

# SUBJECT - VERB AGREEMENT

# Words of the Day!

1. Clandestine - secret
2. Circumspect: to examine thoroughly.
3. Parity: the state of being equal in status, amount, or degree.
4. Devastated -destroy or ruin
5. Consensus: general agreement by a group

# What is subject

## Subject of a Sentence

Here are four ways a subject appears in a sentence:

1 The subject performs an action:

**My dog** loves the postman.

3 The subject is identified:

**My dog** is the one in the middle.

2 The subject is described:

**My dog** is friendly.

4 The subject has an action done to it:

**My dog** was taken to the vet.

# What is a verb ?

A **verb** is a word that expresses an **action** or a **state of being**.

## Action



She **ironed** her dress.

Verb

## State of Being



She **feels** tired.

Verb

VERB MEANING

YOUR DICTIONARY

# POLL QUESTION

How do we recognize action or activity in a sentence?

- a. through subject
- b. through verb
- c. through adjective

# POLL QUESTION

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# What is subject verb agreement ?

Subject-verb agreement refers to the relationship between the subject and predicate of the sentence. Subjects and verbs must always agree in two ways: tense and number. For this post, we are focusing on number, or whether the subject and verb are singular or plural.



# BASIC RULE:

- Singular subjects must have singular verbs.  
Plural subjects take plural verbs.



# For example:

- The light in the lamppost flickers each night.
- In this sentence, the subject *light* is singular; therefore, the verb that describes the action of the subject must also be singular: *flickers*.
- If the subject was plural, the verbs would have to change form to **agree** with the subject.
- For example:
- The lights in the lampposts flicker each night.
- In this sentence, since the subject is now plural, the -s has to be removed from the verb in order to have **subject-verb agreement**.

# POLL QUESTION

Which of the following examples is with subject - verb agreement?

- a. He want to refer the case to the higher authorities.
- b. She wants to refer the case to the higher authorities.
- c. They wants to refer the case to the higher athorities.
- d. None of these.

# POLL QUESTION

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- b. She wants to refer the case to the higher authorities.
- c. They wants to refer the case to the higher authorities.
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## Let's Learn basics first :-

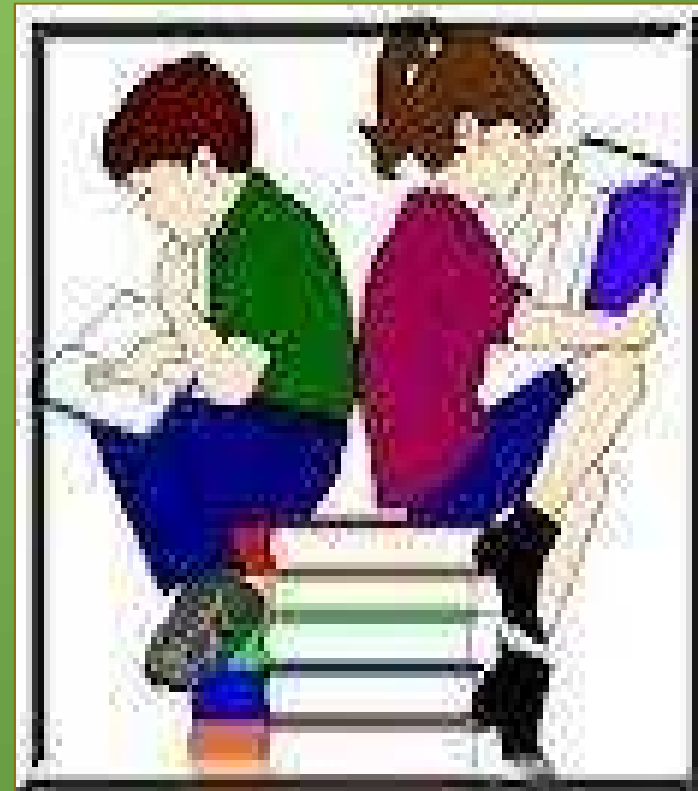
- In the present tense, verbs agree with their subjects in NUMBER (singular/plural) and in PERSON (first, second, or third). The present tense ending **-s (or -es)** is used on a verb if the subject is **THIRD PERSON SINGULAR**. Otherwise, the verb takes **NO ENDING**.

	SINGULAR		PLURAL	
First Person	I	love	We	love
Second Person	You	love	you	love
Third Person	He/she/it	loves	They	love



## Rule 1:-

- When two subjects are joined together using 'and' a plural verb should be used



## Examples:

- Alex *and* courtney are my classmates.
- Bread *and* butter are sold at my shop.

