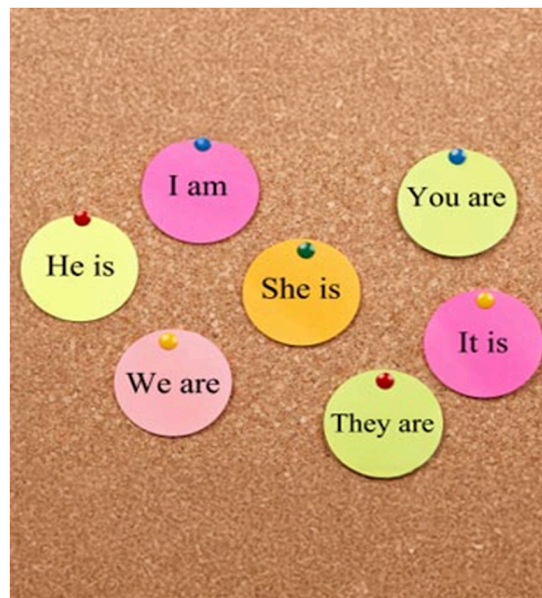


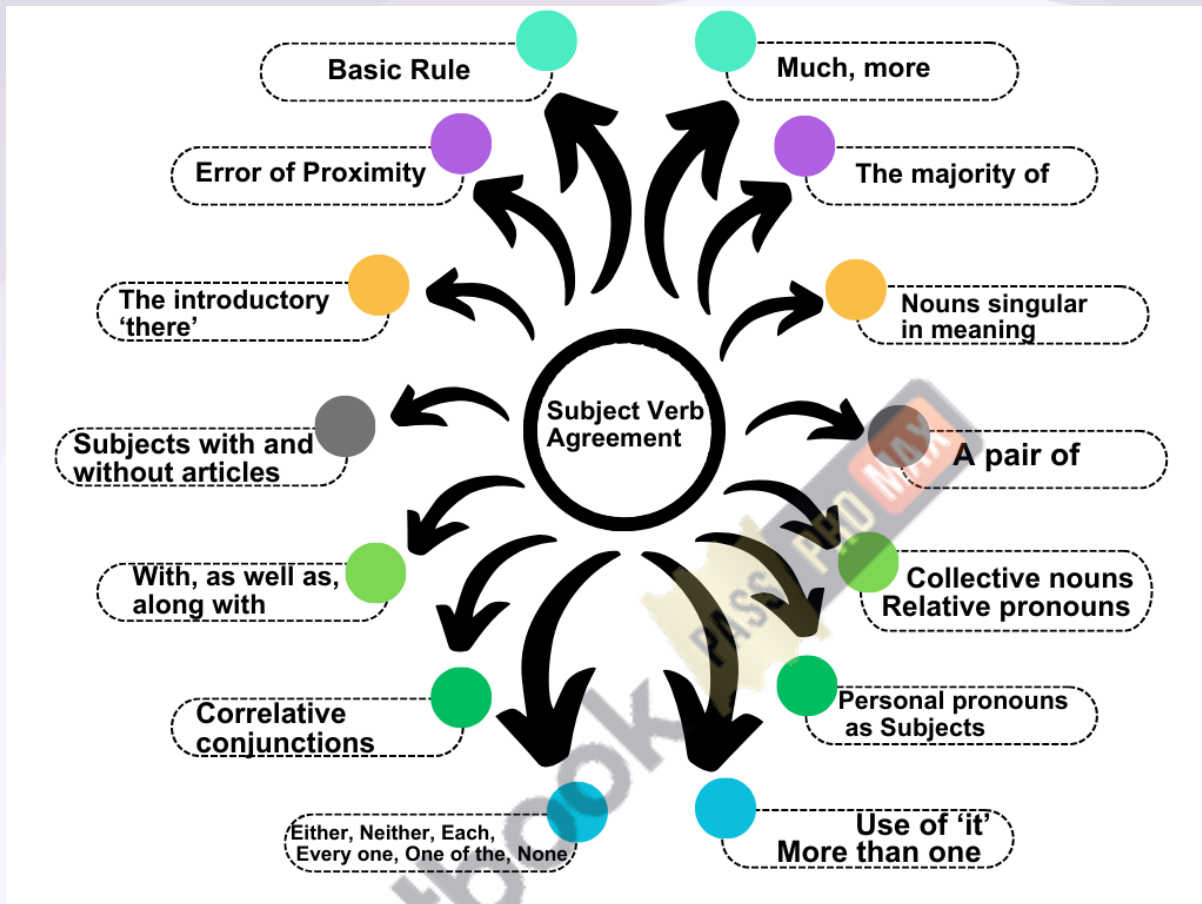
English Grammar

STUDY NOTES

Subject Verb Agreement (I)



WHAT WILL WE STUDY?



Subject-Verb Agreement refers to the grammatical rule that the subject of a sentence must agree in number (singular or plural) with its verb.

1. BASIC RULE

- **Singular subjects take singular verbs:**

Examples:

The girl **is** playing.

He **is** a good boy.

Explanation: Here 'girl' and 'he' are singular subjects, so 'is' (singular verb) is used after the subject.

- **Plural subjects take plural verbs:**

Examples:

The girls **are** playing.

They **are** good boys.

Explanation: Here 'girls' and 'they' are singular subjects, so 'are' (plural verb) is used after the subject.

2. ERROR OF PROXIMITY

The **error of proximity** happens when a verb mistakenly agrees with a noun or pronoun that is nearer to it instead of agreeing with the actual subject of the sentence. This often leads to confusion about which noun the verb should match in number.

Examples:

Incorrect:

The bouquet of roses were beautiful.

Explanation: Here, "bouquet" is the subject, not "roses." The verb should agree with "bouquet," which is singular.

Correct:

The bouquet of roses was beautiful.

Explanation: In this case, "bouquet" is singular, so the verb should be "was," not "were," despite "roses" being plural.

Incorrect:

The team of players are practicing for the game.

Explanation: In this sentence, "team" is the subject, not "players." The verb should agree with "team," which is singular, even though "players" (which is closer to the verb) is plural.

Correct:

The team of players is practicing for the game.

Explanation: "Team" is singular, so the correct verb is "is" not "are." The error occurs when the verb mistakenly agrees with the closer noun, "players," instead of the actual subject, "team."

