

**LESSON 14: "WAS" AND "WERE" — PAST TENSE AGREEMENT****I GRAMMAR SNAPSHOT • RULES FOR " WAS " AND " WERE "**

• We use **was** when we speak of **one** (e.g., *The paper was torn. / Was the bird in the cage?*).

• We use **were** when we speak of **more than one** (e.g., *The papers were torn. / Were the birds in the cage?*).

**• PART A • COPY THESE SENTENCES NEATLY ( ITEMS 1 – 6 )**

*Study each sentence carefully. Copy it neatly on the handwriting line. Notice the use of "was" for one and "were" for more than one.*

1. The paper was torn.

2. The papers were torn.

3. A hen was in the barn.

4. Hens were in the barn.

5. Was the bird in the cage?

6. Were the birds in the cage?

**• PART B • FILL BLANKS WITH " WAS " OR " WERE " & COPY ( ITEMS 7 – 8 )**

*Choose "was" or "were" to fill each blank correctly, then copy the complete sentence on the handwriting line below.*

7. The kitten \_\_\_\_\_ small and black.

8. The kittens \_\_\_\_\_ small and black.

**SELF-CHECK & CONCORD**

Did you use "was" for one and "were" for more than one? Did you copy all capital letters and punctuation correctly?

LESSON 14: "WAS" AND "WERE" — TEACHER ANSWER KEY & GUIDE

PEDAGOGICAL BLUEPRINT • PAST TENSE SUBJECT-VERB CONCORD

• **Lesson Objective:** Introduce past tense forms of the linking verb *to be* (*was* and *were*) with singular and plural subjects in both statements and questions.

• **Grammar Rule:** We use **was** when speaking of **one**; we use **were** when speaking of **more than one**.

• **Interrogative Inversion:** Observe that questions place *Was* or *Were* at the beginning before the subject and end with (?).

|   |             |                                   |                                                                                                         |
|---|-------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | Statement   | The paper was torn.               | Singular subject ("The paper") requires "was"; past participle "torn" functions as predicate adjective. |
| 2 | Statement   | The papers were torn.             | Plural subject ("The papers" with -s) requires "were".                                                  |
| 3 | Statement   | A hen was in the barn.            | Singular subject with indefinite article "A hen" takes "was". Prepositional phrase "in the barn".       |
| 4 | Statement   | Hens were in the barn.            | Plural subject ("Hens") takes "were". Direct contrast with item 3.                                      |
| 5 | Question    | Was the bird in the cage?         | Inverted singular question: "Was" begins with a capital letter; ends with question mark (?).            |
| 6 | Question    | Were the birds in the cage?       | Inverted plural question: "Were" begins with capital letter; subject "the birds"; ends with (?).        |
| 7 | Fill & Copy | The kitten was small and black.   | Singular subject "kitten" takes "was".                                                                  |
| 8 | Fill & Copy | The kittens were small and black. | Plural subject "kittens" takes "were".                                                                  |

**ORAL CONCORD DRILL**  
Call out singular and plural nouns: "The boy..." → students chant "...was!"; "The boys..." → "...were!"; "One book..." → "...was!"; "Two books..." → "...were!".

**PHONICS & SPELLING**  
Note the vowel sounds: **was** (/wɒz/ or /wʌz/) has an irregular 'a' sound; **were** (/wɜːr/) has the /ɜːr/ sound. Contrast spelling of *were* with *where*.

**MECHANICS & QUESTION INVERSION**  
Point out items 5 and 6: in questions, the verb comes first! Remind students that capital letters are required for **Was** and **Were** at the sentence start, and each inquiry must end with (?).

**CONNECTION TO LESSON 4**  
Help students connect Lesson 4 ("is" / "are" for present) to Lesson 14 ("was" / "were" for past): "Today the paper is torn; yesterday the paper was torn."

PEDAGOGICAL STANDARD

Aligned with Classical Trivium Grammar Stage & CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.1.1.C, L.1.2.B

Primary Language Arts Series • Instructional Support Edition

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