

Standard English

Subject Verb agreement

Subject/Verb Agreement: The Rules

Singular

The subject and the verb of a sentence **must always agree** for the sentence to be grammatically correct.

What do you notice about the subject and verb in these sentences?

Thomas **likes** milk.

A hen **lays** eggs.

A **singular (one) subject** is always followed by the singular form of the verb.



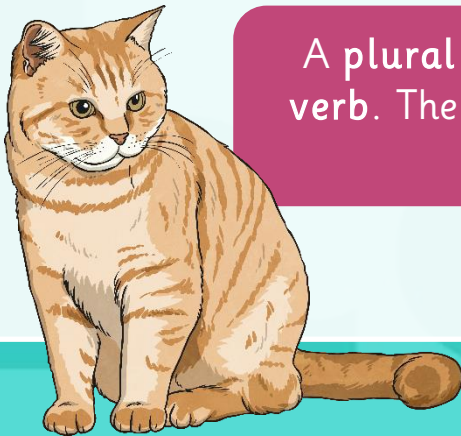
Subject/Verb Agreement: The Rules

Plural

What do you notice about the subject and verb in these sentences?

The mice **run** from the cat.

The children **follow** the Pied Piper.



A plural (more than one) **subject** is always followed by the plural form of the **verb**. The exception to this rule is the pronoun 'I' (and 'they' when it is singular), which is followed by the plural form of the verb

Subject/Verb Agreement: The Rules

To help with correct verb agreement, the basic rule is:

- If the subject is singular (one) the verb must be singular.
- If the subject is plural (more than one) the verb must be plural.

To form the plural of a verb in the present tense, you should remove the s (or sometimes 'es' or 'ies') from the singular form.

Here are some examples of verbs in their present tense singular and plural form...

Singular	Plural
becomes	become
catches	catch
drinks	drink
flies	fly
forgives	forgive
goes	go
hides	hide
leads	lead
rides	ride
seeks	seek
springs	spring
tears	tear
writes	write

Subject/Verb Agreement: The Tricky Bits

The verb 'to be' follows a different rule when it comes to subject/verb agreement. The irregular verb forms of 'to be' are very commonly misused.

Where there is one subject (singular), the correct use of 'to be' is either **is**, **am** or **was**...

I am/was	I am/I was feeling excited.
He is/was	He is/He was very gentle.
She is/was	She is/She was playing tennis.
It is/was	It is/It was a bright summer's day.



Subject/Verb Agreement: The Tricky Bits

In the plural form, the correct use of 'to be' is either **are** or **were**...

We are/were **We are/We were** excited.

You are/were **You are/You were** all in deep trouble.

They are/were **They are/They were** playing all day.

Now you have revised subject/verb agreement,
could you answer some quick questions on the topic?



Quiz! Part 1

Which pair of verbs correctly complete the sentences below?

Mum and Carol _____ certain that they had heard the air-raid siren.

Carol _____ feeling very frightened.

Tick one

is/was

☐

was/are

☐

were/was

☐

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Quiz! Part 2

Choose **one** verb in each pair to complete the sentences using Standard English.

We is / are going on holiday to Spain.

I is / am packing my swimming costume
and towel in my suitcase.

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We **is** / **are** going on holiday to Spain.

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Quiz! Part 3

Complete each sentence by adding the correct subjects to these sentences:

coach Sid and Violet bicycles Marcie

_____ enjoy playing board games.

The _____ were parked outside the bus station.

The _____ was stuck in a traffic jam.

_____ works hard during maths lessons.

Quiz! Part 3

Complete each sentence by adding the correct subjects to these sentences:

coach Sid and Violet bicycles Marcie

Sid and Violet enjoy playing board games.

The bicycles were parked outside the bus station.

The coach was stuck in a traffic jam.

Marcie works hard during maths lessons.

Don't be tricked!

Sometimes we mistake the subject for being plural, when in fact it is singular.

The team is/are performing fantastically.

The team is/are performing fantastically.

Even though a team has more than one person within it,
the noun 'team' is singular.

The players is/are performing fantastically.

'Players' is a plural subject noun so we use are.

Task: Answer the questions in your book

Circle the correct **verb form** in each underlined pair to complete the sentences below.

The last place I saw Jack and Gwen was / were in the playground.

At the museum, there was / were many interesting exhibits.

The bikes was / were lined up for the start of the race.

We was / were planning to hold a cake sale at school.

I was / were chosen to design the posters.

One of my best friends comes / come from Kenya.

In Kenya, more than 60 languages is / are spoken.

The best opportunity to see Kenya's animals is / are at the national parks.

Task: Answer the questions in your book

Complete each sentence below with either 'is' or 'are'.

My collection of stamps _____ worth a fortune.

These trousers _____ too small.

One hundred years _____ a century.

The good news _____ that the trip can still go ahead.

The fishermen _____ repairing the boat.

The number of books available _____ increasing.

Task: Answer the questions in your book

Circle the correct word in each set of brackets.

Neither of the pupils (was / were) paying attention.

Hannah and James (wasn't / weren't) enjoying the game.

Each of the children (was / were) amazed at the sight.

(creeps / creep)

The cheetah _____ after its prey.

(produces / produce)

Skunks _____ a very smelly spray that repels most predators.

(protects / protect)

The mother bear _____ her young.

Answers

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