

# Subject-Verb Agreement

**1. The subject of a sentence or clause must agree in number with the main or auxiliary verb of that sentence or clause.**

Ex: *The books were on the table yesterday.*  
*Whatever you want to do is fine with me.*  
*Every book is checked out.*  
*One of the books was missing.*  
*The news is on at 6:00.*

**2. With fractions, percentages, amounts and distances a singular verb is used when they are not followed by an of phrase.**

Ex: *\$7.50 is the minimum wage.*  
*Five miles is an average distance for me to run.*

**3. When an –of phrase follows a percentage, distance, fraction, or amount, the verb agrees with the noun closest to the verb.**

Ex: *Half of the tables are occupied.*  
*21% of the population is poor.*  
*21% of the books are paperback.*

**4. With indefinite quantifiers (e.g., *all, few, many, much, some*), the verb agrees with the preceding noun or clause:**

With a **singular or non-count** noun or clause, use a singular verb:

Ex: *Much of the book seems relevant to this study.*  
*All the information is current*

With a **plural** noun, use a plural verb:

Ex: *Many researchers depend on grants from industry.*  
*All the studies are current.*

**5. Usually, a singular verb follows NONE, even if the noun following it is plural. However, in conversational English, a plural noun has become acceptable.**

Ex: *None of the workers receives a tip.*  
*None of the workers receive a tip (less formal).*

**6. With a collective noun, use either a singular or a plural verb, depending on whether you want to emphasize the single group or its individual members:**

Ex: *Half of my family lives/live in Canada.*  
*All of the class is/are here.*  
*Ten percent of the population is/are bilingual.*

**7. Adjectives preceded by THE and used as plural nouns take a plural verb:**

*The rich get richer.*  
*The poor face many hardships.*

**8. Expressions using the phrase number of depend on the meaning of the phrase:**

They take a singular verb when referring to a **single quantity**:

The number of *students registered in the class* **is** 20.

They take plural verbs when they are used as **indefinite quantifiers**:

A number of *students* **were** late.

**9. With expressions AS WELL AS, IN ADDITION TO, TOGETHER WITH, the first noun determines if the verb is singular or plural.**

*Ex: France, as well as other European countries,* **has** a tip-included policy.

*Waiters, in addition to others who work for tip,* **are** usually generous tippers.

**10. In the subjects with NEITHER/NOR and NOT ONLY BUT ALSO the noun closest to the verb determines if that verb is singular or plural.**

*Ex: Neither the host nor his guests* **were** happy.

*Neither the guests nor their host* **was** happy.

*Not only the waiter but also the cook and busboy* **work** for tips.

**11. With EITHER/OR, the second noun guests determines that the verb is plural.**

*Ex: Either John or his brother* **is** going to make dinner.

**12. A plural verb is used with subjects using BOTH/AND. However, if the compound subject describes two parts of a single process, then a singular verb is used.**

*Ex: Both John and his sister* **are** going to be at the party.

*Carol and Bob* **were** at the party.

*The administration and interpretation of educational tests* **is** an important part of her job.