



Subject-Verb Agreement

Subject and verbs must agree in number. Singular subjects must have singular verbs; plural subjects must have plural verbs. All verbs have a base form, past tense form, past participle form, present participle form, and the –s form. The –s form indicates a singular form.

When you are writing a sentence in which the verb is expressing an action or a condition in the present and the *subject is plural* or *I* or *you*, you will use the base form of the verb. If the subject is in a singular form, you will use the –s form of the verb.

| Base Form | Past Tense | Past Participle | Present Participle | -s Form |
|-----------|------------|-----------------|--------------------|---------|
| Walk | Walked | Walked | Walking | walks |

I walk to school.

You walk to school

He, she, it walks to school.

They walk to school.

John, who walks to school, is my friend.

The women walk to school.

The woman walks to school.

Pronoun Verb Agreement

When pronouns function as the subjects of sentences or clauses, they are in the subjective case. The subjective pronouns must agree in number with their verbs.

Subjective Pronouns include the following:

| |
|-------------|
| I |
| You |
| He, she, it |
| They |
| Who/whoever |

I like bananas.

You like bananas.

He, she, it likes bananas.

They like bananas.

Who wants a banana?

Compound Subjects

- Two or more subjects joined by *and* require a plural or base form of the verb.
 1. John and Sally are best friends.
 2. She and her friend shop at the mall.
- If two subjects are preceded by *each* or *every* and joined by *and*, you will use a singular or –s verb form.
 1. Each student and instructor buys one ticket.
 2. Every male and female appears solemn.



- Two or more singular pronouns or singular nouns connected by *or* or *nor*— use a singular verb form.
 1. Neither he nor she eats pizza.
 2. Jess or Paul buys the chips.
- A compound subject is connected by *or* or *nor*—the closest subject to the verb must agree.
 1. Neither my husband nor my children like hominy.
 2. Either the students or the instructor is telling the truth.

Separated subjects and verbs

1. Taxes no matter how small are never welcomed.
2. The boy who forgot his books was sent out of class.

Verbs with collective nouns

- Collective nouns are those nouns that represent groups of people: audience, group, jury, faculty, family, team, and committee are a few examples.
- Collective nouns can take a singular or plural verb, depending if they refer to the group as a single unit or to the members of the group.
 1. The team is on a winning streak.
Team is acting as a group, so you use the singular form.
 2. The faculty are preparing to record students' grades.
Faculty refers to the many members recording grades.

Verbs with fractions and singular words that end in –s

- Fractions that refer to a singular noun use the singular verb form and fractions that refer to a plural noun use a plural verb form.
 1. Two-fifths of the forest has died. (Forest is singular, so the verb form is singular.)
 2. Two-fifths of the children were living in poverty. (Children is plural, so the verb will be the plural form.)
- Dollars can be used in reference to an amount or in reference to itself. If you are using dollars as a quantifying agent use a plural form verb; if you are using dollars to refer to itself, you use the singular verb form.
 1. Twenty dollars is enough money for a pizza.
 2. Dollars are very dirty, so you should never put them in your mouth.
- Some special cases of nouns that appear plural but are singular: trousers, tweezers, scissors, shears.
 1. The trousers are dirty.
 2. My scissors are broken.
- Some nouns always require a singular verb form. (civics, mathematics, dollars, measles, and news).
 1. The news is coming on late.
 2. Measles is a deadly disease.



Verbs with indefinite pronouns

- Indefinite pronouns do not refer to a specific person or thing. Most will take a singular verb form.

| | | | | |
|---------|-----------|---------|----------|------------|
| Another | Each | Much | One | Anything |
| Any | Either | Neither | Other | Everything |
| Anybody | Everybody | Nobody | Somebody | Nothing |
| Anyone | Everyone | No one | Someone | Something |

1. No one knows the new student.
2. Everything depends upon this test.