In these examples, the rule focuses on how **prepositional phrases** affect subject-verb agreement. A **prepositional phrase** begins with a preposition (like "of," "in," "with," etc.) and includes a noun or pronoun that serves as the object of the preposition. Importantly, the noun in the prepositional phrase does not affect the verb's agreement with the main subject of the sentence.

Here's how it works: Identifying the Subject and Ignoring Prepositional Phrases:

The actual **subject** of the sentence is what determines the **verb** form, not the noun

within the prepositional phrase. Often, prepositional phrases can create confusion, especially when they contain plural nouns close to the verb. However, they are just modifiers that provide additional details about the subject, so they don't affect the verb's agreement.

3. THE INTRODUCTORY 'THERE'

The introductory **"there"** refers to sentences that begin with the word "there" followed by a form of the verb **"to be"** (such as "is," "are," "was," "were"). The word **"there"** is used as an expletive (filler word) and does not function as the subject of the sentence. Instead, the **subject** comes after the **verb**, and the **verb** must agree with this **subject** in number (singular or plural).

Examples:

Incorrect: There were a cat in the garden.

Correct: There was a cat in the garden.

Explanation: The subject is "a cat" (singular), so the verb must be "was" (singular).

Incorrect: There is two books on the table.

Correct: There are two books on the table.

Explanation: The subject is "two books" (plural), so the verb must be "are" (plural).

4. SUBJECTS WITH ARTICLES

"And" is a coordinating conjunction used to connect two or more subjects. In the case of **compound subjects** (subjects joined by "and") where each subject is preceded by an **article** (like "a," "an," or "the"), the verb used must be **plural** because the sentence is referring to two distinct individuals or things.

Examples:

- The cat and the dog **are** playing in the yard.

Explanation: "The cat" and "the dog" are two different animals, each with its own article "the." Therefore, the verb "are" is plural, indicating multiple subjects.

