



## Rules for Subject-Verb Agreement

# RULE 1

Singular subjects take singular verbs,  
and plural subjects take plural verbs.

**He walks to school.**

In this sentence, the subject is "He," which is singular. The verb "walks" agrees with the singular subject by taking the singular form.

**They walk to school.**

In this sentence, the subject is "They," which is plural. The verb "walk" agrees with the plural subject by taking the plural form.

## Rules for Subject-Verb Agreement

# RULE 2

When the subject is a collective noun, the verb can be singular or plural depending on the intended meaning.

The flock of birds is flying south for the winter.

In this sentence, the subject is "The flock of birds," which is a collective noun representing a group of birds. The verb "is flying" is in the singular form. The intended meaning here is that the group of birds is acting as a single unit, moving together in the same direction.

The flock of birds is flying south for the winter.

In this sentence, the subject is again "The flock of birds," a collective noun. However, this time the verb "are eating" is in the plural form. The intended meaning here is that the individual birds within the group are performing the action separately, each eating seeds from the feeder.

## Rules for Subject-Verb Agreement

# RULE 3

Inverted sentences require special attention to subject-verb agreement. Sometimes, sentences are structured with the verb before the subject. In these cases, pay close attention to ensure the subject and verb agree each other.

**There is a book on the table**

In this sentence, the verb "is" comes before the subject "a book." The subject is singular, and the verb "is" agrees with it in the singular form.

**There are books on the table.**

In this example, the verb "are" comes before the subject "books." The subject is plural, and the verb "are" agrees with it in the plural form. Here, the sentence indicates the presence of multiple books on the table.

## Rules for Subject-Verb Agreement

# RULE 4

Compound subjects joined by "and" take plural verbs, while compound subjects joined by "or" or "nor" take singular verbs. When two subjects are joined by "and," they act as a single unit and take a plural verb. However, when subjects are joined by "or" or "nor," the verb should match the subject closest to it.

**Rohit and Priya are best friends.**

In this sentence, the subjects "Rohit" and "Priya" are joined by "and," and a plural verb is used to agree with the subject because Rohit and Priya together form a pair of best friends.

## Neither Rohit nor Priya is attending the party.

In this sentence, the subjects "Rohit" and "Priya" are joined by "nor." When subjects are joined by "or" or "nor," the verb should match the subject closest to it. In this case, the verb "is" agrees with the singular subject "Priya," which is closest to the verb. The sentence conveys that neither Rohit nor Priya is attending the party individually.

## Neither Rohit nor his friends are attending the party.

In this example, the subjects "Rohit" and "his friends" are joined by "nor." The verb "are" agrees with the plural subject "his friends," which is closest to the verb. The sentence conveys that neither Rohit nor any of his friends are attending the party.

## Rules for Subject-Verb Agreement

# RULE 5

Indefinite pronouns take singular verbs unless they refer to more than one thing. Some indefinite pronouns, like "someone" or "everybody," can be tricky. They generally take singular verbs, even though they might seem plural.

Everyone is here for the meeting.

In this sentence, the subject is the indefinite pronoun "everyone." Even though "everyone" refers to a group of people, it is treated as singular and takes a singular verb. In this case, the singular verb "is" agrees with the subject "everyone." The sentence conveys that all the people expected for the meeting have arrived.

## Many have arrived for the concert.

In this example, the subject is the indefinite pronoun "many." Unlike "everyone," "many" refers to more than one thing or person and is considered plural. As a result, it takes a plural verb, "have," which agrees with the subject "many." The sentence conveys that multiple people have arrived for the concert.





## COMMON MISTAKES

Lack of agreement with a singular subject and a plural verb

- **Incorrect:** "The dog are barking loudly."  
(singular subject, plural verb)
- **Correct:** "The dog is barking loudly."  
(singular subject, singular verb)

Lack of agreement with a plural subject and a singular verb

- **Incorrect:** "The books needs to be returned."  
(plural subject, singular verb)
- **Correct:** "The books need to be returned."  
(plural subject, plural verb)

## Subject-Verb Agreement

### Agreement with collective nouns

- **Incorrect:** "The team are celebrating their victory." (collective noun, plural verb)
- **Correct:** "The team is celebrating its victory." (collective noun, singular verb)

### Agreement with indefinite pronouns

- **Incorrect:** "Someone have left their umbrella behind." (indefinite pronoun, plural verb)
- **Correct:** "Someone has left their umbrella behind." (indefinite pronoun, singular verb)

## Subject-Verb Agreement

### Agreement with compound subjects

- **Incorrect:** "Rahul and Ram is going to the party." (compound subject, singular verb)
- **Correct:** "Rahul and Ram are going to the party." (compound subject, plural verb)

### Agreement with phrases between the subject and verb

- **Incorrect:** "The book, along with the pen, was left on the table." (phrase between subject and verb affecting agreement)
- **Correct:** "The book, along with the pen, were left on the table." (phrase doesn't affect agreement)

# PRACTISE EXERCISE

Mentioned in The Video lesson

## Choose the correct verb

- The books (is/are) on the shelf.
- Each of the students (was/were) given a certificate.
- Neither the manager nor the employees (has/have) any idea about the issue.
- The committee (is/are) discussing the budget for the next year.

## ANSWERS

- The books are on the shelf.
- Each of the students was given a certificate.
- Neither the manager nor the employees have any idea about the issue.
- The committee is discussing the budget for the next year.