

Making Subjects And Verbs Agree 1

Subject-verb agreement with pronouns

Pay attention to present tenses, especially when combined with third-person singular pronouns *he*, *she*, or *it*.

Example: I love political debates, but not Shaniqua. She loves calm discussion.

Subject-verb agreement with *do* and *be*

Use *does*, *is*, and *was* with third-person singular pronouns *he*, *she*, and *it* and singular nouns.

Example 1: She does enjoy skiing although she is not very experienced.

Example 2: When he was younger, Ron was a member of the debate team.

Subject-verb agreement with hard-to-find subjects

Subjects are not found in prepositional or appositive phrases. Subjects can be found after the verb in sentences beginning with *here* or *there* and in questions.

Example: There are several things to discuss with Ainsley, president of the veteran's group.

Subject-verb agreement with group nouns

A group noun such as *audience*, *crowd*, or *team* takes a singular verb if the noun acts as a unit; it takes a plural verb if the members of the group act independently.

Example 1: My family is Australian.

Example 2: The association are voting on the important proposal tomorrow.

Making Subjects and Verbs Agree 2

Subject-verb agreement with indefinite pronouns

Indefinite pronouns ending in *-one*, *-thing*, or *-body* take a singular verb.

Example 1: Somebody has taken my favorite pen.

Example 2: Does anyone know who it was?

Indefinite pronouns *both*, *few*, *many* and *several* take a plural verb.

Example 1: Many of my childhood friends have children of their own.

Example 2: Few of us are listening to the infomercial.

Indefinite pronouns *any*, *all*, *more*, *most*, *none*, and *some* take either a singular or a plural verb depending on the meaning of the sentence.

Example 1: The apples have some soft spots. Most need to be thrown out.

Example 2: The salt is damp. Most is unusable.

Subject-verb agreement with compound subjects

Use a plural verb with compound subjects joined by *and* unless the two subjects compose a single unit.

Example 1: The turnip greens and kale are in the refrigerator.

Example 2: The mortar and pestle is made of black marble.

Use either a singular or a plural verb with compound subjects joined by *or*, *nor*, *either*, *either/or*, *neither*, *neither/nor*, *not only/but also*—the verb should agree with the subject closest to it.

Example 1: Neither the magazines in the living room nor this magazine on the table contains the article I am looking for.

Example 2: John or the Robinsons are planning to drive us home.