

SUBJECT / VERB AGREEMENT

<p>SUBJECTS and VERBS must AGREE with one another in number (singular or plural). Thus, if a subject is singular, its verb must also be singular; if a subject is plural, its verb must also be plural. So, what are the rules?</p>		
<p>1. The subject comes before a phrase beginning with OF: <i>A bouquet of red roses gives. . . (= a bouquet gives, not roses give)</i></p>	<p>2. PORTIONS - percent, fraction, majority, some, all, etc., - Rule 1 is reversed: <i>50% of the cake has disappeared.</i> <i>50% of the cakes have disappeared.</i></p>	<p>3. COLLECTIVE NOUNS - <i>family, couple, staff, audience, etc.</i>, use singular or plural verb, depending on their use: <i>The staff is in a meeting. (staff = a unit)</i> <i>The couple <u>disagree</u> about how to raise their child. (couple = 2 people acting as individuals)</i></p>
<p>4. ALONG WITH, AS WELL AS, BESIDES, NOT, etc., separate the subject from the verb Ignore them and use a singular verb when the subject is singular: <i>The politician, <u>along with the journalist, is expected</u> shortly.</i></p>	<p>5. Use a plural verb with two or more subjects when they are connected by AND apart from compound nouns: <i>A car <u>and</u> a bike <u>are</u> my means of transportation.</i> <i>The bed <u>and</u> breakfast <u>was</u> lovely.</i></p>	<p>6. The verb must agree with the noun or pronoun closest to it when you use 'OR, EITHER/OR, NEITHER/NOR': <i>Neither the bowl nor the <u>plates go</u> on that shelf.</i></p>
<p>7. If you CONNECT singular subjects with 'or,' either/or, or 'neither/nor', they require a singular verb: <i>My aunt <u>or</u> my uncle <u>is</u> arriving by train today. I'm not sure which one!</i> <i><u>Neither</u> Juan nor Carmen <u>is</u> available. They are both busy.</i></p>	<p>8. HERE / THERE - the true subject follows the verb: <i>There <u>are</u> four tables.</i> <i>Here <u>are</u> the keys.</i></p>	<p>9. Use a singular verb with distances, periods of time, sums of money, etc., when considered as a UNIT: <i>3 kilometres <u>is</u> too far to walk.</i> <i>5 years <u>is</u> the maximum sentence for a traffic offence.</i></p>
<p>10. WERE - replaces <i>was</i> in sentences that express a wish or are contrary to fact. Used in the 2nd conditional and also when we want to use the subjunctive mood (hypothetical, wishful, imaginary, or factually contradictory). <i>If Joe were here, you'd be sorry.</i> <i>I wish it were Friday.</i></p>	<p>11. ANYONE, EVERYONE, SOMEONE, NO ONE, NOBODY are always singular and, therefore, require singular verbs: <i>Everyone has done his or her homework.</i> <i>Somebody has left his or her bag.</i></p> <p>ALL / SOME are singular or plural depending on what they're referring to, but NONE, can be either singular or plural. <i>Some of the money is missing. (money = UC)</i> <i>Some of the apples are gone. (apples = C)</i> <i>None of the students have done their homework. ('their' = you can't use the singular)</i> <i>None of you claims responsibility for this incident? ('you' = not one person in a group so it is plural)</i></p>	