

English Grammar

Subject-Verb Agreement

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- Subject-Verb Agreement means the **verb** in a sentence must match the **subject** in **number** (singular or plural) and **person** (1st, 2nd, or 3rd person)
- If the subject is singular → Verb is singular.
- If the subject is plural → Verb is plural.

Examples :

- **Singular Verbs:** is, was, has, plays, goes, does
- **Plural Verbs:** are, were, have, play, go, do

Important Note:

- Adding **s/es** to a noun makes it plural (boy → boys).
- Adding **s/es** to a verb makes it singular (play → plays).

RULE 1: Two Subjects Joined by "And"

➤ When two or more subjects are joined by **and**, use a **plural verb**.

1. Ram and Shyam **are** coming to the party.
2. The cat and the dog **are** playing together.
3. Books and notebooks **were** lying on the table.
4. My father and mother **have** gone to the market.
5. Tea and coffee **are** my favorite drinks.
6. The teacher and the students **are** waiting in the hall.
7. Honesty and hard work **bring** success.
8. Apples and oranges **are** kept in the fridge.
9. She and her brother **were** late for school.
10. The king and the queen **are** arriving tomorrow.

RULE 2: Two Subjects Joined by "And" but Representing One Idea

➤ If two nouns or adjectives joined by **and** refer to the **same person, thing, or idea**, use a **singular verb**.

Examples:

- **Slow and steady** wins the race.
- **Bread and butter** is a common breakfast.
- **My friend, philosopher, and guide** has arrived.
- **The rise and fall of the company** is surprising.
- **Truth and honesty** is the best policy.
- **The long and short** of the story is clear.
- **Rice and dal** is ready for lunch.
- **Black and white** is her favourite combination.
- **Special Note:** When two uncountable nouns joined by **and** show different ideas, use plural verb. Poverty and misery come together.

- **RULE 3: Agreement with conjunctions/ Prepositions**

- When subjects are joined by **as well as, with, along with, together with, besides, except, rather than, accompanied by, etc.**, the verb agrees with the **first subject**.

➤ **List of words:**

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• as well as• with• along with• together with• besides• in addition to• including• accompanied by• in company with• no less than	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• rather than• more than• less than• except• excepting• excluding• apart from• alongside
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Prepositional Phrases + Examples

- **as well as** → Ram **as well as his friends** is coming.
- **with** → Sita **with her brother** is going.
- **along with** → The teacher **along with students** is present.
- **together with** → The captain **together with players** is ready.
- **besides** → Mohan **besides his parents** is invited.
- **in addition to** → She **in addition to her sisters** is selected.
- **including** → The box **including all items** is heavy.
- **accompanied by** → The minister **accompanied by officials** is arriving.

- **in company with** → He **in company with his friends is** travelling.
- **no less than** → Ram **no less than his brothers is** responsible.
- **rather than** → She **rather than her friends is** chosen.
- **more than** → The boy **more than his classmates is** hardworking
- **less than** → He **less than others is** interested.
- **except** → Everyone **except Ram is** present.
- **excepting** → All **excepting Mohan are** ready. (*First subject = All → plural*)
- **excluding** → The group **excluding two members is** complete.
- **apart from** → The class **apart from one student is** silent.
- **alongside** → The manager **alongside his team is** working.

RULE 4: Use of Articles with Two Nouns

- If the article (**a/an/the**) is used only before the first noun, it means **one person/thing** → singular verb.
- If the article is used before both nouns, it means **two different persons/things** → plural verb.

- **Examples:**

- **A** white and black dress was bought by her.
- **The** director and producer has arrived.
- Churchill was **a** great orator and politician.
- **A** red and blue pen is on the table.
- **The** poet and singer is performing tonight.
- **The** teacher and the guardian have come.
- **A** black and white photo was hanging on the wall.
- **The** founder and secretary is coming.
- **The** king and the queen are arriving.
- **An** old and new version of the book is available.

Rule 5: Correlative conjunctions

Correlative conjunctions are pairs of conjunctions that **work together** to connect **equal elements** in a sentence. These elements can be words, phrases, or clauses that have the **same grammatical structure**. The key point about correlative conjunctions is that **both parts of the pair must be used in the sentence for it to make sense**.

Correlative conjunctions

- either ... or
- neither ... nor
- not only ... but also
- not ... but

Examples:

- Neither Ram nor Shyam **has** come.
- Either Ram or his friends **have** come.
- Not only the teacher but also the students **were** happy.
- Either you or I **am** responsible.
- Neither the boys nor the girl **is** playing.
- He or his brothers **are** coming tomorrow.
- Not only the books but also the bag **was** stolen.
- Either the manager or the workers **are** to blame.
- Neither the cat nor the dogs **are** in the garden.
- She or her sisters **have** won the prize.

