

COMPANION WITH FAITH

Writing Guide



Subject – Verb Disagreement

Mr. Abdulshafi
+966 54 387 0234

SUBJECT-VERB-DISAGREEMENT

HOW TO IDENTIFY

standard of English conventions

26

The verb must agree with the subject used in the sentence.

1-Singular subjects take singular verbs

Ex: That **boy** **delivers** newspaper.

choices:

V+S

V-S

creates

is creating

has created

was creating

create

are creating

have created

were creating

2- Plural subjects take plural verbs.

Ex: Those **boys** **deliver** newspapers.

3- A gerund phrase or an infinitive phrase used as a complete subject takes a singular verb.

Ex: **Working with you and the others** **(has)** been a privilege.

Ex: **To finish our science projects** **(is)** our immediate goal.

4- The number of a subject usually is not determined by a word in a phrase or a clause following the subject.

Ex: A **book** of poems **is** on the shelf.

5- A negative construction following the subject does not change the number of the subject.

Ex: Carl, **not Juan and I**, is doing the artwork. yara, **not her parents**, is

6- A compound subject with "and" amounts to a plural subject; however, sometimes a compound subject with "and" amounts to a singular subject.

Ex: The club's **secretary and treasurer** is John. (ONE PERSON)

7- Compound subjects with "either ... or" & "neither ... nor" The verb with or & nor "agrees with the nearest subject.

Ex: Either Harry or his **aunts** **are planning** the activities.

Ex: Neither the potatoes nor the **roast** **is done**.

8- Indefinite pronouns:

8.1 SINGULAR: Each/ Either /Neither/ One /Thing /Body/Much/Little

Ex: **Neither** of the animals in the pen **has been fed** this morning

8.2 PLURAL: Numerous/ Both/ Few/ Many/Several

Ex: **Several** of the women **are** pilots.

8.3 SINGULAR OR PLURAL: All/Any/More/Some/Most/none

Ex: Most of the **job** **was** finished.

Ex. Most of the **jobs** **were** finished.

9- **The subject may be a collective noun.** Common collective nouns (army, club, flock, squadron, assembly, committee, group, staff, jury, team, class)

A collective noun may be either singular or plural, depending on its meaning in a sentence

Ex: The class has met its substitute teachers.

The class were disagreeing with one another about the answers.

Clues: - Pronouns, Substitute noun, Verb

10- **A verb agrees with its subject (but not necessarily with a predicate nominative).**

Ex: The main ingredient in salsa is tomatoes. (predicate nominative)

11- **Here and there are never subjects.**

Ex: Here is a set of keys. Here are the keys.

v

sub

v

s

12- **An expression of an amount (a measurement, a percentage, or a fraction, for example may be singular or plural depending on how it's used.**

Ex: Two years is a long time.

Ex: Two years (1995 and 1998) were especially rainy.

13- A measurement (such as length, weight, capacity, or area) is singular.

Ex: Nine square feet equals one square yard.

V+S

Ex: Three cups of flour is what the recipe requires.

14- The number of → takes a singular verb

Ex: The number of female athletes is growing.

15- A number of → takes plural verb

Ex: A number of girls like strenuous sports.

16- One of + plural word The relative pronoun takes a plural verb.

17- The only one of + plural word The relative pronoun takes a singular verb.

Ex: Melba is the only one of those players who always tries her best.

Melba is one of the girls who always try their best.

18- Every & many (a) → singular many a student is here.

Ex: Every parent and grandparent is looking on proudly.

19- Some nouns that are plural in form take singular verbs.

Civics	gymnastics	molasses
Economics	linguistics	mumps
Electronics	mathematics	news
Genetics	measles	physics

Ex: Linguistics **is** the science of language.

20- Some nouns that are plural in form but that refer to single items take plural verbs.

Binoculars	pants	shears
Eyeglasses	pliers	shorts
Olympics	scissors	slacks

Ex: **Are** the **scissors** sharp enough?

21- The title of a creative work such as a book, song, movie, or painting, generally takes a singular verb.

Ex: **Majors and Minors** is a collection of Paul Laurence Dunbar's poetry.

22- Some plural nouns don't end in "S"

Mice	Nuclei	Octopi	Data	Alumnae
Geese	Cacti	Phenomena	Media	For a
Feet	Syllabi	Formulae	Stadia	Momenta
Men	Fungi	Curricula	Alumni	bacteria

23- The subject and verb are inverted

23.1 Possessive (mine- hers- his- ours- theirs- yours)

Ex: - Theirs has always been the wildest financial dream.

23.2 Phrases without commas: -

Ex: - Found the depth of the Atlantic Ocean are more than anyone could even think of sea crustaceans.

23.3 , and so , , and neither

Ex: - Adel likes to read English Literature, and so do some of his classmates.

23.4- Subject verb inversion Adverbial prepositional phrase starting the sentence.

Ex: - Along the cratered surface of the moon, crawls a line that splits the moon into two hemispheres.

23.5- Negative adverb starting the sentence. (Only, little, never, no sooner, not until, seldom)

Ex: - Never **have** the furious warnings of our agitated employer swayed our plans.

23.6 Participial phrase starting the sentence.

Ex: - Located between San Francisco and Marin County is the Golden gate bridge.

23.7- With (as, than) in comparison.

Ex: - Many countries all over the world fight terrorism and racism as **does** my country.

23.8- Intro. Comparative

Ex: - More important than your personal statements **are** your GPA and SAT scores.

23.9- Had, Should, Were (if-clauses)

Ex: - Were I you, I think I would study more.