**Matching Blocks – Reading Material**

**Overview:**

To coexist, it's important that one person agrees with another. Apply the same principle in a sentence. It is equally important to write and speak good English and so, the building blocks of any sentence, namely the subject and the verb need to go hand in hand.

**Objectives:**

This reading material is designed to help you:

* Understand and learn the rules of subject verb agreement.
* Apply the learning and ensure your sentences mirror good English

**Introduction:**

Subject verb agreement can be one of the more challenging aspects of writing. While short clauses provide for an easily identifiable subject, longer clauses with extensive phrases can make proper subject verb agreement more of a challenge.

**The first and most important rule in subject verb agreement is that the verb must agree with the intended number of the subject.**

To accomplish that task, follow two occasionally not so simple tasks.

1. Identify the real subject
2. Determine whether subject is singular or plural

**Subject Verb Agreement Rules**

1. Subjects and verbs must agree in number. This is the cornerstone rule that forms the background of the concept.

The dog growls when he is angry. The dogs growl when they are angry.

2. Don’t get confused by the words that come between the subject and verb; they do

not affect agreement.

The dog, who is chewing on my jeans, is usually very good.

3. Prepositional phrases between the subject and verb usually do not affect agreement.

The colors of the rainbow are beautiful.

4. When sentences start with “there” or “here,” the subject will always be placed after

the verb, so care needs to be taken to identify it correctly.

There is a problem with the balance sheet. Here are the papers you requested.

5. 4. Subjects don't always come before verbs in questions. Make sure you accurately identify the subject before deciding on the proper verb form to use.

Where are the pieces of this puzzle?

6. 5. If two subjects are joined by and, they typically require a plural verb form.

The cow and the pig are jumping over the moon.

7. 6. The verb is singular if the two subjects separated by and refer to the same person or thing.

Red beans and rice is my mom's favorite dish.

8. 7. If one of the words each, every, or no comes before the subject, the verb is singular.

No smoking or drinking is allowed. Every man and woman is required to check in.

9. If the subjects are both singular and are connected by the words or, nor, neither/nor, either/or, and not only/but also the verb is singular.

Jessica or Christian is to blame for the accident.

10. The only time when the object of the preposition factors into the decision of plural or singular verb forms is when noun and pronoun subjects like some, half, none,more, all, etc. are followed by a prepositional phrase. In these sentences, the object of the preposition determines the form of the verb.

All of the chicken is gone. All of the chickens are gone.

11. The singular verb form is usually used for units of measurement or time.

Four quarts of oil was required to get the car running.

12. If the subjects are both plural and are connected by the words or, nor, neither/nor, either/or, and not only/but also, the verb is plural.

Dogs and cats are both available at the pound.

13. If one subject is singular and one plural and the words are connected by the

words or, nor, neither/nor, either/or, andnot only/but also, you use the verb form of the subject that is nearest the verb.

Either the bears or the lion has escaped from the zoo. Neither the lion nor the bears have escaped from the zoo.

14. Indefinite pronouns typically take singular verbs. \*

Everybody wants to be loved.

15. \* Except for the [pronouns](http://grammar.yourdictionary.com/parts-of-speech/pronouns/what-is-a-pronoun.html) (few, many, several, both, all, some) that always take the plural form.

Few were left alive after the flood.

16. If two infinitives are separated by and they take the plural form of the verb.

To walk and to chew gum require great skill.

17. When [gerunds](http://www.yourdictionary.com/gerund) are used as the subject of a sentence, they take the singular verb form of the verb; but, when they are linked by and, they take the plural form.

Standing in the water was a bad idea. Swimming in the ocean and playing drums are my hobbies.

18. Collective nouns like herd, senate, class, crowd, etc. usually take a singular verb form.

The herd is stampeding.

19. Titles of books, movies, novels, etc. are treated as singular and take a singular verb.

The Burbs is a movie starring Tom Hanks.

20. Final Rule – Remember, only the subject affects the verb!

Other Rules:

1. Use verbs that agree with a subject, not with a noun that is part of a modifying phrase or clause between verb and subject:

“The pot of eggs is boiling on the stove.”

2. Use singular or plural verbs that agree with the subject, not with the complement of the subject:

“My favorite type of movie is comedies,” but “Comedies are my favorite type of

movie.”

3. Use singular verbs with singular indefinite pronouns — each, the “-bodies,” “-ones,”

and “-things” (anybody, everyone, nothing), and the like:

“Neither is correct.” (And, just as in rule number 1, the presence of a modifier is irrelevant: “Neither of them is correct.”)

4. Use plural verbs with plural indefinite pronouns:

“Many outcomes are possible.”

5. Use singular verbs with uncountable nouns that follow an indefinite pronoun:

“All the paint is dried up.”

6. Use plural verbs with countable nouns that follow an indefinite pronoun:

“All the nails are spilled on the floor.”

7. Use plural verbs with compound subjects that include and:

“The dog and the cat are outside.”

8. Use plural verbs or singular verbs, depending on the form of the noun nearest the verb, with compound subjects that include nor or or:

“Either the dog or the cats are responsible for the mess.” (“Either the cats or the

dog is responsible for the mess” is also technically correct but is awkward.)

9. Use singular verbs with inverted subjects that include singular nouns:

“Why is my hat outside in the rain?”

10. Use plural verbs with inverted subjects (those beginning with the expletive there rather than the actual subject) that include plural nouns:

“There are several hats outside in the rain.”

11. Use singular or plural verbs with collective nouns depending on meaning:

“His staff is assembled,” but “Staff are asked to go to the conference room immediately.” (In the first sentence, the emphasis is on the body of employees; in the second sentence, the focus is on compliance by each individual in the body of employees.)

12. Use singular verbs for designations of entities, such as nations or organizations, or compositions, such as books or films:

“The United Nations is headquartered in New York.”

13. Use singular verbs for subjects plural in form but singular in meaning:

“Physics is my favorite subject.”

14. Use singular or plural verbs for subjects plural in form but plural or singular in meaning depending on the context:

“The economics of the situation are complicated,” but “Economics is a complicated

topic.”

15. Use plural verbs for subjects plural in form and meaning:

“The tweezers are in the cupboard.”

16. Use plural verbs in constructions of the form “one of those (blank) who . . .”: “I am one of those eccentrics who do not tweet.”

17. Use singular verbs in constructions of the form “the only one of those (blank) who . .

.”:

“I am the only one of my friends who does not tweet.”

18. Use singular verbs in constructions of the form “the number of (blank) . . .”:

“The number of people here boggles the mind.”

19. Use plural verbs in constructions of the form “a number of (blank) . . .”: “A number of people here disagree.”

20. Use singular verbs in construction of the forms “every (blank) . . .” and “many a

(Blank) . . .”:

“Every good boy does fine”; “Many a true word is spoken in jest.”