

“The Masque of the Red Death” by Edgar Allan Poe (text page 78)

Build Grammar Skills: Subject-Verb Agreement

In most declarative sentences the subject comes before the verb. This is called normal word order.

Poe wrote “The Masque of the Red Death.”

However, in sentences that begin with *there*, the word order is usually inverted.

There are several other copies of the book on that shelf.

While *there* can often be considered an adverb that tells *where* (as in the sentence above), in other cases *there* is used as a sort of pronoun, with the actual subject of the sentence following the verb.

There have been many advances in medicine.

You know that the subject and verb of a sentence must agree in number. When you are writing, do not be tricked into thinking that the word *there* is the subject just because it comes first in the sentence.

A. DIRECTIONS: Read the following lines from Poe’s story. Underline each simple subject once and each verb twice.

1. “There were sharp pains. . . .”
2. “. . . there came . . . a sound which was clear and loud . . .”
3. “. . . there was a brief disconcert . . .”
4. “There are some who would have thought him mad.”
5. “. . . there flows a ruddier light . . .”
6. “. . . there comes . . . a muffled peal . . .”
7. “. . . there are matters of which no jest can be made.”
8. “. . . there was a sharp turn . . .”
9. “. . . there stood . . . a gigantic clock of ebony.”
10. “There was no light of any kind . . .”

B. DIRECTIONS: Underline the correct form of the verb in parentheses.

1. There (is / are) hundreds of books of horror stories in the library.
2. Here (is / are) my library card.
3. There (is / are) several stories by Poe in this collection.
4. Here (hangs / hang) a portrait of Poe.
5. There (was / were) fifteen students in the reading room.
6. Here (comes / come) the best writer of horror stories in our class.
7. Where (is / are) my notes from class?
8. Here they (is / are)!