# Subject-Verb Agreement

Using the right form of verbs depending on the number and person of the subject.

 A singular subject (she, Bill, car) takes a singular verb (is, goes, shines), whereas a plural subject takes a plural verb.

Example: The list of items (is/are) on the desk.

If you know that list is the subject, then you will choose 'is' for the verb.

Exceptions to the Basic rule:

- a. The first person pronoun I takes a plural verb (I go, I drive).
- b. The basic form of the verb is used after certain main verbs such as watch, see, hear, feel, help, let, and make. (He watched Ronaldo score the winning goal).
- 2. A subject will come before a phrase beginning with of.

Incorrect: A bouquet of yellow roses lend color and fragrance to the room.

Correct: A bouquet of yellow roses lends . . . (bouquet lends, not roses lend)

When the subject of the sentence is composed of two or more nouns or pronouns connected by and, use a plural verb.

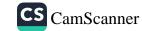
Example: The doctoral student and the committee members write every day.

Example: The percentage of employees who called in sick and the number of employees who left their jobs within 2 years are reflective of the level of job satisfaction.

## Exceptions:

- Breaking and entering is against the law.
- The bed and breakfast was charming.
- ★ (Verb is singular when the noun is compound, meaning the two subjects refer to the same person or thing and are joined by "and.")
- When there is one subject and more than one verb, the verbs throughout the sentence must agree with the subject.

Example: Interviews are one way to collect data and allow researchers to gain an in-depth understanding of participants.



Example: An assumption is something that is generally accepted as true and is an important consideration when conducting a doctoral study.

Two singular subjects connected by or, either/or, or neither/nor require a singular verb.

## Examples:

- My aunt or my uncle is arriving by train today.
- Neither Juan nor Carmen is available.
- Either Kiana or Casey is helping today with stage decorations.
- The verb in an or, either/or, or neither/nor sentence agrees with the noun or pronoun closest to it.

# Examples:

- Neither the plates nor the serving bowl goes on that shelf.
- Neither the serving bowl nor the plates go on that shelf.
- 7. Sometimes the subject is separated from the verb by such words as -along with, as well as, besides, not, etc. These words and phrases are not part of the subject. Ignore them and use a singular verb when the subject is singular.

#### Examples:

- The politician, along with the newsmen, is expected shortly.
- Excitement, as well as nervousness, is the cause of her shaking.
- In sentences beginning with here or there, the true subject follows the verb.

# Examples:

- There are four hurdles to jump.
- There is a high hurdle to jump.
- Here are the keys.
- Use a singular verb with distances, periods of time, sums of money, etc., when considered as a unit.

# Examples:

- Three miles is too far to walk.
- Five years is the maximum sentence for that offense.
- Ten dollars is a high price to pay.

#### BUT

- Ten dollars (i.e., dollar bills) were scattered on the floor.
- 10. With words that indicate portions—e.g., a lot, a majority, some, all—lf the noun after 'of' is singular, use a singular verb. If it is plural, use a plural verb. (Reverse of rule 2)

## Examples:

- A lot of the pie has disappeared.
- A lot of the pies have disappeared.
- Fifty percent of the pie has disappeared.
- Fifty percent of the pies have disappeared.
- A third of the city is unemployed.
- A third of the people are unemployed.
- All of the pie is gone.
- All of the pies are gone.
- Some of the pie is missing.
- Some of the pies are missing.
- 11. Collective nouns are words that imply more than one person but are considered singular and take a singular verb. Some examples are "group," "team," "committee," "family," and "class."
- The group meets every week.
- The committee agrees on the quality of the writing.
- All of my family has arrived
- Most of the jury is here
- A third of the population was not in favor of the bill.
- 12. 'Were' will be used as be verb in sentences starting with 'lf/wish' that express a wish or are contrary to fact.

I wish I were king!

13. The verb is singular for titles of books and movies.

The Birds is a scary movie.

- 14. The words and phrases "each," "each one," "either," "neither," "everyone," "everybody," "anyone," "anybody," "nobody," "somebody," "someone," and "no one" are singular and require a singular verb.
- Each of the participants was willing to be recorded.
- Neither alternative hypothesis was accepted.
- I will offer a \$5 gift card to everybody who participates in the study.
- No one was available to meet with me at the preferred times.

# 15. Noncount nouns take a singular verb.

- Education is the key to success.
- Diabetes affects many people around the world.
- The information obtained from the business owners was relevant to include in the study.
- The research I found on the topic was limited.
- 16. When any of 'few, many, several, both, all, some' is used with a countable noun, the verb is plural.

For example: Some men are needed for the battle.

17. When any of 'few, many, several, both, all, some' is used with an uncountable noun, the verb is singular.

For example: Some milk is spoiled.

Practice- 1. Emily and Greg (comes, come ) to my house every Friday for lunch.

- 2. There (is, are ) time to watch the movie.
- 3. My friends who are in the band (wants, want) me to play a musical instrument.
- 4. My father or my brothers (is, are ) coming with me to the ball game.



5. Everyone (needs, need) time to relax.
6. That bag of oranges (looks, look) fresh.
7. The lacrosse team (hopes, hope ) to win the tournament next week.
8. Your trousers (needs, need) to be cleaned.
9. Some of the books on the shelf (is, are ) dusty.
10. Even though the students like the class, a few (thinks, think) that it is too complicated.
SET 2
1.His pants torn during the match. (was/were)
2. Aron, together with his wife the guests of the party. (Greets/greet)
3. Tweezers always useful to handle small objects. (are/is)
4. The jury not convinced. (was/were)
5. The truthful always trustworthy. (is/are)
6. To cry never the solution to any problems. (is/were)
7. A number of soldiers injured during the war. (was/were)
8. The number of deceased soldiers not stored in the record book. (is/are)
9. A pack of lions approaching the camp. (was/were)
10. Killing not always considered a bad thing. (was/were)
11. There many difficulties regarding the situation. (were/was)
12. Here the tomb of Albert Einstein. (lie/lies)
13. Either she or her friends responsible for this accident. (is/are)
14. Neither me nor my parents aware of the incident. (was/were)
15. None none under the sun. (is/are)
16. None of them able to solve this question. (were/was)
17. Eight fifty dollars what it would cost to buy the new pixel phone. (is/are)
18. A pair of trousers all that I brought along. (is/are)
19. Everything fine when it's done correctly. (work/works)
20. Ronaldo and Messi the greatest football players of the 21st century. (is/are)