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Subject verb Agreement Rules

Definition: (Subject-verb Agreement Rules) In a sentence, the **verb must agree with the subject**. In other words, we can say that the **verb used is according to person and number**. This is called the subject-verb agreement. For example:

1. He comes. (If the *subject is singular* the verb must also be *singular*.)
2. They come. (If the *subject is plural* the verb must also be *plural*.)

(Check more examples, [Subject-verb agreement examples](#)).

We need to be familiar with *singular* and *plural* verbs.

Singular Verb	Plural Verb
Is	are
Has	have
Was	were
V1 + s/es (plays, goes etc.)	V1 (play, go etc.)

TOP 26 Subject-Verb Agreement Rules

To go **Subject-Verb agreement Rules** first you have to know the basic difference between **verb** and **noun**.

Noun + s/es = Plural noun (Noun become *plural* when *es/s* is added)

Verb + s/es = Singular Noun (verb becomes *singular* with *s/es* is added)

Rule 1

If **two subjects** are joined by '**and**', **plural verb** will be used.

Example: Ram **and** Shyam are coming.

Rule 2

If two or more than two **nouns are adjectives** are joined by '**and**' but **only person or thing or idea is discussed** singular verb will be used.

Examples:

1. My friend, philosopher and guide **have** come. (change '**have**' to '**has**') (no error)
2. Slow and steady **win** the race. (change '**win**' into '**wins**') (no error)
3. Fish and chips is my favourite dish. (no error)

If **two uncountable nouns** are joined by '**and**' and if **two different subjects** are discussed, **plural verb** will be used.

Example: Poverty **and** misery **come** together.

Rule 3

If the subject is joined by '**as well as**', '**with**', '**alongwith**', '**together with**', '**and not**', '**In addition to**', '**but**', '**besides**', '**except**', '**rather than**', '**accompanied by**', '**like**', '**unlike**', '**no less than**', '**nothing but**', the verb will agree with the **first subject**.

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Examples:

1. Ram, *as well as* his parents, *is* coming.
2. The captain *along with* the sailors *was* drowned.
3. My father, *unlike* my uncles, *is* very strict.

Rule 4

If an **article** is placed just **before the 1st subject**, it means the **person/think is the same** for which two nouns are used. Hence **singular verb will be used**.

Examples:

1. A white and black gown *was* bought by her.
2. Churchill was a great orator and a great politician of his time. (*wrong*)
Churchil was a great orator and politician of his time. (*right*)

*But if an article is used before every subject, it refers to **different people/things**.*

Hence **plural verb** will be used.

Example: *The director and the producer **have** come.*

Rule 5

If two subjects are joined by '*neither....nor*', '*either ... or*', '*not only*', ...'*but also*', '*nor*', '*or*', '*none-but*', the **verb** will **agree** with the **nearest subject**.

Examples:

1. *Neither* Ram *nor* Shyam **has** come.
2. *Either* Ram *or* his friends **have** come.
3. **Has** Ram *or* Shyam come?

Rule 6

'*Neither of*' means '**not either of the two things or people**'.

Neither of the judges of the division bench knew about the facts of the case. (*Correct*)

- '*None of*' means '**not one of the groups of things or people**'.
- 1. *Neither of* his *four* sons looked after him. (*incorrect*)
- 2. *None of* his *four* sons looked after him.
- '*Either of*' means '**one of the two things or people**'.

Examples:

1. *Either of* the *five* members is at fault. (*incorrect*)
2. *One of* the *five* members is at fault. (*correct*)
3. *Either of* the twins will be made the trustee. (*correct*)

Note: '**Not**' is **not** used with '**both**'. For this purpose '*neither of*' is used.

1. *Both of them did not take the exam.*
2. **Neither of** them took the exam.

Rule 7

Certain nouns are **plural in form but singular in meaning**. Hence they take **singular verb**.

Names	list
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Names of diseases	Measles, Mumps, Rickets, Shingles etc.
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Names	list
Names of games	Billiards, Darts, Draughts etc.
Names of Countries	The United States, The West Indies etc.
Names of books	The Arabian Nights, Three Musketeers etc.
Names of subjects	Physics, Economics, Civics, Statistics, Politics, Linguistics.

1. *Mathematics* is an interesting subject

2. *Politics* is not my cup of tea.

Note: If '*Statics*' means '*data*', *Mathematics* means '*Calculation*' and '*Politics*' means '*Political thought*', plural verb is used.

Example: Statics have revealed multiple scams in the organisation of the Commonwealth Games.

Rule 8

Usually, we **match the verb with the nearest subject** but this is wrong. **Match the verb with the main subject of the sentence.**

Examples:

1. The quality of apples is good.

2. He and not his parents is guilty.

3. The appeal of the victims for the transfer of the cases related to riots to some other states has been accepted.

Rule 9

Collective noun always takes **singular verb**.

