

Subject-Verb Agreement

- A noun and a verb have to "agree" in number; that is, a singular noun takes a singular verb; plural nouns take plural verbs. Remember, a singular verb often ends with an *s*.

Example: Jim (singular noun) leaves (singular verb) early on Friday.

Example: Jim and Sue (plural nouns) leave (plural verb) early on Friday.

- The number of the subject (singular or plural) is not changed by words that come between the subject and the verb.

Example: Mary, one of my best students, is earning an "A" in this course.

- The following words are always singular: *each, either, neither, one, no one, anyone, everyone, someone, anybody, nobody, somebody, and everybody*.

Example: Neither of the men is (singular) working.

- The following words may be singular or plural, depending upon their meaning in the sentence: *some, any, all, and most*.

Example: Most of the cake was eaten by the guests.

- Subjects (nouns) joined by *and* are plural. Subjects (nouns) joined by *or* or *nor* take a verb that agrees with the last subject.

Example: Bob and George are leaving. Neither Bob nor George is leaving.

- *There* and *here* are never considered subjects. In sentences that begin with these words, the subject is usually found after the verb.

Example: There were five books (subject) on the shelf.

- Nouns that represent a group of people, places, or things may be singular or plural, depending upon their use in the sentence; however, they are generally singular.

Example: The orchestra is playing a difficult composition.

- Expressions of time, money, measurement, and weight are singular when the amount is considered as one unit.

Example: Five dollars (one amount) is too much to pay for one ticket.

- Some nouns, while plural in form, are actually singular in meaning.

Example: Mathematics is an easy subject for her.

Example: The United States was represented at the conference.