- A doctor and a nurse **work** in the clinic.

Explanation: "A doctor" and "a nurse" are two different individuals, each preceded by the article "a." The verb "work" is plural because it refers to both of them.

Why are articles important?

The presence of **articles** before each **subject** helps clarify that the subjects are separate entities. Without the articles, the meaning could change, and the verb might not necessarily be plural.

Without Articles (Different Rule)

- **Example:** "The CEO and founder **is** giving a speech."
 - **Explanation:** Here, "The CEO and founder" is one person with two titles, not two different people. Since it's the same person, the verb "**is**" is singular.

Exceptions:

- **Compound subjects with a singular noun and a plural noun:**

Example: The cat **and** the mice **are** hiding.

Explanation: The singular "cat" and the plural "mice" are joined by "and," so the plural verb "are" is used.
- **When "and" connects singular nouns that refer to a single idea:**

Example: Peanut butter **and** jelly **is** my favourite sandwich.

Explanation: Here, "peanut butter and jelly" refers to one sandwich, so the singular verb "is" is used.
- **Collective nouns:**

Example: The team **and** the coach **are** celebrating their victory.

Explanation: "The team" is a collective noun, but since "the coach" is added with "and," the plural verb "are" is used.

5. SUBJECTS WITHOUT ARTICLES

When we talk about **two qualities, roles, or attributes** of the **same person** or thing. In such cases, we avoid repeating the article because we're referring to one person who possesses both qualities or performs both roles. As a result, the verb remains **singular** since the subject is singular.

Examples

- She is **the** CEO and founder of the company.
 - **Explanation:** The person being described is both the CEO and the founder, but it's **one person**. The article "the" is used only once, and the verb "is" is singular to reflect that there is one subject.
- He is **a** talented singer and dancer.
 - **Explanation:** "He" is both a singer and a dancer, but these are qualities of **one individual**. The article "a" is not repeated, and the verb "is" remains singular.
- John is **the** team leader and project manager.
 - **Explanation:** John has two roles, but he is still **one person**. The article "the" is not repeated, and the verb "is" is singular to reflect the singular subject.

Why Avoid Repeating the Article?

- Repeating the article suggests that we are talking about two different people or things, not one person with two roles or qualities.
 - **Example:** "He is **the** teacher and **the** principal." (This would imply two different individuals, not one person. Hence, this sentence is incorrect)

6. AGREEMENT WITH CONJUNCTIONS/PREPOSITIONS

- When the subject consists of two nouns or pronouns joined with the following list of words, the **verb** agrees with the **main** (first) **subject**.

As well as
Like
Unlike
Besides
In addition to
With
Together with
Along with
Including
Accompanied by
But

Examples:

i) The teachers, **with** her students, **are** going on a trip.

Explanation: "The teachers" is the main subject (plural), so the plural verb "are" is used, regardless of the plural subject "students" that follows "with."

ii) The cat, **as well as** the dogs, **is** sleeping.

Explanation: "The cat" is the main subject (singular), so the singular verb "is" is used, even though "the dogs" is plural.

iii) The president, **along with** his advisors, **was** at the meeting.

Explanation: "The president" is the main subject (singular), so the singular verb "was" is used, regardless of the plural "his advisors."

7. CORRELATIVE CONJUNCTIONS

Correlative conjunctions are **pairs** of conjunctions that work together to connect equal elements in a sentence. These elements can be words, phrases, or clauses that have the same grammatical structure. The key point with correlative conjunctions is that both parts of the pair must be used in the sentence for it to make sense.

Common correlative conjunctions include:

- **Either...or**
- **Neither...nor**
- **Not only...but also**
- **Both..... and**

- **Either.....or, neither..... nor**

"Either... or" and "neither... nor" are both used in subject-verb agreement to connect two or more subjects. Here the choice of **verb** depends on the **subject** that is **closer** to the **verb**.

Examples:

i) **Either** the cat **or** the dogs **are** playing outside.

Explanation: The closer subject, "dogs," is plural, so the verb "are" is also plural.

ii) **Either** the dogs **or** the cat **is** playing outside.

