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Subject-verb agreement is a fundamental aspect of English grammar crucial in maintaining clarity and coherence. By ensuring that the subject and verb in a sentence agree in number, we can convey our thoughts accurately and effectively. In this article, we will explore the rules of subject-verb agreement that will equip you with the knowledge to enhance your English writing and speaking skills and avoid common errors. Here are the twenty unavoidable rules to follow concerning subject-verb agreement in English sentences. 1. Subjects and verbs must agree in number. This is the cornerstone rule that forms the background of the concept. Here are some examples that illustrate this rule of subject-verb agreement: The cat is sleeping. The cats are sleeping. He runs every morning. They run every morning. In the first example, the singular subject cat agrees with the singular verb is. In the second one, the plural subject cats agrees with the plural verb are. For the third example, the singular subject he agrees with the singular verb runs while in the fourth example, the plural subject they agrees with the plural verb run. These examples demonstrate how subjects and verbs must agree in number, whether its a singular subject with a singular verb or a plural subject with a plural verb. 2. Do not get confused by the words that come between the subject and verb; they do not affect the agreement. Here are the examples that illustrate how words between the subject and verb do not affect the agreement: The dog, along with his puppies, is playing in the yard. In this sentence, dog is the subject, and is is the singular verb. Although the phrase along with his puppies comes between the subject and verb, it does not affect the agreement. The verb is remains singular to agree with the singular subject dog. The team, including their coach, is practicing for the upcoming tournament. In this example, team is the subject, and is is the singular verb. The phrase including their coach is inserted between the subject and verb, but it does not alter the agreement. The verb is remains singular to match the singular subject team. 3. Prepositional phrases between the subject and verb usually do not affect agreement. Here are examples that demonstrate how prepositional phrases between the subject and verb typically do not affect agreement: The book on the table belongs to me. The books on the table belong to me. The prepositional phrase on the table is placed between the subject book and the verb belongs. However, the verb remains singular to agree with the singular subject book. In the second example, the prepositional phrase remains the same, but the verb belong becomes plural to match the plural subject books. These examples illustrate that prepositional phrases placed between the subject and verb generally do not affect the agreement. The agreement is determined by the number (singular or plural) of the subject, and the presence of prepositional phrases does not alter this agreement. 4. When sentences start with there or here, the subject will always be placed after the verb, so care needs to be taken to identify it correctly. There is a cat in the garden. There are several books on the shelf. In both examples, the subject (a cat and several books) follows the verb (is and are) after the word there. Care must be taken to identify the subject correctly in these sentences since the typical subject-verb word order is reversed. Here comes the bus. Here are your keys. In these examples, the subject (the bus and your keys) comes after the verb (comes and are) following the word here. When encountering sentences starting with there or here, it is important to identify the subject correctly as it comes after the verb. This helps maintain subject-verb agreement and ensures the sentences grammatical accuracy. 5. Subjects dont always come before verbs in questions. Make sure you accurately identify the subject before deciding on the proper verb form to use. Here are examples that demonstrate how subjects dont always come before verbs in questions, emphasizing the importance of accurately identifying the subject: Is the book on the table yours? Are the dogs in the backyard barking? In both examples, the subject (the book and the dogs) comes after the verb (is and are) in the interrogative sentences. Accurately identifying the subject is crucial to determine the appropriate verb form. Have you finished your homework? Did they go to the park? Here, the subjects (you and they) are positioned after the auxiliary verbs (have and did) in the questions. Properly identifying the subject enables us to select the correct verb form. These examples highlight the importance of accurately identifying the subject in questions before deciding on the appropriate verb form. Subjects in questions can appear after the verb or auxiliary verb, and being mindful of this allows for correct subject-verb agreement in sentence construction. 6. If two subjects are joined by and, they typically require a plural verb form. John and Sarah are going to the party. The dog and the cat are playing in the yard. In both examples, the subjects (John and Sarah and the dog and the cat) are connected by the conjunction and. As a result, a plural verb form (are) is used to maintain subject-verb agreement. 7. The verb is singular if the two subjects are separated by and refer to the same person or thing. The captain and coach is the same person. Bread and butter is a common breakfast choice. Playing the piano and singing is her passion. Here, the captain and coach refers to a single individual who holds both roles, so the verb is remains singular to match the singular subject. In the second example, bread and butter is considered a single entity or combination, so the verb is remains singular. For the third one, playing the piano and singing represents a singular activity or passion, so the verb is remains singular. 8. If the words each, every, or no come before the subject, the verb is singular. Each student has a textbook. Every house needs maintenance. No one knows the answer. These examples demonstrate that when the words each, every, or no are used before the subject, the verb that follows remains singular to maintain the subject-verb agreement. 