

## SUBJECT-VERB AGREEMENT

He/She/It = third person + s/es/ies

**RULE 1** – A verb agrees with its subject in number.

Singular subjects take singular verbs:

It  
The car stays in the garage.

Flowers=they

The flower smells good.

**RULE 2** – The number of the subject (singular or plural) is not changed by words that come between the subject and the verb.

A box of chocolates is delicious.

One of the eggs is broken.

Of the eggs is a prepositional phrase. The subject one and the verb is are both singular. Mentally omit the prepositional phrase to make the subject verb-agreement easier to make.

### SUBJECT-VERB AGREEMENT EXERCISE 1

Direction: Circle 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.

A woman

Women /wimin/

A man

men

**RULE 3** – Some subjects always take a singular verb even though the meaning may seem plural.

These subjects always take singular verbs:

each someone

either anyone

neither nobody  
one somebody  
no one anybody  
everyone everybody

Someone in the game was (not were) hurt.

Neither of the men is (not are) working.

**RULE 4** – The following words may be singular or plural depending upon their use in a sentence: some, any, all, most.

Most of the news is good. (singular)

Most of the flowers were yellow. (plural)

All of the pizza was gone. (singular)

All of the children were late. (plural)

#### SUBJECT-VERB AGREEMENT EXERCISE II

Directions: Circle the correct verb in 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.

**RULE 5** – Subjects joined by and are plural. Subjects joined by or or nor take a verb that agrees with the last subject.

They  
Bob and George are leaving.

Neither Bob nor George is leaving.

I like apples, and I like oranges.  
I don't like apples nor do I like oranges

Neither Bob nor his friends **are** leaving.

**RULE 6** – **There** and **here** are never subjects. In sentences that begin with these words, the subject is usually found later on in the sentence.

There were **five books** on the shelf. (were, agrees with the subject book)

Here is **the report** you wanted. (Is agrees with subject report)

**RULE 7** – **Collective nouns** may be singular or plural, depending on their use in the sentence.

A collective noun is a noun used to name a whole group. Following are some common examples:

army crowd orchestra

audience flock public

class group swarm

club herd team

committee jury troop

United States

**The orchestra** is playing a hit song. (Orchestra is considered as one unit—singular.)

The orchestra **were** asked to give **their** musical **backgrounds**. (Orchestra is considered as separate individuals—plural)

**Liverpool are a great team**  
**Liverpool is a great team.**

Directions: Circle 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.
9. There (**is-are**) **many things** to do before the holidays.
10. The jury (**was-were**) polled for **their** verdicts.

**The jury was polled for its verdict.**

11. Here (is-are) the nails you need for the projects.

**RULE 8** – Expressions of time, money, measurement, and weight are usually singular when the amount is considered one unit.

178cms is not tall for a man in the UK.

Five dollars is (not are) too much to ask.

Ten days is (not are) not nearly enough time.

On occasion, however these terms are used in the plural sense:

There were thirty minutes to countdown.

**RULE 9** – Some nouns, while plural in form, are actually singular in meaning.

Mathematics is (not are) an easy subject for some people.

Physics is (not are) taught by Prof, Baldwin.

mumps home economics social studies economics

measles calisthenics statistics civics

physics gymnastics phonics news

acrobatics aesthetics thesis mathematics

**RULE 10** – Don't and Doesn't must agree with the subject. Use doesn't after he, she, it.

Doesn't he (not don't) know how to sail?

They don't (not doesn't) make movies like that anymore.

#### SUBJECT-VERB EXERCISE

Directions: Circle the correct verb in each of the sentences below.

1. Mumps (is-are) one of the most uncomfortable diseases.
2. One hundred dollars (is-are) not a lot of money to some people.
3. She (doesn't-don't) look very well today.
4. Twenty minutes (is-are) the amount of time it takes me to get home from work.
5. It (doesn't-don't) seem so cold today.
6. Gymnastics (is-are) easy for Angela.
7. Interesting news (is-are) what sells our paper.

8. A pound of cookies (cost-costs) about a dollar.

9. They (doesn't-don't) think they'll win the game tonight.

10. He (don't-doesn't) speak very well.

Directions: Write the correct verb in the blank to the left of each sentence.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Everybody (was-were) asked to be quiet.

2. \_\_\_\_\_ In a marathon, few of the starters (finishes-finish) the race.

3. \_\_\_\_\_ Sixty days (is-are) not enough time to complete the project.

4. \_\_\_\_\_ All of the workers (is-are) receiving their bonus.

5. \_\_\_\_\_ On our street (is-are) many tall trees.

6. \_\_\_\_\_ It (don't-doesn't) make any difference.

7. \_\_\_\_\_ The value of cars and motorcycles (has-have) increased.

8. \_\_\_\_\_ The principal and her husband (is-are) honored guests.

9. \_\_\_\_\_ Either the pitcher or the base runners (was-were) caught napping.

10. \_\_\_\_\_ One of my friends (believe-believes) in E.S.P.

11. \_\_\_\_\_ Have you ever heard the expression, "No new (is-are) good news?"

12. \_\_\_\_\_ There (was-were) several dents in the car.

13. \_\_\_\_\_ Louise (doesn't-don't) want to drive that long distance.

14. \_\_\_\_\_ Either Luis or Horace (pay-pays) the bills in our house.

15. \_\_\_\_\_ A boy and a girl (were-was) here to see you.

16. \_\_\_\_\_ The box of apples (is-are) on the porch.

17. \_\_\_\_\_ Some of the job applicants (is-are) expected to pass the difficult screening test.

18. \_\_\_\_\_ The army (is-are) conducting maneuvers in March.

19. \_\_\_\_\_ Here (come-comes) the family now.

20. \_\_\_\_\_ Neither of us (is-are) going to work.

21. \_\_\_\_\_ (Doesn't-Don't) they know when to quit?

22. \_\_\_\_\_ Thirty minutes (is-are) the time limit for the test.

23. \_\_\_\_\_ Measles (is-are) a disease most children experience.

24. \_\_\_\_\_ The class (is-are) turning in their registration forms today.

25. \_\_\_\_\_ Beyond the mountains (is-are) a fertile valley.