

Name \_\_\_\_\_

## Subject-Verb Agreement

The subject and verb in a sentence must **agree**, or work together. A singular subject needs a singular verb. A plural subject needs a plural verb.

Use the following rules for verbs that tell about the present time.

- If the subject is a singular noun or *he, she, or it*, add *-s* or *-es* to most verbs.  
The wagon *creaks*. It *lurches* along.
- If the subject is a plural noun or *I, you, we, or they*, do not add *-s* or *-es* to the verb.  
The oxen *pull* the wagon. They *strain* uphill.
- For the verb *be*, use *am* and *is* to agree with singular subjects and *are* to agree with plural subjects.  
I *am* hot. Thomas *is* happy. The patriots *are* loyal. We *are* late.
- A **collective noun** names a group, such as *family, team, and class*. A collective noun is singular if it refers to a group acting as one: The family *rides* in the wagon. A collective noun is plural if it refers to members of the group acting individually: The family *are arguing* about the tax.

**Directions** Match each subject with a verb that agrees. Write the letter of the correct verb on the line.

- |                           |                    |
|---------------------------|--------------------|
| _____ 1. The colonists    | A. are training.   |
| _____ 2. The British king | B. is beginning.   |
| _____ 3. A war            | C. rebel.          |
| _____ 4. Troops           | D. sends his army. |

**Directions** Underline the verb in ( ) that agrees with the subject of each sentence.

5. The American colonies (trade, trades) with England.
6. Two of the colonies' exports (is, are) cotton and indigo.
7. England (tax, taxes) the items imported into the colonies.
8. Tea (is, are) a popular drink in the colonies.
9. The Boston Tea Party (show, shows) the colonists' anger about taxes.
10. Today, Americans (drink, drinks) more coffee than tea.
11. Earlier conflicts (is, are) forgotten.
12. The two countries (consider, considers) themselves close allies.



**Home Activity** Your child learned about subject-verb agreement. Have your child make up sentences about clothes he or she wears, using both singular subjects (shirt, belt) and plural subjects (socks, shoes) and making sure verbs agree.

Read the article. Then answer the questions that follow.

# How Humpbacks Go Fishing

by Linda Brown Anderson, Highlights

1 Humpback whales are known for feeding alone or in pairs. Most of the time, they plow through the ocean with their huge mouths open, scooping up thousands of tiny shrimplike creatures called krill. But humpbacks that live near the west coast of North America have a surprising and spectacular way of catching fish. When they spot a school of herring, the humpbacks dive into the depths and close in on the fish from below. A steady flow of bubbles rises to the surface, forming a circle.

2 Suddenly, all of the whales explode out of the water at once, right in the middle of the bubble-circle. Their huge mouths are open and full of silver, wriggling fish.

3 Scientists wanted to know more about how the whales fed on schools of fish. Using underwater microphones, they listened to humpbacks as they fed. The whales made magnificent trumpetlike sounds as they swept up and ate the fish.

4 The researchers also used the Crittercam, a video camera that can be attached harmlessly to the back of a whale. It showed that the whales waved their huge flippers back and forth as they fed.

5 Most researchers thought the humpbacks were fighting over the fish. Whales are known to use bubbles and loud calls when they try to chase away other whales. Maybe they also waved their flippers to shoo one another away.

## A Deep Mystery

6 Dr. Fred Sharpe had a radical idea for the late 1980s, when he began his research. Maybe the whales were working together!

7 Dr. Sharpe led a team of researchers. They used sonar to “see” deeper into the water. A sonar device sends out sound waves, then catches the echoes of those waves after they bounce off objects, such as whales, fish, and bubbles. Using the echoes, the sonar creates pictures of the objects.

8 The sonar showed that, to a humpback, bubbles are tools. A single whale swims below the fish, carefully releasing air from its blowhole to create a wall of bubbles.

