

### 3.6. Advanced topic: “One of” the mysteries

**Rule:** In the above section, we learnt that in a clause, words in *prepositional phrase* will *never* be the subject of *that clause*. So, words in *prepositional phrases* cannot serve as subjects.

Let us further enhance our understanding on this. Words in *prepositional phrases* cannot serve as subjects **in their respective clause**.

Let's consider the following sentence:

*One of the books belong/belongs to Tom.*

There is only one *clause* in this sentence (the entire sentence is an *Independent clause*). In this clause, we know that words in *prepositional phrase* cannot serve as *subjects*. So, we can disregard *of the books* (prepositional phrase) to determine the subject (*one* in this case). Since the subject (*one*) is singular, *belongs* (singular verb) is the correct verb. So, the correct sentence is:

***One of the books belongs to Tom.***

Now, let's consider another sentence:

*One of the books that was/were left in the class belong/belongs to Tom.*

Notice the difference between this sentence and the previous one. This sentence has *two* clauses:

1. *One of the books belong/belongs to Tom:*
  - In this clause, the *rule* will apply. *books* cannot be the subject (since *books* is in the prepositional phrase *of the books*) and hence, *belongs* is the correct verb.
2. *that was/were left in the class:*
  - The choice of *was* or *were* would clearly depend upon what *that* modifies. Remember, *that* would always have the tendency to modify the *nearest* grammatically & logically eligible noun (Refer to section 2.3.2). In this case, there is no reason (*grammatically* or *logically*) why *that* cannot modify *books*. Hence, *that* will modify *books* and so, *were* is the correct verb.

So, the complete sentence is:

*One of the books that were left in the class belongs to Tom.*

Let's look at another sentence:

*Production of sci-fi thrillers that use/uses recent technological advances in cinematography has/have awed the viewers.*

This sentence has *two* clauses:

- (a) *Production of sci-fi thrillers has/have awed the viewers:*
  - In this clause, the *rule* will apply. *sci-fi thrillers* cannot be the subject (since *sci-fi thrillers* is in the prepositional phrase *of sci-fi thrillers*) and hence, *production* is the singular subject and *has* is the correct verb.

(b) *that use/uses recent technological advances in cinematography:*

- The choice of *use* or *uses* would clearly depend upon what *that* modifies. Remember, *that* would always have the tendency to modify the *nearest* grammatically & logically eligible noun (Refer to section 2.3.2). In this case, there is no reason (*grammatically* or *logically*) why *that* cannot modify *sci-fi thrillers*. Hence, *that* will modify *movies* and so, *use* is the correct verb.

So, the complete sentence is:

*Production of sci-fi thrillers that **use** recent technological advances in cinematography **has** awed the viewers.*

A sentence based on official question (#42, OG Verbal Review: *Twenty-two feet long and 10 feet in diameter...*):

*Capable of bringing a high-technology gas pump, robotic mechanic and tow truck to satellites in space, F-36 is one of the many new service stations that is part of a 10-year effort to extend the life of spacecrafts.*

**Analysis:** *that* would always have the tendency to modify the *nearest* grammatically & logically eligible noun (Refer to section 2.3.2). In this case, there is no reason (*grammatically* or *logically*) why *that* cannot modify *service stations*. Hence, *that* will modify *service stations* (plural) and so, *are* is the correct verb. So, the correct sentence is:

*Capable of bringing a high-technology gas pump, robotic mechanic and tow truck to satellites in space, F-36 is one of the many new service stations that are part of a 10-year effort to extend the life of spacecrafts.*