Subject-Verb Agreement

Study Guide

**A subject must agree with its verb in NUMBER - singular or plural**

1. Most subjects are nouns and nouns are singular or plural.
   a. singular nouns do NOT end in -s (box, custom, mouse)
   b. most plural nouns END in -s (boxes, customs, mice)

2. Verbs are also singular or plural.
   a. singular verbs END in -s (is, counts, has)
   b. plural verbs DO NOT end in -s (are, count, have)

A SINGULAR SUBJECT BELONGS WITH A SINGULAR VERB - Box is Mouse has Custom counts

A PLURAL SUBJECT BELONGS WITH A PLURAL VERB - Boxes are Mice have Customs count

**A prepositional phrase that comes between the subject and the verb does not affect the subject-verb agreement.**

   Ex. The *cheers* (of the crowd) *were heard* a mile away. prep. ph.

**Verb agreement with a compound subject**

   Subject (or, nor) subject + verb = the verb must agree with the subject which is closer to it

   Ex. Either the *turkey* or the *stuffing* is cooking. (turkey or stuffing - since OR is used to join the two subjects, stuffing is the closer to IS, so IS would be your correct answer)

   Ex. Neither the *lights* nor the *wreath* is in the box. (lights and wreath are joined by OR - wreath is closer to the verb IS, and wreath is singular, so the verb IS would be correct since it is also singular)
Subject (and) subject + verb = plural verb

Ex. The **boy** and the **girl** are waiting for their ride.

**EXCEPTIONS TO THE RULE!!**
1. Bacon and eggs **IS** a popular breakfast. (Bacon and eggs is one dish)
2. Every town and village **CELEBRATES** the new year.

**Sentences with unusual order:**

There were several books on the shelf. – Several books were on the shelf.
Here are the keys to your car. – The keys to your car are here.

**Pronoun Antecedent Agreement**

Pronouns and their antecedents (the noun, pronoun, or group of words which replaces the noun) must agree in:

1. **Person**
   
   | 1st | 2nd | 3rd |

*Incorrect: Stephanie learned French. This is the language **YOU** need to know when **YOU** go to Paris.

*Correct: Stephanie learned French. This is the language **SHE** needs to know when **SHE** goes to Paris.

2. **Gender**

   | Masculine | Feminine |

   |  |  |

*Incorrect: Rebecca will drive HIS own car to the movies.
*Correct: Rebecca will drive HER own car to the movies.

3. Number    Singular             Plural

*Incorrect: Either Becca or Megan will take THEIR backpack.
*Correct: Either Becca or Megan will take HER backpack.

Agreement with personal and indefinite pronouns:
(refer to the list on the study guide)

**Same rules apply – personal pronouns must agree with other personal pronouns

EX. SHE lost HER backpack.
(both are singular)

- indefinite pronouns must agree with person pronouns.

EX. EVERYONE in the group expressed HIS OR HER opinion.
(both are singular)

EX. SOME of the students are ready for THEIR homework.
(both are plural)