9 Also using sonar, the scientists saw other whales moving toward the herring, chasing the fish toward the bubble wall. The herring were reluctant to try to escape through the bubbles. The bubble-blowing whale began to swim in a circle, making the wall of bubbles go all the way around the fish. The fish were trapped in a bubble net!

10 Using an underwater microphone, the research team recorded the sounds of the whales. The whales swam under the herring and began their trumpetlike calls. Then the whales swam upward all at once, waving their flippers, and gulped a large number of fish.

11 The whales were working together!

12 How did the whales use their calls and flippers to help catch their food?

13 To find out, Dr. Sharpe and his team placed a school of herring into an aquarium. Then the researchers pumped in air to make a wall of bubbles. The fish would not swim through the bubbles.

14 When the researchers played a recording of feeding calls by humpbacks, the herring dashed away from the sounds. The sounds make it easier to trap the fish in the bubble net.

15 The scientists also placed a model of a humpback flipper into the aquarium. Like a real humpback flipper, the model was dark on one side and white on the other. As the researchers turned the flipper and flashed the white underside at the school, the fish quickly swam away.

### Working as a Team

16 Now Dr. Sharpe understood how humpbacks feed together. One whale forms a wall of bubbles around the fish. Other whales approach from the sides and from below. One of the whales, the leader, makes calls from below that send the fish toward the surface and into the ring of bubbles. As the fish are squeezed into a tighter group, the bubble-blowing whale continues to swim in a circle, closing the net and trapping the fish in a bubble corral.

17 Finally, all of the whales swim up into the feast of fish, making trumpetlike calls and flashing the white sides of their flippers to keep the trapped fish from escaping between them.

18 Over the years, the research group has seen that humpback whales often live and hunt together for years. Each time they go fishing, the same whales play the same roles: bubble blower, first caller, and so on.

19 Thanks to Dr. Sharpe and his co-workers, we now know something about humpback intelligence. We also know that these famous “loners” actually can form lifelong relationships with others of their species.

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**8**

Which sentence **best** supports the ideas that humpbacks work in groups and form lifelong relationships with other whales?

**A** “Humpback whales are known for feeding alone or in pairs.”

**B** “When they spot a school of herring, the humpbacks dive into the depths and close in on the fish from below.”

**C** “Maybe they also waved their flippers to shoo one another away.”

**D** “Over the years, the research group has seen that humpback whales often live and hunt together for years.”

**Go On**

- 9** Which sentence from the article shows why scientists at first thought the whales were fighting each other for food?
- A** "Most of the time, they plow through the ocean with their huge mouths open, scooping up thousands of tiny shrimplike creatures called krill."
  - B** "Suddenly, all of the whales explode out of the water at once, right in the middle of the bubble-circle."
  - C** "Whales are known to use bubbles and loud calls when they try to chase away other whales."
  - D** "A single whale swims below the fish, carefully releasing air from its blowhole to create a wall of bubbles."

- 10** Which **best** shows that herring are afraid of light-colored objects?
- A** Herring live in the dark depths of the ocean not near the lighter surface.
  - B** Herring swim away from the white flipper model but not the dark one.
  - C** Herring will not swim through the bubbles that the whales create.
  - D** Herring behave differently in light-colored tanks than they do in dark ones.

- 11** How do herring react to the bubbles the whales blow?
- A** They swim toward them.
  - B** They won't swim through them.
  - C** They swim parallel to them.
  - D** They generally ignore them.

- 12** According to paragraph 7, what do "sonar" devices use to "see" under water?
- A** sound
  - B** science
  - C** cameras
  - D** temperature

**13**

Which paragraph has evidence to support the claim, "The whales were working together"?

- A** paragraph 4
- B** paragraph 5
- C** paragraph 9
- D** paragraph 13

**14**

Which of the following should be taken out of a summary of this article?

- A** Humpback whales hunt together to catch schools of herring.
- B** The Crittercam is a special video camera that attaches to a whale.
- C** Whales blow bubbles and wave their flippers to trap fish.
- D** Researchers used sonar to watch the whales at work.

***Go On***