

### 3.2. Getting back to basics: Subject is the “doer” of the verb

**The subject is *who or what* does the *verb*.**

In a sentence, every verb *must* have a subject, irrespective of whether the verb expresses *action* (such as eat, dance, shout or study) or *state of being* (the *linking verbs* such as is, are, was, were, seem, become).

Hence, the *doer* of the verb is the *subject* of that verb.

Applying this basic principle provides a handy way of identifying the *subject* of a sentence. Let us look at few examples:

*The victory of the home country in three consecutive world cups (is/are) the reason for celebration.*

– What *is/are* the reason for celebration: *Victory* and hence, *victory* is the *subject* (singular) and requires *singular* verb *is*.

*The students, who all belonged to the same neighborhood, (form/forms) a formidable basketball team\*

– Who *form/forms* a formidable basketball team: *The students*, and hence, *the students* is the *subject* (plural) and requires *plural* verb *form*.

*The intense coursework that all the students of the class (is/are) expected to complete (is/are) very rigorous.*

– Who/What *is/are* expected to complete: *students*, and hence, *students* is the *subject* (plural) and requires *plural* verb *are*.

What *is/are* very rigorous: *coursework*, and hence, *coursework* is the *subject* (singular) and requires *singular* verb *is*.

A sentence based on official question (#30, OG-13: *Paleontologists believe that fragments..*):

*Paleontologists believe that pieces of a dinosaur nest found in South Africa and estimated to be 180 to 190 million years old provides first detailed look at dinosaur reproduction early in the evolutionary history of dinosaurs.*

**Analysis:** What *provide/provides* first detailed look at dinosaur reproduction cycle: *Pieces*, and hence, *pieces* is the *subject* (plural) and requires *plural* verb *provide*.

So, the correct sentence is:

*Paleontologists believe that pieces of a dinosaur nest found in South Africa and estimated to be 180 to 190 million years old provide first detailed look at dinosaur reproduction early in the evolutionary history of dinosaurs.*

Another sentence based on official question (#3, OG-13: *Although a surge in retail sales..*):

*Although a drop in interest rates have raised hopes that economy will gather steam, many economists fear the onset of “stagflation”.*

**Analysis:** What *have/has* raised hopes that economy will gather steam: *drop (in interest rates)* and hence, *drop* is the *subject* (singular) and requires *singular* verb *has*.

So, the correct sentence is:

*Although a drop in interest rates has raised hopes that economy will gather steam, many economists fear the onset of “stagflation”.*