



COMSATS University, Islamabad

Assignment # 1

Subject-Verb Agreement

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Subject-Verb Agreement

In English language, the subject and the verb must agree in number (singular or plural) and in person (first, second or third). This applies even if the subject is complex and contains extra information.

The basic idea behind sentence agreement is simple: all the parts of our sentence should match (or agree).

Rules & Examples

- If the subject is singular, the verb must also be singular.
 - **Example:** She *writes* everyday.
- If the subject is plural, the verb must also be plural.
 - **Example:** They *write* every day.
- When the subject of the sentence is composed of two or more nouns or pronouns connected by *and*, use a plural verb.
 - **Example:** The doctoral student *and* the committee members *write* everyday.
- When there is one subject and more than one verb, the verbs throughout the sentence must agree with the subject.
 - **Example:** Interviews *are* one way to collect data and *allow* researchers to gain an in depth understanding of participants
- When a phrase comes between the subject and the verb, remember that the verb still agrees with the subject, not the noun or pronoun in the phrase following the subject of the sentence.
 - **Example:** The student, as well as the committee members, *is* excited.

- When two or more singular nouns or pronouns are connected by "or" or "nor," use a singular verb.
 - **Example:** The chairperson or the CEO *approves* the proposal before proceeding.
- When a compound subject contains both a singular and a plural noun or pronoun joined by "or" or "nor," the verb should agree with the part of the subject that is closest to the verb. This is also called the rule of proximity.
 - **Example:** The student or the committee members *write* everyday.
- The words and phrases "each," "each one," "either," "neither," "everyone," "everybody," "anyone," "anybody," "nobody," "somebody," "someone," and "no one" are singular and require a singular verb.
 - **Example:** Each of the participants *was* willing to be recorded.
- Uncountable nouns take a singular verb.
 - **Example:** Education *is* the key to success.
- Some countable nouns in English such as *earnings*, *goods*, *odds*, *surroundings*, *proceeds*, *contents*, and *valuables* only have a plural form and take a plural verb.
 - **Example:** The earnings for this quarter *exceed* expectations.
- In sentences beginning with "there is" or "there are," the subject follows the verb. Since "there" is not the subject, the verb agrees with what follows the verb.
 - **Example:** There *is* little administrative support.
- Collective nouns are words that imply more than one person but are considered singular and take a singular verb. Some examples are "group," "team," "committee," "family," and "class."
 - **Example:** The group *meets* every week.

Errors

If the subject and the verb does not agree in number or in person, then the sentence is considered grammatically incorrect. Consider following **examples**:

- I *are* going to the store.
- The banks *stores* money.
- He *are* working hard.

Exceptions

Exceptions to the subject-verb agreement do occur. For **example**,

- The group *meet* at 9 o'clock. [Refers to each group member.]