



Subject-Verb Agreement

- Most basic sentences have one subject at the beginning of a sentence followed by a verb. Since the subject and verb are often next to each other, it is easy to check for subject-verb agreement.
 - ◇ Amy (singular subject) wants (singular verb form) to go bowling.
 - ◇ Her parents (plural subject) want (plural verb form) to go bowling with her.
- The subject and the verb must match in terms of number.
 - ◇ If the subject of the sentence is singular, then the verb must also be singular. (John likes pizza.)
 - ◇ If the subject is plural, then the verb must be plural. (His friends like pizza, too.)
- When the subject and the verb don't agree, a sentence may look like this:
 - ◇ Wrong: Most students (plural subject) takes (singular verb) four courses.
 - ◇ Right: Most students (plural subject) take (plural verb) four courses.
- If a sentence contains a compound (more than one) subject connected by AND, it needs a **plural** verb:
 - ◇ Harry and Earl spend most of their time teasing their friends.
 - ◇ The cats and dogs in her home rarely fight.
- If a sentence has a compound subject connected by OR, NOR, BUT, EITHER...OR, NEITHER...NOR, or NOT ONLY...BUT ALSO the verb must **agree with the subject nearest** to it.
 - ◇ Either the cats or the dog wakes me up. (A singular verb is needed because dog is singular.)
 - ◇ Anna or her brothers feed the pets each morning. (A plural verb is needed because brothers are plural.)
- Use a **singular** verb when a sentence has an indefinite pronoun, such as: EACH, EITHER, NEITHER, ONE, EVERYONE, EVERYBODY, EVERYTHING, SOMEONE, SOMEBODY, ANYBODY, ANYTHING, NOBODY, and ANOTHER.
 - ◇ Everyone in John's family likes pizza.
 - ◇ Nobody knows the answer to the question.
 - ◇ Everyone wants to travel over the break.
- In order to avoid making mistakes in subject-verb agreement, review the differences between singular and plural subjects and verbs:

Singular

I walk.

You walk.

He/She/It walks.

Joe walks.

The child walks.

Plural

We walk.

You walk.

They walk.

Joe and Sue walk.

The children walk.

- Note: A **verb** ending in s is **singular**; many **nouns** ending in s are **plural**.