RULE 6 & 7: Neither of / None of

- **Neither of** → used for **two** persons/things.
- **None of** → used for **more than two**. After "none of" + plural noun, singular verb is usually preferred.

Examples:

- Neither of the two boys has come.
- None of the students has/have passed.
- None of the books is interesting.
- Neither of them is guilty.
- None of the girls was present.
- Neither of the options is correct.
- None of my friends has replied.
- Neither of the teams has won yet.
- None of the money was spent.
- None of the candidates is suitable.

- Rule 8: Nouns plural in form but singular in meaning

Category	Examples
Branches of Learning	Mathematics, Physics, Economics, Statistics, Politics
Diseases	Measles, Mumps, Diabetes, Rabies, Rickets
Books (Titles)	Gulliver's Travels, Great Expectations, The Canterbury Tales, War and Peace, The United States of America
Countries	The United States, The Netherlands, The Philippines, The Maldives, The Bahamas
Distance / Quantity	Five kilometers, Ten rupees, Two hours, Fifty dollars, Twenty liters

Examples:

- No news is good news.
- Politics is a dirty game.
- Mathematics is a difficult subject.
- Economics is interesting.
- The news was surprising.
- Ethics demands honesty.
- Measles is a dangerous disease.
- Billiards is my favourite game.
- Physics is my weakest subject.
- The innings was very exciting.

- **RULE 9**

In a sentence, the verb must agree with the subject that is the **main subject** of the sentence. We often match the verb with the nearest subject, but doing so is incorrect.

Examples:

- **The color of the flowers** is beautiful.
 - *(Main subject: "The color" → singular → "is")*
- **The collection of rare stamps** was sold yesterday.
 - *(Main subject: "The collection" → singular → "was")*
- **The leader along with his followers** has arrived.
 - *(Main subject: "The leader" → singular → "has")*

- **The teacher, not the students,** is responsible for the mistake.
 - *(Main subject: "The teacher" → singular → "is")*
- **The pages of the old book** are torn.
 - *(Main subject: "The pages" → plural → "are")*
- **The manager as well as his employees** was present at the meeting.
 - *(Main subject: "The manager" → singular → "was")*
- **The taste of these mangoes** is sour.
 - *(Main subject: "The taste" → singular → "is")*
- **John, and not his brothers,** has won the prize.
 - *(Main subject: "John" → singular → "has")*
- **The roof of the buildings** needs repair.
 - *(Main subject: "The roof" → singular → "needs")*
- **The smell of the rotten vegetables** is unbearable.
 - *(Main subject: "The smell" → singular → "is")*

RULE 10 : Collective Nouns

- Collective nouns (team, committee, family, jury, audience, crowd, etc.)

take:

- **Singular verb** → when we think of the group as **one unit**.
- **Plural verb** → when we think of **individual members**.

Examples:

- The team has won the match.
- The committee has taken its decision.
- The jury is divided in its opinion.
- The audience has taken its seats.
- My family is going on a trip.
- The crowd was very large.
- The government is planning new rules.
- The class is very noisy today.
- The public is angry with the decision.
- The jury are arguing among themselves.

- **RULE 11: Plural Numbers / Quantities**

- When a plural number expresses a **single unit** (amount, distance, time, weight), use **singular verb**.

Examples:

- Hundred rupees is a small amount.
- Ten miles is a long distance to walk.
- Five litres of milk is enough.
- Two hours is sufficient for the test.
- Fifty kilograms is her weight.
- Three thousand rupees is my monthly fee.
- Twenty minutes is not enough time.
- Ten kilometres is too far to run.
- Two and two makes four.
- Five years is a long period.

RULE 12: Relative Pronouns (who, which, that)

- The verb agrees with the **antecedent** (the noun to which the relative pronoun refers).

Examples:

- She is one of the girls who have won the prize.
- He is the only student who has passed.
- I am not one of those who waste time.
- This is the book that contains all the answers.
- She is one of the best singers who have performed here.
- He is the man who knows the secret.
- They are the players who were selected.
- This is one of the houses that were damaged.
- You are the only person who understands me.
- It is I who am responsible for this.

- **RULE 13: Each, Every, Everyone, Somebody, Anyone, Many a, etc.**
- These words are **singular** and take **singular verb, singular noun, and singular pronoun.**

Examples:

- Each student has completed the homework.
- Every boy and every girl has come.
- Someone has stolen my pen.
- Many a student has failed the exam.
- Anyone is allowed to participate.
- Nobody knows the truth.
- One must do one's duty.
- More than one player was injured.
- Each of them has received a gift.
- Everybody loves a good story.

