

CHAPTER 29 Subject-Verb Agreement

A sentence is divided into Subject and Predicate

The Subject is either Singular or Plural. *The Finite Verb of a sentence must agree with its Subject in Person and Number.* Singular Subject takes Singular Verb and Plural Subject takes Plural Verb.

Examples :

1. Ram reads a book. – (Singular Subject–Singular Verb)
2. Boys play in the field. – (Plural Subject–Plural Verb)

Rules of Subject-Verb Agreement :

1. First Person Singular and Plural Subjects take Singular / Plural Verb with them.

Examples : (i) I am fine today.

(ii) I was sorry for my mistake.

(iii) I like mango very much.

(iv) We swim in this pond.

(v) We are doing our work.

2. Second Person Singular and Plural Subjects take Plural Verb with them.

Examples : (i) You sing song.

(ii) You are helping the poor.

3. Third Person Singular Subject takes Singular Verb and Third Person Plural Subject takes Plural Verb.

Examples : (i) Ravi runs on the road.

(ii) Mohan is waiting for the bus.

(iii) Radha has a story book.

(iv) They are watching the match.

4. Two Singular Subjects joined by *and*, take Plural Verb.

Examples : (i) Rajiv and Sujit are close relatives.

(ii) He and I are working very hard to achieve the goal.

- (iii) Soni and Moni read in the same class.
- (iv) Iron and brass are heavy metals.
- (v) Rose and lily are beautiful flowers.
- (vi) Tiger and lion are wild animals.

5. Two Singular Subjects (nouns) joined by *and* but referring to one idea or same person or thing take Singular Verb.

Examples : (i) Slow and steady wins the race.

(ii) Time and tide waits for none.

(iii) Bread and butter is my favourite breakfast.

(iv) Rice and curry is a cheap food.

(v) My friend and philosopher has advised me to do this.

(vi) The horse and carriage is at the door.

(vii) The rise and fall was caused by the storm.

(viii) The poet and painter is dead.

6. Two Singular Subjects joined by *or*, take Verb according to Second Subject.

Examples : (i) James or John has written this letter.

(ii) Meeta or Usha has drawn this picture.

(iii) Mr Pathak or Mr Mishra has taught the students.

(iv) Gopi or Ramu is in the field.

7. Two Subjects joined by *or*, *nor*, *either.... or*, *neither.... nor* and are of different persons, take Verb according to Second Subject.

Examples : (i) Mohit or I have to leave the place.

(ii) Either he or I am mistaken.

(iii) Either you or he has taken my watch.

(iv) Neither you nor he is to blame.

(v) Neither my friend nor I have received the letter.

8. Two Subjects joined by *with* or *as well as* take Verb according to First Subject.

Examples : (i) I with my guards was walking on the road.

(ii) The mother with her children is at the door.

(iii) He as well as I is guilty.

(iv) I as well as my friends am working on this project.

(v) The master as well as his servants is waiting for the king.

9. Each, every, either, neither, everyone, much, a little, no body, some one, many a take Singular Verb.

Examples : (i) Each of the boys was given a school bag.

(ii) Every man, woman and child *was* watching Ramayana on the television.

(iii) Either of the roads *is* good.

(iv) Neither of the books *is* costly.

(v) Everyone *is* happy today.

(vi) Much labour *is* required to pass the examination.

(vii) A little knowledge *is* a dangerous thing.

(viii) No body *has* taken dinner yet.

(ix) Someone *has* scolded the baby.

(x) Many a man *has* plucked flowers from this garden.

10. All, several, both, many, a few, some take *Plural Verb*.

Examples : (i) All teachers *were* present in the meeting.

(ii) Several shops *were* looted by the criminals.

(iii) Both stories *are* interesting.

(iv) Many people *were* taking rest in the courtyard.

(v) A few letters *were* written to the officer.

(vi) Some boys *were* quarrelling over a story book.

11. A Plural Noun which refers to some specified quantity or amount as a whole is a singular subject and takes a *Singular Verb*.

Examples : (i) Fifty miles *is* a long distance.

(ii) Ten thousand rupees *is* a handsome amount.

(iii) Twenty years *is* a long period.

(iv) Ten minutes *was* given to each speaker.

12. A Plural Noun which refers to a proper name for a single collective unit is a singular subject and takes a *Singular Verb*.

Examples : (i) The United States *has* a big army.

(ii) The Arabian Nights *is* an interesting book.

(iii) Gulliver's Travels *is* a satire on society.

(iv) Plutarch's lives *is* my favourite book.

13. Some Nouns which are plural in form but singular in meaning take a *Singular Verb*.

Examples : (i) The news *is* good.

(ii) Politics *is* a good game.

(iii) Economics *is* an interesting subject.

(iv) Mathematics *is* a tough subject.

(v) Measles *is* a serious disease.

14. A Collective Noun takes a *Singular Verb* when the collection is thought as a whole.

Examples : (i) The committee *has* sent its report.

(ii) The assembly *was* very peaceful.

(iii) The jury *has* given its verdict.

(iv) The congress *has* framed its rule.

