

Subject-Verb Agreement

Subject/Verb Agreement refers to the agreement between the subject and verb of a sentence in terms of number. This means that **the subject and verb must match**, that is, they must both be singular or both be plural.

Subject-Verb Agreement Rules

- **Make the verb agree with its subject**, not with a word that comes between.

Example:

The samples of the cheesecake in the kitchen need tasting.

- **Treat multiple subjects joined by *and* as plural**. HOWEVER, when creating a compound subject, use a singular verb because the subject denotes one person or a single unit.

Example:

My mom and my uncle want to attend my graduation.

Salt and pepper is placed at each end of the table.

- **When a compound subject is preceded by *every* or *each*, use a singular verb**.

Example:

Each cat and each dog has its own toy.

- **When a compound subject is part of a “neither/nor” or “either/or” construction, try to make your subjects parallel in number**. If you cannot make them parallel, make the verb agree with part of the subject nearer to the verb

Example:

Neither the quality of Joe’s vanilla ice cream nor the price has changed.

Neither the quality of Joe’s vanilla ice cream nor the prices have changed.

Neither the prices of Joe's vanilla ice cream nor the quality has changed.

- **Consider most indefinite pronouns as singular.** The following indefinite pronouns do not refer to specific persons or things: *anybody, each, everyone, nobody, somebody, anyone, either, everything no one, someone, anything everybody neither nothing something.*

Example:

Everyone in the restaurant wants ice cream.

- **Treat collective nouns as singular when they refer to the group as a unit,** unless the meaning is clearly plural. Examples of collective nouns: *jury, committee, audience, crowd, troop, family, and couple.*

Example:

My family has its traditions.

A billion dollars is a lot of money.

- **Make the verb agree with its subject even when the subject follows the verb.** For example, in sentences beginning with *there is* or *there are*, the verb precedes the subject in the sentence.

Example:

There are surprisingly few honeybees left in some parts of the world.

- **Treat titles of works, company names, words or phrases used as official or proper terms, and gerund phrases as singular subjects.**

Example:

The Three Musketeers is a classic adventure novel that everyone should read.