



Grammar

Subject/verb agreement

To write clearly you need to make sure that the verb in a sentence agrees with its subject in number and in person, for example:

The child watches the television.

↑ ↑
subject verb

The children watch the television.

↑ ↑
subject verb

His mother is in the kitchen.

↑ ↑
subject verb

His parents are in the kitchen.

↑ ↑
subject verb

Notice how it is the singular verb that often ends with 's'.

Sometimes the subject of a sentence is a **collective noun**, which is a word that refers to a group, for example: *team*.

If the collective noun is singular the verb must match this: The team waits patiently.

If the collective noun is plural, the verb must match this: The teams wait patiently.

To make sure your subject and verb always agree, ask yourself: What is the main subject of this clause/sentence? Is it singular or plural? Is the verb correct?

Activity

9. Correct the following sentences to make the verb agree with the subject:

- She wear her new shoes.
- When you get back, I needs to speak with you.
- His Mother and Father is coming to the school tomorrow.
- The children plays in the yard.
- The army are fighting the enemy.
- The two boys is frantically searching for their bikes.
- There is several large herds of goats in our area.
- The ladies' group prepare the food for the wedding feast.
- Various teams of athletes, each from a different school, is competing in the competition.

10. Select the correct form of the verb for each of the following sentences:

- The children and their parents (is/are) praying that the concert will be a success.
- The sermon was so moving that the congregation (was/were) crying aloud.
- Neither Jamil, the oldest boy, nor his younger sister Karen (like/likes) eating meat.
- When you look closely, you (see/sees) a range of colours in the stone.
- The customers heard the noise and (was/were) gathered at the window to see what was happening.