# Exception:-

- If a subject consisting of two singular nouns connected by 'and' refers to the same person, thing or same idea, a singular verb is used.
- 
- My friend, philosopher and guide have come. (change HAVE to HAS because all qualities are found in one person)
- Bread and butter are my favourite dish. (change ARE to IS because here subject is referring to one dish.)
- Breaking and entering is against the law.
- The bed and breakfast was charming.



- When two subjects connected by and are proceeded by **each , every, or many** a **singular** verb is used.
- Each man and boy is expected to meet his obligation.
- Every shirt ,tie and coat is marked for reduction sale.

# POLL QUESTION

Which of the following is correct?

- a. Dash and his father is waiting outside the hall.
- b. The coach and the wicket keeper are working hard.
- c. The coach and wicket keeper are working hard.
- d. The coach and the wicket keeper is working hard.

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## Rule 2:-

- If two subjects are joined with correlative conjunctions such as “**Either- or**” , “ **neither-nor**” , “**not only- but also**” etc...then the verb follows the subject that is closer to it

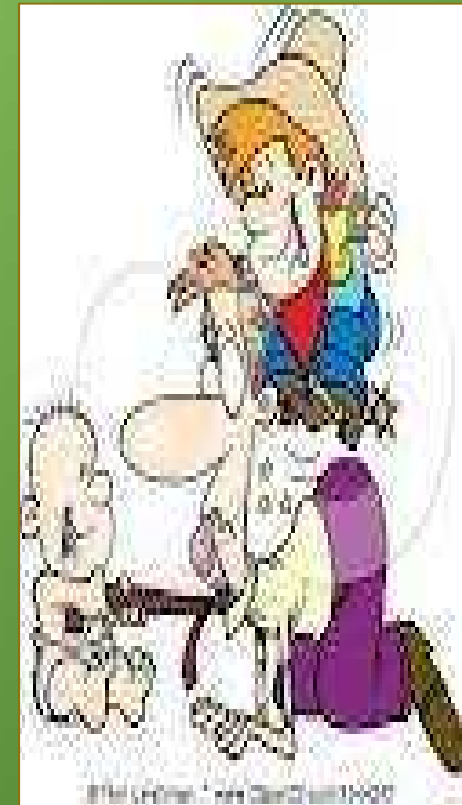


# Examples:-

- Neither Soha nor her family members **express** their pain openly. ( closer subject is the “family members” which is plural)
- Either rain or snow is falling all over the state.
- *Neither the plates nor the serving bowl **goes** on that shelf.*
- *Either Kiana or Casey is helping today with stage decorations.*
- *Not only the headmaster but also the teachers **are** in favour of the expansion of the school.*
- *Not only the teachers but also the headmaster **is** in favour of the expansion of the school.*

## Rule 3:-

- Sometimes the subject is separated from the verb by such words 'as well as', 'with', 'alongwith', 'together with', 'and not', 'In addition to', 'but', 'besides', 'except', 'rather than', 'accompanied by', 'like', 'unlike', 'no less than', 'nothing but'
- Then the verb agrees with the primary subject. 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.
- My father unlike my uncles is very strict.

# POLL QUESTION

Which of the following is following Rule 3 properly?

- a. The leader, along with the guards, is expected shortly.
- b. The leader, along with the guards, are expected shortly.
- c. The leader, along with the guards, were expected shortly.



# POLL QUESTION

Which of the following is following Rule 3 properly?

- a. The leader, along with the guards, is expected shortly.
- b. The leader, along with the guards, are expected shortly.
- c. The leader, along with the guards, were expected shortly.

## Rule 4:- These should be easy to remember—SANE

- Indefinite pronouns can pose special problems in subject - verb agreement. The difficulty is that some indefinite pronouns sound **plural** when they are really **singular**.
- As subjects, the following indefinite pronouns **ALWAYS** take *singular verbs*.

either	anybody	somebody	everybody	nobody	each
neither	anyone	someone	everyone	no one	
one	anything	something	everything	nothing	

## Examples

***Each sees*** the value of the course.

singular    singular  
                  's'

***Everybody has*** gone to the movies.

singular    singular  
                  's'

***Nothing seems*** right around this house anymore!

singular    singular  
                  's'

***Another is*** on the way.

singular    singular  
                  's'

However,

the following indefinite pronouns  
**ALWAYS** take ***plural verbs***.

both	few	many	several	others
------	-----	------	---------	--------

## Examples

***Many have*** answered the invitation for Friday evening.

↑ plural    ↑ plural  
no 's'

A ***few are*** not coming at all.

