CLASS 10 • ENGLISH GRAMMAR

GRAMMAR MASTERY

Direct & Indirect Speech
+ Subject-Verb Agreement

The Complete Two-in-One Edition



130+ PRACTICE QUESTIONS • FULLY SOLVED ANSWER KEYS

Board-Pattern Exercises • Mind Maps • Rule Charts

How to Use This Book

This is the **complete two-in-one edition** covering both **Direct & Indirect Speech** and **Subject-Verb Agreement** — two of the highest-weightage grammar topics in the CBSE Class 10 English board exam. Together they regularly account for 8–10 marks across the Writing & Grammar section, and quietly affect marks in letter, notice and article writing too.

The book is organised in two parts. Work through each part in order: read the rule box, study the worked examples, then attempt the practice sets that follow. Every practice set is fully solved in the Answer Key at the end of its part, so you can self-check without flipping back and forth mid-attempt.

What You Will Master in This Book

- **Part 1:** The 3 Golden Rules, tense backshift, pronoun & time-place changes, converting statements, questions, commands and exclamations, plus special cases and common mistakes
- **Part 2:** 15 numbered Subject-Verb Agreement rules — collective nouns, either/or, indefinite pronouns, 'a number of' vs 'the number of', there is/are, uncountable nouns and more
- Two full mind maps for last-minute revision
- **130+ practice questions** in board-exam format, fully solved

Marks Weightage Snapshot

Question Type in Board Paper	Typical Marks	Where This Topic Appears
Editing / Transformation (Gap-fill)	4–5 marks each	Grammar section, direct question
Integrated Grammar (dialogue/verb forms)	2–3 marks	Combined with other grammar items
Reading & writing-based application	1–2 marks	Comprehension, letters, notices, articles

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PART ONE

DIRECT & INDIRECT SPEECH

Rules • Tables • Mind Map • 65 Practice Questions • Answer Key

1. Key Terms & The 3 Golden Rules

Direct Speech reports the exact words spoken, enclosed in quotation marks. **Indirect (Reported) Speech** reports the meaning of what was said, without quotation marks, usually introduced by a reporting verb (says, said, told, asked...) and a connector (that, if, whether, to...).

Example: *Riya said, "I am learning French."*

Correct: Riya said that she was learning French.

Golden Rule 1 — The Reporting Verb

- If the reporting verb is in the **present or future tense** (says, will say), the tense inside the speech does NOT change.
- If the reporting verb is in the **past tense** (said), the tense inside the speech usually shifts one step back (this is called **backshift**).
- 'Said to' changes to **told** when followed by an object (the listener).

Golden Rule 2 — The Connector

- Statements → use **that** (often omitted in informal speech, but written in formal exam answers)
- Yes/No Questions → use **if / whether**
- Wh- Questions → use the **Wh- word itself** (what, where, why...) as the connector; no 'that'
- Commands/Requests → use **to** (positive) or **not to** (negative); no reporting 'that'

Golden Rule 3 — Word Order & Punctuation

- Quotation marks are removed; the sentence becomes a statement (except for genuine reported questions, which still end with a full stop, NOT a question mark).
- Question word order (auxiliary before subject) changes back to **normal statement order** in indirect speech.
- The auxiliary 'do/does/did' used only for questions is dropped once word order is normalised.

Example: *Raj asked, "Where do you live?"*

Correct: Raj asked where I lived.

2. Tense Backshift Chart

When the reporting verb is in the **past tense**, shift the tense of the direct speech one step back as shown below. This is the single most tested rule in this chapter.

Direct Speech (Tense)	Indirect Speech (Tense)	Example (Direct → Indirect)
Simple Present	Simple Past	"I play." → he played.
Present Continuous	Past Continuous	"I am playing." → he was playing.
Present Perfect	Past Perfect	"I have played." → he had played.
Present Perfect Continuous	Past Perfect Continuous	"I have been playing." → he had been playing.
Simple Past	Past Perfect	"I played." → he had played.
Past Continuous	Past Perfect Continuous	"I was playing." → he had been playing.
Past Perfect	Past Perfect (no change)	"I had played." → he had played.
Future (will/shall)	would	"I will play." → he would play.
Future Continuous	would be + V-ing	"I will be playing." → he would be playing.

Modal Verbs — Backshift Chart

Direct (Modal)	Indirect (Modal)
can	could
may	might
must / have to	had to
shall (simple future)	would
will	would

No Further Backshift Needed

- **could, would, might, should, ought to** and **must** (when it means logical necessity, not obligation) do NOT change further — they stay the same in indirect speech.

3. Pronoun & Possessive Changes

Pronouns change according to **person**, following this rule: the 1st person pronoun in direct speech changes according to the **subject** of the reporting verb; the 2nd person pronoun changes according to the **object** of the reporting verb; the 3rd person pronoun never changes.

Direct Speech	Indirect Speech
I, we (1st person)	changes to subject of reporting verb (he/she/they/it)
you (2nd person)	changes to object of reporting verb (him/her/them)
he, she, it, they (3rd person)	no change
my, our	his/her/their (matches subject of reporting verb)
your	his/her/their (matches object of reporting verb)
mine, ours	his/hers/theirs
this	that (unless still physically present)
these	those

Example: Sameer said, "I have lost my pen."

Correct: Sameer said that he had lost his pen.

Example: She said to me, "You look tired."

Correct: She told me that I looked tired.

Example: They said, "We will help you."

Correct: They said that they would help me.

4. Time, Place & Word Changes

Words that point to 'now' or 'here' from the speaker's original moment must shift to match the reporting moment, if the reporting verb is in the past tense.

Direct Speech	Indirect Speech
now	then
today	that day
tonight	that night
yesterday	the day before / the previous day
tomorrow	the next day / the following day
last night	the night before
last week/month/year	the previous week/month/year
next week/month/year	the following week/month/year
ago	before
here	there
this	that
these	those
come	go
bring	take

Example: He said, "I will finish this today."

