

UNIT I

SUBJECT-VERB AGREEMENT

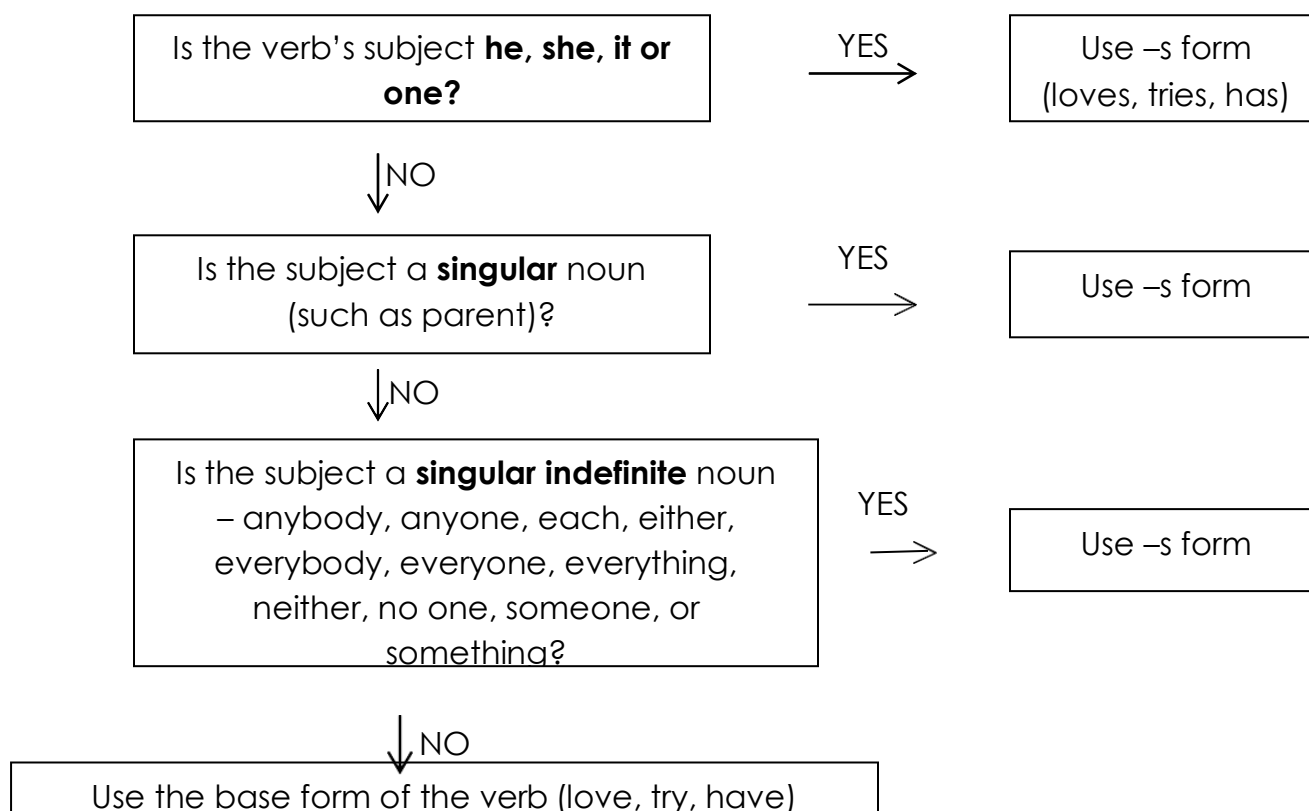
Most native English speakers know the standard verb-subject combinations by ear. Examples of these combinations are *he talks*, not *he talk* and *she has*, not *she have*.

However, if you don't trust your ear or you find simple sentence formations confusing, just follow these simple rules and you will be ready to write flawless sentences in no time!

- 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

- If the concept still confuses you, try answering the following questions to understand when to use the **-s (or -es)** form of a present tense verb.



- After learning the basic fundamentals of subject-verb agreement, read and understand these special rules and after some practice, forming correct sentences will be easy!

1. Make the verb agree with its subject, not with the word in between High levels of pollution **cause** damage to the respiratory tract The subject is **levels**, NOT pollution

2. With subjects joined with or, nor, either...or, or neither... nor, make the verb agree with the part of the subject **NEARER** to the verb

A driver's license or credit card **is** required

See, the term "driver's license" was not used in making the verb agree the sentence. Instead it was the term "credit card"

Neither the lab assistant nor the students **were** able to download the information

3. Treat most indefinite pronouns as SINGULAR

Anybody	Each	Everyone	Nobody	Somebody
Anyone	Either	Everything	No one	Someone
Anything	Everybody	Neither	Nothing	Something

Everybody who signed up for the snowboarding trip **was** taking lessons

Everyone on the team **supports** the coach

4. However, a few indefinite nouns such as ALL, ANY, NONE and SOME may be singular or plural DEPENDING on the noun or pronoun they refer to.