Examples:

1. The herd of cows is grazing in the field.

2. The committee has unanimously taken its decision.

If there is a **division** among the members of the collective noun or we **talk about the members** of the collective noun, **plural verb and plural pronoun** are used.

1. The jury are divided in their opinion

2. The audience have taken their seats.

Rule 10

Plural number will always take **plural verb**.

Hundred boys are in my class.

Note: If *plural noun* is used *after cardinal adjectives* (*one, two, three, four* etc.) and if *plural noun* denotes certain *amount, weight, height or period*, *singular verb* will be used.

In other words we can say that **plural number** used as a **singular unit** will take **singular verb**.

Examples:

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1. Hundred rupees **is** in my pocket.
2. Ten miles **is** a long distance to cover on foot.

Five thousand rupees **is** a handsome amount

↓ ↓ ↓
Numeral **Plural** **Singular**
Adjective **Noun** **Verb**

Five thousands rupees **have** been spent on different useful commodities.

↓ ↓ ↓
Numeral **Plural** **Plural**
Adjective **Noun** **Verb**

Subject-verb Agreement Rules

Rule 11

If a **subject** and the **verb** are **joined by a relative pronoun**, the verb used will **agree with the antecedent to the relative pronoun**.

Examples:

1. She is one of the noblest women **that has** ever lived on this earth.
(That is a relative pronoun so here we use 'have' in place of 'has')
2. I am not one of those **who** will trust everyone whom **I meet**.
(who is a relative pronoun so here we use 'they meet' in place of 'i meet')

Note: Try to understand the meaning of the sentence in this type of questions.

Rule 12

Each, Every, Everyone, Someone, Somebody, Nobody, None, One, Any, Many a, More than one, are singular. Hence they will take **singular verb, singular noun, and singular pronoun**.

Examples:

1. **Each** student **has** come.
2. **Each** boy **each** girl **has** come.
3. **One** must tolerate **one's** friend as well as **his** enemy. (Use 'one's' in place of 'his')
4. **Many a** student have not done **their** homework. (Use 'his' in place of 'their')
5. **More than one** man **was** present there.

Note: *Many* is used in the following ways:

- *Many a man has come.*
- *Many men have come.*
- *A great /A good many men have come.*

Rule 13

If '**of**' is used after *each, every, one*, etc. The **noun or pronoun that comes immediately after 'of'** will be **plural** in form. However the *verb, pronoun, adjective*, etc. **That comes in the latter part of the sentence will be singular** in form.

Example: One of the boys/them has done his work.

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Rule 14

If 'each' is used **after Plural noun or plural pronoun, plural verb** is used.

We each **have** a duty towards our nation.

Rule 15

If Indefinite Pronoun 'One' comes as the subject of a sentence, it takes singular verb and singular pronoun 'one', 'one's', and 'oneself' and not 'he', 'him', 'his' or 'himself'. For example:

Examples:

- One should keep **his** promise. (**incorrect**)
- One should keep **one's** promise. (**correct**)

Rule 16

If a sentence states an **imaginary position**, it starts with *if, as if, as though, suppose, I wish, in case*, would that etc. In such sentences 'were' is used the verb irrespective of the number of the subject.

Examples:

1. I wish, I **were** bird.
2. If he **were** rich, he would help others.

Rule 17

An **optative Sentences**, singular subject takes plural verb.

Example: Long **live** the Queen.

('live' = plural verb, 'queen' = singular subject)

Rule 18

A number of / 'a large number of' / 'a great number of' is used with **plural countable noun**. Hence they will take **plural verb**.

Examples: A number of **students were** present. (**correct**)

Note: A number of **denotes the number of plural countable noun**. It will take singular verb.

- The number of **boys are** fifty. (**incorrect**)
- The number of **boys is** fifty. (**correct**)

Rule 19

With uncountable nouns we use 'Amount of / Quantity of' followed by a **singular verb**.

Examples:

- The **amount of money are** not sufficient. (**correct**)
- The **amount of money is** not sufficient. (**correct**)

Rule 20

'All' can be used in both *countable* and *uncountable* sense. When used as *uncountable*, it takes **singular verb** and when used as *countable*, it takes **plural verb**.

Examples:

1. All **is** well that **ends** well.
2. All **are** well at home.

Rule 21

Scenery, Poetry, Furniture, Advice, Information, Hair, Business, Mischief, Bread, Stationery, Crockery, Luggage, Baggage, Postage, Knowledge, Wastage, Jewelry, Breakage, Equipment, Evidence, Work (works means literary

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pieces), *News, Percentage, Dirt, Dust, Traffic, Electricity, Music, Confectionery, pottery, Bakery, Behaviour, Word* (When used in sense of discussion) Fuel and Cost are uncountable nouns and hence will take singular verb. These nouns will not take [article. 'A/An', 'many', 'few', 'number of', and 'plural form'](#).