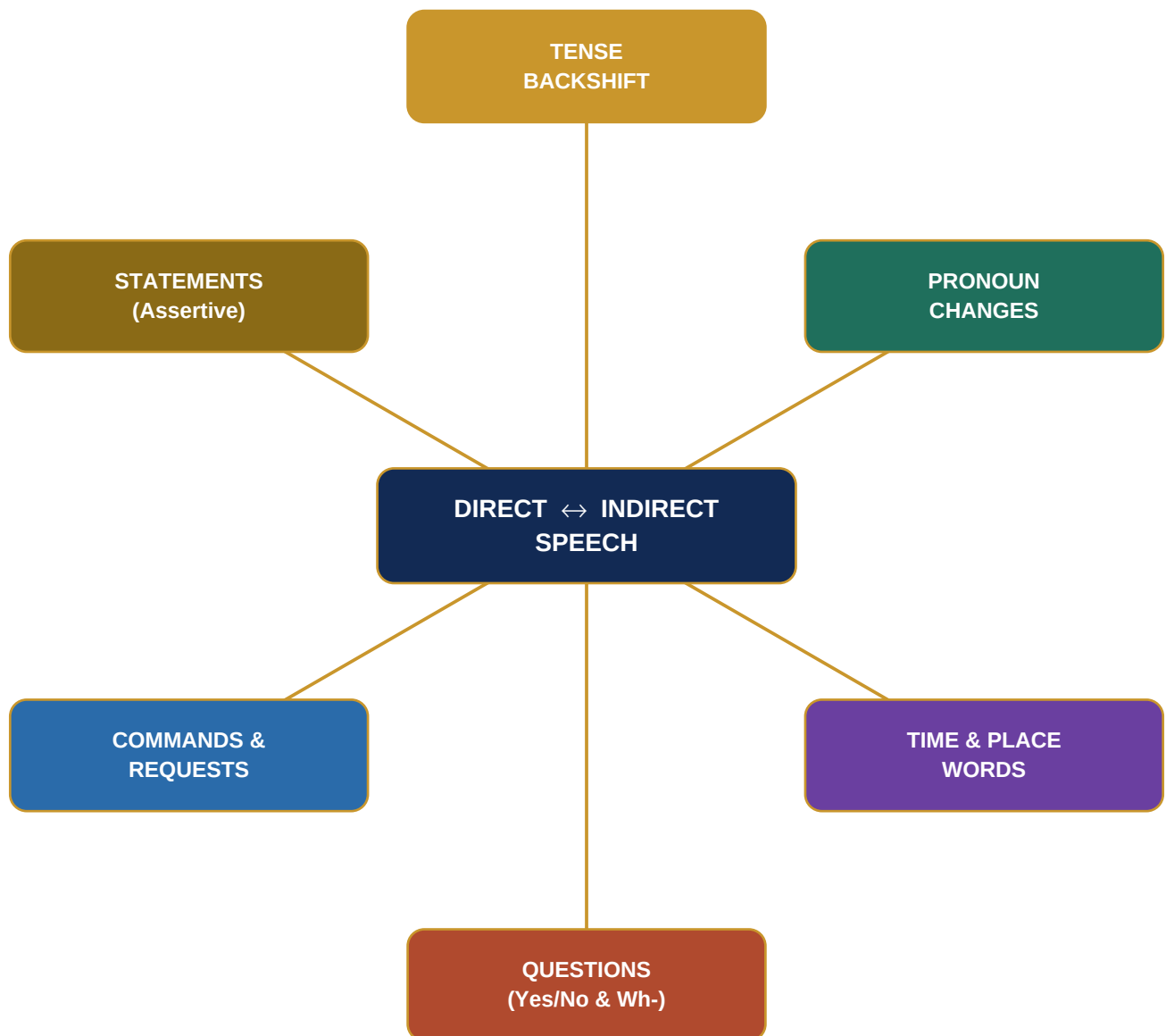
Correct: He said that he would finish that the same day.

Exam Tip

- If the reporting verb is in the **present tense**, or the situation is still true/current, these words often stay unchanged — use judgement based on context, not blind substitution.

5. Mind Map — Direct & Indirect Speech at a Glance

Use this map for quick last-minute revision before the exam. Each branch is explained in detail in the sections that follow.



6. When NOT to Change the Tense

Universal Truths & Habitual Facts

- If the direct speech states a **universal truth, scientific fact, or habitual action**, the tense remains unchanged even if the reporting verb is in the past tense.

Example: *The teacher said, "The sun rises in the east."*

Correct: The teacher said that the sun rises in the east.

Example: *She said, "Honesty is the best policy."*

Correct: She said that honesty is the best policy.

Example: *He said, "I go for a walk every morning."*

Correct: He said that he goes for a walk every morning. (habitual)

Present Reporting Verb

- If the reporting verb is in the **present or future tense** (says/will say), do NOT backshift the tense at all — only pronouns and time/place words change if needed.

Example: *Anil says, "I am busy today."*

Correct: Anil says that he is busy today.

7. Converting Statements (Assertive Sentences)

Step-by-Step Method

- Change the reporting verb: **says/say** → **says**; **said** → **said**; **said to** → **told**
- Remove quotation marks and add the connector **that**
- Change pronouns as per Golden Rule (Section 3)
- Backshift the tense if required (Section 2)
- Change time/place words if required (Section 4)

Example: Mother said, "I am cooking dinner."

Correct: Mother said that she was cooking dinner.

Example: He said, "I passed the exam last year."

Correct: He said that he had passed the exam the previous year.

Example: They said, "We shall meet you tomorrow."

Correct: They said that they would meet us the next day.

Example: The manager said to the staff, "You must submit the report by Friday."

Correct: The manager told the staff that they had to submit the report by Friday.

Example: Neha said, "I can swim very well."

