

SUBJECT AND VERB AGREEMENT

Watch the video explanation first. Then study the rules.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wureAATyXuk&feature=relmfu>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RmIpRJShQTI&feature=related>

ALWAYS PLURAL

- After **PEOPLE, POLICE, and CATTLE**.
People are strange, aren't they?
The police have arrested the suspect.
- After **A NUMBER OF, A GROUP OF**
A number of my friends are planning a holiday together. They hope to go to Greece.
A group of students are taking the course.
- When the subject has **two nouns joined by AND**
She and her friends are at the fair.
- These pronouns take a plural verb **FEW, MANY, SEVERAL, BOTH, ALL, SOME**
Few of my relatives live in Europe.
Both the ring and the necklace are worthless.
- SCISSORS, TWEEZERS, TROUSERS, SHEARS, SHORTS, JEANS, PYJAMAS, TIGHTS, GLASSES**..... require a plural verb:
These scissors are dull.
His glasses need cleaning.
My trousers are dirty.
To make them singular you must use "a pair of"



REMEMBER:

The verb agrees with the subject; don't be mistaken with the appositive phrases that you may find between the subject and the verb:

One of the boxes is open.

The book, including all the chapters in the first section, is boring.

The President, accompanied by his wife, is travelling to India.

All of the books, including yours, are in that box.



ALWAYS SINGULAR



- After the expressions: **ONE OF, A KIND OF, A TYPE OF**
One of my friends is coming to see me.
- When talking about sums, units of measurement and mathematical expressions:
Ten thousand pounds is a lot of Money.
The nearest town is five-kilometres from here.
Two and two is four.
- When the subject has **two singular nouns joined by OR**
The pencil or the pen is in the drawer.
- When, after a subject, we have a phrase starting with: **AS WELL AS, IN ADDITION TO, WITH**.
The team captain, as well as his players, is anxious.
The woman with all the dogs walks down my street.
- Nouns connected with **EACH (of), EACH ONE, EITHER (of), NEITHER (of), and INDEFINITE PRONOUNS** (someone, something, anybody, anything, no one, nothing, everybody, everything...) take a singular verb.
Each of these hot dogs is juicy.
Everybody knows Mr. Jones.
Either of the answers is correct.
- These nouns: **CIVICS, MATHEMATICS, POLITICS, ATHLETICS, ECONOMICS, PHYSICS, ATHLETICS, ECONOMICS, MEASLES, MUMPS, NEWS**,... also take singular verbs:
Maths is my favourite subject.
The news has been commented everywhere.
A university degree in physics is not something easy to achieve.
However, some of them which end in -ics may take a verb in the plural especially if they are not considered as an academic subject:
The acoustics at the concert were Great.

PLURAL OR SINGULAR

- Group nouns (**FAMILY, TEAM, GROUP, CROWD, CLASS, COMPANY, GOVERNMENT, COMMITTEE**...) take a verb in singular or plural.
We prefer a singular verb when the noun is regarded as a single unit:
The family is a very important part of society.
This species is in danger of extinction.
We use a plural verb when we consider the noun as collective:
My family are on holiday.
The government think they can solve the problem.
There are thousands of species of butterflies.
- If the subject has **a singular and a plural noun joined by OR, NOR, NEITHER...NOR, EITHER...OR, NOT ONLY...BUT ALSO**, then the verb agrees with the part of the subject which is nearer the verb.
They boy or his friends run every day/ His friends or they boy runs every day.
Either she or her brothers have to pay for the broken window.
Not only the coins but also the crown was made of gold.



PRACTICE

1. People usually complains/ complain about everything but they won't do anything to improve the situation.
2. There is / are both men and women at the camp.
3. Each of the players has / have the same chances to win.
4. All of the members of the party votes / vote for or against the proposal.
5. My son, along with two friends, is / are coming home to spend a couple of days.
6. Either the prime minister or the ministers is / are attending the conference.
7. Nobody helps/help to do the cooking but everybody wants / want dinner ready on time.
8. A packet of sugar and a carton of milk was / were on the table.
9. The news about the Greek economy is / are quite worrying.
10. My father or my grandparents is/are coming to the audition.
11. The book, excluding some chapters, is / are quite interesting.
12. Mumps is / are a very contagious disease.
13. A ship and a plane has / have recently disappeared in the area.
14. Politics is / are something I don't care about much.
15. Nike, together with other famous sports brands, is / are sponsoring the race.
16. Either the lion or the zebras saves/ save their life.
17. It is the individual teacher not the staff who has / have to decide about the correct punishment for a student.
18. Either film is / are good, you can choose which one to watch.
19. The police is / are investigating the robbery.
20. The mayor, as well as other two councilors, has / have been imprisoned.
21. One of my best friends works / work at a very famous department store.
22. Few of the pages has / have been checked for mistakes.
23. Two weeks is / are not too much waiting for something you really want.
24. A group of demonstrators was/ were burning containers in the streets near the town hall.
25. Scissors is / are dangerous for very small children.
26. Doing athletics is / are a great way to keep fit.
27. Not only the doctors but also her mother agrees/ agree with the treatment.
28. Each one of the students has / have to bring a toy to school tomorrow.
29. The Stars and Stripes is / are the name that the Americans give to their flag
30. The statistics shows / show that there has been a steady increase over the last years.



If you need further practice try these websites:

http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/cgi-shl/quiz.pl/sv_agr_quiz.htm

<http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/quizzes/svagr2.htm>

<http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/quizzes/svagr3.html>