

SUBJECT-VERB AGREEMENT



What can be a subject?

- A noun
- A pronoun
- A word acting as a noun
 - Gerund
 - Infinitive
 - Adjective with article *the*

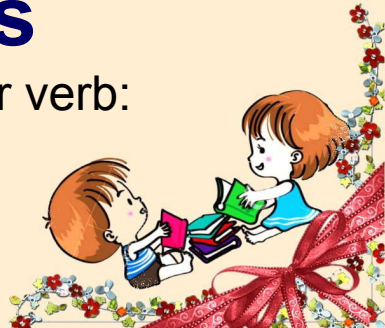


The Number of Subjects

- ❑ A noun ending in s/es/ies is usually a regular plural noun:
boys boxes flies
- ❑ Irregular plural noun:
children people phenomena
- ❑ Singular Pronoun:
He She It someone everyone
- ❑ Plural Pronoun:
They other both some those these all

The Number of Verbs

- ❑ A verb ending in s/es/ies is usually a singular verb:
walks goes buys accompanies



Unit 10.1 : Subject-Verb Agreement



The Rules of Subject-Verb Agreement

- Subject-verb agreement rule applies in present tense verb and past tense verb of verb *to be*.

①. General Rules:

Singular Subject + Singular Verb

Plural Subject + Plural Verb

- ***Dara speaks*** Chinese fluently.
- ***He teaches*** Chinese.
- His ***parents are*** Chinese.



The Rules of Subject-Verb Agreement

②. Intervening Rules:

Singular Subject + modifiers (s) + Singular Verb

Plural Subject + modifier(s) + Plural Verb

- **Dara** with his students **speaks** Chinese fluently.
- His **parents** followed by Dara **are** Chinese.



The Rules of Subject-Verb Agreement

③. Compound-subject Rules:

Compound subjects are two or more subjects joined by *AND*, *OR*, *NOR* or two subjects joined by *both... and...*, *either... or...*, *neither... nor...*, *not only... but also...*



The Rules of Subject-Verb Agreement

③ . Compound-subject Rules (continued):

For compound subjects joined by *and* or *both... and...*, the verb is in plural form.

- ***You and I*** are friends.
- ***Both you and I*** are Cambodian.

If compound subjects joined by *and* or *both... and...* refers to one unit, the verb is in singular form.

- ***The room and wall*** needs renovating.



The Rules of Subject-Verb Agreement

③. Compound-subject Rules (continued):

For compound subjects joined by *or*, *nor*, *either...or...*, *neither... nor...*, or *not only... but also...*, the verb agree with the nearer subject.

- ***John or his friends were*** in this room.
- ***Either John or his friends were*** in this room.
- ***John's friends or he was*** in this room.
- ***Either John's friends or he was*** in this room.



The Rules of Subject-Verb Agreement

④. Indefinite pronoun subject Rules:

1. Singular indefinite pronoun subject + Singular Verb
2. Plural indefinite pronoun subject + Plural Verb

Always-Singular Indefinite Pronouns

(-one words)

one, no one
 anyone
 Everyone
 someone

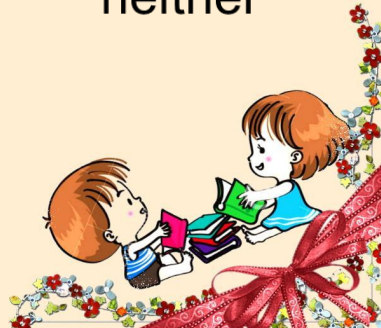
(-body words)

nobody
 anybody
 everybody
 somebody

(-thing words)

nothing
 anything
 everything
 something

each
 either
 neither



The Rules of Subject-Verb Agreement

④. Indefinite pronoun subject Rules (cont'):

Always-Plural Indefinite Pronouns

several many few both

The following Indefinite Pronouns can be singular or plural, depending upon the nouns to which they refer.

some all any most none



The Rules of Subject-Verb Agreement

④. Indefinite pronoun subject Rules (cont'):

Examples:

- When we checked, **everything was** as it should be.
- **Many** in my class **are** good at grammar.
- **Several** of my friends **were** at the party.
- **All** of the money is gone. (*All* refers to money—uncountable noun)
- **All** of the children want dessert. (*All* refers to children—plural noun)

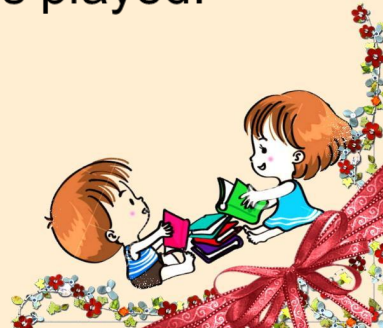


The Rules of Subject-Verb Agreement

⑤. Rules of Agreement with Special Subjects:

+ **Collective Nouns:** A collective noun names a group. Consider a collective noun singular when it refers to a group as a whole. Consider a collective noun plural when it refers to each number of a group individually.

