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Time subject verb agreement

grammargrammar timesubject verb agreement Grammar Time If your computer is equipped with PowerPoint, click on the PowerPoint icon to the right for a brief PowerPoint presentation on Subject-Verb Agreement. Click HERE for help with Powerpoint. Basic Principle: Singular subjects need singular verbs; plural subjects need plural verbs. My brother is a nutritionist. My sisters are mathematicians. See the section on Plurals for additional help with subject-verb agreement. The indefinite pronouns anyone, everyone, someone, no one, nobody are always singular and, therefore, require singular verbs. Everyone has done his or her homework. Somebody has left her purse. Some indefinite pronouns — such as all, some — are singular or plural depending on what they're referring to. (Is the thing referred to countable or not?) Be careful choosing a verb to accompany such pronouns. Some of the beads are missing. Some of the water is gone. On the other hand, there is one indefinite pronoun, none, that can be either singular or plural; it often doesn't matter whether you use a singular or a plural verb — unless something else in the sentence determines its number. (Writers generally think of none as meaning not any and will choose a plural verb, as in "None of the engines are working," but when something else makes us regard none as meaning not one, we want a singular verb, as in "None of the food is fresh.") None of you claims responsibility for this incident? None of the students have done their homework. (In this last example, the word their precludes the use of the singular verb. Some indefinite pronouns are particularly troublesome Everyone and everybody (listed above, also) certainly feel like more than one person and, therefore, students are sometimes tempted to use a plural verb with them. They are always singular, though. Each is often followed by a prepositional phrase ending in a plural word (Each of the cars), thus confusing the verb choice. Each, too, is always singular and requires a singular verb. Everyone has finished his or her homework. You would always say, "Everybody is here." This means that the word is singular and nothing will change that. Each of the students is responsible for doing his or her work in the library. Don't let the word "students" confuse you; the subject is each and each is always singular — Each is responsible. Phrases such as together with, as well as, and along with are not the same as and. The phrase introduced by as well as or along with will modify the earlier word (mayor in this case), but it does not compound the subjects (as the word and would do). The mayor as well as his brothers is going to prison. The mayor and his brothers are going to jail. The pronouns neither and either are singular and require singular verbs even though they seem to be referring, in a sense, to two things. Neither of the two traffic lights is working. Which shirt do you want for Christmas?Either is fine with me. In informal writing, neither and either sometimes take a plural verb when these pronouns are followed by a prepositional phrase beginning with of. This is particularly true of interrogative constructions: "Have either of you two clowns read the assignment?" "Are either of you taking this seriously?" Burchfield calls this "a clash between notional and actual agreement."* "The conjunction or does not conjoin (as and does): when nor or is used the subject closer to the verb determines the number of the verb. Whether the subject comes before or after the verb doesn't matter; the proximity determines the number. Either my father or my brothers are going to sell the house. Neither my brothers nor my father is going to sell the house. Are either my brothers or my father responsible? Is either my father or my brothers responsible? Because a sentence like "Neither my brothers nor my father is going to sell the house" sounds peculiar, it is probably a good idea to put the plural subject closer to the verb whenever that is possible. The words there and here are never subjects. There are two reasons [plural subject] for this. There is no reason for this. Here are two apples. With these constructions (called expletive constructions), the subject follows the verb but still determines the number of the verb. Verbs in the present tense for third-person, singular subjects (he, she, it and anything those words can stand for) have s-endings. Other verbs do not add s-endings. He loves and she loves and they love. and. . . . Sometimes modifiers will get between a subject and its verb, but these modifiers must not confuse the agreement between the subject and its verb. The mayor, who has been convicted along with his four brothers on four counts of various crimes but who also seems, like a cat, to have several political lives, is finally going to jail. Sometimes nouns take weird forms and can fool us into thinking they're plural when they're really singular and vice-versa. Consult the section on the Plural Forms of Nouns and the section on Collective Nouns for additional help. Words such as glasses, pants, pliers, and scissors are regarded as plural (and require plural verbs) unless they're preceded the phrase pair of (in which case the word pair becomes the subject). My glasses were on the bed.My pants were torn.A pair of plaid trousers is in the closet. Some words end in -s and appear to be plural but are really singular and require singular verbs. The news from the front is bad.Measles is a dangerous disease for pregnant women. On the other hand, some words ending in -s refer to a single thing but are nonetheless plural and require a plural verb. My assets were wiped out in the depression.The average worker's earnings have gone up dramatically.Our thanks go to the workers who supported the union. The names of sports teams that do not end in "s" will take a plural verb: the Miami Heat have been looking. . . . The Connecticut Sun are hoping that new talent. . . . See the section on plurals for help