

Proofreading Application: Report

Good writers are generally good proofreaders. Readers tend to admire and trust writing that is error-free. Make sure that you correct all errors in grammar, usage, spelling, and punctuation in your writing. Your readers will have more confidence in your words if you have done your best to proofread carefully.

After all the work you have put into your writing, you want readers to be impressed by your work and to understand your message. Errors in agreement can make your work appear sloppy or careless and can confuse your readers. Careful proofreading will help you catch errors and ensure that you are presenting your best work to your audience.

PROOFREADING ACTIVITY

The following excerpt from a report on whales contains errors in subject-verb agreement. Find and correct the errors in subject-verb agreement in the following paragraphs. Use proofreading symbols such as those on page 809 of *Elements of Language* to make your corrections.

Example Whales are fascinating animals. They are mammals, but they ^{live} ~~lives~~ underwater.

Unlike fish, whales does not have gills. Whales need air just like other mammals. They resurface periodically and breathes through a blowhole on top of their heads. If a whale get water in its lungs, it drown.

Whales are divided into two major groups. One group are the whalebone whales. Their name come from the bony plate embedded in their upper jaw, which are called a whalebone. They eats microscopic animals called plankton, which they strains from the water through their whalebones. Whalebone whales is large and slow. Blue whales, the largest animals of all time, belongs to this group. Other members of the group is right whales, rorqual whales, and gray whales. The second major group are the toothed whales. As their name imply, they have teeth instead of a whalebone. Rather than plankton, they eat fish and squid. This group include dolphins, porpoises, beaked whales, and narwhals.

The 1950s (were, was) good years for Fitzgerald. (Their, Her) manager, Norman Granz, carefully chose her singing material, and (he, they) provided excellent jazz instrumental support for (it, her). In fact, Granz's Jazz at the Philharmonic featured Fitzgerald as (their, its) star attraction. Fitzgerald's singing style (were, was) so popular that many singers imitated Fitzgerald's style in (his or her, their) own performances. Fitzgerald also became famous for (her, their) "scat" singing. Singers of this style (imitate, imitates) a trumpet or saxophone with (his or her, their) voices. *Mack the Knife: Ella in Berlin* (is, are) one of her famed scat recordings.

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Unlike fish, whales ~~do~~ ^{do} not have gills. Whales need air just like other mammals. They resurface periodically and ~~breathes~~ ^{breathe} through a blowhole on top of their heads. If a whale ~~get~~ ^{gets} water in its lungs, it ~~drown~~ ^{drowns}.

Whales are divided into two major groups. One group ~~are~~ ^{is} the whalebone whales. Their name ~~come~~ ^{comes} from the bony plate embedded in their upper jaw, which ~~are~~ ^{is} called a whalebone. They ~~eats~~ ^{eat} microscopic animals called plankton, which they ~~strains~~ ^{strain} from the water through their whalebones. Whalebone whales ~~is~~ ^{are} large and slow. Blue whales, the largest animals of all time, ~~belongs~~ ^{belong} to this group. Other members of the group ~~is~~ ^{are} right whales, orqual whales, and gray whales. The second major group ~~are~~ ^{is} the toothed whales. As their name ~~imply~~ ^{implies}, they have teeth instead of a whalebone. Rather than plankton, they eat fish and squid. This group ~~include~~ ^{includes} dolphins, porpoises, beaked whales, and narwhals.

Literary Model: Dialogue, pp. 165–66

EXERCISE A

Just the sound of the name brought Slade to my eye. . . .

"I don't think it's any good to send him a bill, Mr. Baumer," I said. "He can't even read."

"He could pay yet."

"He don't pay anybody," I said.

"I think he hate me," Mr. Baumer went on. "That is the thing. He hate me for coming not from this country. I come here, sixteen years old, and learn to read and write, and I make a business, and so I think he hate me."

"He hates everybody."

Mr. Baumer shook his head. "But not to pinch the nose. Not to call Dutchie."

The side door squeaked open, but it was only Colly Coleman coming in from a trip, so I said, "Excuse me, Mr. Baumer, but you shouldn't have trusted him in the first place."

"I know," he answered, looking at me with his misty eyes. "A man make mistakes. I think some do not trust him, so he will pay me because I do. . . ."

He took his pencil from behind the ear where he had put it and studied the point of it. "That Slade. He steal. . . . He sneak things from his load. A thief, he is. And too big for me."

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EXERCISE B

Answers will vary. Sample responses are given.

1. All but one of the many incorrect verbs that appear in this passage are spoken by Mr. Baumer. The other character makes only one error in subject-verb agreement; the rest of his speech is informal but standard English.