Some of our luggage **was** lost None of

his advice **makes** sense

5. Make the verb agree with its subject even when the subject follows the verb

There **are** surprisingly few children in our neighborhood

There **were** a social worker and a crew of twenty volunteers at the scene of the accident

6. Words such as athletics, economics, measles and news are usually SINGULAR, despite their plural form

Statistics **is** among the most difficult courses in our program

7. Titles of works, company names, words mentioned as words, and gerund phrases are SINGULAR

Lost Cities **describes** the discoveries of many ancient civilizations

Delmonico Brothers **specializes** in organic produce and additive-free meats.

8. Treat collective nouns (e.g. team, audience, crowd, class, family) as SINGULAR unless the meaning is clearly plural

1. SINGULAR

Collective nouns nearly always emphasize a group as a UNIT The

class **respects** the teacher

The board of trustees **meets** in Denver twice a year

2. PLURAL

Occasionally, a collective noun is treated as plural to draw attention to the INDIVIDUAL members of the group

The class **are** debating amongst

If that is the case, it is better to change it to:

The class members **are** debating amongst themselves

themselves

Now try answering these exercises to measure how much you learned!

EXERCISE 1

Underline the subject (or compound subject) and then identify the verb that agrees with it.

Everyone in the telecom focus group (has/have) experienced problems with cell phones

1. Your friendship over the years and your support (has/have) meant a great deal to us.
2. Hamilton Family Center, a shelter for teenage runaways in San Francisco, (offers/offer) a wide variety of services.
3. The main source of income for Trinidad (is/are) oil and pitch.
4. The chances of your being promoted (is/are) excellent.
5. There (was/were) a Pokémon card stuck to the refrigerator.
6. Neither the professor nor his assistants (was/were) able to solve the mystery of the eerie glow in the laboratory.
7. Many hours at the driving range (has/have) led us to design golf balls with GPS locators in them.
8. Discovered in the soil of our city garden (was/were) a button dating from the Civil War dating from the turn of the century.
9. Every year, during the midsummer festival, the smoke of village bonfires (fills/fill) the sky.
10. The story performers (was/were) surrounded by children and adults eager to see magical tales.

EXERCISE 2

Edit the following sentences to eliminate problems with subject-verb agreement and write the edited sentence. If a sentence is correct, write "correct."

Jack's first days in the infantry was grueling

Jack's first days in the infantry **were** grueling

1. One of the main reasons for elephant poaching are the profits received from selling the ivory tusks.
2. Not until my interview with Dr. Chang were other possibilities opened to me.
3. Batik cloth from Bali, blue and white ceramics from Cambodia, and a bocce ball from Turin has made Hannah's room the talk of the dorm.
4. The board of directors, ignoring the wishes of the neighbourhood, has voted to allow further development.
5. Measles is a contagious childhood disease.
6. The presence of certain bacteria in our bodies are one of the factors that determines our overall health.
7. Leah is the only one of the many applicants who has the ability to step into this job.
8. Neither the explorer nor his companions was ever seen again.

EXERCISE 3

1. Benito (doesn't, don't) know the answer.
2. Annie and her brothers (is, are) at school.
3. George and Tamara (doesn't, don't) want to see that movie.
4. Your pants (is, are) at the cleaner's.
5. (Is, Are) the tweezers in this drawer?
6. The committee (debates, debate) these questions carefully.
7. The members of the committee (leads, lead) very different lives in private
8. (Is, Are) the news on at five or six?
9. Mathematics (is, are) John's favourite subject, while Civics (is, are) Andrea's favourite subject
10. Statistics (is, are) not a piece of cake to learn.
11. Unfortunately, dishonest politics (was, were) used to win the election.
12. Athletics (provides, provide) important opportunities for physical development.
13. Good news usually (travels, travel) fast.
14. Ceramics (take, takes) a great deal of practice for proficiency.
15. The projected statistics (compares, compare) the budgets of the first 3 quarters.
16. The dog or the cats (is, are) outside.
17. The players, as well as the captain, (want, wants) to win.
18. Either my shoes or your coat (is, are) always on the floor.
19. The movie, including all the previews, (take, takes) about two hours to watch.
20. The Prime Minister, together with his wife, (greet, greets) the press cordially.
21. The man with all the birds (live, lives) on my street.
22. One of my sisters (is, are) going on a trip to France.
23. Either my mother or my father (is, are) coming to the meeting.