9. If the subjects are both singular and are connected by the words or, nor, neither/nor, either/or, and not only/but also the verb is singular. The dog or the cat is responsible for knocking over the vase. Neither the teacher nor the students was aware of the change. Either John or Sarah is going to the party. Not only the flowers but also the vase belongs to Alice. The examples above highlight that when the subjects connected by or, nor, neither/nor, either/or, or not only/but also are both singular, the verb remains singular to maintain the subject-verb agreement. 10. The only time when the object of the preposition factors into the decision of plural or singular verb forms is when noun and pronoun subjects like some, half, none, more, all, etc. are followed by a prepositional phrase. In these sentences, the object of the preposition determines the form of the verb. Some of the cake is missing. Some of the cakes are missing. Half of the pizza has been eaten. Half of the pizzas have been eaten. None of the money was recovered. None of the coins were recovered. These examples demonstrate that when noun and pronoun subjects like some, half, none, more, all, etc. are followed by a prepositional phrase, the object of the preposition determines the form of the verb, leading to either plural or singular verb forms accordingly. 11. The singular verb form is usually used for units of measurement. Five kilometers is a long distance to walk. Two hours is the duration of the meeting. In these examples, the units of measurement kilometers and hours are treated as singular nouns, and the verb is used in its singular form to agree with it. 12. If the subjects are both plural and are connected by the words or, nor, neither/nor, either/or, and not only/but also, the verb is plural. The dogs or the cats are making a lot of noise. Neither the students nor the teachers want to go on the field trip. Either the apples or the oranges are on sale. Not only the birds but also the squirrels are gathering food for winter. When the subjects connected by or, nor, neither/nor, either/or, or not only/but also are both plural, the verb must also be plural to maintain the subject-verb agreement. 13. If one subject is singular and one plural and the words are connected by the words or, nor, neither/nor, either/or, and not only/but also, you use the verb form of the subject that is nearest the verb. When one subject is singular and the other is plural, connected by the words or, nor, neither/nor, either/or, or not only/but also, you should use the verb form that agrees with the subject that is nearest to the verb. Here are examples that demonstrate this rule: Neither the dogs nor the cat likes the rain. Not only the teacher but also the students have completed the assignment. In the first example, the singular subject cat is closer to the verb likes, so the verb takes the singular form likes. On the other hand, the plural subject students is closer to the verb have completed, so the verb takes the plural form have completed to agree with the nearest subject. 14. Indefinite pronouns typically take singular verbs. Everyone is excited about the party. Somebody has left their umbrella behind. Nobody wants to be left behind. Each of the students has submitted their assignment. These examples illustrate that indefinite pronouns, such as everyone, somebody, nobody, and each, require singular verbs to maintain the subject-verb agreement. 15. "Except for the pronouns (few, many, several, both) that always take the plural form. Few of the students were present in class today. Many have tried, but few have succeeded. Several have volunteered to help with the project. Both of them are talented musicians. The examples above illustrate that the pronouns few, many, several, and both always take the plural form of the verb to ensure subject-verb agreement. 16. If two infinitives are separated by and, they take the plural form of the verb. To walk and to chew gum require great skill. To learn and to grow are essential to life. To be and to do are two different things. To see and to be seen are two different experiences. To know and to understand are not the same thing. In each of these sentences, the two infinitives are joined by the conjunction and. The verb that follows the conjunction must agree with the subject of the sentence, which is the two infinitives. Since the two infinitives are plural, the verb must also be plural. In this case, the verb is require, which is in the plural form. Remember that this rule only applies when the two infinitives are separated by and. If the two infinitives are not separated by and, then the verb can be singular or plural, depending on the context of the sentence. 17. When gerunds are used as the subject of a sentence they take the singular verb form of the verb, but when they are linked by and they take the plural form. Singing is my favorite hobby. Playing video games is a waste of time. Learning new things is exciting. In each of these sentences, the gerund is the subject of the sentence. The verb that follows the gerund must agree with the subject, hence the verbs are singular in these circumstances. However, when two gerunds are joined by and, the verb must be plural. For instance: Learning new things and meeting new people are exciting experiences. Swimming in the ocean and hiking in the mountains are my favorite ways to relax. Reading a good book and taking a nap are my favorite ways to unwind. In these sentences, the gerunds are linked by and. The verb that follows the gerunds must agree with the subjects, which are the two gerunds. Since the two gerunds are plural, the verb must also be plural. In these cases, the verbs are are. 18. Collective nouns like herd, senate, class, crowd, etc. usually take asingular verb form. The jury is deliberating. The flock of geese is flying south. The herd of cattle is grazing in the field. The team is playing well tonight. The class is working on a project. Here, the collective noun is the subject of the sentence. The verb that follows the collective noun must agree with the subject, so the verbs are singular in these examples. 