

Subject- Verb Agreement

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Course Name- Technical Communication in English

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Subject Verb Agreement

- A singular subject (*she, John, car*) takes a singular verb (*is, goes, shines*), whereas a plural subject takes a plural verb.

Rule 1:

A verb agrees with its subject in number.

Example: The flower smells good.

The boys are climbing the walls like caged animals.

Your friend talks too much

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Rule 2:

The number of the subject (singular or plural) is not changed by words that come between the subject and the verb.

Example: The women in the pool swim well.

The weather on the coast appears to be good this weekend.

Rule 3:

Some subjects always take a singular verb even though the meaning may seem plural.

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These subjects always take singular verbs:

- each, someone either, anyone, neither, nobody, one, somebody, no one, anybody, everyone, everybody.

Example: Someone in the game was (not were) hurt.

Nobody in the class **has** the answer.

Everybody **was** asked to remain quiet.

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Rule 4:

The following words may be singular or plural, depending upon their use in a sentence:

some, any, all, most

Example: Most of the news **is** good. (singular)

Most of the flowers **were** yellow. (plural)

All of the children **were** late. (plural)

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Rule 5:

Subjects joined by “and” are plural. Subjects joined by “or” or “nor” take a verb that agrees with the last subject.

Examples: Neither Bob nor George is leaving.

Neither Bob nor his friends are leaving.

Neither the serving bowl nor the plates go on that shelf.

She or I run every day.

Sita and Parvati run everyday.

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Rule 6:

“There” and “here” are never subjects. In sentences that begin with these words, the subject is usually found later on in the sentence.

Examples: There were five books on the shelf. (were, agrees with the subject book)

Here is the report you wanted. (Is agrees with subject report)

There is a high hurdle to jump.

Here are the documents.

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Rule 7:

Collective nouns may be singular or plural, depending on their use in the sentence.

Examples: The orchestra is playing a hit song.

A group of boys were digging in my flower beds.

A bouquet of flowers is all you need to attend the party.

The jury (was-were) polled for their verdicts.

The United States is a country of contrasts.

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Rule 8:

Expressions of time, money, measurement, and weight are usually singular when the amount is considered one unit.

Examples: Within a year, \$5 million was spent on building a factory.

Ten dollars is a high price to pay

On occasion, however these terms are used in the plural sense.

Examples: There were thirty minutes to countdown.

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

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Rule 9:

Some nouns, while plural in form, are actually singular in meaning.

Examples: mumps, economics, social studies, mathematics
economics, measles, calisthenics, statistics,
civics, physics, gymnastics, phonics, news,
acrobatics, aesthetics, thesis.

Example: Physics is (not are) taught by Prof. Sharma.

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Rule 10:

“Don’t” and “Doesn’t” must agree with the subject. Use “doesn’t” after “he”, “she”, “it”.

Examples: Doesn’t he (not don’t) know how to sail?

They don’t (not doesn’t) make movies like that anymore.

They don’t think they’ll win the game tonight.

He doesn’t speak very well.