

Subject-Verb Agreement

What is a subject?

- The **subject** is who or what the sentence is about.
- A **compound subject** is two or more nouns or pronouns joined with the conjunction *and*.

Ex.

subject
↙

The students take notes in class.

The teachers and students work hard.

↖ ↗
Compound subject

Subject-Verb Agreement Rules

1. When the subject is singular, use a singular verb. Most singular verbs end in –s.

Ex. Julie dances at the party.

2. When the subject is plural, use a plural verb. Plural verbs are NOT formed by adding –s or –es like plural nouns.

Ex. Julie and Jan dance at the party.

The students study hard for the test.

3. Two singular subjects connected by *or* or *nor* require a singular verb.

Jack or Jonathan dances at the party.

4. When a singular subject is connected by *or* or *nor* to a plural subject, put the plural subject last and use a plural verb.

The serving bowl or the plates go on that shelf .

5. Use a plural verb with two or more subjects when they are connected by *and*.

The **dog** and the **cat** **fight** with each other.

6. Collective nouns are words that imply more than one person but that are considered singular and take a singular verb, such as: group, team, committee, class, and family.

Ex. The **class** **works** on their homework.

7. The words each, each one, either, neither, everyone, everybody, anybody, anyone, nobody, somebody, someone, and no one are singular and require a singular verb.

Ex. **Everybody** **knows** Mr. Jones.

8. Do not be misled by a phrase that comes between the subject and the verb. The verb agrees with the subject, not with a noun or pronoun in the phrase.

Ex. The **team captain**, as well as his players, **is** anxious.

9. Doesn't is a contraction of does not and should be used only with a singular subject. Don't is a contraction of do not and should be used only with a plural subject. The exception to this rule appears in the case of the first person and second person pronouns I and you. With these pronouns, the contraction don't should be used.

Ex. He doesn't want to study.

They don't eat pizza.

I don't talk on the phone.