with this problem. Fractional expressions such as half of, a part of, a percentage of, a majority of are sometimes singular and sometimes plural, depending on the meaning. (The same is true, of course, when all, any, more, most and some act as subjects.) Sums and products of mathematical processes are expressed as singular and require singular verbs. The expression "more than one" (oddy enough) takes a singular verb: "More than one student has tried this." Some of the voters are still angry. A large percentage of the older population is voting against her. Two-fifths of the troops were lost in the battle. Two-fifths of the vineyard was destroyed by fire. Forty percent of the students are in favor of changing the policy. Forty percent of the student body is in favor of changing the policy. Two and two is four. Four times four divided by two is eight. If your sentence compounds a positive and a negative subject and one is plural, the other singular, the verb should agree with the positive subject. The department members but not the chair have decided not to teach on Valentine's Day. It is not the faculty members but the president who decides this issue. It was the speaker, not his ideas, that has provoked the students to riot. Didn't find what you need? Search our website or email us. Use a singular verb with sums of money or periods of time, that is, do not let the verb agree with the head word of the noun phrase subject, but rather with the singular sum of money or period of time:(1) [Ten dollars] is a high price to pay.(2) [Five years] is the maximum sentence for that offence.Even though both dollars and years are plural, we get singular agreement, since we are dealing with one (singular) sum of money in the first example, and one (singular) period of time in the second example. Content manager: aweluluseFeb. 16, 2011 Summary: Ever get "subject/verb agreement" as an error on a paper? This handout will help you understand this common grammar problem. This handout gives you several guidelines to help your subjects and verbs agree. 1. When the subject of a sentence is composed of two or more nouns or pronouns connected by and, use a plural verb. She and her friends are at the fair. 2. When two or more singular nouns or pronouns are connected by or or nor, use a singular verb. The book or the pen is in the drawer. 3. When a compound subject contains both a singular and a plural noun or pronoun joined by or or nor, the verb should agree with the part of the subject that is nearer the verb. The boy or his friends runs every day. 4. 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. He doesn't like it. They don't like it. 5. 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. One of the boxes is open The people who listen to that music are few. The team captain, as well as his players, is anxious. The book, including all the chapters in the first section, is boring. The woman with all the dogs walks down my street. 6. The words each, each one, either, neither, everyone, everybody, anybody, anyone, nobody, somebody, someone, and no one are singular and require a singular verb. Each of these hot dogs is juicy. Everybody knows Mr. Jones. Either is correct. 7. Nouns such as civics, mathematics, dollars, measles, and news require singular verbs. The news is on at six. Note: The word dollars is a special case. When talking about an amount of money, it requires a singular verb, but when referring to the dollars themselves, a plural verb is required. Five dollars is a lot of money. Dollars are often used instead of rubles in Russia. 8. Nouns such as scissors, tweezers, trousers, and shears require plural verbs. (There are two parts to these things.) These scissors are dull. Those trousers are made of wool. 9. In sentences beginning with "there is" or "there are," the subject follows the verb. Since "there" is not the subject, the verb agrees with what follows. There are many questions. There is a question. 10. 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. The team runs during practice. The committee decides how to proceed. The family has a long history. My family has never been able to agree. The crew is preparing to dock the ship. This sentence is referring to the individual efforts of each crew member. The Gregg Reference Manual provides excellent explanations of subject-verb agreement (section 10: 1001). 11. Expressions such as with, together with, including, accompanied by, in addition to, or as well do not change the number of the subject. If the subject is singular, the verb is too. The President, accompanied by his wife, is traveling to India. All of the books, including yours, are in that box. Nobody likes conflict, and that includes sentences! We know that every sentence requires a subject and a predicate, but we also have to make sure that these two agree with one another. In the grammar world, this is called subject-verb agreement. The two places where subjects and verbs most often disagree are in number and tense. If the subject is plural, then the verb also has to be plural. Likewise, if the subject is plural, then the verb must also be plural. This seems like a no-brainer, but things can get complicated when you are talking about money, time, collective nouns, indefinite pronouns, and interrupting phrases. When you're ready, test yourself with a quiz and practice with our high-quality, standards-aligned questions. Subject-verb agreement refers to the relationship between the subject and predicate of the sentence. Subjects and verbs must always agree in two ways: tense and number. For this post, we are focusing on number, or whether the subject and verb are singular or plural. For example: The light in the lamppost flickers each night. In this sentence, the subject light is singular; therefore, the verb that describes the action of the subject must also be singular: flickers. If the subject was plural, the verbs would have to change form to agree with the subject. For example: The lights in the lampposts flicker each night. In this sentence, since the