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Singular and plural verb forms

1 Tick the correct sentence in each pair.

- 1 a Health and education are top priorities for the new government.
b Health and education is top priority for the new government.
- 2 a The number of students going on to higher education has increased.
b The number of students going on to higher education have increased.

We use a singular verb form (*is, has, makes, needs, etc.*):

- after a singular noun

Each team has eleven players.

Everybody needs a minimum amount of sleep per night.

- after an uncountable noun

Research shows that people with pets are less likely to suffer from stress.

- after the *number/percentage/proportion, etc. of*

The proportion of people living alone has increased.

We use a plural verb form (*are, have, make, need, etc.*):

- after a plural noun

Most people recycle less than 30% of their waste.

Computers have become a normal part of everyday life.

- after two or more singular or uncountable nouns considered together

Japan and the US have similar rates of literacy.

★ Remember that where you use more than one verb in a sentence with the same subject, they must all be in the same form:

The project provides a place for children to play safely and keeps them out of trouble.

2 Correct the mistake below.

Small children loves playing with the animals.

Small children



3 Complete each sentence with the correct present form of the verb in brackets.

- 1 New technology (*allow*) us to analyse the data in seconds.
- 2 Older people often (*eat*) less and (*need*) less sleep.
- 3 Advances in medicine (*mean*) that people are living longer.
- 4 Access to clean drinking water (*be*) a basic human right.
- 5 Everyone (*receive*) a welcome pack on the first day.
- 6 Fish and meat (*be*) both sources of protein.
- 7 The number of places available (*vary*) each year.
- 8 Mobile phones (*have*) changed the way we communicate.