Correct: Neha said that she could swim very well.

Example: The old man said, "I have lived in this village for fifty years."

Correct: The old man said that he had lived in that village for fifty years.

Example: She said, "I don't like loud music."

Correct: She said that she did not like loud music.

Example: He said, "I was reading a novel when you called."

Correct: He said that he had been reading a novel when I had called.

Assertive Sentences with Negatives

Example: The boy said, "I have not finished my homework."

Correct: The boy said that he had not finished his homework.

8. Converting Yes/No Questions

Rules for Yes/No Questions

- Reporting verb **said/said to** → **asked**
- Connector: **if** or **whether** (both acceptable)
- Change the question word order to **normal statement order** (subject before verb)
- Drop the auxiliary do/does/did once word order is normalised, and adjust the main verb's tense instead
- End with a full stop, NOT a question mark

Example: He said to her, "Do you like coffee?"

Correct: He asked her if she liked coffee.

Example: The teacher said, "Have you completed the assignment?"

Correct: The teacher asked if I had completed the assignment.

Example: She said to me, "Can you help me with this?"

Correct: She asked me if I could help her with that.

Example: Rohit said, "Is it raining outside?"

Correct: Rohit asked if it was raining outside.

Example: The officer said, "Did you bring your documents?"

Correct: The officer asked if I had brought my documents.

Example: She asked, "Will you come to the party?"

Correct: She asked if I would come to the party.

9. Converting Wh- Questions

Rules for Wh- Questions

- Reporting verb **said/said to** → **asked**
- The Wh- word itself (what, where, when, why, who, how) becomes the connector — do NOT add 'that'
- Change question word order to normal statement order
- Backshift tense and change pronouns/time-place words as usual

Example: *He said to me, "Where do you live?"*

Correct: He asked me where I lived.

Example: *The teacher said, "Why are you late today?"*

Correct: The teacher asked why I was late that day.

Example: *She said to him, "What are you doing here?"*

Correct: She asked him what he was doing there.

Example: *They said, "When will the results be declared?"*

Correct: They asked when the results would be declared.

Example: *He asked, "Who broke this window?"*

Correct: He asked who had broken that window.

Example: *The interviewer said, "How did you solve this problem?"*

Correct: The interviewer asked how I had solved that problem.

Exam Tip

- When the Wh- word itself is the subject of the question (e.g. 'Who broke the window?'), the word order does not need rearranging — it is already in statement order.

10. Converting Commands, Requests & Orders

Rules for Imperative Sentences

- Reporting verb changes based on tone: **ordered / commanded** (strict order), **requested** (please), **advised** (should), **forbade** (negative command), **told** (neutral)
- Connector: **to** (positive command) or **not to** (negative command) — remove 'please', 'kindly'
- The base form of the verb (V1) stays as the infinitive: **to + V1**
- No backshift of tense is needed — infinitives don't carry tense

Example: *The teacher said, "Sit down."*

Correct: The teacher ordered/told the students to sit down.

Example: *He said, "Please help me with this bag."*

Correct: He requested me to help him with that bag.

Example: *The doctor said, "Do not eat oily food."*

Correct: The doctor advised him not to eat oily food.

Example: *The officer said, "Stand in a line."*

Correct: The officer ordered them to stand in a line.

Example: *Mother said, "Do not go out in the rain."*

Correct: Mother forbade me to go out in the rain. / told me not to go out in the rain.

Example: *The captain said, "Attack now!"*

Correct: The captain commanded them to attack immediately.

Example: *She said to the child, "Don't touch the stove."*

Correct: She warned the child not to touch the stove.

Example: *He said, "Kindly close the door."*

Correct: He requested me to close the door.

Requests Beginning with 'Let'

The Word 'Let'

- **Let me...** → reporting verb becomes **requested/proposed**, and 'let me' becomes **'he/she might be allowed to'**
- **Let us / Let's...** → reporting verb becomes **suggested/proposed**, and the clause becomes **'they should...'**
- **Let him/her/them...** → reporting verb becomes **said**, and it becomes **'...should be allowed to...'**

Example: *He said, "Let me carry your bag."*

Correct: He requested that he might be allowed to carry my bag.

Example: *She said, "Let's go for a movie."*

Correct: She suggested that they should go for a movie.

11. Converting Exclamatory & Optative Sentences

Rules for Exclamatory Sentences

- Reporting verb becomes **exclaimed with joy/sorrow/wonder/regret** as appropriate to the emotion
- Remove interjections (Alas!, Hurrah!, Wow!, Oh!) and exclamation marks
- 'What a/an + noun' and 'How + adjective' clauses are usually rewritten with **'that' + a statement**, often using 'very' to preserve intensity

Example: She said, "Alas! I have failed."

Correct: She exclaimed with sorrow that she had failed.

Example: He said, "What a beautiful sunset!"

Correct: He exclaimed that it was a very beautiful sunset.

Example: They said, "Hurrah! We have won the match."

Correct: They exclaimed with joy that they had won the match.

Example: She said, "How clever you are!"

Correct: She exclaimed that I was very clever.

Optative Sentences (Wishes/Prayers)

Rule for Optative Sentences

- Reporting verb becomes **wished / prayed**, and the clause is introduced with **'that'**

Example: The priest said, "May you live long!"

Correct: The priest wished that I might live long.

12. Special Cases Examiners Love

'Shall I...?' — Offers/Suggestions

- 'Shall I...?' (offer) → reporting verb becomes **offered**, and the clause uses **should**
- 'Shall we...?' (suggestion) → reporting verb becomes **suggested**, using **should**

Example: He said, "Shall I open the window?"

Correct: He offered to open the window.

Example: She said, "Shall we start the meeting?"

Correct: She suggested that they should start the meeting.

'Used to' and Past Habitual Actions

- **used to** does NOT change — it already expresses a discontinued past habit and stays as 'used to' in indirect speech.

