

20 Rules of Subject Verb Agreement



Can't we all just get along?

1. Subjects and verbs must agree in number.

- Singular subject = singular verb
- Plural subject = plural verb
- Cow= singular, eats= singular
- Ducks= plural, quack= plural
- *Hint*= SVS- singular verbs have an S
- Singular yes?- the verb has an “S”!
- Singular no? The “S” has to go!



2. Don't get confused by the words that come between the subject and verb.

The detective *who was called to the case* is usually very good.



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

The biker *in this race* is very competitive.



The bikers *in this race* are very competitive.



4. If a sentence starts with “there” or “ here”, the subject will always be placed after the verb.



There is a meeting today.



Here are the results from this past month.

5. Subjects can come after the verb in questions.

- Does Betty always play with dolls?



- How are the Bosco sticks today?



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

- The puppy and the lady are friends.



7. If two subjects are separated by “and” refer to the same thing, the verb is singular.

- Spaghetti and meatballs is my favorite pasta dish.

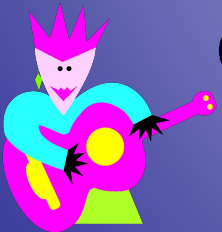


8. If both subjects are singular and connected by *or*, *nor*, *neither/nor*, *either/or* and *not only/but also*, the verb is singular.

- Sally *or* Bubba has stolen the scarecrow.

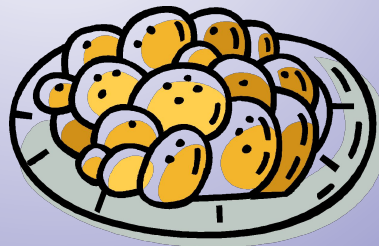


- *Not only* the guitar player *but also* the drummer was soaked with sweat.



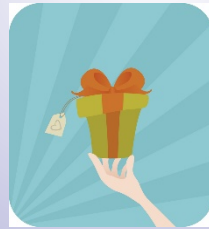
9. If both subjects are plural and connected by the words *or*, *nor*, *neither/nor*, *either/or*, and *not only/but also*, the verb is plural.

- Cookies or brownies are nice treats for your teacher.

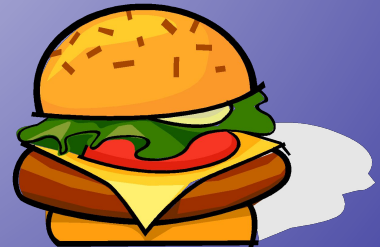


10. If one subject is singular and one plural and are connected by the words *or*, *nor*, *neither/nor*, *either/or*, and *not only/but also*, use the subject that is nearest the verb.

- **Either my sisters or my mom has sent me a present.**



- **Not only Bob but also the Smiths want some hamburgers for supper.**



11. Units of measurement usually use a singular verb.

- **Six gallons** of paint **was** used on the house.



- **Five dollars** **is** too much for a cup of coffee.



12. Collective nouns usually take a singular verb.

- The **herd** is stampeding.

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are needed to see this picture.

The **class** was ready for the test.



13. Titles of books, movies, novels, etc. are treated as singular.

- *Holes* was one of my favorite books. I want to see the movie.

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14. Two infinitives separated by and take a plural verb.

- To run and to read are my two favorite “Free-time” activities.



15. Gerunds alone take a singular verb. Gerunds linked by *and* take a plural verb.

- **Dancing** is not something everyone can do as well as I can!

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16. If the words each, every or no come before the subject, the verb is singular.



- **Each** boy and girl has to take the test.
- **Every** frog and toad turns into a prince.



- **No** paper and pen is required.
(But an apple would be nice!:))



- **Dancing and singing** **come** na e!

17. Most indefinite pronouns take singular verbs.

one	body	thing
someone	somebody	something
anyone	anybody	anything
No one	nobody	nothing
everyone	everybody	everything



Little

One

* **Everybody** is happy.

Another

Neither

* **No one** has a dime.

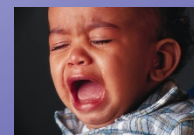


Much

Either

* **Nothing** was going to help.

Each



18. ***Both, few, many, others,***
and *several* take a plural verb.

- **Several** need to finish the race.



- A **few** have the right answer.



19. When the subject is ***all, any, more, most, none, or some***, this is the ONLY time you must look at the object of the prepositional phrase to determine whether it is singular or plural.

- ***All of the chickens*** have laid eggs.

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- ***Some of the milk*** has spilled.

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20. Final rule- Remember, only the
SUBJECT affects the verb!

