

Subject-Verb Agreement (Singular)

Need to Know:

- Subjects are the noun (person, place, or thing) that the sentence is about. Subjects can be singular (1) or plural (more than 1).
 - Ex. “Mom” = Singular; “Women” = Plural.
- A noun and a verb have to “agree” in number; that is, a singular noun takes a singular verb; plural nouns take plural verbs.
- Remember, a singular verb often ends with an s (ex. *Reads, writes, flies, jumps, etc.*).

Singular Subject.

Singular subjects must also have a singular verb.

“She writes every day.”

→ This sentence contains one singular verb.

“Lisa rushes to the store and pays for a snack.”

→ When there are multiple verbs for the same singular subject, the verbs must remain singular.

Interrupting phrases.

Be aware of phrases that come between the subject and verb.

“The cheer captain, as well as the other cheerleaders, is anxious about the first big performance.”

→ The verb will always match the subject. (Captain is the subject of the sentence).

Noncount nouns.

Noncount nouns exist in abstract quantities and therefore cannot be counted.

“Heart disease affects millions of people in the world.”

→ Some common noncount nouns are names of abstract concepts, diseases, languages, natural substances, and food.

“Ice is so cold that it can be painful to touch.”

→ Noncount nouns always take singular verbs.

Collective nouns.

Collective nouns name groups of people or things, but are still considered singular.

“My family is going on vacation to Europe this summer.”

→ Some of the most commonly used collective nouns are team, group, committee, class, and family.

Tips:

1. The rule of proximity states that when a sentence has a compound subject with both a singular and plural noun, the verb should agree with the noun it is closest to.
 - a. This is primarily used with the conjunctions "or" and "nor."

Example: “The professors or the assistant grades every day.”



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Subject-Verb Agreement (Plural)

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 - Ex. “Mom” = Singular; “Women” = Plural.
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- Remember, a singular verb often ends with an s (ex. *Reads, writes, flies, jumps, etc.*).

Plural Subject.

Plural subjects must have plural verbs

Example: “The birds fly through the air.”

→ Both “birds” and “fly” are plural forms.

Subjects following the verb.

In sentences beginning with “there is” or “there are,” the subject always follows the verb.

“There are many factors affecting my decision.”

→ Since “there” is not the subject, the verb agrees with what follows the verb.

Countable nouns.

Some countable nouns always take plural verbs.

“The surroundings of the park are beautiful.”

→ The most common ones include: goods, odds, surroundings, earnings, proceeds, contents, and variables.

Multi-parted nouns.

Nouns that describe items that always have multiple parts are plural. These nouns always have a plural verb.

“The pants are far too large.”

→ Some of the most common examples of this are scissors, tweezers, trousers, pants, and shears.