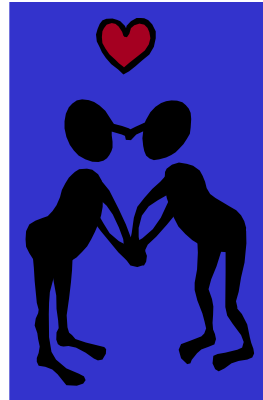
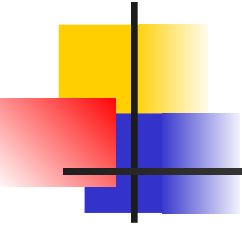


# SUBJECT-VERB AGREEMENT

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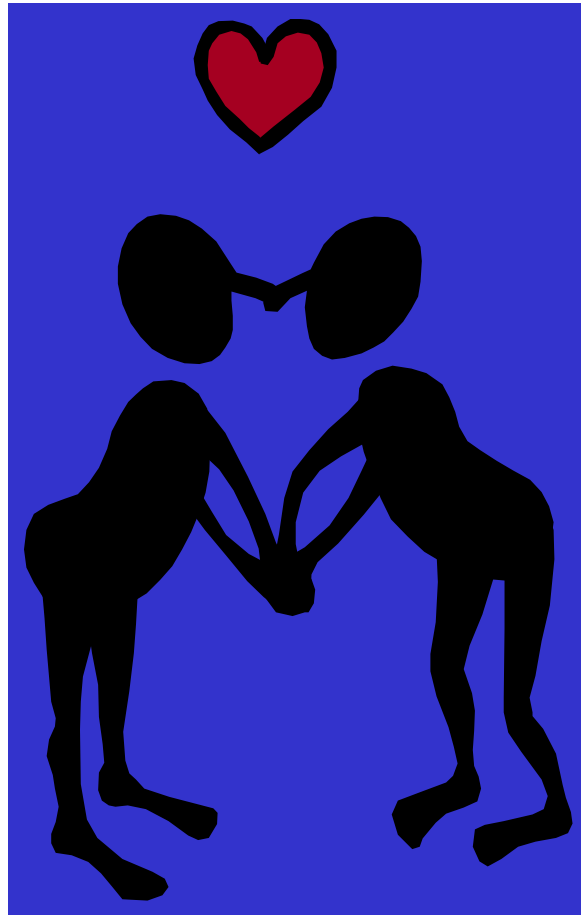


# EVERY VERB MUST AGREE WITH ITS SUBJECT



Singular Subject

Singular Verb



Plural Subject

Plural Verb



# The Stupidity of English Grammar

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- To make a noun plural, we **add -s**
  - Singular: girl
  - Plural: girls
- To make a verb plural, we **take away** the **-s**.
  - Singular: he talks
  - Plural: they talk



# Watch the Verb Endings!

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## Singular

- I walk
- You walk
- He/She/It walk **s**
  - Joe walk **s**
  - The girl walk **s**

## Plural

- We walk
- You walk
- They walk
  - Joe and Maria walk
  - The girls walk

# Remember the 3 irregular verbs:

## ■ DO

Singular Plural

■ He doess They do

## ■ HAVE

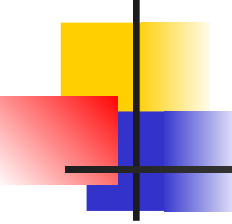
■ She hass They have

## ■ BE

■ He iss They are

■ She wass They were



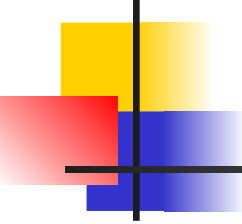


# Tip for Subject/verb Agreement

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Generally, if the subject doesn't end in **-S**, the verb will.

If the subject does end in **-S**, the verb won't.

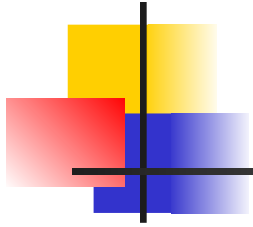


No -S on  
subject

-S on  
verb

The girl dancess.





-S on subject

The girlss dance.

No -S on verb





# Compound subjects joined by “and”

- If there are two or more subjects joined by *and*, the subject must be plural, so the verb will not get an “s”.

## Example

- **The boy and the girl dance.**  
(= **They** dance.)

No -S on  
verb







# Compound subjects joined by “or”

---

If there are two or more subjects joined by **or**, the verb agrees with the part of the subject closest to it.

Examples:

- The professor or the students walk the halls.  

- The students or the professor walks the halls.  




# Watch out for “Everybody”

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- Everybody **loves**es grammar!
- Everybody **understands**s subject/verb agreement.



# Possible Pitfalls

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Sometimes, several words come between the subject and the verb.

- The student, though she had lots of problems in other schools, **finds/find (?)** her new class easy.
  - The **student**, **though she had lots of problems in other schools**, **finds** her new class easy.
  - The **student finds** her new class easy.



# Prepositional phrases

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The subject can **never** be part of a **prepositional phrase**.

## Example

The students **in my class** study / stud~~ies~~  
hard.





# Possible Pitfalls

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Sometimes, the subject will come after the verb, in questions or when sentence begins with *there*.

## Examples

- Why **is** he falling asleep?
- Why **are** they falling asleep?
- There **is** no excuse for such behavior.
- There **are** no excuses for such behavior.



# Possible Pitfalls

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Relative Pronouns (*who/which/that*) can be either singular or plural, depending on the word they refer to.

- The **student who works** hard will succeed.



- The **students who work** hard will succeed.



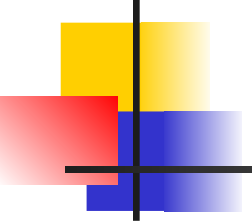


# How do I get this right?

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- First, identify whether or not you have problems with subject/verb agreement.
- If you don't have any problems with this, don't worry about it!
- If you do have problems
  - Identify the verb. Ask who or what is doing it.
  - This will identify the subject.
  - Say them together and make sure that they match in terms of number.





The subject and verb are the skeleton of every sentence. Make sure you fit those two important parts together correctly!