Example: He said, "I used to play cricket every day."

Correct: He said that he used to play cricket every day.

Direct Speech with Two Clauses (Statement + Question, etc.)

- Report each clause separately with its own connector, joined by **and**.

Example: He said, "I am tired and I want to rest."

Correct: He said that he was tired and that he wanted to rest.

Reported Speech Inside a Question

- When the whole sentence is itself a question about what someone said, keep the outer question mark but treat the reported part using indirect-speech rules.

Example: Did she say, "I will not come"?

Correct: Did she say that she would not come?

13. 10 Common Mistakes to Avoid

- ✗ *Using a question mark in indirect Yes/No or Wh- questions — always end with a full stop.*
- ✗ *Forgetting to change "said to" to "told" when an object (listener) is present.*
- ✗ *Adding "that" after Wh- words or "if/whether" — only ONE connector is needed, never both.*
- ✗ *Not restoring normal word order in reported questions (e.g. keeping "did he go" instead of "he had gone").*
- ✗ *Backshifting tenses even when the reporting verb is in the present tense.*
- ✗ *Forgetting that universal truths keep the Simple Present tense regardless of the reporting verb.*
- ✗ *Mixing up "bring/come" (toward speaker) with "take/go" (away from speaker) after the shift.*
- ✗ *Using "could/would/might/should" as if they need further backshift — they don't change.*
- ✗ *Leaving "please" or "kindly" in the indirect command instead of converting the tone into the reporting verb.*
- ✗ *Forgetting that "this/these" only change to "that/those" when the object is no longer present or relevant.*

Practice Set A — Statements

Rewrite each sentence in indirect speech.

Change the following sentences into indirect speech.

- 1** She said, "I am writing a letter."
- 2** He said, "I have finished my homework."
- 3** They said, "We will visit Delhi next month."
- 4** The boy said, "I play cricket every Sunday."
- 5** She said, "I was watching TV when the phone rang."
- 6** He said, "I had already left when you called."
- 7** My father said, "I bought this car last year."
- 8** The girl said, "I don't understand this sum."
- 9** The teacher said, "The Earth revolves around the Sun."
- 10** He said, "I can speak three languages."
- 11** She said, "I must complete this project today."
- 12** They said, "We were playing football in the park."
- 13** The old woman said, "I have lived here since childhood."

Practice Set B — Questions

Rewrite each sentence in indirect speech.

Change the following sentences into indirect speech.

- 1** He said to her, "Do you like ice cream?"
- 2** She asked, "Where are you going?"
- 3** The teacher said, "Have you done your homework?"
- 4** He said to me, "What is your name?"
- 5** She said, "Can you lend me your pen?"
- 6** They asked, "When will the train arrive?"
- 7** He said to his friend, "Why did you not call me yesterday?"
- 8** She asked, "Is it going to rain today?"
- 9** The man said, "How much does this cost?"
- 10** He asked, "Who is knocking at the door?"
- 11** She said to him, "Will you attend the wedding?"
- 12** The officer said, "Did you complete the form?"
- 13** He asked, "Which book do you want to borrow?"

Practice Set C — Commands, Requests & Exclamations

Rewrite each sentence in indirect speech.

Change the following sentences into indirect speech.

- 1** The teacher said, "Open your books."
- 2** He said, "Please pass the salt."
- 3** The doctor said, "Take rest for two days."
- 4** She said, "Don't make noise in the library."
- 5** The captain said, "Fire!"
- 6** He said, "Kindly switch off the lights."
- 7** She said, "Alas! I have lost my purse."
- 8** They said, "Hurrah! We have won the trophy."
- 9** He said, "What a wonderful performance!"
- 10** The mother said, "Wish you a happy birthday!"
- 11** The guard said, "Do not cross the line."
- 12** She said, "Let me finish this first."
- 13** He said, "Let's go for a walk."

Practice Set D — Mixed — Board-Pattern

Rewrite each sentence in indirect speech. (As per actual CBSE exam pattern.)

Change the following sentences into indirect speech.

- 1** The principal said to the students, "Maintain discipline in the assembly."
- 2** She said, "I shall be leaving for Mumbai tomorrow."
- 3** He asked his sister, "Have you seen my glasses anywhere?"
- 4** The coach said, "Practice hard if you want to win."
- 5** She said, "I am extremely happy with the results."
- 6** The clerk said, "Fill this form and submit it at the counter."
- 7** He said, "I used to visit my grandmother every summer."
- 8** They said, "We shall never forget this day."
- 9** The teacher asked, "Why were you absent yesterday?"
- 10** She said, "What a pity that we missed the train!"
- 11** He said to the waiter, "Bring me a glass of water."
- 12** The manager said, "The meeting will be held next week."
- 13** She said, "I have never been to that place before."

Practice Set E — Error Correction / Editing

Each sentence has ONE error in the reported-speech conversion. Identify and correct it.

Rewrite the incorrect part correctly. (Format: as in the actual board editing exercise.)

- 1** Incorrect: He told that he was tired. — Identify the missing word.
- 2** Incorrect: She asked me that where I was going. — Identify the extra word.
- 3** Incorrect: He said that he will come tomorrow. — Identify the tense error.
- 4** Incorrect: She asked if did I finish my work? — Identify the word-order error.
- 5** Incorrect: The teacher told to the students to be quiet. — Identify the extra word.
- 6** Incorrect: He said that the sun rose in the east. — Identify the tense error (universal truth).
- 7** Incorrect: She requested me to please help her. — Identify the redundant word.
- 8** Incorrect: He asked me what I am doing there. — Identify the tense error.
- 9** Incorrect: They said that they has passed the test. — Identify the subject-verb error.
- 10** Incorrect: He said that he is here yesterday. — Identify the double error (verb + time word).
- 11** Incorrect: She said that she must have finished it before I arrive. — Identify the tense error.
- 12** Incorrect: The officer ordered him don't to leave. — Identify the negative-command error.
- 13** Incorrect: He asked whether I can help him? — Identify TWO errors.