↑ plural    ↑ plural  
no 's'

***Several indicate*** that they will be late.

↑ plural    ↑ plural  
no 's'

# POLL QUESTION

both   few   many   several   others

Above - mentioned Indefinite pronouns always take *plural verbs*.

- a. True
- b. False

# POLL QUESTION

both   few   many   several   others

Above - mentioned Indefinite pronouns always take *plural verbs*.

- a. True
- b. False

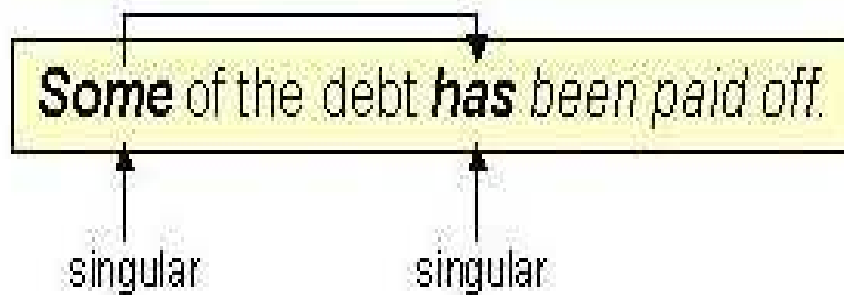
# EXCEPTION:

- A third group of indefinite pronouns takes **either** a singular or plural verb depending on the pronoun's meaning in the sentence.
- Look at them closely.

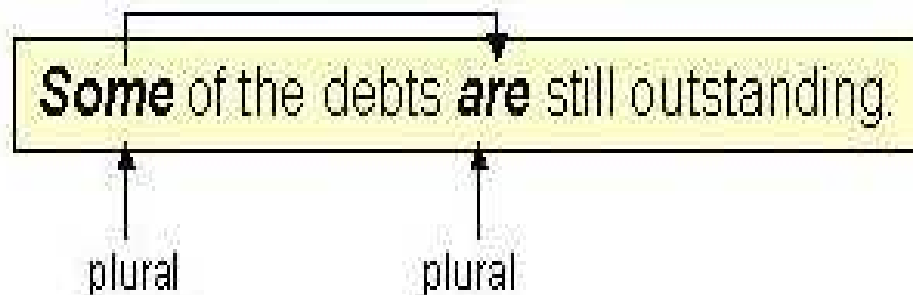
some	any	none	all	most
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## Examples



**Some** refers to **debt**.  
Therefore, **some** is singular  
and takes a singular verb.



Here, **some** refers to **debts**.  
Therefore, **some** is plural  
and takes a plural verb.

## Rule 5:- Collective Nouns

- A collective noun is a word that represents a group of persons ,animals, or things e.g. audience ,committee,company ,council etc. The following rules govern the form of verb to be used with a collective noun.
- The verb might be singular or plural, depending on the writer's intent.



**When the group acts as a unit , the verb should be singular.**

- The committee has agreed to submit its report on Friday.
- The majority has made its decision.
- The firm is one of the most reputed in the country.
- The herd of cows is grazing in the field.

When the members of the group are thought of as acting separately ,the verb should be plural.

- The teams are arguing over who should be the captain.
- The couple are separating this week.
- The jury are divided in their opinion.
- The audience have taken their seats.

# POLL QUESTION

Which of the following is correct?

- a. The jury has agreed to submit its report on Friday.
- b. The jury have agreed to submit its report on Friday.
- c. The jury has agreed to submit their report on Friday.

# POLL QUESTION

Which of the following is correct?

- a. The jury has agreed to submit its report on Friday.
- b. The jury have agreed to submit its report on Friday.
- c. The jury has agreed to submit their report on Friday.

## Rule 6:-

- So far we have considered subjects that can cause subject-verb agreement confusion: **compound** subjects, **group noun** subjects, **plural form - singular meaning** subjects, and **indefinite** subjects.
- The remainder of this teaching unit examines subject - verb agreement problems that can result from **word placement** in sentences. There are four main problems: prepositional phrases, clauses beginning with **who**, **that**, or **which**,

## Prepositional Phrase

A prepositional phrase sometimes complicates subject – verb agreement.