Explanation: Here, the closer subject, "cat," is singular, so the verb "is" is singular.

iii) **Neither** the cat **nor** the dogs **are** outside.

Explanation: The closer subject, "dogs," is plural, so the verb "are" is also plural.

iv) **Neither** the dogs **nor** the cat **is** outside.

Explanation: In this case, the closer subject, "cat," is singular, so the verb "is" is singular.

- **Not only... but also**

This construction emphasises two subjects or ideas. When subjects are connected by "not only...but also," the **verb** agrees with the **subject** that is **closest** to it (the second subject).

Examples:

i) **Not only** the manager **but also** the employees **are** responsible for the project.

Explanation: "Employees" is the closest subject and is plural, so the plural verb "are" is used.

ii) **Not only** the employees **but also** the manager **is** responsible for the project.

Explanation: Here, "manager" is the closest subject and is singular, so the singular verb "is" is used.

- **Both.... and**

The correlative conjunction "**both...and**" is used to connect two ideas or elements that are equally important or of the same kind. It emphasises that two things are true or relevant at the same time.

Examples:

1. **Both** the movie **and** the book were entertaining.
 - (This means that *both* the movie and the book were enjoyable.)
2. She is **both** intelligent **and** hard-working.
 - (This highlights that she possesses *both* intelligence and a strong work ethic.)
3. **Both** my brother **and** my sister are coming to the party.

- (Here, it emphasizes that *both* the brother and the sister will attend.)
- 4. He enjoys **both** reading **and** writing.
 - (This implies that he likes *both* activities.)

In each case, "both...and" connects two related elements, ensuring that they are given equal importance.

8. EITHER, NEITHER, EACH, EVERYONE, ONE OF THE, NONE

i) **Either:** It refers to one of two options and always takes a **singular verb**.

Examples:

Either of the two dogs **is** in the yard.

Either of the two candidates **is** fit for this job.

ii) **Neither:** It refers to none of the options and always takes a **singular verb**.

Examples:

Neither of the teachers **was** present at the meeting.

Neither of the players **was** exhausted after the match.

iii) **Each or Everyone:** It refers to individual items in a group, focusing on them separately, and always takes a **singular verb**.

Examples:

Each of the girls **was** in the class.

Everyone **has** completed the assignment.

iv) **One of the:** It refers to a single member of a group and takes a **singular verb** when followed by a singular noun.

Example:

One of the players **is** injured.

One of the children **is** sure to be selected.

v) **None:** It refers to not one or not any and can take either a **singular or plural verb** depending on context.

a) **Singular verb:** When it refers to the **uncountable subject**.

Example:

None of the information **is** accurate.

None of the food **was** wasted.

Explanation: Here, 'information' and 'food' are uncountable nouns, so we use **singular verbs** in this case.

- b) **Singular and plural verb:** When "None" is used with countable noun, it agrees with both singular and plural verb.

None of the actors **are** ready for the shoot. (Correct)

None of the actors **is** ready for the shoot. (Correct)

9. MUCH, MORE

i) Much

- Much is used with **uncountable nouns** (which are treated as singular).
- When "much" is the **subject** of a sentence, it usually takes a **singular verb** because uncountable nouns are considered singular.

Examples:

Much of the water **is** contaminated.

Much of the work **remains** to be done.

ii) More

- More can be used with both **countable** and **uncountable nouns**. The **verb** form (singular or plural) depends on the type of noun it modifies.

- a) When "more" refers to **uncountable nouns**, it takes a **singular verb**:

Examples:

More money **is** needed for the project.

Explanation: "Money" is uncountable, so "is" (singular verb) is correct.

More information **was** useful.

Explanation: "Information" is uncountable, so the singular verb "was" is used.

- b) When "more" refers to countable nouns, it takes a **plural verb**:

Examples:

More students **are** joining the class.

Explanation: "Students" is countable and plural, so "are" (plural verb) is used.

More books **have** been added to the library.

Explanation: "Books" is countable and plural, so the verb "have" is plural.

10. THE MAJORITY OF

It can be used only for numbers and takes a **plural verb**.

Examples:

The majority of children **like** ice cream.

The majority of books **are** there.

