



## Subject-Verb Agreement

### What is Subject-Verb Agreement?

The subject and the verb of a sentence must agree with one another. If the subject is plural, the verb is plural. If the subject is singular, the verb is singular.

(Hint: If a subject ends in -s or -es, it is plural. If a verb ends in -s or -es, it is singular.)

### Basic Rules:

1. **For agreement purposes, ignore words that come between the subject and the verb.**

*Plural:* The <sup>s</sup>students (at Del Mar College often) <sup>v</sup>go on to larger colleges and universities.

*Singular:* A <sup>s</sup>student (from Del Mar College often) <sup>v</sup>goes on to a larger college or university.

2. **Use a plural verb for subjects connected by “and.”**

*Plural:* <sup>s</sup>Del Mar and <sup>v</sup>TAMUCC are colleges in the Corpus Christi area.

3. **When subjects are joined by the conjunctions “or,” “nor,” or “or not only...but,” the verb should agree with the closer subject.**

*Plural:* Neither Grace nor her <sup>s</sup>sisters <sup>v</sup>are going.

*Singular:* Neither Ben nor his <sup>s</sup>brother <sup>v</sup>is here.

4. **Use singular verbs for most indefinite pronouns.**

Indefinite pronouns do not refer to any certain person, thing, or idea.

(Common indefinite pronouns: *anyone, everyone, no one, one, someone, every, anybody, everybody, nobody, somebody, anything, neither, everything, nothing, something, each, and either.*)

Singular: <sup>S</sup> Everyone in lab <sup>V</sup> is here.

Singular: <sup>S</sup> Neither of them <sup>V</sup> is at school today.

- 5. With collective nouns, use singular or plural verbs according to context.**  
A collective noun names a group of people or things (such as *jury*, *committee*, *team*, *crowd*, *band*, *class*, and *group*).

**Use a singular verb when the group acts as one unit.**

Singular: My English <sup>S</sup> class <sup>V</sup> is very thought provoking.

**Use a plural verb when the members of the group act individually.**

Plural: The <sup>S</sup> jury <sup>V</sup> are working on separate charges.

- 6. Use singular verbs with subjects that specify amounts** (distance, money, or measurements).

Singular: Eight <sup>S</sup> dollars <sup>V</sup> is a lot of money to lose.

Singular: Six <sup>S</sup> cups of water <sup>V</sup> is what the recipe called for.

**Remember:** The subject and the verb of a sentence must agree with one another. If the subject is plural, the verb is plural. If the subject is singular, the verb is singular.