

# Definitely Singular

## Purpose

Students will practice identifying and properly using indefinite pronouns.

## Materials

*For the teacher:* chalk, chalkboard

*For the students:* copies of Black Line Master (BLM) *Which Verb Should I Use?*, pen or pencil

## Activity

### A. Pre-Activity Discussion

1. Write on the chalkboard the following indefinite pronouns: “each,” “every,” “anybody,” “anything,” “another,” “one,” “somebody,” “someone,” and “something.”
2. Ask students if they know what part of speech these words are. Ask them to explain why they are called indefinite, using other pronouns such as his, hers, their, to compare.
3. Tell students that these examples of indefinite pronouns agree with singular verbs, even when followed by two or more nouns. Explain that other indefinite pronouns agree with plural verbs, but that once you have learned which verb form an indefinite pronoun takes, it always uses that form.
4. Write some practice sentences on the board, and ask students to provide a singular verb to complete the sentence (e.g., Each of the boys wants a hamburger. Every girl and boy studies hard. Is anybody going to stay at school? One of the pencils is Austin’s. Someone is at the door.).

### B. Team Practice

1. Divide the class into nine groups.
2. Assign each group one of the indefinite pronouns that takes singular verbs.
3. Instruct each group to write three sentences using their assigned pronoun. Tell the groups to use a different verb for each sentence and to write at least one question.
4. Ask each group to present one of the sentences that it wrote. Tell the groups to identify their indefinite pronoun.

(continued)



### MEETING INDIVIDUAL NEEDS

Challenge students by introducing other indefinite pronouns, such as *both*, *several*, *few*, *many*, and *plenty*, which always require plural verbs. Make flash cards with indefinite pronouns on the front and the word “singular” or “plural” on the back. Have students quiz each other to see whether they can remember the correct verb form for each indefinite pronoun.



### INCORPORATING TECHNOLOGY

Instruct each group to create a presentation about their indefinite pronoun using a presentation software program. Ask each group to give their presentation to the class.

**Standards Link**  
**6.4.9**

## Activity (continued)

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5. Ask a group why they did not choose to use the verb [*insert the plural form of the verb*] instead.

### C. Apply What Students Have Learned

1. Give each student a copy of the BLM *Which Verb Should I Use?*
2. Instruct students to read the directions and to complete the activity on their own.
3. Ask each student to share with the class one of his/her five sentences.

## Classroom Assessment

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### Basic Concepts and Processes

After the activity, ask students the following questions:



Do you use a singular or plural verb with the indefinite pronoun *anybody*?



What is another example of an indefinite pronoun?



How do you decide which verb to use with an indefinite pronoun?

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# Which Verb Should I Use?

**Part A: Underline the indefinite pronoun in each sentence. Circle the verb that agrees with the pronoun in each sentence.**

1. (Is / Are) someone going to register you for the baking contest?
2. Another cook I know (want / wants) to enter the contest.
3. Each student and parent (sign / signs) the entry form.
4. Taylor says that something in the kitchen (smell / smells) good.
5. Every egg, stick of butter, and cup of sugar (was / were) used.
6. The judges say that anybody (has / have) a chance to win.
7. Somebody in the contest (need / needs) to use my timer.
8. My friend says that anything with lots of sugar (taste / tastes) wonderful.
9. One of the judges (was / were) tasting my cake!



**Part B: Write five sentences of your own using five different indefinite pronouns from this list: each, every, anybody, anything, another, one, somebody, someone, and something.**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

# Which Verb Should I Use?

## Teacher Directions

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Distribute one copy of the BLM *Which Verb Should I Use?* to each student.

Part A: Instruct students to underline the indefinite pronoun in each sentence. Tell them to circle the verb that agrees with the pronoun in each sentence.

Part B: Instruct students to write five sentences of their own using five different indefinite pronouns from the list provided.

## Answer Key

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Part A:

1. (Is/ Are) someone going to register you for the baking contest?
2. Another cook I know (want / wants) to enter the contest.
3. Each student and parent (sign / signs) the entry form.
4. Taylor says that something in the kitchen (smell / smells) good.
5. Every egg, stick of butter, and cup of sugar (was/ were) used.
6. The judges say that anybody (has/ have) a chance to win.
7. Somebody in the contest (need / needs) to use my timer.
8. My friend says that anything with lots of sugar (taste / tastes) wonderful.
9. One of the judges (was/ were) tasting my cake!

Part B:

Student responses will vary. Verify that students have used singular verbs in their sentences.