19. Titles of books, movies, novels, etc. are treated as singular and take a singular verb. To Kill a Mockingbird is a classic novel by Harper Lee. The Lord of the Rings is a popular fantasy series by J.R.R. Tolkien. Gone with the Wind remains a beloved film from the 1930s. Pride and Prejudice is a famous novel by Jane Austen. The Shawshank Redemption is a moving film The Hunger Games is a movie. The title of the book, movie, or novel is the subject of the sentence. The verb that follows the title must agree with the subject, so the verbs are singular in these cases. Please remember that this rule applies even if the title of the book, movie, or novel has a plural word in it. For example, the title of the book The Hunger Games has the plural word Games in it, but the verb is is singular because the title is treated as a singular noun. 20. Final Rule Remember, only the subject affects the verb! Subject verb agreement is an essential grammar topic that deals with the set of grammar rules that govern the agreement between a verb and its subject. In simple words, subject verb agreement gives you a number of rules about matching of a verb with its subject in person and number which is grammatically an important aspect. In this post, we'll discuss 20 important subject verb agreement rules along with example sentences. Note that you must have read or memorized some of the subject verb agreement rules mentioned in this post. However, you need to revise them all not to forget any of them. What is Subject Verb Agreement? Subject verb agreement simply means that "the verb agrees with its subject." That is, a verb must grammatically agree with its subject in number and person. Let's put it in other simpler way, a verb such as "go" must be according to the number and person of the subject. (more about number and person) That is, if the subject is third person singular such as "he," "she," and "it", the verb must be singular such as "runs," "goes," and "eats." On the other hand, if the subject is first and third person plural such as "we," "they," and "people", the verb must be plural such as "run," "go," and "eat." (more about verb) Before you jump into the main section of the article, you need to keep in mind the following points: 1. Subject: A grammatical subject is the doer of an action in simple or has a state of being as "he" and "John" in "he runs fast" and "John is happy." 2. Verb: A verb in English is a word that refers to an action or state of being as "goes" and "eating" in "she goes to school everyday" and "the boss is extremely angry." 3. Agreement: Agreement in grammar refers to the fact that a verb agrees or matches with the person and number of the subject as in "she runs" and "I run" and "they run." 20 Subject Verb Agreement Rules with Examples Let's now head to the 20 subject verb agreement rules in English grammar. Here are the 20 rules of subject verb agreement: Rule 1. A singular subject uses a singular verb and a plural subject takes a plural verb. Examples: a. He goes. (singular) b. They go. (plural) Rule 2. A plural verb is used when two subjects are connected with the help of "and." Examples: a. The police and the thief are present. b. The student and the teacher are going to the market. Rule 3. The verb agrees with the nearest subject when two subjects are joined by "or" or "nor." Examples: a. Either the students or the professor is present. b. Neither the professor nor the students are present. Rule 4. Singular subjects which are joined by "either.....or" and "neither.....nor" use singular verbs. Examples: a. Either the teacher or the student is outside. b. Neither the teacher nor the student is present. Rule 5. A collective noun takes a singular verb if it refers to a single entity and uses a plural verb in case it refers to all the members of an entity individually. Examples: a. The jury has given its verdict. b. The jury have been divided in their opinions. Rule 6. When "percent of" becomes the subject, the verb agrees with the noun used after "of." Examples: a. Ten percent of the apple is eaten. b. Thirty percent of students are present. Rule 7. Some always plural nouns take plural verbs always. Examples: a. My pants are wet. b. The scissors are in the drawer. Rule 8. The names of subjects, even though they use an "s" take singular verbs. Examples: a. Linguistics is a relatively difficult subject. b. Mathematics is easy for me. Rule 9. The titles of movies, books or any other works, even though they may seem plural, are singular and take singular verbs. Examples: a. The Arabian Nights is a wonderful work. b. The Chronicles of Narnia is an amazing series. Rule 10. When the conjunction "and" joins two subjects that refer to the same object, we use a singular verb. Examples: a. The poet and philosopher is dead. b. My friend and tutor is calling me. Rule 11. When "none of" becomes the subject, the verb is used depending on the word used after "of." Examples: a. None of the apple is eaten. b. None of the students are present. Rule 12. When we use number or amount, we use verb according to the number or amount. Examples: a. 20 rupees is a small amount of money. b. At least three pens are required. Rule 13. We use singular verbs with indefinite pronouns such as everyone, anyone, somebody, everybody, nobody, etc. Examples: a. Everyone is here. b. Somebody is calling you. Rule 14. We use plural verbs with indefinite pronouns such as a few, many, several, all, others, etc. Examples: a. Many students are absent. b. Several people were injured. Rule 15. When we use "there" at the beginning, we use either a singular or plural verb depending on the noun that comes afterward. Examples: a. There is a pen on the table. b. There are many students on the road. Rule 16. We use a singular verb with the first person singular subject "I", with the exception of a perfective tenses. Examples: a. I am going. b. I was going. Rule 17. We use a plural verb with both the singular and the plural "you." Examples: a. You are my teacher. b. You all are my friends. Rule 18. The verb agrees with the subject, not with the word that comes after "as well as." Examples: a. My teachers as well as my friend John are going. b. My friend John as well as my teachers is going. Rule 19. When we use a compound subject and each word in the compound subject refers to a different entity, we use a plural verb. Examples: a. The king and queen are coming. b. I and you are best friends. Rule 20. When "each" and "every" are used, they take a singular verb. Examples: a. Each of the students has left the classroom. b. Every teacher should also abide by the rules.

Subject-verb agreement answers. Which subject-verb agreement rule is being broken in the sentence above. How many subject-verb agreement rules are there. Subject verb agreement brainpop answers.