

Agreement

I. Subject Verb Agreement (SVA)

A. a verb must agree with its subject in number

1. Singular words indicate one; Plural words indicate more than one
2. Only nouns, pronouns, and verbs have number

B. Plural forms of nouns

1. Use rules 1-6
2. Collective nouns may be either singular or plural

Examples: army, club, family, class, group, team, and audience

C. Plural forms of personal pronouns

1. Pronouns have different forms to indicate singular and plural

Singular	Plural
I, me	We, us, our
He, him, she, her	They, them
It, this	These

2. Some pronouns may be singular or plural depending on their use in a sentence

Examples: You and who

D. Number of verbs

1. Verbs have singular and plural forms
2. Verbs ending in –s are generally singular

E. Rule of agreement

1. a singular subject must have a singular verb

S V

Example: Jeff always has a good time at the beach.

S V

She was here earlier today.

2. a plural subject must have a plural verb

S V

Example: The surfers always have a good time at the beach.

S V

They were here earlier today.

3. Normal problems occur with the third-person forms in the present tense

Examples: She wants; They want; He is/was; We are/were

4. a prepositional phrase that comes between the subject and its verb does not affect subject-verb agreement

Example: s **prepositional phrase** v

INCORRECT: The lights on the Christmas tree creates a festive atmosphere.

CORRECT: The lights on the Christmas tree create a festive atmosphere.

The subject is lights not tree; therefore, the verb create must agree with the plural subject lights.

5. Compound Subjects

a. Two or more singular subjects joined by or or nor must have a singular verb

Example: Either the turkey or the stuffing is cooking.

Neither the potatoes nor the peas are done.

b. When a singular and a plural subject are joined by or and nor, the verb must agree with the subject nearer the verb.

Plural Singular V

Example: Neither the lights nor the wreath **are** in the box.

c. Subjects joined by and usually take a plural verb

Example: The boys and girl are waiting for the parade.

The boys and the girl are waiting for the parade.

1. Two exceptions apply to subjects joined by and
 - a. If the parts of the compound subject are thought of as a single unit, then the compound subject is considered singular and must have a singular verb.

Example: Bacon and eggs is a very popular breakfast.

- b. The words every and each before a compound subject indicates the need for a singular verb.

Example: Every town and village celebrates.

6. Sentences with unusual word order
 - a. The subject usually follows the verb in sentences beginning with there and here.

V S

Example: There were several books about holidays.

V S

Here is a book about the holiday.

- b. The word order with questions also follows the rules of agreement in number. The subject is not at the beginning of the sentence; therefore, you should find your subject first to make sure it agrees with the verb.

V S

Example: Where is the lobby?

V S

Where are the loaves of bread?

7. Agreement with indefinite pronouns

a. Some pronouns are always singular and will take a singular verb:

anybody	anyone	anything	another	each
either	everybody	everyone	everything	neither
nothing	nobody	no one	one	somebody
someone	something	much	other	little

Examples: Each of the banners is blue.

Everyone in the first five rows was delighted by the play.

b. Some pronouns are always plural:

both	few	many	several	others
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Examples: Few have chosen a gift yet.

Several have not started reading the book.

c. Some indefinite pronouns are singular and plural and the number is determined by the antecedent of the pronoun.

all	any	most	none	some	more
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Examples: Some of the milk is frozen. (object milk is singular)

Some of the cookies are frozen, too. (object cookies is plural)

S V

They were here earlier today.

3. Normal problems occur with the third-person forms in the present tense

Examples: She wants; They want; He is/was; We are/were

4. a prepositional phrase _____
does not affect subject-verb agreement

Example: s prepositional phrase v

INCORRECT: The lights on the Christmas tree creates a festive atmosphere.

CORRECT: The lights on the Christmas tree create a festive atmosphere.

- The subject is lights not tree; therefore, the verb create must agree with the plural subject lights.

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Neither the potatoes nor the peas are done.

b. When a singular and a plural subject are joined by or and nor, _____

Plural Singular V

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c. Subjects joined by and _____

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1. Two exceptions apply to subjects joined by and

a. If the parts of the compound subject are thought of as a single unit,

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b. The words every and each before a compound subject_____.

Example: Every town and village celebrates.

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V S

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Here is a book about the holiday.

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_____	either	everybody	_____
everything	neither	nothing	nobody
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Examples: Each of the banners is blue.

Everyone in the first five rows was delighted by the play.

b. Some pronouns are always plural:

both _____ many _____ others

Examples: Few have chosen a gift yet.

Several have not started reading the book.

c. Some indefinite pronouns are singular & plural and the number is determined by _____.

all any most none some more

Examples: Some of the milk is frozen. (object milk is _____)

Some of the cookies are frozen, too. (object cookies is _____)