

# Subject – Verb Agreement

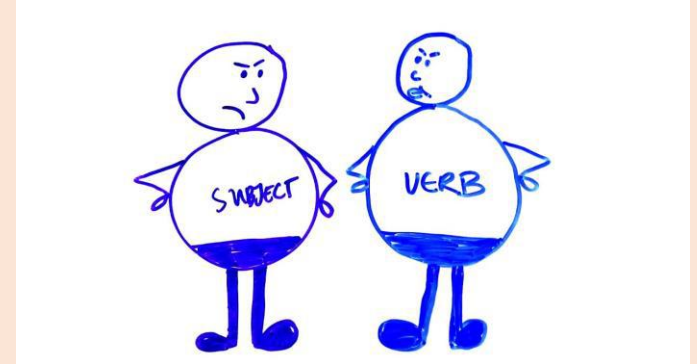
Subject  
Verb  
Agreement



# Subject – Verb Agreement

We know what is a **Subject**?  
and  
What is a **Verb**?

**So Let's Revise .....**



‘Subject’ is a noun or pronoun that tells us what the sentence talks about and ‘verb’ represents the action in the sentence.

**Ravi** is playing Football

Subject

**He** is playing Football

Pronoun

Verb

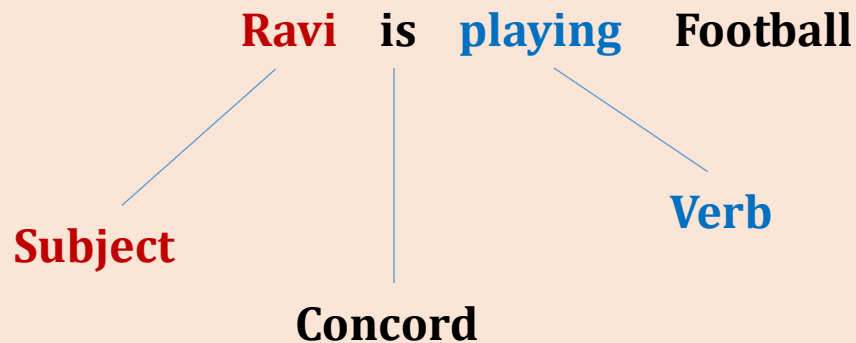


# Subject – Verb Agreement

So what is **Subject Verb Concord**?



It means that the subject and verb in a sentence should agree or match, otherwise the sentence will not sound right.



# Golden Rules Of Subject-Verb Agreement



**KNOW THE  
RULES !**



# Rule #1

## The Verb and Subject must agree in number (Singular or Plural)

This means that if the subject is singular, the verb should be singular and if the subject is plural, the verb should also be plural.

### Examples

He **plays** football



**Subject & Verb are Singular**

They **play** football.



**Subject & Verb are Plural**



# Rule #2

**The number of the subject (Singular or Plural) will not change due to words/phrases in between the subject and the verb.**

- **One** of the **glasses** is empty.

Here, the subject is '**one**', the verb should be 'is'

- The **bouquet** of red **roses** **smells** so sweet.

Here 'bouquet' is the subject and not 'roses', the verb should be 'smells' and not 'smell'



# Rule# 3

**Subjects that are joined by conjunction 'and' in a sentence take a plural verb.**

- Radha **and** Meera **are** coming home.
- Apples **and** mangoes **are** my favourite fruits.
- The general managers and the controllers **are** attending a three-day meeting this week.

**However.....**

Use a singular verb when two or more subjects are connected by *and* refer to the same person or thing.

- Our **secretary and treasurer** **is** Francis Eisenberg. (One person.)
- **Corned potato and cabbage** **was** his favourite dish. (One dish.)
- **Wear and tear** **has** to be expected when you're in the rental business. (One type of damage.)





# Rule # 4

When the subject is followed by words such as 'as well as', 'along with', 'together with', 'accompanied by', 'besides', use a singular verb if the subject is singular.