- The **army defends** the nation.
- The **army guard** their camp.
- The **crowd cheers** when the music is played.
- The **crowd rush** to find their seats.



The Rules of Subject-Verb Agreement

5. Rules of Agreement with Special Subjects_(cont')

+ **Special Nouns:** Certain nouns that end in –s, such as *mumps*, *measles*, *physics*, and *mathematics*, take singular verbs.

- ***Mathematics* interests** many people.

Certain other nouns that end in –s, such as *scissors*, *pants*, *binoculars*, *eyeglasses*, and *shorts*, take plural verb.

- ***Your pants* are** too short.



The Rules of Subject-Verb Agreement

5. Rules of Agreement with Special Subjects_(cont'):

Many nouns that end in *-ics* may be singular or plural, depending upon their meaning.

- ***Politics* is** often interesting. (one subject of interest)
- His ***politics* are** shameless. (more than one action of political nature)

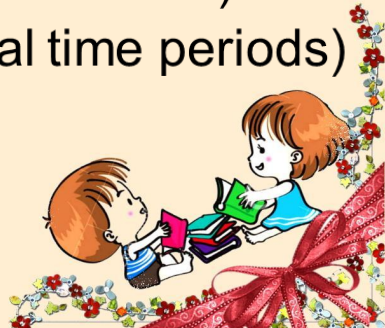


The Rules of Subject-Verb Agreement

5. Rules of Agreement with Special Subjects_(cont'):

+ Nouns of Amount: When a noun of amount refers to a total that is considered as one unit, it is singular. When it refers to a number of individual units, it is plural.

- ***Four dollars* is** a fare price. (one amount)
- ***Four dollars* lie** on the sidewalk. (four individual notes)
- Two ***months* is** the waiting period. (one unit of time)
- Two ***months* have gone** by. (two individual time periods)



The Rules of Subject-Verb Agreement

5. Rules of Agreement with Special Subjects_(cont')

+ **Titles:** A title is always singular, even if a noun within the title is plural.

- ***Little Women* delights** readers of all ages.
- ***Cakes and Bagels* is** my favorite bakery.



The Rules of Subject-Verb Agreement

6. Rules of Agreement with Linking Verbs:

Do not be confused by a predicate nominative that is different in number from the subject. Only the subject affects the number of the linking verb.

- The last **course was** three subjects in English and two other subjects in Khmer. (The verb *was* agrees with *course*, not with the predicate nominative *subjects*)
- The main **courses for dinner were** a selection of fish dishes. (The verb *were* agrees with *courses*, not with the predicate nominative *a selection*)



The Rules of Subject-Verb Agreement

7. Rules of Agreement in Inverted Sentences:

+ Type of Inverted Sentences:

1. Interrogative Sentence.

- **Does** the **eagle** live in the mountain?

2. Prepositional Phrase + Verb + Subject.

- In front of students **stands** the **teacher**.

3. The sentence begins with the words *there* or *here*.

- There **is** an **eagle** on the mountain.

- Here **come** the last two **runners**.



The Rules of Subject-Verb Agreement

⑧. Rules of Agreement in Subject Relative Pronoun:

When a relative pronoun, *who*, *which*, or *that*, is used as a subject, it takes a singular verb if the word it stands for is singular and a plural verb if the word it stands for is plural.

- Gary is one of those **people who are** very private. (*who* stands for **people**, a plural noun, so the plural verb **are** is used.)
- Gary is a **person who is** very private. (*who* stands for **a person**, a singular noun, so the singular verb **is** is used.)
- This **drink, which tastes** like pure sugar, is supposed to be 100 percent fruit juice.



Unit 10.1 : Subject-Verb Agreement

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

When a noun (person, place, or thing) is singular, it names **only one** thing.

When a noun (person, place, or thing) is plural, it names **more than one** thing.

Which noun is singular? Which noun is plural?

- lizards
 - lizard
- pencil
 - pencils

A verb is an **action word** .

Which word in the sentence is a verb?

- The dog chased the cat.
- The cat climbed the tree.



Select the correct verb in each sentence which agrees with the subject.

- My aunt (own, owns) a big car.
- Our dog (sleeps, sleep) in the hot sun.
- The boys (hides, hide) under the bed.
- The runners (race, races) in the park.
- Our dogs (like, likes) to run across the yard.
- Jenna (likes, like) to hide under the bed.
- Billy (measure, measures) the fence.
- The girls (dance, dances) to the beat.
- The players (practice, practices) for the big game.
- The baby (smile, smiles) at her mother.



Unit 10.1 : Subject-Verb Agreement

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING: ANSWERS

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Which noun is singular? Which noun is plural?

