

Subject-Verb Agreement

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

- 1. 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)

- 3. 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.")

- 4. 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.

5. 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.

6. 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.

8. 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.

9. 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—If 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 'If/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)

