



SUBJECT-VERB AGREEMENT

What Is Subject-Verb Agreement?

Subject-verb agreement means that the subject and the verb in a sentence must match. If the subject is singular, the verb should be singular. If the subject is plural, the verb should be plural.

Correct agreement helps your sentences sound natural and clear.

Basic Rule

Singular subject → singular verb

Plural subject → plural verb

Examples:

Correct (singular): The student studies every day.

Correct (plural): The students study every day.

Why Is Subject-Verb Agreement Important?

Correct subject-verb agreement makes your writing easier to understand. Errors can confuse your reader and make your writing feel less polished.

Singular vs. Plural Subjects

Singular subjects refer to one person, place, or thing.

Examples: student, teacher, class

Plural subjects refer to more than one.

Examples: students, teachers, classes

Common Subject-Verb Agreement Errors

Singular Subject with Plural Verb

Incorrect: The student study every night.

Correct: The student studies every night.

Plural Subject with Singular Verb

Incorrect: The students studies every night.

Correct: The students study every night.

Words Between Subject and Verb:

Incorrect: The group of students are working.

Correct: The group of students is working.

Subjects That May Be Confusing

Some subjects can be tricky. The examples below show common patterns that may confuse writers.

Everyone, Someone, Anyone

These words are singular, even though they refer to many people.

Examples:

Everyone has an opinion.

Someone needs help.

Subjects Joined by “and”

When two subjects are joined by “and,” the subject is usually plural.

Example:

Students and teachers work together.

Subjects Joined by “or” or “nor”

The verb should match the subject closest to it (the second subject).

Examples:

Either the student or the instructors are responsible.

Either the instructors or the student is responsible.

Collective Nouns

Words like “team,” “group,” and “class” are usually treated as singular because they refer to one group or unit.

Example:

The class is learning new material.

Prepositional Phrases

Sometimes extra information comes between the subject and the verb. This can make agreement confusing.

Example:

The group of students is studying.

The subject is "group," not "students," so the verb is singular.

Tips for Correct Agreement

- Identify the subject first
- Decide if the subject is singular or plural
- Match the verb to the subject, not to other words in the sentence
- Watch for words like everyone, each, and someone

Common Mistakes to Avoid

Ignoring the Real Subject:

Example: The list of items are on the desk.

Correct: The list of items is on the desk.

Confusing Plural Nouns:

Example: The news are important.

Correct: The news is important.

Using the Wrong Verb Form:

Example: She go to class every day.

Correct: She goes to class every day.

Final Takeaway

When you are unsure, try simplifying the sentence. Find the subject and check if the verb matches it. Clear subject-verb agreement will make your writing smoother and more professional.