1. a. lizards b. lizard
2. a. pencil b. pencils



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Unit 10.1 : Subject-Verb Agreement

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

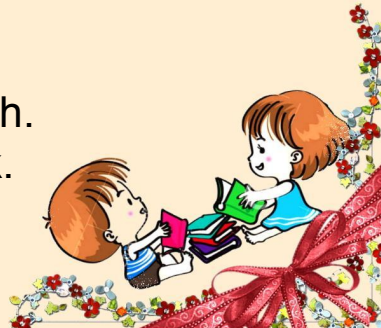
Select the correct verb in each sentence which agrees with the subject.

1. My little brother (play, plays) with his toys.
2. The big bug (crawl, crawls) slowly.
3. The furry kittens (plays, play) together.
4. The whales (swim, swims) next to each other.
5. Mary (laugh, laughs) loudly when she hears a joke.
6. Jenny (eat, eats) too much candy.
7. The ducks (bathe, bathes) in the pond.
8. The tigers (growls, growl) through the cage.
9. The waitress (wipe, wipes) the table.
10. My classmates (vote, votes) for a school president.
11. The raccoons (steal, steals) the food from the campground.
12. The old food (smell, smells) strange.
13. My new backpack (hold, holds) a lot of books.
14. The stories in this book (make, makes) me laugh.
15. Mr. Lopez (jog, jogs) every morning of the week.
16. My sister (drive, drives) a new car.



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HOW TO FIX PROBLEMS IN AGREEMENT

Phrases between subjects and verbs

Sometimes a phrase comes between the subject and the verb. ▾

Subject	Verb	Phrase	Verb
The hero	is	Coyote. k tales	is Coyote.

▾

The number of the subject is usually **not** changed by a phrase following the subject. ▾

Subject	Verb
The hero	is Coyote.
of those folk tales	



HOW TO FIX PROBLEMS IN AGREEMENT

Phrases between subjects and verbs

A **phrase** is a group of related words that is used as a single part of speech and that does not contain both a verb and its subject.

We cleaned up trash **at the lake.**

Working hard all day, the volunteers made progress.

My younger brother wanted **to come along.**



HOW TO FIX PROBLEMS IN AGREEMENT

Phrases between subjects and verbs



Subject

Verb

A **bag** of marbles **is** on the shelf.

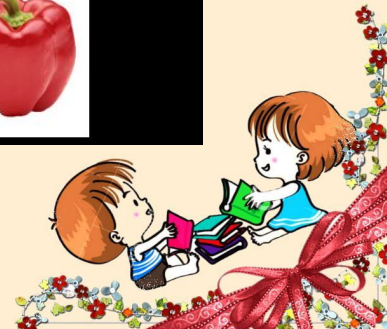
Is agrees with *bag*, not *marbles*.

Subject

Verb

The **peppers** in the garden **have grown** quickly.

The helping verb *have* agrees with *peppers*, not *garden*.



Identify the subject of each verb in parentheses. Then, choose the form of the verb that agrees with that subject.

1. The moon over the ocean (*is, are*) a beautiful sight.
2. The hands on my watch (*glows, glow*) in the dark.
3. Four students from our school (*plays, play*) in a band.
4. A tidal wave, despite its name, (*is, are*) not caused by the tides.
5. Earthquakes beneath the sea (*causes, cause*) most tidal waves.
6. Tidal waves in the open ocean generally (*does, do*) not cause much interest.
7. The height of tidal waves often (*remains, remain*) low.



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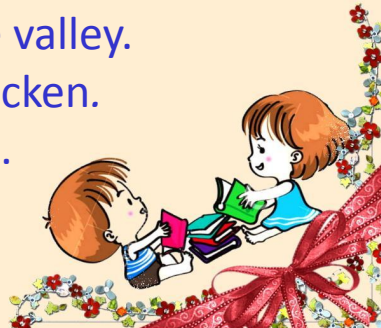
CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

For each of the following sentences, choose the correct form of the verb in parentheses.

1. Most of the balloons (*has, have*) long strings.
2. Both of these shoes (*gives, give*) me blisters.
3. Someone on the soccer team (*needs, need*) a new uniform.
4. Neither of the boys (*was, were*) wearing a helmet.
5. None of the houses (*has, have*) been painted yet.

For each of the following sentences, choose the verb that agrees with the compound subject.

1. Mandy and her friends (*is, are*) going to the movies.
2. A statue or a fountain (*looks, look*) good in a park setting.
3. Neither maples nor elms (*grows, grow*) well in the valley.
4. Either potatoes or rice (*is, are*) served with the chicken.
5. Ants and spiders (*has, have*) invaded the backyard.



Unit 10.1 : Subject-Verb Agreement

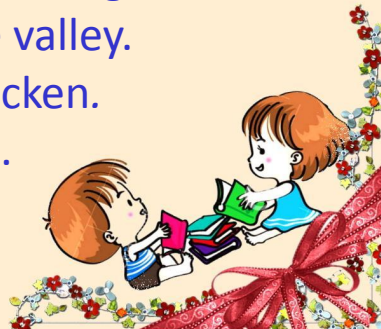
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End of Session