## Examples

- Matt, **as well as** his mother, **is** expected shortly.
- Alex, **as well as** his parents, **is** coming to the party.
- The boys, **accompanied by** their teacher Mr. Robbins **are** planning a tour.
- Pratik, **along with** his brother, **is** going to school.





# Rule# 5

**Subjects that are joined by ‘either/or’,  
neither/nor’ use a singular verb.**

Thus **either** and **neither** are singular if they are not used with or and nor.

## Examples

- My dad **or** my mom **is** arriving today.
- **Neither** of you **is** responsible enough to handle it.
- **Neither** of you **is** leaving until you have finished your work.
- **Either** day **is** convenient.



# Rule # 6

The verb in a sentence containing ***Either ... or, neither ... nor, or, and nor*** take two nouns before and after them and agree with the noun or pronoun closest to it.

**The nouns placed prior to the words *or* and *nor* have no effect on the verbs.**

## Examples

- **Neither** the shoes **nor** the bag **matches** the dress.  
(Here, 'bag' is closest to the verb, hence 'matches')
- **Neither** the bag **nor** the shoes **match** the dress.  
(Here, 'shoes' is closest to the verb, hence 'match')
- **Either** a melon **or** oranges **are** on the menu today.



# Rule# 7

**Some nouns are always singular and indefinite. When these nouns become the subjects, they always take singular verbs.**

<b>Any + singular noun</b>	<b>No + singular noun</b>	<b>Some + sin. noun</b>	<b>Every + sin. noun</b>	<b>Each + sin. noun</b>
Anybody Anyone Anything	Nobody No one Nothing	Somebody Someone Something	Everybody Everyone Everything	Each student  Either* Neither*

## Examples

- **Everybody** **wants** to live happily.
- **Something** **is** bothering him.



# Rule # 8

The sentences beginning with *here/there* are different in structure and in such cases the **subject** comes after or follows the verb.

## Examples

- Here **are** the **chocolates**.
- There **is** a big **puddle** on the road.
- There **are** four **hurdles** to jump.
- There **is** a high **hurdle** to jump.
- Here **are** the **keys**.



# A Quick Recap...

Mark the correct answer.

1. Each **gets/get** a trophy for playing.
2. Somebody will **pays/pay** for this.
3. Anybody **are/is** more fun than you.
4. Something **is /are** very wrong here.
5. Everybody **enjoy/enjoys** a good book.
6. The politician, along with the newsmen, **is/are** expected shortly.  
Excitement, as well as nervousness, **are/is** the cause of her shaking.
7. I or Robert **opens /open** the door when someone comes.
8. Neither the boys nor we **is/ are** responsible for it.
9. There **is /are** a pond near the house.
10. A lot of the pies **have/has** disappeared.



# A Quick Recap..... Answers

1. Each **gets** a trophy for playing.
2. Somebody will **pay** for this.
3. Anybody **is** more fun than you.
4. Something **is** very wrong here.
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7. I or Robert **opens** the door when someone comes.
8. Neither the boys nor we **are** responsible for it.
9. There **is** a pond near the house.
10. A lot of the pies **have** disappeared.

**LET'S  
CHECK YOUR  
ANSWERS!**



# Rule # 9

**In sentences that include sums of money, periods of time or distances etc. (as a unit), use singular verbs.**

## **Examples**

- 500 rupees **is** a high price to pay.
- 62 years **is** the minimum age of retirement.
- 10 kilometres **is** too far to walk.
- Ten dollars **is** a high price to pay.

**BUT.....**

Ten dollars (i.e., dollar bills) **were** scattered on the floor.





# Rule# 10

In the case of words such as 'a lot of', all of', 'some of' etc. in a sentence, pay attention to the noun after 'of'. If the noun after 'of' is singular then use a singular verb, if plural, use a plural verb.

## Examples

A lot of the cake **is** gone.