24. 50% of the work (is, are) complete.
25. Either answer (is, are) acceptable.
26. Every one of those books (is, are) fiction.
27. Nobody (know, knows) the trouble I've seen.
28. All of the CDs, even the scratched one, (is, are) in this case.
29. Among the animals, turtles cling to their basic structural design, while many others (is,are) experimenting their way to extinction.
30. Turtles are unique; each (has, have) eight cervical vertebrae, compared with seven of most mammals.

EXERCISE 4

Underline the subject (or compound subject) and then identify the verb that agrees with it:-

1. Your friendship over the years and your support (has/have) meant a great deal to us.
2. Hamilton Family Center, a shelter for teenage runaways in San Francisco, (offers/offer) a wide variety of services.
3. The main source of income for Trinidad (is/are) oil and pitch.
4. The chances of your being promoted (is/are) excellent.
5. There (was/were) a Pokémon card stuck to the refrigerator.
6. Neither the professor nor his assistants (was/were) able to solve the mystery of the eerie glow in the laboratory.
7. Many hours at the driving range (has/have) led us to design golf balls with GPS locators in them.
8. Discovered in the soil of our city garden (was/were) a button dating from the Civil War dating from the turn of the century.
9. Every year, during the midsummer festival, the smoke of village bonfires (fills/fill) the sky.
10. The story performers (was/were) surrounded by children and adults eager to see magical tale

Exercise 5

When a verb agrees with its subject in number:-

Direction: Select the correct verb in each of the sentences below.

1. Your friend (talk-talks) too much.
2. The man with the roses (look-looks) like your brother.
3. The women in the pool (swim-swims) well.
4. Bill (drive-drives) a cab.
5. The football players (run-runs) five miles every day.
6. That red-haired lady in the fur hat (live-lives) across the street.
7. He (cook-cooks) dinner for his family.
8. The boys (walk-walks) to school every day.
9. The weather on the coast (appear-appears) to be good this weekend.
10. The centre on the basketball team (bounce-bounces) the ball too high.

Exercise 6

When a subject is singular or plural depending on its usage and some seem to be plural but always take singular verb.

Direction: Select the correct verb in each of the sentences below.

1. Each of the girls (look-looks) good on skis.
2. Everybody (was-were) asked to remain quiet.
3. Neither of the men (is-are) here yet.
4. (Is-Are) each of the girls ready to leave?
5. Several of the sheep (is-are) sick.
6. Some members of the faculty (is-are) present.

7. Nobody in the class (has-have) the answer.
8. Each of the girls (observe-observes) all the regulations.
9. All of the milk (is-are) gone.
10. Most of the seats (was-were) taken.
11. At the end of the fall (comes/come) the hard tests.
12. The slaughter of animals for their fur (has/have) caused controversy.
13. The student, as well as his teacher, (was/were) going on the field trip.
14. The hard tests (comes/come) at the end of the fall.
15. Both of my roommates (has/have) decided to live in the dorms.

Exercise 7

When a subject is a collective noun or joined by and, or, nor.

Direction: Select the correct verb in each of the sentences below.

1. Margo and her parents (visit-visits) each other often.
2. Either the cups or the glasses (are-is) in the dishwasher.
3. Vern and Fred (need-needs) a ride to work.
4. There (is-are) a dog, a cat, and a bird in the garage.
5. Neither Matt nor his brothers (was-were) at the party.
6. Here into the main ring of the circus (come-comes) the trained elephants.
7. Either the workers or the boss (deliver-delivers) the merchandise.
8. The committee (work-works) hard for better schools.
9. There (is-are) many things to do before the holidays.
10. The jury (was-were) polled for their verdicts.
11. Here (is-are) the nails you need for the projects.
12. Either Joyce or Ellen (was-were) here.

13. The United States (is-are) a country of contrast.

14. A magazine and a book (was-were) lying on the floor.

15. The family (is-are) occupied with their individual problems.

Exercise 8

DIRECTION for the questions 1 to 20: In each of the following sentences supply a verb in agreement with its subject:

1. To take pay and then not to do work___dishonest.
2. The cost of all these articles_____risen.
3. The jury_____divided in their opinions
4. That night every one of the boat's crew_down with fever.
5. One or the other of those fellows___stolen the watch.
6. The strain of all the difficulties and vexations and anxieties_____more than he could bear.
7. No news_____good news.
8. The accountant and the cashier_absconded.
9. A good man and useful citizen__passed away.
10. The famous juggler and conjurer___too unwell to perform.
11. The Three Musketeers_____written by Dumas.
12. Each of the suspected men__arrested.
13. The ebb and flow of the tides__explained by Newton.
14. Ninety rupees_____too much for this bag.
15. The cow as well as the horse_____on grass.
16. Neither his father nor his mother_____alive.
17. There_____many objections to the plan.
18. Two-thirds of the city_____in ruins
19. The formation of paragraphs_____very important.

20. Man's happiness or misery_____in a great measure in his own ha

