

Subject-Verb Agreement

Learn it!

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Subject-Verb Agreement

What will you learn?

- Make the subject and the verb agree
- Handle more complex cases, like compound subjects, collective nouns, and portions
- What not to do with phrases like "as well as" or extra information in parenthesis

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Subject-Verb Agreement

Subject-verb agreement is making sure the verb form matches with its subject in person (first, second, or third) and number (singular or plural).

Liz is an accountant and **she has** a typical 8-5 job.

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When Do We Use Subject-Verb Agreement?

Subject-verb agreement applies only to verbs put into the simple present tense and only in the past tense when using the verb "to be."

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Subject-Verb Agreement

Regular		Irregular	
Subject	Verb	Subject	Verb
I	work	I	am
You	work	You	are
He/She/It	works	He/She/It	is
We	work	We	are
They	work	They	are

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Subject-Verb Agreement

1st, 2nd, 3rd Person

A verb in the simple present tense changes depending on whether the subject is singular or plural, and whether it's 1st, 2nd, or 3rd person.

I run every morning.

You run every morning.

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3rd person singular (he, she, it) we need to add an "s"
(or an "es" depending on the spelling) to the verb.

He runs every morning.

She runs every morning.

It runs every morning.

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If the subject is plural, whether it's 1st person plural
("we"), 2nd person plural ("you") or 3rd person plural
("they"), the verb stays in its base form.

We run every morning.

You (all) run every morning.

They run every morning.

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	Singular	Plural
1 st person	I run	we run
2 nd person	you run	you run
3 rd person	he/she/it runs	they run

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	Singular	Plural
1 st person	I am	we are
2 nd person	you are	you are
3 rd person	he/she/it is	they are

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Compound subjects are when two subjects are joined
by "and." We treat them as a plural subject, so the verb
stays in the base form.

My brother and sister play tennis.

They play tennis.

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"To Be" is irregular so it has its own special forms for
simple present tense with different subjects.

I am
you are
he/she/it is
we are
they are

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When two subjects are joined by "or" or "nor," the verb agrees with the subject closest to it.
(Rule of Proximity).

Neither the teacher nor the students are ready.

Neither the students nor the teacher is ready.

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Subject-Verb Agreement

When two subjects are joined by "or" or "nor," the verb agrees with the subject closest to it.
(Rule of Proximity).

Either the cat or the dogs bark loudly.

Either the dogs or the cat barks loudly.

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Subject-Verb Agreement

When extra information is added in parentheses or with phrases like "as well as" it doesn't count as part of the subject.

The book, as well as the notes, is on the table.

My friend (along with her colleagues) is at the door.

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Subject-Verb Agreement

When extra information is added in parentheses or with phrases like "as well as" it doesn't count as part of the subject.

The teacher, as well as the students, speaks clearly.

My brother (along with his friends) plays basketball.

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Collective nouns like "team," "family," or "group" can be treated as third-person singular when we talk about them as one unit.

The team is winning.

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However, when we refer to the individuals within the group (they), we use third-person plural verb form.

The team are arguing among themselves.

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American vs. British English

In American English, collective nouns are almost always treated as singular.

The family is going on vacation.

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In British English, collective nouns can often be treated as either singular or plural depending on context.

The family is planning a holiday.

The family are planning a holiday.

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Use the third-person, singular verb form with distances, periods of time, sums of money, etc., when considered as a unit.

Ten dollars is a high price to pay for socks.

Ten dollars (i.e. dollar bills) are scattered on the floor.

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Some pronouns, known as singular indefinite pronouns (like "everyone," "each," "someone," "nobody," "anyone") are always treated as third-person singular.

Everyone is excited.

Someone has left their bag.

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In sentences that start with "there is" or "there are," the subject comes after the verb, not before it. (inverted subject)

There is a book on the table.

There are books on the table.

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When the subject includes both singular and plural elements, the verb agrees with the subject closest to it.

There is a book and two pens on the table.

There are two pens and a book on the table.

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Words like "a lot of," "some of," or "a majority of" can be third-person singular or plural depending on the noun that follows. (portions)

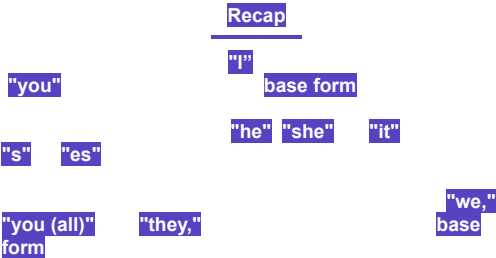
A lot of the cake is gone.

A lot of the cakes are gone.

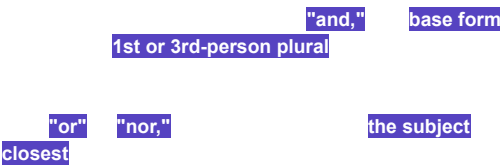
Some of the money is missing.

Some of the people are missing.

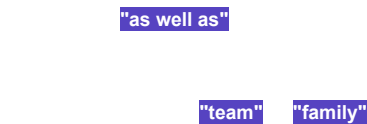
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