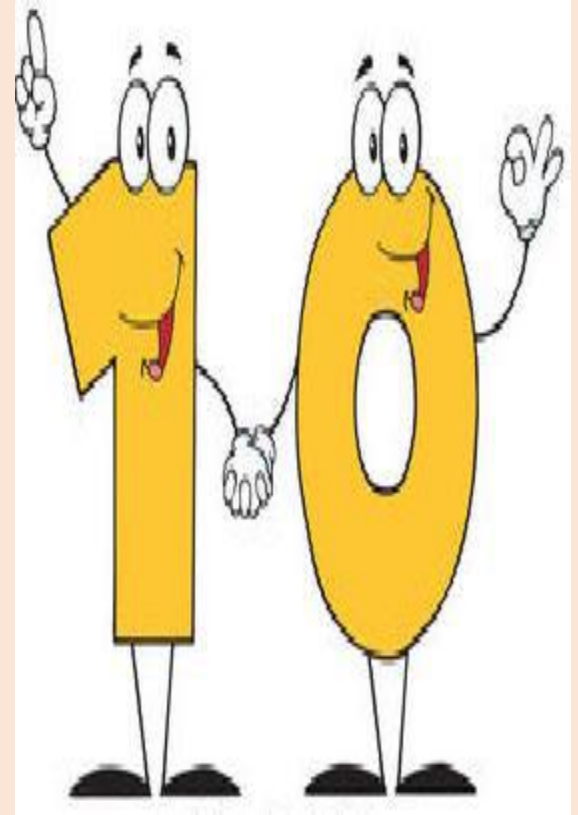
A lot of the cakes **are** gone.

A third of the city **is** unemployed.

A third of the people **are** unemployed.

All of the cake **is** eaten.

All of the cakes **are** eaten.



# Rule # 11

In the case of collective nouns such as 'group', 'population', 'family', 'jury', 'audience' in a sentence, the verb can be singular or plural depending on their use in the sentence or on writer's intent.

## Examples

- Most of my **family** **is** here **OR are** here.
- Most of the **jury** **is** here **OR are** *here*.
- Half of the **population** **was** against the bill **OR were** against the bill.



# Rule # 12

**Collective nouns are usually regarded as singular subjects.**

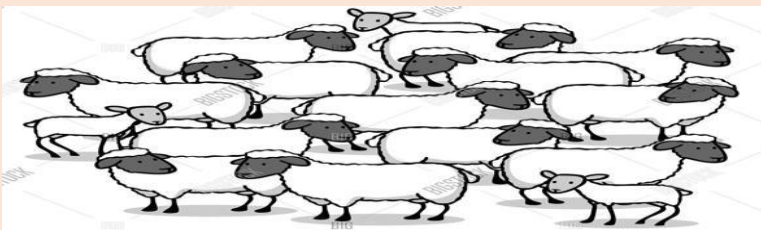
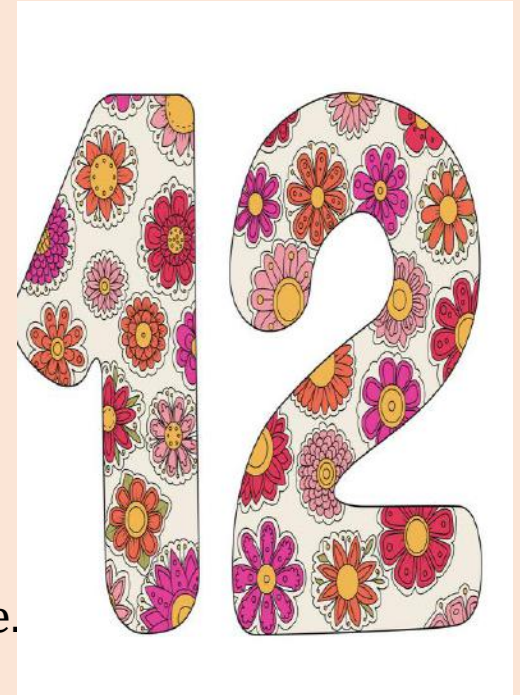
**Example:**

- The **committee** **has** decided to postpone the game.
- The **crowd** **enjoys** the excitement in the game.
- Twenty **dollars** **is** not a lot of money.

