

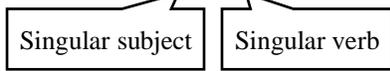


Writing Centre

Subject-Verb Agreement

The Basic Rule: Singular subjects have singular verbs and plural subjects have plural verbs.

Example 1: Jason walks to the store.



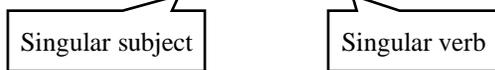
Example 2: The brothers walk to the store.



Other Examples:

1. When connecting nouns with “of”, the noun before “of” is the subject:

Example 1: The bag of groceries is on the table.



Example 2: The bags of groceries are on the table.



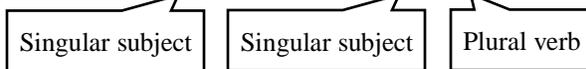
Exception: When using expressions that indicate portions (“some of”, “half of”, etc.), the verb matches the noun after “of”.

Example 1: Most of the people want to go home.

Example 2: Some of the cake is gone.

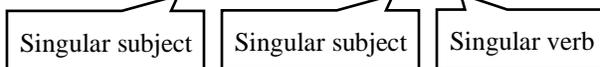
2. Two subjects joined by “and” have a plural verb:

Example: The motorcycle and the car race down the road.

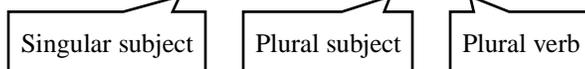


3. When including multiple subjects connected with “or” or “nor”, the verb matches the closest subject:

Example 1: The mother or the father makes supper each day.



Example 2: Neither the mother nor her children want to take out the garbage.



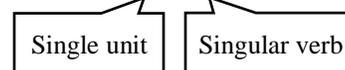
Note: If the sentence feels awkward, consider reordering your subjects or rephrasing the sentence.

4. Sometimes multiple items make up a single unit and thus use a singular verb. This is common with periods of time, amounts of money, and measures of distance:

Example 1: Forty-five minutes is a long wait.



Example 2: Ten dollars is a fair price.



5. With “here” or “there”, the verb matches the noun after the verb.

Example 1: There are the documents.



Example 2: Here is a pencil.

