

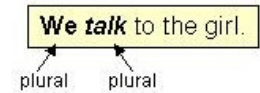
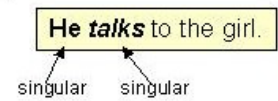
Subject-Verb Agreement

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English: Grammar

Rule One: A verb must agree with its subject in number.

- Singular subject => singular verb
- Plural subject => plural verb

Examples



Rule Two: The subject never appears in a prepositional phrase.

- **To find the subject, cross out the prepositional phrase.**
- *Reminder: a preposition are words such as: of, in, on, above, below, along, with, near, etc.*
 - A pair of ~~kitchen scissors~~ (is, are) in the second drawer.
 - My sister, ~~along with her friends~~, (has, have) invited me to the party.

Rule Three: A verb agrees with its subject even when the verb comes before the subject.

- There (is, are) a spelling mistake in my homework.
- Where (is, are) the children's coats?

Rule Four: Subjects joined by and generally take a plural verb.

- A patchwork quilt and a sleeping bag (covers, cover) my bed in the winter.
- A crusty baking pan and a greasy plate (sit, sits) on the countertop.

Rule Five: When subjects are joined by either...or, nor, neither or not only... but also, the verb agrees with the subject closer to the verb.

- Either my dog or the squirrels (eat, eats) the breadcrusts I put out for my dog.
- Neither the squirrels nor my dog (eat, eats) the breadcrusts I put out for the birds.

Rule Six: Words ending in -one, -body, -thing take singular verbs; also each, either, neither.

- Each of the students (is, are) using Twitter in the classroom.
- Everyone (loves, love) Ms. Wolbers' class, because she is SO nice and NEVER tortures students with giant essay assignments.



Rule Seven: Units of time, mass, money, length & distance take singular verbs.

- Four hours (is, are) a short time to wait for concert tickets.
- Three centimetres (seems, seem) like a small amount, but my hair looks much shorter!

Subject-Verb Agreement Review

Choose the correct verb that matches the subject for each sentence.

1. After the restaurant makeover was complete, most of the original appliances _____ (was, were) donated to charity.
2. Each of their children _____ (was, were) given a name picked at random from the pages of a *Harry Potter* book.
3. Many of the chapters in the business textbook _____ (include, includes) useful websites in the margins.
4. Envelopes, file folders, and a recipe book _____ (is, are) jammed into Ian's kitchen drawers.
5. Neither of the main dishes at tonight's dinner _____ (contain, contains) any meat.
6. Even though the athlete was fit, 50 kilometres _____ (is, are) a long distance to run.
7. The metal grab bar on the ceiling of the Skytrain _____ (make, makes) it easier for people to ride the train without falling over.
8. In exchange for a reduced rent, Karla and James _____ (clean, cleans) the dentist's office beneath their second-floor apartment.
9. There _____ (is, are) now hundreds of classic books available online for free.
10. During class discussions, an individual who _____ (is, are) critical of text that other classmates _____ (like, likes) _____ (has, have) to be careful not to hurt anyone's feelings.