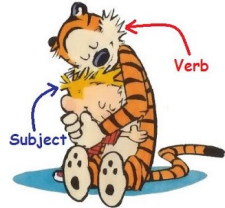


## SUBJECT-VERB AGREEMENT



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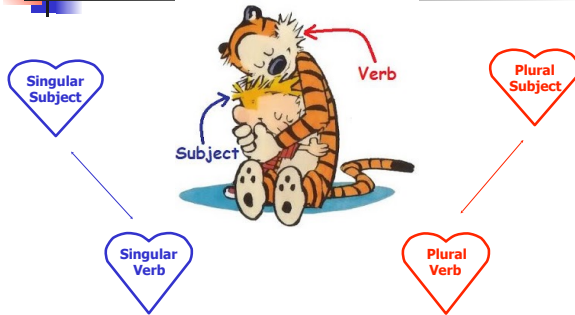
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## EVERY VERB MUST AGREE WITH ITS SUBJECT



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## The Stupidity of English Grammar

- To make a noun plural, we add **-s**
  - Singular: girl
  - Plural: girl**s**
- To make a verb plural, we **take away** the **-s**.
  - Singular: he talk**s**
  - Plural: they talk

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## Watch the Verb Endings!

### Singular

- I walk
- You walk
- He/She/It walk **S**
  - Joe walk **S**
  - The girl walk **S**

### Plural

- We walk
- You walk
- They walk
  - Joe and Maria walk
  - The girls walk

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## Remember the 3 irregular verbs:

### DO

- |                  |   |               |
|------------------|---|---------------|
| <u>Singular</u>  |   | <u>Plural</u> |
| ▪ He <u>does</u> | ↖ | They do       |

### HAVE

- |                  |   |           |
|------------------|---|-----------|
| ▪ She <u>has</u> | ↖ | They have |
|------------------|---|-----------|

### BE

- |                  |   |           |
|------------------|---|-----------|
| ▪ He <u>is</u>   | ↖ | They are  |
| ▪ She <u>was</u> | ↖ | They were |



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## Tip for Subject/verb Agreement

Generally, if the subject doesn't end in -S, the verb will.

If the subject does end in -S, the verb won't.

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The girl dances.

No -S on subject

-S on verb

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The girls dance.

-S on subject

No -S on verb

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### Compound subjects joined by "and"

- If there are two or more subjects joined by **and**, the subject must be plural, so the verb will not get an "s".

Example

- The boy and the girl dance.  
(= They dance.)

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## Compound subjects joined by “or”

If there are two or more subjects joined by **or**, the verb agrees with the part of the subject closest to it.

Examples:

- The professor or the students **walk** the halls.
- The students or the professor **walks** the halls.



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## Watch out for “Everybody”

- Everybody **loves** grammar!
- Everybody **understands** subject/verb agreement.

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## Possible Pitfalls

Sometimes, several words come between the subject and the verb.

- The student, though she had lots of problems in other schools, **finds/find (?)** her new class easy.
  - The **student, though she had lots of problems in other schools,** **finds** her new class easy.
  - The **student** **finds** her new class easy.

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## Prepositional phrases

The subject can **never** be part of a **prepositional phrase**.

### Example

The students **in my class** study / ~~s~~die hard.



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## Possible Pitfalls

Sometimes, the subject will come **after** the verb, in questions or when sentence begins with **there**.

### Examples

- Why **is he** falling asleep?
- Why **are they** falling asleep?
- There **is no excuse** for such behavior.
- There **are no excuses** for such behavior.

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## Possible Pitfalls

Relative Pronouns (who/which/that) can be either singular or plural, depending on the word they refer to.

- The **student who works** hard will succeed.
  - The **students who work** hard will succeed.
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## How do I get this right?

- First, identify whether or not you have problems with subject/verb agreement.
- If you don't have any problems with this, don't worry about it!
- If you do have problems
  - Identify the verb. Ask who or what is doing it.
  - This will identify the subject.
  - Say them together and make sure that they match in terms of number.

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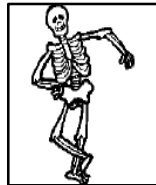
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The subject and verb are the skeleton of every sentence. Make sure you fit those two important parts together correctly!



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