(v) The crowd *was* dispersed.

(vi) My family *is* an ideal family.

15. A Collective Noun takes a *Plural Verb* when the individuals of which it is composed are thought of.

Examples : (i) The jury *were* divided in their opinions.

(ii) The committee *were* indifferent on that issue.

(iii) The audience *were* getting thrilled.

(iv) The crowd *were* fighting over a small matter.

16. Some Nouns which appear to be singular but are plural in meaning, take *Plural Verb*.

Examples : (i) Cattle *are* grazing in the field.

(ii) The people *were* crazy about the musical programme.

(iii) The police *have* submitted the report.

(iv) Children *are* very innocent.

17. Nouns such as furniture, advice, information, knowledge, luggage, behaviour, scenery, traffic, music are always singular and take *Singular Verb*.

Examples : (i) The furniture *is* good and costly.

(ii) His piece/pieces of advice *is* always followed by me.

(iii) All information given by the student *was* true.

(iv) His luggage *is* not so much heavy.

(v) The traffic *was* very busy.

18. A number of, followed by Noun takes *Plural Verb* whereas the number of, followed by Noun takes *Singular Verb*.

Examples : (i) A number of boys *have* failed in the examination.

(ii) The number of students *is* fifty.

19. A pair of followed by Noun takes *Singular Verb*.

Examples : (i) A pair of shoes *has* been bought.

(ii) A pair of scissors *is* lying on the bed.

20. When Plural Noun comes after a team of, a chain of, an army of, a bunch of, a set of, Singular Verb is used.
Examples : (i) A team of players *has* arrived.

- (ii) A chain of events *has* occurred here.
- (iii) A crowd of people *was* waiting for the leader.
- (iv) A bunch of flowers *was* presented to the chairperson.

- (v) A set of pens *was* bought.

21. When the Subject of a sentence is Noun + of + Noun, the Noun is the real Subject and Singular or Plural Verb is used according to it.

Examples : (i) The price of these flowers *is* much.

- (ii) The pages of this book *are* missing.
- (iii) The people of this country *are* hard working.
- (iv) The future of our country *is* bright.
- (v) The colour of these shirts *is* attractive.

22. Adjectives used as Nouns take *Plural Verb* with them.
Examples : (i) The rich *are* selfish.

- (ii) The poor *are* honest.

Try Out Exercise

Direction : Complete each sentence by choosing the correct verb given in the bracket and writing it in the blank provided at the right side :

Example : The principal and secretary (is, are) not present in the office. _____

- (i) Time and tide (*wait, waits*) for none. _____
- (ii) Mohit or I (*is, am*) to blame for this mistake. _____
- (iii) The team (*has, have*) won the last match. _____
- (iv) Neither you nor I (*are, am*) wrong. _____
- (v) The man with his sons (*has, have*) fled away. _____
- (vi) Many people (*was, were*) taking bath in the pond. _____
- (vii) Hammer and sickle (*was, were*) kept on the ground. _____
- (viii) No one (*has, have*) brought book today. _____
- (ix) Six of the chickens (*is, are*) ill. _____

- (x) Half of the plot (*is, are*) vacant. _____

- (xi) No news (*is, are*) good news. _____

- (xii) The advice given to me (*is, are*) very good. _____

- (xiii) The police (*has, have*) arrested the culprit. _____

- (xiv) Two and two (*is, are*) four. _____

- (xv) The United Nations (*is, are*) our only hope. _____

- (xvi) Physics (*is, are*) a tough subject. _____

- (xvii) Ten miles (*is, are*) a long distance. _____

- (xviii) A number of flowers (*has, have*) been plucked by the boy. _____

- (xix) A flock of sheep (*was, were*) grazing in the field. _____

- (xx) The number of students present in the assembly (*is, are*) thin. _____

Application Practice

1. Direction : Complete each sentence by choosing the correct verb given in the bracket and writing it in the blank provided at the right side :

- (i) The poor (*is, are*) honest. _____

- (ii) The jury (*has, have*) given its decision. _____

- (iii) The crowd (*was, were*) weeping to see the incident. _____

- (iv) The people of India (*are, is*) honest. _____

- (v) Each of us (*want, wants*) to win. _____

- (vi) You, he and I (*am, are*) close friends. _____

- (vii) Sudha as well as her parents (*has, have*) arrived. _____

- (viii) He or I (*am, is*) wrong. _____

- (ix) Five years (*has, have*) passed since I met her. _____

- (x) Each one (*has, have*) got a chair. _____

- (xi) Each of these flowers (*is, are*) beautiful. _____

- (xii) Bread and butter (*is, are*) my favourite breakfast. _____

- (xiii) Shelley's poetry (*is, are*) very touching. _____

- (xiv) Many a boy (*has, have*) won the debate. _____

- (xv) More than ten people (*was, were*) injured. _____

- (xvi) His shoes (*are, is*) shining. _____

- (xvii) The chairman and president (*has, have*) arrived in the office. _____

- (xviii) The price of the mangoes (*is, are*) high. _____

- (xix) Romeo and Juliet (*is, are*) a great drama. _____