

Subject Verb Agreement

Subject must agree in **Number** and **Person**. *Thus*, if the subject is of the *singular number*, the verb must be of the *singular number*.

If the subject has a *plural number*, the verb must be of the *plural number*.

The basic rule of subject-verb agreement is that a **singular subject** (the doer of an action being talked of in the sentence) always takes a **singular verb** (the action being done in the sentence). In contrast, a **plural subject** always takes a **plural verb**. For example:

- The boy *goes* out. The boys *go* out.

Remember:

- **Doesn't** is a contraction of **does not** and should be used only with a singular subject.
- **Two singular subjects** connected by **or**, **either/or**, or **neither/nor** require a singular verb.
- Nouns like **scissors** and **trousers** always take plural verbs.

The **subject** and the **verb** must agree. If the **subject** is **singular**, the **verb** should also be **singular**.

If the **subject** is **plural**, the **verb** should also be **plural**. The verb agrees with the subject in number and person.

- The given words look like plurals (i.e. they end in 's'). But they are, in fact, singular nouns. For these nouns, we use a singular verb. E.g. Maths, Physics, Civics, Economics, News, Measles etc.

Points to Ponder:

Words such as **audience**, **congregation**, **crowd**, **group**, and **family** take a **singular** or **plural verb**, depending upon the sentence. But it is always safe to use plural verbs with these nouns.

Nouns plural in form but **singular** in **meaning** take a plural form. For example, *compasses*, *scissors*, *tongs*, *goggles*, *jeans* etc.

Everybody, somebody, nobody, anybody, each takes a singular verb.

When **two subjects** (nouns) are joined by ‘**and**’, they require a **plural verb**.

For example.

The cow and the goat are grazing.

We use a **singular verb** if two subjects (nouns) are separated by ‘**and**’ refer to the same person or thing.

For example. Bread and butter *is* my favorite breakfast. Mr. Sehgal, my friend, and philosopher, *sits* next to me.

If subjects are joined by **or**, **nor**, **either**, or **neither** the verb agrees with the subject.

For example, Neither he nor his pet *was* there.

Either the girl or her sisters *have* broken the tray.

He or his friends *are* to be blamed.

The **title of a book, play, story**, or **musical composition** takes a singular verb even though they are in the plural.

Words or phrases expressing **periods, fractions, weights, measurements** and **amount of money** is considered as singular and takes a singular verb.

When a plural noun comes between a singular subject and its verb, the verb agrees with the subject, *not the nearest plural*. For example.

- Each of the muskmelons *is* sweet.
- Each one of their group *is* enthusiastic.
- Neither of the workers *was* busy.

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