(Here, the noun is plural, but the subject is regarded as a collective noun.)

**The following are also regarded as singular subjects and take singular verbs.**

- A **pack of wolves** **is** approaching towards the herd of cattle.
- A **school of fish** always **hides** from the big fishes.
- A **flock of sheep** always **moves** together.



# Rule # 13

In sentences that express a wish, request or contrary to fact, the word 'were' is used instead of 'was.'

## Examples

- I **wish** my sister **were** here.
- I **wish** I **were** on a beach right now.

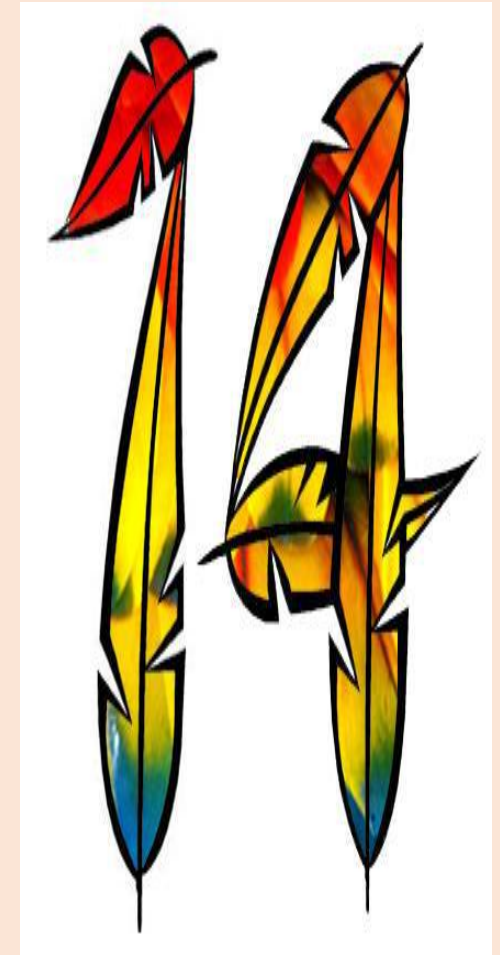
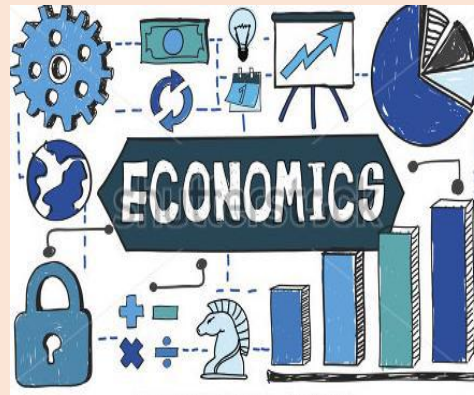
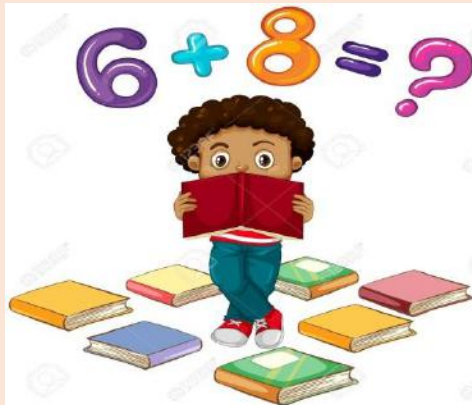


# Rule # 14

Nouns such as 'mathematics', 'civics', 'news' etc. while plural in form, are singular in meaning and use singular verbs.

## Examples

- This **news** **is** very depressing.
- **Mathematics** **is** very difficult for some people.
- **Economics** **is** an easy subject.





# Rule # 15

**Some Nouns are always plural. These nouns have 2 parts – Scissors, Tongs, Eye glasses, Shorts, Pants**

## **Examples**

- My **pants are** in the drawer.
- Your **eyeglasses are** dirty.
- These **scissors are** useless.