- **RULE 13: Each / Every / One + of + Plural Noun**

- The noun after **of** is plural, but the verb and pronoun remain **singular**.

- **Examples:**

- **One of the boys** has done his work.
- **Each of the girls** is talented.
- **Every one of the students** has passed.
- **One of them** has broken the glass.
- **Each of the books** is useful.
- **One of my friends** is a doctor.
- **Every one of the teams** has played well.
- **One of the apples** is rotten.
- **Each of the candidates** has been interviewed.
- **One of the problems** is still unsolved.

- **RULE 14**

When "each" is used after a plural noun or a plural pronoun, it is considered plural, and a plural verb is used with it.

Examples:

- **They each have** their own opinion about the matter.
- **We each are** responsible for completing the project on time.
- **The students each have** submitted their assignments.
- **You each need** to submit your identification cards at the gate.
- **The players each receive** a trophy for participating in the tournament.
- **The employees each are** getting a bonus this Diwali.
- **We each want** to succeed in life through hard work.
- **The children each have** finished their homework.
- **The candidates each were** given ten minutes to speak.
- **The guests each have** brought a gift for the birthday boy.

- **RULE 15**

When the indefinite pronoun '**One**' is used as the subject of a sentence, a **singular verb** is used with it, and for its reference, the singular pronouns – **one, one's, oneself** – are used, not **he, him, his, himself**.

- For example:

One should keep **his** promise. (Incorrect)

One should keep **one's** promise. (Correct)

RULE 16

Hypothetical sentences usually begin with **if, as if, as though, suppose, I wish, in case, or would that**. After these words, regardless of the number and person of the subject, the plural verb '**were**' is used, not '**was**'.

- For example:

(1) I wish I **were** a bird.

(2) If he **were** rich, he would help others.

- **I wish I were** taller so I could reach the top shelf.
- **If she were** the principal, she would ban all exams.
- He acts **as if he were** the owner of this company.
- **Suppose I were** to win the lottery, I would travel the world.
- She looks **as though she were** seeing a ghost.
- **I wish** my brother **were** more careful while driving.
- **If I were** you, I would apologize immediately.
- **Would that** every child **were** safe and happy at home.

RULE 17

In an **optative sentence** (a sentence expressing a wish, prayer, or blessing), a **plural verb** is used even with a **singular subject**.

- For example:

(1) **God save the king!**

(Singular subject "God" + plural verb "save")

- (2) **Long live the Queen!**

(Singular subject "the Queen" + plural verb "live")

Examples:

- Heaven bless this home with peace and happiness!
- Long live the President of India!
- God grant me the strength to overcome all difficulties.
- May the sun always shine on your wedding day!
(Note: "May" + plural verb "shine" is common in optatives)
- Success follow you wherever you go!
- Long live their beautiful friendship!
- God forbid that we should ever face such a tragedy again.
- Fortune smile upon all those who work honestly!

RULE 18

- **A number of / A large number of / A great number of** are used with **plural countable nouns**, and a **plural verb** is used with them.
- For example:
A number of students **were** present. (Correct)
- **Note:** However, **The number of** is used to mean a fixed/definite number. It is followed by a plural noun, but when used as the subject of a sentence, a **singular verb** is used with it.
- For example:
The number of boys **are** fifty. (Incorrect)
The number of boys **is** fifty. (Correct)

Examples:

Part 1: "A number of" / "A large number of" / "A great number of" + Plural Verb

A number of students are waiting outside the principal's office.

A large number of birds migrate to warmer regions every winter.

A great number of employees have applied for the transfer.

A number of complaints were received by the customer care department.

Part 2: "The number of" + Singular Verb

The number of students in this class is forty-two.

The number of covid cases has decreased significantly this month.

The number of books in the library is over ten thousand.

The number of unemployed youth is rising every year.

- **RULE 21**

- The following words are used as **Uncountable Nouns**:

furniture, advice, work, evidence, equipment, news, information, luggage, baggage, percentage, poetry, knowledge, dirt, dust, traffic, electricity, music, breakage, stationery, scenery, confectionery, pottery, bakery, crockery, behaviour.

- Therefore, a **singular verb** is used with them.

- For example:

(1) The **scenery** of Kashmir **has** enchanted us.

- (2) I passed, but the **percentage** of marks **was** not good.