Answer Key — Part 1: Direct & Indirect Speech

Set A — Statements

1. She said that she was writing a letter.
2. He said that he had finished his homework.
3. They said that they would visit Delhi the following month.
4. The boy said that he played cricket every Sunday.
5. She said that she had been watching TV when the phone had rung.
6. He said that he had already left when I had called.
7. My father said that he had bought that car the previous year.
8. The girl said that she did not understand that sum.
9. The teacher said that the Earth revolves around the Sun.
10. He said that he could speak three languages.
11. She said that she had to complete that project that day.
12. They said that they had been playing football in the park.
13. The old woman said that she had lived there since childhood.

Set B — Questions

1. He asked her if she liked ice cream.
2. She asked where I was going.
3. The teacher asked if I had done my homework.
4. He asked me what my name was.
5. She asked if I could lend her my pen.
6. They asked when the train would arrive.
7. He asked his friend why he had not called him the day before.
8. She asked if it was going to rain that day.
9. The man asked how much that cost.
10. He asked who was knocking at the door.
11. She asked him if he would attend the wedding.
12. The officer asked if I had completed the form.
13. He asked which book I wanted to borrow.

Set C — Commands, Requests & Exclamations

1. The teacher told/ordered the students to open their books.
2. He requested me to pass the salt.
3. The doctor advised him to take rest for two days.
4. She told/forbade them not to make noise in the library.
5. The captain commanded them to fire.
6. He requested me to switch off the lights.

7. She exclaimed with sorrow that she had lost her purse.
8. They exclaimed with joy that they had won the trophy.
9. He exclaimed that it was a very wonderful performance.
10. The mother wished me a happy birthday.
11. The guard ordered them not to cross the line.
12. She requested that she might be allowed to finish that first.
13. He suggested that they should go for a walk.

Set D — Mixed Board-Pattern

1. The principal told the students to maintain discipline in the assembly.
2. She said that she would be leaving for Mumbai the next day.
3. He asked his sister if she had seen his glasses anywhere.
4. The coach told them to practice hard if they wanted to win.
5. She said that she was extremely happy with the results.
6. The clerk told them to fill that form and submit it at the counter.
7. He said that he used to visit his grandmother every summer.
8. They said that they would never forget that day.
9. The teacher asked why I had been absent the day before.
10. She exclaimed that it was a great pity that they had missed the train.
11. He asked the waiter to bring him a glass of water.
12. The manager said that the meeting would be held the following week.
13. She said that she had never been to that place before.

Set E — Error Correction / Editing

1. Correct: He said that he was tired. (missing connector 'that' after told is fine, but 'told' needs an object — correct form: He told her that he was tired, OR He said that he was tired.)
2. Correct: She asked me where I was going. (remove 'that' — Wh- word alone is the connector)
3. Correct: He said that he would come the next day. (will → would after past reporting verb)
4. Correct: She asked if I had finished my work. (restore normal word order, drop 'did')
5. Correct: The teacher told the students to be quiet. ('told to' is wrong — 'told' takes a direct object, not 'to')
6. Correct: He said that the sun rises in the east. (universal truth stays in Simple Present)
7. Correct: She requested me to help her. ('please' must be dropped in indirect requests)
8. Correct: He asked me what I was doing there. (backshift: am → was)
9. Correct: They said that they had passed the test. (has → had; subject-verb agreement of auxiliary)
10. Correct: He said that he was there the day before. (is → was; yesterday → the day before)
11. Correct: She said that she had to finish it before I arrived. (arrive → arrived, backshift in the clause)
12. Correct: The officer ordered him not to leave. (not to, not 'don't to')
13. Correct: He asked whether I could help him. (can → could; remove question mark)

PART TWO

SUBJECT-VERB AGREEMENT

Rules • Tables • Mind Map • 65 Practice Questions • Answer Key

1. The Basic Rule

A verb must **agree with its subject in number** — a singular subject takes a singular verb, and a plural subject takes a plural verb. This sounds simple, but the CBSE board consistently builds questions around subjects that are easy to misjudge.

Golden Rule

- Singular subject → singular verb (is, was, has, does, runs...)
- Plural subject → plural verb (are, were, have, do, run...)
- Always identify the **true subject** first — ignore words/phrases sitting between the subject and the verb.

Example: *The box of chocolates are on the table.*

Correct: The box of chocolates **is** on the table. (subject = box, singular)

Example: *The list of items were long.*

Correct: The list of items **was** long. (subject = list, singular)

2. Compound Subjects Joined by 'And'

Rule

- Two or more subjects joined by **and** usually take a **plural verb**.
- Exception: if the two nouns joined by 'and' refer to the **same person/thing or a single idea**, use a singular verb.

Example: *Ramesh and Suresh is going to the market.*

Correct: Ramesh and Suresh **are** going to the market.

Example: *Bread and butter are my favourite breakfast.*

Correct: Bread and butter **is** my favourite breakfast. (single dish)

Example: *The teacher and writer are coming today.*

Correct: The teacher and writer **is** coming today. (same person)

3. Either/Or, Neither/Nor

Rule

- With **either...or** and **neither...nor**, the verb agrees with the subject **closer to it** (the one nearer the verb), not the first one.

Example: *Either the manager or the workers is responsible.*

Correct: Either the manager or the workers **are** responsible. (verb agrees with 'workers')

Example: *Neither the students nor the teacher were present.*

Correct: Neither the students nor the teacher **was** present. (verb agrees with 'teacher')

Example: *Either you or I am/is wrong.*

Correct: Either you or I **am** wrong.

4. 'With', 'As Well As' & Similar Phrases

Rule

- Phrases like **with**, **along with**, **as well as**, **together with**, **in addition to**, **accompanied by** do NOT change the number of the subject — the verb still agrees with the **original (first-mentioned) subject only**.