**Note:** If these words are preceded by 'a pair of', they will be regarded as single as singular subject

## **Example:**

- A pair of pants **is** needed.
- This pair of trousers **is** ugly.



# Rule # 16

**A number of + noun** is a plural subject, and it takes a plural verb. **The number of + noun** is a singular subject, and it takes a singular verb.

## Example

**A number of dancers** **are** coming to the party.  
(Indefinite number of dancers – plural)

**The number of dancers** coming to the party **is** 12.  
(Definite number of dancers – singular)

**A number of people** **prefer** cricket to football.  
**The number of days** in this month **is** 28.





# Rule # 17

**Non count nouns take a singular verb.**

## **Examples**

- **Education** **is** the key to success.
- **Diabetes** **affects** many people around the world.
- **The information** obtained from the business owners **was** relevant to include in the study.
- **The research** I found on the topic **was** limited.

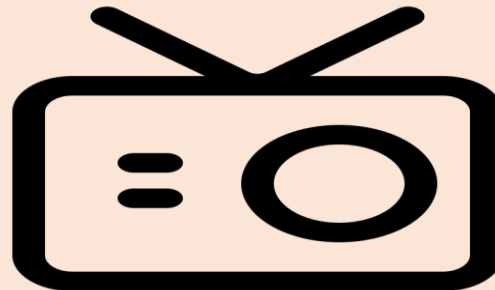


# Rule # 18

If one subject is singular and one is plural, the verb agrees with the nearer subject.

## Example

- Neither the **television** nor the radios **work**.
- Neither the **radios** nor the television **works**.



# Rule # 19

## Use on None/No

None is a singular subject when it is used alone

### However

When used with prepositional phrase starting with of then the subject can be both singular and plural

**None+ of + singular subject takes singular verb.**

- None of the money **has** been used.

**None+ of + plural subject takes plural verb.**

- None of the bottles **are** clean enough to keep water.

**Similarly No + plural subject takes plural verb.**

- No men **are** hungry now.



# Rule # 20

If a *gerund* (verb +ing) or an *infinitive* (to+ 1<sup>st</sup> form of verb) comes as a subject, the verb will always be singular.

## Examples

- **Walking** **is** a good habit.
- **Eating** healthy food **makes** you healthy.
- **Swimming** **is** a good exercise.



# Rule # 21

If ***the + an adjective*** appears as the subject of a sentence, it will be plural.

## Examples

- The **pious** **are** loved by God.
- The **industrious** **are** always not successful.
- The **best** **do** not lack integrity.



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# Are you ready to get quizzed?

**For each of the following, choose the sentence in which the subject and verb agree.**

**1.**

- a. Every one of the shirt has green colour.
- b. Every one of the shirt have green colour.

**2.**

- a. This singer, along with a few others, play the harmonica on stage.
- b. This singer, along with a few others, plays the harmonica on stage.

**3.**

- a. The president or the vice president are speaking today.
- b. The president or the vice president is speaking today.

**4.**

- a. Sandals and towels are essential gear for a trip to the beach.
- b. Sandals and towels is essential gear for a trip to the beach.



# Quiz Answers

1 a.

Every one of the shirt has green colour.

2 b.

This singer, along with a few others, plays the harmonica on stage.

3 b.

The president or the vice president is speaking today.

4 a.

Sandals and towels are essential gear for a trip to the beach.

**LET'S  
CHECK YOUR  
ANSWERS!**





# Assignment

**Choose the correct form of the verb that agrees with the subject.**



1. Annie and her brothers **are/is** at school.
2. Either my mother or my father **are/is** coming to the meeting.
3. The dog or the cats **is/are** outside.
4. Either my shoes or your coat **is** always on the floor.
5. **Is /Are** the news on at five or six?
6. Mathematics **is/are** John's favourite subject, while Civics **is/are** Andrea's favourite subject.
7. **Are /Is** the tweezers in this drawer?
8. Your shorts **are/is** at the cleaner's.
9. There **were /was** fifteen candies in that bag. Now there **is/are** only one left!
10. The committee **debates/debate** these questions carefully.

