

# Subject Verb Agreement

Subject verb agreement simply means the subject and verb must agree in number. This means both need to be singular or both need to be plural.

## Subject/Verb Agreement Examples

Here are some examples of subject verb agreement (the subject is bolded and the verb underlined):

- My **dog** always growls at the postal carrier.
- **Basketballs** roll across the floor.
- I don't understand the assignment.
- These **clothes** are too small for me.
- **Peter** doesn't like vegetables.

## Compound Subjects

Compound subjects (two subjects in the same sentence) usually take a plural verb, unless the combination is treated as singular in popular usage or the two subjects refer to the same thing or person. Here are some examples of subject verb agreement with compound subjects:

- **Sugar and flour** are needed for the recipe.
- **Neither my dad nor my brothers** know how to ski.
- **Pepperoni and cheese** are great on a pizza.
- **Corned beef and cabbage** is a traditional meal in Ireland. (popular usage)
- **The creator and producer** is arriving soon. (both refer to same person)

When using "or" or "nor" in a compound subject containing a singular and plural subject, the verb agrees with the closest subject. Examples of compound subjects using or, neither-nor, or either-or include:

- **My mom or dad** is coming to the play. (singular)
- Neither **gray nor white** is my favorite color. (singular)
- Either **Grandpa or my sisters** are going to the park. (closest subject is plural)
- Either **my sisters or Grandpa** is going to the park. (closest subject is singular)
- Neither **she nor I** am going to college. (closest subject is singular)

## Singular Indefinite Pronouns

Here are some examples of subject verb agreement with singular indefinite pronouns:

- **Each** gets a trophy for playing.
- **Somebody** will pay for this.
- **Anybody** is more fun than you.
- **Something** is very wrong here.
- **Everybody** enjoys a good book.
- **Nothing** has been determined as of yet.

## Plural Indefinite Pronouns

Here are some examples of subject verb agreement with plural indefinite pronouns:

- **Both** are qualified for the job.
- **Many** went to the beach and got sunburned.
- **Few** know what it really takes to get ahead.
- **Several** are already on location.
- **Some** sugar is required for taste. (sugar is uncountable so singular verb used)
- **Most** of the cookies were eaten. (cookies are countable so plural verb used)

## Midsentence Phrase or Clause

Here are some examples of subject verb agreement with a phrase or clause between the subject and verb:

- A **theory** of physics ascertains that a body in motion stays in motion.
- A **virus** in all the company's computers is a real threat to security.
- The **causes** of this prevalent disease are bad diet and lack of exercise.
- The **couch and chair** I got at the store look really nice in here.
- The **members** of the choir are very happy with the performance.

## Collective Nouns

Collective nouns can be singular or plural depending on meaning. Here are some examples of subject verb agreement with collective nouns:

- The **committee** meets here every Thursday. (singular)
- The **crowd** is getting angry. (singular)
- The **jury** has finally reached a decision. (singular)
- The **majority** rules most of the time. (singular)
- The **staff** have gone their separate ways for the holidays. (plural)

## Inverted Subjects

Here are some examples of subject verb agreement with inverted subjects where the subject follows the verb:

- There are seven clean **plates** in the dining room.
- There is a **hair** in my lasagna.
- Over the rainbow flies a **bird**.
- How are the **employees** enjoying the new building?
- A good gift is a **gift card**.