
The 20 Rules of Subject Verb Agreement in Standard English (1-4)

1. Subjects and verbs must agree in number. This is the cornerstone rule that forms the background of the concept.

The *dog growls* when he is angry.

The *dogs growl* when they are angry.

2. Don't get confused by the words that come between the subject and verb; they do not affect agreement.

The *dog*, who is chewing on my jeans, *is* usually very good.

3. Prepositional phrases between the subject and verb usually do not affect agreement.

The *colors* of the rainbow *are* beautiful.

4. When sentences start with "there" or "here," the subject will always be placed after the verb, so care needs to be taken to identify it correctly.

There *is* a problem with the balance sheet. Here *are* the papers you requested.

Day 1 – Determine whether or not the following sentences are correct. If they are incorrect, make the necessary adjustments.

1. There are extra butter in the refrigerator.
2. My mother, along with the other representatives, are going to the convention.
3. A player on the Vikings are going to sign autographs at the mall this Saturday.
4. My sister eat paste.
5. This Tuesday, John, as well as his friends, is driving to the rock concert.
6. Runners on the team is being tested for performance enhancing drugs.
7. Dad and mom yells at me when I play my music too loud.
8. Here are a plate of Oreo cookies.
9. There are a box for you to pack your things in.
10. Finally, this exercise, after reading pages of material, are finished.

The 20 Rules of Subject Verb Agreement in Standard English (5-8)

5. Subjects don't always come before verbs in questions. Make sure you accurately identify the subject before deciding on the proper verb form to use.

Does *Lefty* usually **eat** grass? Where **are** the *pieces* of this puzzle.

6. If two subjects are joined by *and*, they typically require a plural verb form.

The cow and the pig **are jumping** over the moon.

7. The verb is singular if the two subjects separated by *and* refer to the same person or thing.

Red beans and rice **is** my mom's favorite dish.

8. If the words *each, every, or no* come before the subject, the verb is singular.

No *smoking and drinking* **is** allowed. *Every man and woman* **is** required to check in.

Day 2 – Determine whether or not the following sentences are correct. If they are incorrect, make the necessary adjustments.

1. Were the election news on the front page?
2. Mary and David is driving to the city this afternoon.
3. Each man and woman are required to pay taxes.
4. Macaroni and cheese are Ben's favorite dinner.
5. Every college and university require a transcript for admission.
6. The teacher and the principal negotiates the labor contracts for the building.
7. Steak and green beans is what we will have for dinner.
8. Bacon and eggs is what we will have for breakfast.
9. Do John normally arrive late to the meeting?
10. No running and horseplay are allowed in the hallways.

The 20 Rules of Subject Verb Agreement in Standard English (9-12)

9. If the subjects are both singular and are connected by the words *or, nor, neither/nor, either/or, and not only/but also* the verb is singular.

Jessica or Christian is to blame for the accident.

10. The only time when the object of the preposition factors into the decision of plural or singular verb forms is when noun and pronoun subjects like *some, half, none, more, all, etc.* are followed by a prepositional phrase. In these sentences, the object of the preposition determines the form of the verb.

All of the *chicken* is gone. All of the *chickens* are gone.

11. The singular verb form is usually used for units of measurement.

Four *quarts of oil* **was** required to get the car running.

12. If the subjects are both plural and are connected by the words *or, nor, neither/nor, either/or, and not only/but also*, the verb is plural.

Dogs and cats are both available at the pound.

Day 3 – Determine whether or not the following sentences are correct. If they are incorrect, make the necessary adjustments.

1. Three cups of milk are needed to make this recipe.
2. Not only the teachers but also the students is attending the assembly.
3. Either Mary or John are taking Pete to the movies.
4. Some of the butter are melting in the sunlight.
5. Some of the cakes are covered with pink icing.
6. Fifteen gallons of gasoline is enough to fill my car.
7. Neither the parents nor their children is going on the fieldtrip.
8. All of the people has the chicken pox.
9. Ann or Kathy have the remote control.
10. Half of the class are home with the flu.

The 20 Rules of Subject Verb Agreement in Standard English (13-16)

13. If one subject is singular and one plural and the words are connected by the words *or, nor, neither/nor, either/or, and not only/but also*, you use the verb form of the subject that is nearest the verb.

Do your *sisters* or your *girlfriend* **want** any pizza?

14. Indefinite pronouns typically take singular verbs.

Everybody **wants** to be loved.

15. * Except for the pronouns (*few, many, several, both*) that always take the plural form.

Few **were** left alive after the flood.

16. If two infinitives are separated by *and* they take the plural form of the verb.

To walk and to chew gum **require** great skill.

Day 4 – Determine whether or not the following sentences are correct. If they are incorrect, make the necessary adjustments.

1. Either the principal or the students is planning the assembly.
2. Either the students or the principal is planning the assembly.
3. To run and to jump is the key to success in track and field.
4. Several has to attend the meeting on Saturday.
5. Nobody have a clue as to the correct answer.
6. Not only the players but also the coach were in the bus accident.
7. Everybody need several glasses of water every day.
8. Both was on the train that derailed.
9. Neither the mice nor the cat was found after the house burned down.
10. To sleep and to eat is the primary routine for a baby.

The 20 Rules of Subject Verb Agreement in Standard English (17-20)

17. When gerunds are used as the subject of a sentence they take the singular verb form of the verb, but when they are linked by *and* they take the plural form.

Standing in the water **was** a bad idea. *Swimming* in the ocean and *playing drums* **are** my hobbies.

18. Collective nouns like herd, senate, class, crowd, jury, crew, etc. take a singular verb form when they act as a single unit. They take a plural verb form when the members or parts of the group are acting individually.

The jury has decided on its verdict. The jury have different opinions about the verdict.

19. Titles of books, movies, novels, etc. are treated as singular and take a singular verb.

The Burbs **is** a movie starring Tom Hanks.

20. Final Rule – Remember, only the subject affects the verb!

Day 5 – Determine whether or not the following sentences are correct. If they are incorrect, make the necessary adjustments.

1. The class are making way too much noise.
2. The students are making way too much noise.
3. Skiing is probably my favorite winter activity.
4. Boating and fishing is probably my favorite summer activities.
5. The Outsiders are my favorite S.E. Hinton novel.
6. My mother, along with all of her friends and all of our neighbors, eats exotic fruit.
7. The senate vote on the legislation this Tuesday.
8. The herd were stampeding.
9. Students for Safety are a new organization in the school.
10. The Wedding Crashers are the funniest movie I've seen in a long time.