Examples:

1. The **scenery** of Kashmir **has** enchanted us.
2. I passed the exam but the **percentage** of marks **was** not good.
3. The **mischievous** committed by him is unpardonable.
4. His **hair** is black.
5. I have some **equipment** that I needed for the project.

Such [nouns](#) have no plural form but sometimes we need the singular/plural form of some of these nouns. The singular/plural form is made by adding certain words before the uncountable nouns.

Examples:

1. He gave me **a piece of** information.
2. **All pieces of** information given by her **were** reliable.
3. **Many kinds of** furniture **are** available in that shop.
4. I want **a few articles of** jewellery.
5. He ate **two slices of** bread.
6. Please show me **some items of** office stationery.
7. The police have found **a strand of** hair in the car.

Note: Monies is the **plural for of money** which means **amounts of money**.

Monies have been collected and handed to the women's welfare society.

Rule 22

Certain nouns exist in **plural forms** only. Thus 's' cannot be removed from such nouns to make them singular. They take plural verb with them.

Scissors, tongs, pliers, bellows, trousers, pants, pajamas, shorts, Spectacles, goggles, binoculars, sunglasses, gallows, fangs, alms, amends, archives, arrears, auspices, congratulations, embers, fireworks, lodgings, outskirts, particulars, proceeds, regards, riches, remains, savings, shambles, surroundings, tidings, troops, tactics, thanks, valuables, wages, belongings, braces, etc.

Examples:

1. Where **are** my **pants**?
2. Where **are** the **tongs**?
3. The **proceeds** **were** deposited in the bank.
4. All his **assets** **were** seized.
5. **Alms** **were** given to the beggars.
6. The **embers** of the fire **were** still burning.

Note: Wages can be used in both singular & plural form. See the following sentences

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	Meaning	Form	Example
Wages	Labour	Plural	→ Wages are paid in cash.
	Result	Singular	→ Wages of hard work is sweet.

Subject-verb Agreement Rules

Rule 23

News, innings, politics, summons, physics, economics, ethics, mathematics, mumps, measles, rickets, shingles, billiards, athletics are certain nouns that are plural in form but singular in meaning. They **take singular verb**.

Examples:

1. No **news** **is** good news.
2. **Politics** **is** a dirty game.
3. **Economics** **is** an interesting subject.
4. **Ethics** demands honesty.

Rule 24

Cattle, cavalry, infantry, poultry, peasantry, children, gentry, police, and people are certain nouns are **singular in form** but plural in meaning. They take plural verb 's' is never used with these nouns.

Examples:

Cattle are grazing in the field.

Our infantry have marched forward.

Police have arrested the thieves.

Note: '*People*' means '*a number of men*' while '*peoples*' means '*people of different races*'

Example: *The greek peoples were brave (Here we are talking about only one race. Therefor the use of 'people' is wrong.)*

Rule 25

Deer, sheep, series, species, fish, crew, team, jury, aircraft, counsel, are certain nouns that are used in both singular and plural form. If they are used in a singular sense, they take a singular verb and if they are used in the plural sense, they take a plural verb.

Examples:

1. Our team **is** the best.
2. Our team **are** trying their new uniform.
3. There are two fish in the pond.
4. There are many fishes in the aquarium. (Here the word '**fishes**' refers to different species of fish.)

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Rule 26

S.N	Words	+ Noun/Pronoun	Verb
1.	No	+ U.N	Singular Verb
2.	No	+ S.C.N	Singular Verb
3.	One-third of / three-fourth of / The rest of / A quarter of / Part of / Ten percent of / Twenty percent of	+ U.N.	Singular Verb
4.	One-third of / three-fourth of / Part of / Ten percent of / Twenty percent of	+ P.C.N	Plural Verb
5.	Most of / Some / Some of / Half of / Enough / Enough of / Not enough of / Plenty of / A lot of / Lots of	+ P.C.N	Singular Verb
6.	Most of / Some / Some of / Half of / Enough / Enough of / Not enough of / Plenty of / A lot of / Lots of	+ U.N.	Plural Verb
7.	The percentage of	+ U.N./P.C.N	Singular Verb
8.	More than one	+ S.C.N	Singular Verb
9.	More than two/three etc.	+ P.C.N	Plural Verb
10.	More	+ P.C.N. + Than one	Plural Verb

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The following sentences show how the rules given in the table are followed:

1. No air is present on Mars.
2. No students was interesting in taking the exam.
3. One-third of the word has been finished.
4. One-third of the students have passed.
5. Ninety percent of the work is done.
6. Most of the knowledge is gained by experience.
7. Most of the girls are absent today.
8. Ninety percent of the students have passed the exam with good marks.
9. Half of the candidates have passed with flying colours.
10. Some of the students have no taken the exam
11. The percentage of successful candidates is less.
12. More than one city was ruined.
13. More cities than one were in ruins.
14. More than two thieves have been caught.
15. More plans than one were made.

