

Subject-verb agreement: Putting it all together

Sentence has one subject

Singular noun: Use a **singular** verb

The **cat sleeps** in the sun.

Plural noun: Use a **plural** verb

The **cats sleep** in the sun.

If the noun can't be counted, use a **singular** verb

The **juice is** very fresh.



Singular regular verbs end in an **–s**.
Plural regular verbs do not!

Compound subjects: Subjects separated by “and” or “or”

And: Use a **plural** verb

Kim **and** Dave **ride** the bus.

Or: Match the **closest** noun

Soups or **salad comes** with your meal.

Indefinite pronouns as subjects: Anybody, both, each, etc.

Singular: Use “**is**”

Anybody is welcome to try the pie or cake.

Each is delicious!

Plural: Use “**are**”

Both are made here at the bakery.

Many are tempted to try them.



“**Each**” is always singular.
Pronouns that begin with “**any**” or “**every**” are also singular.

Subject is a collective noun or group

Acting as a unit:
Use a **singular** verb

The **committee holds** regular meetings.

Acting as individuals:
Use a **plural** verb

The **committee decide** how to vote by reviewing the data.



If a group is acting as individuals, a writer will often phrase the sentence to make this clear.
The committee **members** decide how to vote by reviewing the data.

Tricky situations

Subject separated from the verb: **Find** the subject and **match** it!

The **choice of campsites is** limited.

The **possibilities for an uncomfortable night are** endless.



Don't be misled by the **intervening words**!

There are and There is: **Find** the subject and **match** it!

There **are bears** near the camp.

There **is a cub** with one of the bears.



Try rephrasing the sentence with the subject first:
“**Bears are** near the camp.”