Example: *The captain, along with his teammates, were praised.*

Correct: The captain, along with his teammates, **was** praised. (subject = captain, singular)

Example: *The teacher, as well as the students, are excited.*

Correct: The teacher, as well as the students, **is** excited.

Example: *Ravi, together with his friends, go to the gym daily.*

Correct: Ravi, together with his friends, **goes** to the gym daily.

5. Collective Nouns

Rule

- Collective nouns (team, family, jury, class, committee, government, army, crowd) take a **singular verb** when the group acts as a single unit, and a **plural verb** when the members are acting individually/separately.

Example: *The team are playing well this season.*

Correct: The team **is** playing well this season. (acting as one unit)

Example: *The committee is divided in their opinions.*

Correct: The committee **are** divided in their opinions. (acting individually)

Example: *My family are large.*

Correct: My family **is** large. (single unit)

6. Indefinite Pronouns

Rule

- Indefinite pronouns such as **each, either, neither, everyone, everybody, everything, someone, somebody, anyone, anybody, no one, nobody, none (of + singular)** are treated as **singular** and take a singular verb.

Always Singular	Always Plural	Depends on Noun After 'Of'
each, either, neither	several, both, few, many	none, some, all, most
everyone, everybody	others	half, a lot
someone, somebody		
no one, nobody, nothing		

Example: *Everyone have submitted their assignments.*

Correct: Everyone **has** submitted their assignment.

Example: *Neither of the answers are correct.*

Correct: Neither of the answers **is** correct.

Example: *Some of the milk are spoiled.*

Correct: Some of the milk **is** spoiled. (uncountable noun after 'of')

Example: *Some of the students is absent.*

Correct: Some of the students **are** absent. (plural noun after 'of')

7. 'A Number Of' vs 'The Number Of'

Rule

- **A number of** (meaning 'many') is followed by a **plural noun and plural verb**.
- **The number of** (referring to a specific count/total) is followed by a **plural noun but a singular verb**, because the true subject is 'the number' (singular).

Example: *A number of students was absent today.*

Correct: A number of students **were** absent today.

Example: *The number of students were increasing every year.*

Correct: The number of students **was** increasing every year.

8. 'Each' and 'Every' Before Compound Subjects

Rule

- When **each** or **every** comes before two or more singular subjects joined by 'and', the verb is still **singular**, because each/every isolates the subjects one at a time.

Example: *Each boy and each girl were given a prize.*

Correct: Each boy and each girl **was** given a prize.

9. Quantity, Distance, Money & Time as a Unit

Rule

- When an expression of **money, distance, weight, or time** is thought of as a **single amount/unit** (not individual items), it takes a **singular verb**.

Example: *Five hundred rupees are a lot of money for this.*

Correct: Five hundred rupees **is** a lot of money for this.

Example: *Ten kilometres are too far to walk.*

Correct: Ten kilometres **is** too far to walk.

Example: *Two years are a long time to wait.*

Correct: Two years **is** a long time to wait.

10. Titles, Names & Single Entities

Rule

- Titles of books, films, or the names of countries/organisations — even if plural in form — take a **singular verb** because they refer to ONE single entity.

Example: *"The Three Musketeers" are a thrilling novel.*

Correct: "The Three Musketeers" **is** a thrilling novel.

Example: *The United States have a strong economy.*

Correct: The United States **has** a strong economy.

Example: *The United Nations work for global peace.*

Correct: The United Nations **works** for global peace.

11. Percentages and Fractions

Rule

- With percentages and fractions (e.g. 'half of', '60% of'), the verb agrees with the **noun that follows 'of'** — singular noun takes a singular verb, plural noun takes a plural verb.

Example: *Fifty percent of the work are done.*

Correct: Fifty percent of the work **is** done.

Example: *Fifty percent of the students is present.*

Correct: Fifty percent of the students **are** present.

Example: *Half of the cake are eaten.*

Correct: Half of the cake **is** eaten.

12. 'One of the...' and Relative Pronoun Clauses

Rule A — 'One of the + plural noun'

- 'One of the + plural noun' takes a **singular verb**, because the actual subject is 'one'.

Example: *One of the students are missing.*

Correct: One of the students **is** missing.

Rule B — Relative Pronoun Clauses (who/which/that)

- The verb after **who/which/that** agrees with the **antecedent** (the noun the pronoun refers to), not with the word immediately before it.

Example: *He is one of the boys who plays well.*

Correct: He is one of the boys who **play** well. (antecedent = boys, plural)

13. There Is / There Are

Rule

- In 'there is/are' sentences, the verb agrees with the **noun that follows it** (the real subject), not with 'there'.

Example: *There is many reasons for this delay.*

Correct: There **are** many reasons for this delay.

Example: *There are a book and a pen on the table.*

Correct: There **is** a book and a pen on the table. (nearest noun singular — informal usage accepts singular here)

14. Uncountable Nouns

Rule

- Uncountable (mass) nouns always take a **singular verb**, even though they may look or sound plural.

Common Uncountable Nouns

news, furniture, advice, information, luggage, baggage

knowledge, homework, equipment, scenery, poetry

mathematics, physics, economics, news (subjects/topics)

Example: *The news are shocking.*

Correct: The news **is** shocking.

Example: *Mathematics are my favourite subject.*

Correct: Mathematics **is** my favourite subject.

Example: *Her advice were useful.*

Correct: Her advice **was** useful.

15. Nouns That Look Plural But Are Singular (and Vice Versa)

Rule

- Some nouns ending in -s (athletics, physics, news, measles) are grammatically **singular**. Others referring to pair-items (scissors, trousers, spectacles, jeans, tongs) are always **plural** and have no singular form.