A prepositional phrase is composed of:





## Examples of Prepositional Phrases

preposition   modifier   noun  
of the car

preposition   modifier   noun  
at the brown house

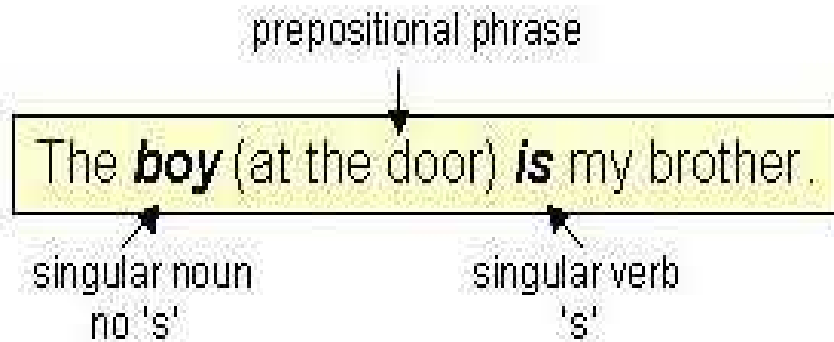
preposition   pronoun object  
about him

preposition   modifiers   noun objects  
over that last big hill

preposition   modifiers   pronoun object  
to a sweet someone

# A prepositional phrase may be placed between the subject and verb

## Example



In this example, the singular verb **is** agrees with the singular subject **boy**.

However, a prepositional phrase inserted between the subject and verb makes agreement more difficult.

- ***Car*** is the singular subject. ***Was*** is the singular helping verb which agrees with ***car***. If we aren't careful, however, we may mistakenly label ***riders*** as the subject since it is nearer to the verb than ***car*** is. If we choose the plural noun, ***riders***, we will incorrectly select the plural verb ***were***.

WRONG!

The ***car*** (with many riders) ~~***were***~~ speeding around the curve.

# POLL QUESTION

Which of the following is correct ?

- a. The bike with multiple riders were speeding around the curve.
- b. The bike with multiple riders are speeding around the curve.
- c. The bike with multiple riders is speeding around the curve.

# POLL QUESTION

Which of the following is correct ?

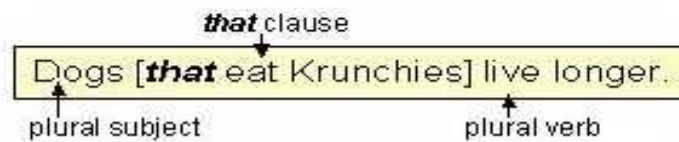
- a. The bike with multiple riders were speeding around the curve.
- b. The bike with multiple riders are speeding around the curve.
- c. The bike with multiple riders is speeding around the curve.

- A clause beginning with *who*, *that*, or *which* and coming BETWEEN the subject and verb can cause agreement problems. Like the prepositional phrase, the *who* / *that* / *which* clause never contains the subject.

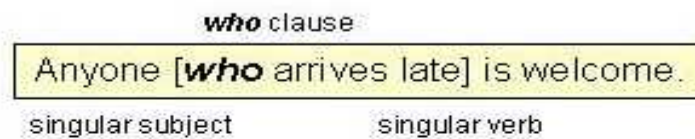
### Example #1:



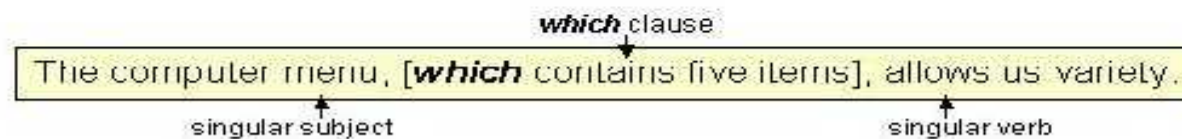
### Example #2:



### Example #3:



### Example #4:



# POLL QUESTION

Which one is correct ?

- a. Dog that eat crunchies live longer.
- b. Dogs that eats crunchies live longer.
- c. Dog that eats crunchies live longer.



# POLL QUESTION

Which one is correct ?

- a. Dog that eat crunchies live longer.
- b. Dogs that eats crunchies live longer.
- c. Dog that eats crunchies live longer.

## Rule 7:-

- In sentences beginning with here or there, the true subject follows the verb.
- Examples:
  - There are five matches to play.
  - Here is the package of letters.
  - There is little administrative support..



