

Subject-Verb Agreement

A sentence is made up of a subject and a verb. The subject and the verb in a sentence must agree. So what does that mean?

Subjects can be singular (only one) or plural (more than one). Likewise verbs have a singular or plural form. If a **subject** of a sentence is **singular**, then the **verb** must also be in the **singular** form. Here is an example:

- Mary loves coffee.

The subject, “Mary,” is singular. (In this sentence there is only one Mary.) The verb, “loves,” is also in the singular form. Here’s another example:

- The tutors love coffee.

The subject of this sentence, “tutors,” is plural. (There is more than one tutor.) Therefore, the verb, “love,” is also in plural form.

Think Opposites

- ✓ To write a subject in the **plural** form, we often add an “s” to the end of the word: cats, dogs, rabbits.
- ✓ To write a verb in the **plural** form, we usually do the opposite and take off the “s”: Cats run. Dogs bite. Rabbits hop.
- ✓ If a subject is **singular**, we usually do not add an “s” to the end of the word: the cat, the dog, the rabbit.
- ✓ On the other hand, to write a verb in the **singular** form we again do the opposite and add an “s”: The cat runs. The dog bites. The rabbit hops.

Here are a few more tips:

- ❖ When a sentence has two or more subjects joined by “and” use the **plural** form of the verb.

Mary and Linda like strong coffee.
Carmen and Sydney drink cokes.

- ❖ When the subject of a sentence is a collective noun, (a noun that stands for a group, like team, or crowd) use the **singular** form of the verb.

The team wins every game it plays.
The crowd claps wildly.

Practice

Choose the correct verb for each sentence.