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Simmons.

Subject-Verb Agreement

Do I need an
s at the end of
the verb?

Or should I
leave the *s*
off?



This presentation
covers maintaining
agreement between
subjects and *verbs*.



A subject-verb agreement item on an objective test might look like this ...

Sample Item

The foods that provide good nutrition are
A B
often the least tasty; a hamburger and fries,
on the other hand, satisfy the tongue but
C
clog the arteries.

A. provides

B. are

C. satisfies

D. No change is necessary.

Is needs to be
the plural *are*,
which option *B*
fixes.

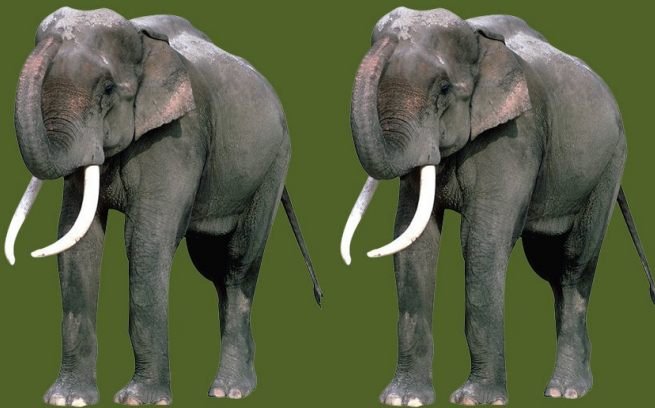


Agreement in a Nutshell



The *elephant* trumpets
for a peanut.

elephant = singular subject
trumpets = singular verb



The *elephants trumpet*
for peanuts.

elephants = plural subject
trumpet = plural verb

In the *present tense*,
singular verbs end in
the suffix *s*; *plural*
verbs do *not*.



Two [or more] singular nouns joined by *and* make a *plural* subject.

The chicken *wing* and pork *rib sit* untouched on Ruth's plate.



Because there's no *s* at the end of *sit*, you know it's a *plural* verb.

When *each* or *every* precedes two [or more] singular nouns joined by *and*, you have a *singular* subject.

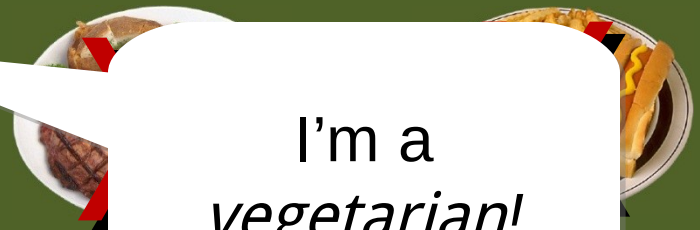
Every chicken wing *and* pork rib *sits* untouched on Ruth's plate.



Because there *is* an *s* at the end of *sit*, you know it's a *singular* verb.

In this situation, no matter *how many* singular nouns you join with *and*, the subject is *still* singular.

Every chicken wing, pork rib, slice of pepperoni pizza, hotdog, hamburger, steak, *and* fried shrimp *sits* untouched on Ruth's plate.



I'm a
vegetarian!



Use caution with these three conjunctions:
either ... or, *neither ... nor*, and *not only ... but also*.

Not only the boss but also her
employees wish the shift would end.

If you *flip* the two subjects,
so that *employees* is next to
the verb, then *wish* will work!



These *indefinite pronouns* are always *singular* [even when they *seem* plural].

- Each, either, neither
- Anyone, anybody, anything
- Everyone, everybody, everything
- No one, nobody, nothing
- Someone, somebody, something

Everyone on Earth =
more than one person—
billions of people, in fact.
The word *everyone*,
however, is still *singular*.



Beware interrupting phrases.

- As well as
- Along with
- Together with
- Including
- In addition to
- Especially

The squirrel ~~as well as the pigeons~~ **keeps** an eye on Sammy, the sneaky cat.



Bad
kitty!

This sentence might
sound right, but it is
completely *wrong!*



Beware inverted word order.

Here are the onions you need for the chili. ~~In~~
~~the refrigerator~~ **are** the jalapeño peppers you
might want to add.

*Here and
there are
never the
subjects.*



*Cross through
prepositional
phrases to find the
real subject!*

Quick Test

Directions: In the items that follow, choose the option that corrects an error in the underlined portion(s). If no error exists, choose “No change is necessary.”

Show me
what *you*
know.



Item 1

In the cabinet are the tools that you will need to

A

unclog the bathroom sink; I have found that a

B

plunger and a prayer often do the trick.

C

A.are

B.has

C.does

D.No change is necessary.

Item 2

Here are the books that Thomas and Darlene

A

need for their research, and here are the earplugs

B

that you'll require once they both doze off in

C

boredom and start snoring.

- is
- are**
- dozes
- No change is necessary.

Item 3

Jasmine and Rodney have decided to double the

A

number of cupcakes that they are baking since

B

everyone loves moist cake and chocolate frosting.

C

A.has

B.is

C.loves

D.No change is necessary.

Item 4

Not only those students but also their professor

looks forward to the final exam; everyone has

A

B

exciting vacation plans that start next Monday.

C

A.looks

B.have

C.starts

D.No change is necessary.

Item 5

At the pet store, each iguana, mouse, and gerbil

tries to climb the walls of its glass cage while

A

humans hover outside like giant predators who are

B

C

ready to strike.

A.tries

B.hovers

C.is

D.No change is necessary.

Item 6

Tyrone, as well as his cousins, hopes that Grandma

A

brings her famous brownies and peach pie that

B

drip with generous scoops of vanilla ice cream.

C

A.hopes

B.bring

C.drips

D.No change is necessary.

Item 7

Either the dogs or the cat sleeps on the bed while
A
everyone is out; Lorraine always finds an
B C
indentation in the center of her comforter.

A.sleeps

B.are

C.find

D.No change is necessary.

Item 8

Meryl, together with her friends Beatrice and Laverne,

plans a daily trip for ice cream, for these women

A

have discovered that the calories are worth seeing

B

C

Theo scoop their servings with his muscular arms.

A.plan

B.has

C.are

D.No change is necessary.

Item 9

The scissors are sharp, so neither the cousins nor

A

Timmy is allowed to play with them, even when the

B

boys need to finish a school project.

C

A.is

B.are

C.need

D.No change is necessary.

Item 10

Each fork, spoon, and knife is scarred from the

A

disposal since Drew refuses to check the drain

B

before he throws the switch.

C

A.is

B.refuse

C.throw

D.No change is necessary.



Grammar Bytes! provides additional handouts and exercises on *subject-verb agreement*. Go to *chompchomp.com!*

The End.

Bad
kitty!

