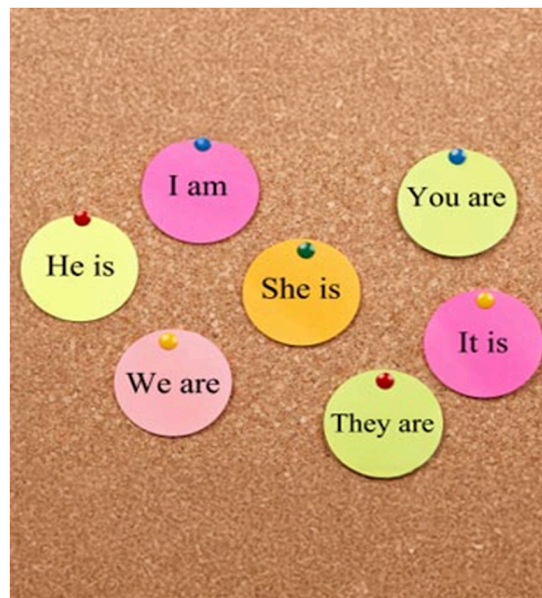


English Grammar

STUDY NOTES

Subject Verb Agreement (II)



11. NOUNS PLURAL IN FORM BUT SINGULAR IN MEANING

Some nouns that seem to be in plural form but singular in meaning always take a singular verb. These include various branches of learning, names of diseases, books, country, distance, or any specific quantity (considered as whole).

Examples:

Mathematics **is** an interesting subject. (Subject)

The Arabian Nights **is** a famous book. (Novel)

The United States **has** signed a treaty. (Country)

Five hundred kilometres **is** a long distance. (Distance)

Forty kilograms **is** a heavy weight. (Quantity)

12. A PAIR OF

It refers to two things that are usually seen or used together (like shoes, scissors, pants, etc.). When "a pair of" is used, it makes the subject singular, even though it may seem plural because it involves two items. Therefore, a singular verb should follow.

Examples:

i) A pair of shoes **is** in the closet.

Explanation: Even though "shoes" is plural, "a pair of" makes it singular, so the verb "is" is singular.

ii) A pair of scissors **is** mine.

Explanation: "Scissors" is plural but "a pair of" is added before it that makes it singular so the verb "is" is used.

13. COLLECTIVE NOUNS

Collective nouns refer to a group of individuals or things considered as a single unit, such as "team," "family," "jury," "audience," "committee," or "crowd."

Case I: It will take a singular verb when considered as a whole, or when all members are collectively performing an action as a unit.

Examples:

The jury **delivers** its decision.

The family **is** going on vacation next week.

Explanation: In both examples, the subject is doing action as a whole.

Case II: It will take a plural verb when we don't think of a group as a whole but its members are individually doing their own actions.

Examples:

i) The band **are** tuning their instruments.

Explanation: The individual members of "the band" are doing different actions (tuning their instruments), so the plural verb "are" is used.

ii) The audience **are** taking their seats.

Explanation: Each person in the "audience" is acting separately, so the plural verb "are" fits.

14. RELATIVE PRONOUNS AS SUBJECTS

Relative pronouns (such as *who*, *which*, and *that*) can act as subjects in clauses. When the subject of a verb is a relative pronoun, the verb agrees with the noun or pronoun that the relative pronoun refers to.

Key meaning:

Who: refers to people

Which: refers to things

That: refers to people or things

Examples:

i) She is the one **who works** late every night.

Explanation: "Who" refers to "one" (singular), so the verb "works" is singular.

ii) They are the students **who study** hard every day.

Explanation: "Who" refers to "students" (plural), so the verb "study" is plural.

iii) This is the book **that describes** the incident.

Explanation: "That" refers to "book" (singular), so the verb "describes" is singular.

15. PERSONAL PRONOUNS AS SUBJECTS

When "**who**" is used in a sentence, the verb must match the number (singular or plural) and person (first, second, or third) of the antecedent it refers to.