Looks Plural but is Singular	Always Plural (Pair Items)
athletics, physics, news, mathematics	scissors, trousers, spectacles
measles, mumps, economics	jeans, tongs, pliers

Example: *Athletics are a popular sport in this school.*

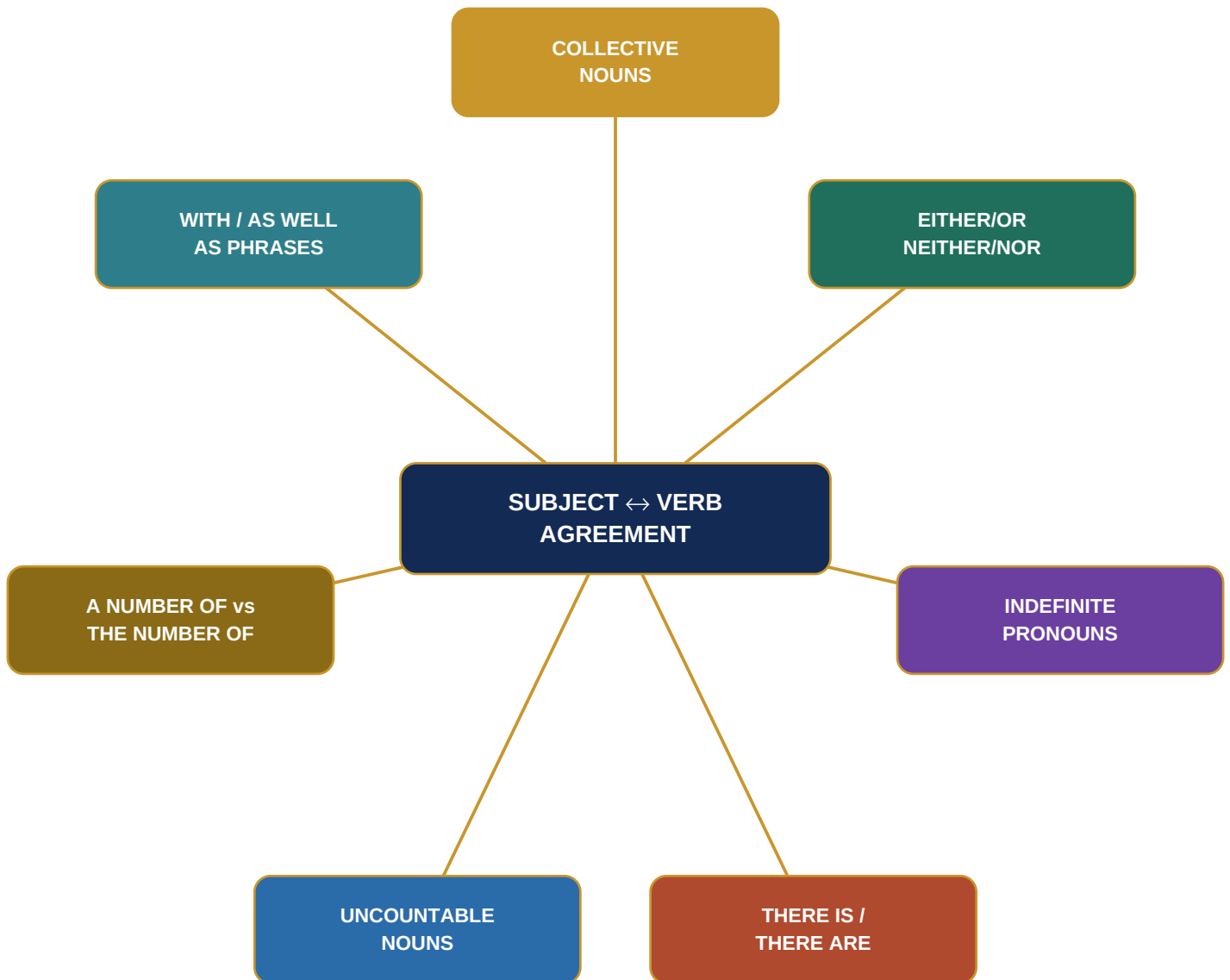
Correct: Athletics **is** a popular sport in this school.

Example: *My scissors is missing.*

Correct: My scissors **are** missing.

16. Mind Map — Subject-Verb Agreement at a Glance

Use this map for quick last-minute revision before the exam. Each branch is explained in detail in the sections above.



17. Common Traps Table

A quick-reference table of the sentence patterns the CBSE board repeatedly uses to test this topic.

Pattern in the Sentence	Verb Agrees With
Subject + (phrase with 'with/as well as') + verb	the ORIGINAL subject only
Either/Or, Neither/Nor + two subjects + verb	the subject CLOSER to the verb
'A number of' + plural noun + verb	PLURAL verb
'The number of' + plural noun + verb	SINGULAR verb ('the number')
'One of the' + plural noun + verb	SINGULAR verb ('one')
Percentage/fraction + 'of' + noun + verb	the noun AFTER 'of'
'There is/are' + noun + verb	the noun AFTER 'there is/are'
Relative clause (who/which/that) + verb	the ANTECEDENT noun
Collective noun (team, family) + verb	SINGULAR (as one unit) or PLURAL (individually)
Title of a book/film + verb	SINGULAR (always one entity)

Practice Set A — Fill in the Blanks

Fill in each blank with the correct form of the verb given in brackets.

- 1 The bunch of flowers _____ (look) beautiful on the table.
- 2 Neither the players nor the coach _____ (be) satisfied with the result.
- 3 The committee _____ (have) different opinions on the matter.
- 4 A number of students _____ (participate) in the debate.
- 5 The number of accidents _____ (be, increasing) every year.
- 6 Everyone in the class _____ (has/have) submitted the project.
- 7 Mathematics _____ (be) a difficult subject for many students.
- 8 Fifty percent of the mangoes _____ (be) rotten.
- 9 One of the girls _____ (has/have) lost her bag.
- 10 There _____ (be) many problems with this plan.
- 11 The teacher, along with her students, _____ (be) visiting the museum.
- 12 My scissors _____ (be) not sharp enough.
- 13 Either you or your brother _____ (have) to attend the meeting.