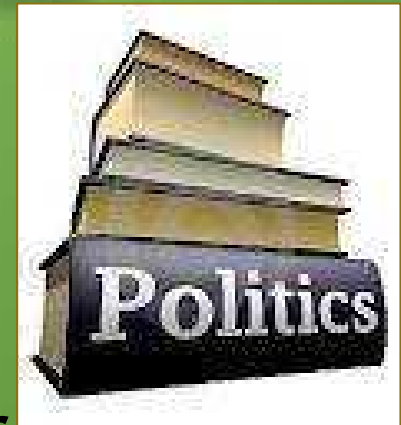
## Rule 8:-

- Some nouns that are plural in form because they end with 'S' but singular in meaning such as
- Name of diseases:- Measles, Mumps, Rickets, Shingles etc.
- Name of games : Billiards, Darts, Draughts, etc.
- Name of countries:- The United States, The West Indies etc
- Name of books :- The Arabian Nights, Three Musketeers, etc.
- Name of subjects:- Physics, Economics, Civics, Statistics, Politics etc.

Usually  
take  
singular  
verb

# Examples:-

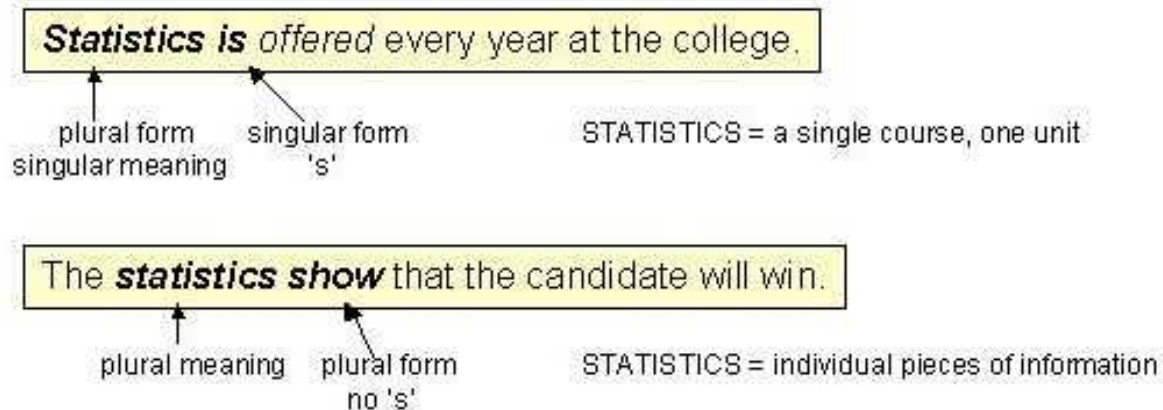
- Mathematics is an interesting subject.
- Politics is not my cup of tea.
- News is travelling faster than ever before.
- Generally measles lasts about two weeks.



# Exception:-

- Some nouns ending in -ics (such as athletics, statistics and politics ) are considered plural when referring to individual facts, qualities or activities.

## Examples



# POLL QUESTION

Pick the correct sentence :

- a. Mathematics are considered a difficult subject.
- b. Mathematics is considered a difficult subject.

# POLL QUESTION

Pick the correct sentence :

- a. Mathematics are considered a difficult subject.
- b. Mathematics is considered a difficult subject.

## Rule 9:-

- Use a singular verb with distances, periods of time, sums of money, quantities etc., when considered as a unit.
- Examples:
- Ten miles is too far to walk.
- Seven years is the maximum sentence for that offense.
- Five dollars is a high price to pay.
- 5 metres is ample for a suit.





## Exception:-

- When subject consists of noun referring to individual units ,use plural verb.
- *Ten dollars (i.e., dollar bills) were scattered on the floor.*
- Hundred rupees **are** to be distributed among the students.
- Note the difference
- Five thousand rupees is a handsome amount.

Five thousand rupee have been spent on different useful commodities.

## Rule 10:-

- The expression the number has a singular meaning and requires a singular verb, whereas the expression a number has a plural meaning and takes a plural verb.

- Examples:-

- The number of board members is very small.
- A number of board members are absent.
- A number of our staff are going on leave.



# Rule 11:-

- The following words are always *plural*: **PANTS, TROUSERS, PLIERS, SCISSORS, SHEARS, TONGS**. However, if *the word PAIR is used, the verb is singular*
- Examples:
- The pants are torn into two.
- The pair of scissors was placed on the table



*Thank  
you*