Explanation of the rule:

1. **Identify the Antecedent:** The word **"who"** refers back to a noun or pronoun (the antecedent) that indicates who or what is being discussed.
2. **Determine the Pronoun's Number and Person:** Look at the antecedent to determine if it's singular or plural, and its person (first, second, or third).
3. **Choose the Correct Verb Form:** Use the verb form that agrees with the subject (the antecedent) that **"who"** refers to.

Examples

Singular Antecedent

- **Example 1:** "The teacher **who** is grading the papers **is** very strict."
 - **Explanation:** Here, "who" refers to "the teacher," which is singular. The verb "is" agrees with the singular subject.
- **Example 2:** "She is the one **who** will present at the conference."
 - **Explanation:** "Who" refers to "she," which is singular, so the verb "will" agrees with the singular subject.

Plural Antecedent

- **Example 3:** "The students **who** are studying hard **are** likely to succeed."
 - **Explanation:** "Who" refers to "the students," which is plural. The verb "are" agrees with the plural subject.
- **Example 4:** "They are the ones **who** always help with the project."
 - **Explanation:** "Who" refers to "they," which is plural, so the verb "help" agrees with the plural subject.

16. USE OF 'IT'

When a sentence begins with "It," the **verb** is placed according to the **subject** that follows the verb in the sentence. This is common in sentences where "it" serves as a dummy subject for what comes later. The verb agrees with the real subject of the sentence.

Examples:

1. **It is the books that taught him real manners.**
 - "It" is the dummy subject, and "the books" is the real subject. The verb "is" agrees with the singular form of "it," but the action (taught) relates to "the books."
2. **It was the children who caused the commotion.**

- "It" is a placeholder. "The children" is the real subject, but the verb "was" agrees with "it." The verb "caused" relates to "the children."

17. MORE THAN ONE

"More than one" is treated as **singular**, even though it seems to refer to multiple items. Therefore, it is followed by a **singular noun** and a **singular verb**. This is because "more than one" emphasises the individuality of each item, despite indicating a quantity greater than one.

Examples:

1. **More than one student is absent today.**
 - Even though more than one student is absent, "more than one" takes the **singular noun** "student" and the **singular verb** "is."
2. **More than one book was found in the library.**
 - "More than one" is followed by the singular noun "book" and the singular verb "was."
3. **More than one person has agreed to the proposal.**
 - Despite referring to multiple people, the noun "person" remains **singular**, and the verb "has" (**singular**) is used.

In all of these cases, "more than one" is treated grammatically as singular, so it requires a singular noun and verb, even though the meaning involves more than one entity.



LET'S PRACTICE

Tick the correct option in the following.

1. The dogs (run/runs) around the park every evening.

Answer: run

Explanation: "Dogs" is a plural subject, so the verb should be in its base form without an 's.' Therefore, "run" is correct.

2. The bouquet of flowers (smell/smells) wonderful.

Answer: smells

Explanation: The subject "bouquet" is singular, even though it refers to multiple flowers, so the singular verb "smells" is correct.

3. Each of the students (has/have) completed the assignment.

Answer: has

Explanation: "Each" is always singular, so the verb must also be singular. Thus, "has" is correct.

4. There (is/are) several problems with the plan.

Answer: are

Explanation: The subject "problems" is plural, so the verb "are" is the correct choice.

5. A lot of time (has/have) been wasted on this issue.

Answer: has

Explanation: When "a lot of" refers to an uncountable noun like "time," the verb is singular, so "has" is correct.

Choose the current answer. (Do yourself)

1. The captain, as well as the players, (was/were) late for the game.

2. Fifteen minutes (is/are) enough to finish the task.

3. The team (is/are) arguing among themselves.

4. The news (was/were) very surprising.

5. Mathematics (is/are) my favourite subject.

6. The members of the committee (was/were) divided on the issue.

7. The pair of shoes (is/are) expensive.

8. Either my mother or my brothers (is/are) going to the store.

9. Neither of the boys (has/have) completed the homework.

10. The flock of birds (fly/flies) south for the winter.