subject is now plural, the -s has to be removed from the verb in order to have subject-verb agreement. Money is tricky when it comes to subject-verb agreement because there are specific rules for referring to an amount of money versus dollars or cents themselves. For example: since this sentence refers to an amount of money, a singular verb is used: Five thousand dollars was deposited at the bank this morning. On the flip side, this second sentence refers to dollars themselves, so a plural verb is needed instead: Five thousand dollar bills were deposited at the bank this morning. Do you see how the interpretation of the sentence changes when the writer refers to physical dollar bills instead of a lump sum of money? In reading the first sentence, I imagined a check written out to a bank teller. In the second sentence however, I imagined someone lugging several bags into the bag, each filled with one-dollar bills. Return to the Table of Contents The rules for time are very similar to the rules for money when it comes to subject-verb agreement. Just as a singular verb is used with an amount of money, a singular verb is also used with a period of time. For example: The 1920's is the backdrop for F. Scott Fitzgerald's novel, The Great Gatsby. However, even though a plural verb is used when referring to individual dollar bills or coins, we normally do not refer to individual units of time since time is abstract. Therefore, singular verbs are always used instead of plural verbs whenever a writer refers to a period of time or a unit of measurement. For example: 225 pounds is the maximum weight that I can deadlift right now. Collective nouns, or nouns that name groups composed of members, use either singular or plural verbs based on the context of the sentence. When collective nouns like family, squad, or committee act in unison in a sentence, a singular verb is used. For example: The committee votes to build a new park downtown. When collective nouns act individually or separately from the group, a plural verb is used. For example: The herd of cows are running sporadically in every direction. Even though indefinite pronouns are nonspecific, most of these pronouns can still be divided into singular and plural categories. However, for indefinite pronouns that can be either singular or plural depending on the sentence, writers must reference a different noun in the sentence to find out whether a singular or plural verb is needed. Always singular example: Does anybody want to take Precalculus with me this semester? Always plural example: Several kittens need to be adopted this weekend. When an indefinite pronoun like some, more, none, or all is used, writers must refer to the noun or noun phrase immediately following this pronoun to know whether the verb is singular or plural. For example: None of my clothes are clean. (the verb is plural because clothes is plural) None of the pizza is left. (the verb is singular because pizza is singular) Sometimes it can be difficult to know whether a verb should be singular or plural because it is so far away from the subject of the sentence. It is easy to be confused by appositive phrases, prepositional phrases, or direct objects and think that these indicate the number of the verb. This is not the case! The subject is the only noun that decides if the verb is singular or plural. For example: Chris Hemsworth, one of many successful actors in Hollywood, has an intense workout regimen. In this sentence, even though the appositive phrase uses the plural noun actors, the subject, Chris Hemsworth, is still singular, which means that the verb "has" must also be singular. Here is another example: The knot-hole in the tree, typically full of treasures for Scout and Jem, was, instead filled with cement. In this sentence, it can be tricky to find the true subject since there are several prepositional phrases that interrupt the subject and verb. Even though there are many nouns, both singular and plural, the true subject, knot-hole, is singular, so the singular verb is needed. Return to the Table of Contents Here are some important tips to help you understand Subject-verb agreement: For example: Jacob, one of my next door neighbors, is a werewolf. In this sentence, Jacob, not "neighbors", is the subject of the sentence, because "neighbors" is part of the appositive phrase. Tip #2. When referring to sums of money or collective nouns acting in unison, a singular verb is used For example: The herd of bison is grazing in the field. In this sentence, because the bison are acting as a unified group, the verb is singular. For example: Her palms sweaty and mind racing, she begins her descent down the mountain. In this sentence, the subject does not appear until the middle of the sentence. Do not get tricked by modifiers like this participlal phrase! Return to the Table of Contents Now that you understand how subject-verb agreement functions in sentences, review the anchor chart below and complete the review to fully understand how to reach subject-verb agreement in your own writing. Refer to the graphic below to learn the different types of Subject-Verb Agreement: Note: subjects are underlined, and verbs are italicized. This list, obviously, does not include all possible scenarios of subject-verb agreement; however, it is meant to be used as a guide to help writers navigate subject-verb agreement. Now that you know how to make subjects and verbs agree, test your ability to find the subjects and verbs that agree in number. Select the subject and verb in the sentences below. Remember, subjects and verbs must agree in number; meaning, if the subject is singular, then the verb must also be singular. 1. Mouse Finbar's main weakness was cake. In this sentence, weakness is the singular subject of the sentence, which means that the verb, was, must also be singular. 