RULE 22

- Some nouns are always used only in the plural form. The 's' at the end of these nouns cannot be removed to make them singular. They look plural and are also used as plurals. Such nouns are:
- Scissors, tongs, pliers, pincers, bellows, trousers, pants, pajamas, shorts, gallows, fangs, spectacles, goggles, binoculars, sunglasses, alms, amends, archives, arrears, auspices, congratulations, embers, fireworks, lodgings, outskirts, particulars, proceeds, regards, riches, remains, savings, shambles, surroundings, tidings, troops, tactics, thanks, valuables, wages, belongings, braces, etc.

- For example:
 - (a) Where are my pants?
 - (b) Where are the tongs?
 - (c) The proceeds were deposited in the bank.
 - (d) All his assets were seized.
 - (e) Alms were given to the beggars.
 - (f) The embers of the fire were still burning.

- RULE 23
- Some nouns look plural but are singular in meaning. They are always used as singular. For example: News, Innings, Politics, Summons, Physics, Economics, Ethics, Mathematics, Mumps, Measles, Rickets, Shingles, Billiards, Athletics, etc.
- For example:
 - (a) No news is good news.
 - (b) Politics is a dirty game.
 - (c) Economics is an interesting subject.
 - (d) Ethics demands honesty.

- RULE 24

- Some nouns look singular but are always used as plural. For example: cattle, cavalry, infantry, poultry, peasantry, children, gentry, police, people, etc. We never add an 's' to them. For example, writing "cattles" or "childrens" is incorrect.

Examples:

- **Cattle are** grazing in the field.
- The **police have** caught the thief.
- **Children are** playing in the park.
- **Poultry are** being raised on this farm.
- The **cavalry have** been ordered to move forward.
- **People are** waiting outside the stadium.
- The **infantry have** completed their training.
- **Gentry were** invited to the royal banquet.
- The **peasantry have** suffered due to the drought.
- **Cattle were** seen drinking water from the river.

- RULE 25
- Some nouns are used only in the singular form. These are uncountable nouns. The article A/An is also not used with them. For example:
- Scenery, Poetry, Furniture, Advice, Information, Hair, Business, Mischief, Bread, Stationery, Crockery, Luggage, Baggage, Postage, Knowledge, Wastage, Money, Jewellery, Breakage, Equipment, Work, Evidence, Word (when 'word' means promise, message, or discussion), Fuel, and Paper.
- For example:
 - (a) The scenery of Manali is beautiful.
 - (b) I have no information about the meeting.
 - (c) The mischief done by the boy made his mother angry.
 - (d) Her hair is long and shiny.
 - (e) I need some equipment for the kitchen.

- (i) The plural of these nouns cannot be formed. For example, writing "sceneries, informations, furnitures, hairs" etc. is incorrect.
- (ii) If both singular and plural forms of the above nouns are needed, then certain words are added to them. See the examples given below:
 - (a) She gave me a piece of advice.
 - (b) All pieces of information were correct.
 - (c) Three kinds of furniture are made in this factory.
 - (d) She bought a few articles of jewellery.
 - (e) I ate two slices of bread.
 - (f) He bought some items of stationery.
 - (g) I found a strand of hair on the table.

- RULE 26
- Some nouns remain in the same form in both plural and singular. For example:
deer, sheep, series, species, fish, crew, team, jury, aircraft, counsel, etc.

Examples:

- I saw a **deer** in the forest yesterday. (Singular)
There are five **deer** grazing near the lake. (Plural)
- One **sheep** is missing from the farm. (Singular)
The farmer has fifty **sheep** on his farm. (Plural)
- We watched a new **series** on Netflix last night. (Singular)
Three **series** have been nominated for the award. (Plural)

- The rose is a beautiful **species** of flower. (Singular)
Many **species** of birds are found in this region. (Plural)
- The **crew** is working efficiently. (Singular - as one unit)
The **crew** are getting ready for their departure. (Plural - as individual members)
- The **team** has won the match. (Singular - as one unit)
The **team** are celebrating in their own way. (Plural - as individual members)
- The **jury** has given its verdict. (Singular - as one unit)
The **jury** are divided in their opinions. (Plural - as individual members)
- One **aircraft** landed on the runway. (Singular)
Two **aircraft** are flying in the sky. (Plural)
- He is an experienced **counsel** in this case. (Singular)
Both **counsel** have presented their arguments. (Plural)
- I caught one **fish** from the river. (Singular - one fish)
There are many **fish** in this aquarium. (Plural - multiple fish of same species)
The ocean has various **fishes** including tuna, salmon, and cod. (Plural - different species)

Thankyou