SUBJECT/VERB AGREEMENT

The first secret to getting subjects and verbs to agree is to temporarily get rid of the interfering words between the subject and the verb. These interfering words are almost always prepositional phrases. The problem is that a singular subject might be followed by a prepositional phrase that ends in a plural noun, or vice versa, leading one to choose the verb that goes with the noun at the end of the prepositional phrase rather than the subject.

> For example:

> > The cost of the items intimidate many people.

> > The cost ~~of the items~~ intimidate many people. → Eliminate the words between the subject and verb

The cost intimidates many people. →   When the subject, "cost," appears right next to the verb, "intimidate," it becomes clear that you must change "intimidate" to "intimidates."

The cost of the items intimidates many people. →   Reinsert the interfering phrase now that the subject and verb agree.

The second secret is to remember that with the verbs "is" and "are" the subject often follows the verb.
> For example:
> > There *is* an invoice in the basket.
> > There *are* several invoices in the basket.

People often make the mistake of using the contraction "there's" meaning "there is" when they should use "there are."
> > INCORRECT – There's fourteen people in our department.
> > CORRECT –There are fourteen people in our department.

Repair the following subject/verb agreement errors. Write "OK" if the sentence is already correct.

1. The boys on the team wants to play another game.

2. The date of the bills show a pre-existing condition.

3. There are seven printers on this floor.

4. The medications for this illness is available at the pharmacy.

5. There's my desk.

6. Most companies in the state are in favor of the change.

7. There's several reasons that we should pay the claim.

8. The doctors in the department agree on the referral.

9. I know you wanted me to get blank forms, but there's twenty-five left.

10. The doctor, because of all her experiences, believe that we should err on the side of caution.