2. Ruby Roundhouse knew that the only way to save her friends was to win a dance fight. In this sentence, there are two clauses, each with its own subject and verb. The subject and verb of the first clause are singular: Ruby Roundhouse knew. The subject and verb of the second clause are also singular: way and was. However, since there are two clauses with two separate verbs, we have to make sure that there is also agreement in tense. Since the verb "knew" is in past tense, the verb "was" must also be in past tense. 3. Spencer, Fridge, and Martha were separated from the group during the attack. In this sentence, the subject (Spencer, Fridge, and Martha) is plural because three different people are included. Therefore, the verb phrase (were separated) must also be plural. 4. In Jumanji: The Next Level, a new character, Ming, is introduced. In this sentence, character is the singular subject. It is difficult to find the true subject because there is both a prepositional phrase and an appositive; however, since character is the true singular subject, the verb "is" must also be singular. 5. In order to win the game, Jumanji, the characters were instructed to return the Jaguar's Eye to its home. In this sentence, characters is the plural subject, and were instructed is the plural verb. Pro tip: Subjects and verbs within the same clauses must agree with one another in number, while verbs in separate clauses within the same sentence must agree with one another in tense. For additional practice, check out Subject-Verb Agreement content on Albert. Return to the Table of Contents Feeling confident in your understanding of Subject-Verb Agreement? Take this short six-question quiz to see what you've learned: 1. True or False: subjects and verbs must always agree in both number and tense Answer: False Correct Explanation: That's right! While subjects and verbs must always agree in number, tense is reserved for verbs only as nouns in the English language cannot denote tense. Incorrect Explanation: Sorry, that's not right! Remember, subjects and verbs must always agree in number, tense is reserved for verbs only as nouns in the English language cannot denote tense. 2. Can noun objects be the subject of a sentence? Answer: No Correct Explanation: That's right! Direct objects, indirect objects, and objects of prepositions can never be the subject of a sentence! Incorrect Explanation: Sorry, that's not right! Remember, direct objects, indirect objects, and objects of prepositions can never be the subject of a sentence. 3. In this sentence, should the verb be a singular "is" or a plural "are"? They is/are attempting to bake bread from scratch. Answer: Plural "are" Correct Explanation: That's right! Since the subject, "they", is plural, the verb must be the plural "are". Incorrect Explanation: Sorry, that's not right! Remember, if the subject is plural, then the verb must also be plural. 4. In this sentence, are the noun and verb singular or plural? Racoons are sometimes called "trash pandas" due to their habit of going through people's garbage. Answer: Plural Correct Explanation: That's right! The subject "racoons" and the verb phrase "are called" are both plural. Incorrect Explanation: Sorry, that's not right! The subject "racoons" and the verb phrase "are called" are both plural, not singular. 5. In this sentence, are the noun and verb singular or plural? Mark, one of my best friends, was cast in our upcoming drama. Answer: Singular Correct Explanation: That's right! In this sentence, Mark is the subject, not friends. Therefore, the verb was cast is also singular. Incorrect Explanation: Sorry, that's not right! In this sentence, Mark is the subject, not friends. Remember that nouns in appositive phrases cannot be the subject of the sentence. Therefore, the verb was cast is also singular. 6. In this sentence, is the singular verb "was" or the plural verb "were" needed? Ten thousand dollars was/were demanded by the thieves for the return of the jewel. Answer: Singular verb "was" Correct Explanation: That's right! This is a tricky one. Remember, when referring to a sum of money, a singular verb is used. When referring to actual dollar bills, a plural verb is used. Incorrect Explanation: Sorry, that's not right! Remember, when referring to a sum of money, a singular verb is used. For additional practice with subject-verb agreement, check out our completely free practice on Albert. Subject-Verb Agreement. Return to the Table of Contents Even though subjects and verbs are the foundation of every complete sentence, students can still struggle to locate subjects and verbs in sentences as well as understand why and how they should agree with one another. Once you have a clear understanding of where your students stand, the Common Core English Language Progressive Skills Chart is a helpful tool for building on your students' knowledge, regardless of where they may be. For specific standards on subject-verb agreement, check out the Common Core State Standards website. Albert's Subject-Verb Agreement Practice provides several activities that each focus on a different type of subject-verb agreement, from Simple Subject-Verb Agreement to more advanced Indefinite Pronouns. Once students have practiced each type of subject-verb agreement, assessments are also provided to check student retention. It can be tricky to find both the main subject and the main verb of a sentence, especially if there are distracting objects, modifiers, or verbs acting like other parts of speech. Once you have determined the action or state of being that is described in the sentence, then you have to find out who or what is performing the action or experience the state of being. Finally, you must make sure that both the subject and the verb agree in number because if they do not, it can be very difficult to understand what is being communicated. Be sure to check out our free grammar course for more subject-verb agreement practice. You can also access over 3,400 free, high-quality questions that address nearly every grammatical concept. Need help preparing for your Grammar exam? Albert has hundreds of grammar practice questions with detailed explanations to help you master concepts.

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