Practice Set B — Error Correction

Each sentence contains ONE subject-verb agreement error. Rewrite the sentence correctly.

- 1** The list of names are pinned on the notice board.
- 2** Each student and each teacher were given a certificate.
- 3** The jury is divided in their views about the case.
- 4** The United Nations work towards world peace.
- 5** Ten kilometres are a long distance to cover on foot.
- 6** None of the information were useful to us.
- 7** Half of the students is absent today.
- 8** He is one of the players who plays for the national team.
- 9** The news about the exam postponement are surprising.
- 10** The captain, together with his team, were awarded the trophy.
- 11** There is a pen and a notebook on the table.
- 12** A number of workers was on strike yesterday.
- 13** Physics are taught by Mr. Sharma in our school.

Practice Set C — Choose the Correct Verb

Choose the correct verb form from the two given in brackets.

- 1** The group of tourists (was/were) exploring the fort.
- 2** Neither of the answers (is/are) correct.
- 3** The number of complaints (has/have) gone down this month.
- 4** Everybody (know/knows) the rules of the game.
- 5** Bread and butter (is/are) served for breakfast.
- 6** The scissors on the table (is/are) blunt.
- 7** Either the manager or the employees (is/are) at fault.
- 8** The team (has/have) won the championship this year.
- 9** One of the boxes (contain/contains) old books.
- 10** Ten thousand rupees (is/are) too much to spend on this.
- 11** The economics of the country (is/are) improving.
- 12** The committee members (was/were) arguing among themselves.
- 13** Twenty percent of the fruit (was/were) spoiled.

Practice Set D — Editing / Omission

Rewrite each sentence, correcting the underlined error (shown in italics).

- 1 The furniture in this shop *are* expensive.
- 2 Every man, woman and child *were* present at the rally.
- 3 The class *are* going on a field trip tomorrow (as a single unit).
- 4 The number of tourists *have* risen sharply this year.
- 5 Neither rain nor storms *stops* the postman.
- 6 One of my friends *live* in Chennai.
- 7 The advice given by the doctor *were* ignored.
- 8 The Alps *is* a mountain range in Europe.
- 9 Twenty rupees *are* not enough for this ticket.
- 10 The audience *was* clapping loudly and cheering individually.
- 11 A pair of trousers *are* hanging on the line.
- 12 My family *are* planning a trip together as one unit.
- 13 The jury *has* announced their individual opinions.

Practice Set E — Mixed — Board-Pattern

Fill in the blank OR correct the error, as per the actual CBSE editing exercise format.

- 1** Each of the students _____ (has/have) to submit an assignment.
- 2** The board of directors _____ (meet) every Monday.
- 3** Neither the singer nor the dancers _____ (was/were) ready.
- 4** A number of trees _____ (be, cut) down for construction.
- 5** The price of vegetables _____ (has/have) increased this week.
- 6** There _____ (be) a lot of noise outside the classroom.
- 7** Everyone in the hall _____ (clap/claps) at the end of the speech.
- 8** The scissors that I bought yesterday _____ (be) already blunt.
- 9** One of the reasons for his success _____ (be) hard work.
- 10** The number of empty seats _____ (be, surprising).
- 11** Fifty percent of the population _____ (live) in rural areas.
- 12** The team, as well as its coach, _____ (be) confident of victory.
- 13** None of the students _____ (has/have) completed the survey.

Answer Key — Part 2: Subject-Verb Agreement

Set A — Fill in the Blanks

1. looks
2. were
3. have
4. participated/participate
5. is increasing
6. has
7. is
8. are
9. has
10. are
11. is
12. are
13. has

Set B — Error Correction

1. The list of names is pinned on the notice board.
2. Each student and each teacher was given a certificate.
3. The jury are divided in their views about the case.
4. The United Nations works towards world peace.
5. Ten kilometres is a long distance to cover on foot.
6. None of the information was useful to us.
7. Half of the students are absent today.
8. He is one of the players who play for the national team.
9. The news about the exam postponement is surprising.
10. The captain, together with his team, was awarded the trophy.
11. There is a pen and a notebook on the table. (or: There are a notebook and a pen)
12. A number of workers were on strike yesterday.
13. Physics is taught by Mr. Sharma in our school.

Set C — Choose the Correct Verb

1. was
2. is
3. has
4. knows
5. is
6. are

7. are
8. has
9. contains
10. is
11. is
12. were
13. was

Set D — Editing / Omission

1. The furniture in this shop is expensive.
2. Every man, woman and child was present at the rally.
3. The class is going on a field trip tomorrow.
4. The number of tourists has risen sharply this year.
5. Neither rain nor storms stop the postman.
6. One of my friends lives in Chennai.
7. The advice given by the doctor was ignored.
8. The Alps is a mountain range in Europe. (correct as is — proper noun as single entity)
9. Twenty rupees is not enough for this ticket.
10. The audience were clapping loudly and cheering individually.
11. A pair of trousers is hanging on the line.
12. My family is planning a trip together.
13. The jury have announced their individual opinions.

Set E — Mixed Board-Pattern

1. has
2. meets
3. were
4. are being cut
5. has
6. is
7. claps
8. are
9. is
10. is surprising
11. lives
12. is
13. has

You've Completed Grammar Mastery

You have now worked through both halves of this two-in-one edition — **Direct & Indirect Speech** and **Subject-Verb Agreement** — with over 130 board-pattern practice questions and fully solved answer keys. Revisit the two mind map pages in the days before your exam for a fast, complete recap of both topics.

Keep Practising

- Re-attempt any practice set you scored below 80% on, a few days later
- Time yourself on Practice Set E in each part to simulate real exam pressure
- Use the Common Mistakes / Common Traps pages as a final revision checklist the night before your exam

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