Subject-Verb Agreement

Student Name:

Instructor:

Date:

Course:

# About This DLA

## Important Note

All the activities (3) in the DLA must be completed in their entirety before meeting with a tutor and receiving credit. Where indicated, complete your work on this sheet. If your instructor wants evidence of this completed DLA, return this form to him or her with the tutor’s signature included.

## Learning Outcomes

Through computer and other independent work, this activity will familiarize you with the rules for subject-verb agreement and help you create sentences in which the subjects and verbs agree.

## Activities (approximately 1 hour)

Read the information, complete the activities that follow, and be prepared to discuss your answers when you meet with a tutor.

# Subject-Verb Agreement

Subject-verb agreement means that the subject and the verb agree in number. For example, if you have a **singular subject** (only one of something), you need to use a **singular verb**. If you have a plural subject(two or more of something), you need to use a plural verb.

* Abigail **loves**  ice cream.
* She and her friend **love** going to the mall for ice cream.

## Grammatical Person

Let’s look at the different points of view:

| Point of View | Example |
| --- | --- |
| 1st person singular | **I** |
| 2nd person singular | **You** (one person) |
| 3rd person singular | **She, He, It** Tom, Sally, the government, a table, singular subjects |
| 1st person plural | **We** |
| 2nd person plural | **You** (more than one person) |
| 3rd person plural | **They** Those ladies, the oranges, cats, plural subjects |

## Subject-Verb Agreement in the Simple Present Tense

There are three forms of *be* in the present tense: **am**/**is**/**are**

| Subject | Be |
| --- | --- |
| I | **am (not)** |
| he/she/it/singular subjects | **is (not)** |
| you/we/they/plural subjects | **are (not)** |

There are two forms of do in the present tense: **do**/**does**

| Subject | Do |
| --- | --- |
| I/you/we/they/plural subjects | **do (not)** |
| he/she/it/singular subjects | **does (not)** |

We use the **base** form of the verb when the subject is *I, you, we, they* or a plural noun. We use the ***–s*** form when the subject is *he, she, it*, or a singular noun

| Subject | Verb |
| --- | --- |
| I/you/we/they/plural subjects | **run** |
| he/she/it/singular subjects | **runs** |

Many times, you only add **–*s*** to verbs for *he/she/it* (third person singular), but sometimes you need more than ***–s***. Here are some spelling rules for the ***–s*** form:

| Rule | Base Form | -s Form |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Add –s to most verbs to make the –s form | hope eat | hope**s** eat**s** |
| When the base form ends in *ss, sh, ch*, or *x*, add –es and pronounce an extra syllable | miss wash catch mix | miss**es** wash**es** catch**es** mix**es** |
| When the base form ends in a consonant + y, change the y to i and add –es. | carry worry | carr**ies** worr**ies** |
| When the base form ends in a vowel + y, add –s but do not change the y. | pay enjoy | pay**s** enjoy**s** |
| Add –es to *go* and *do*. | go do | go**es** do**es** |

## Subject-Verb Agreement in the Simple Past Tense

There are two forms of *be* in the past: **was**/**were**

| Subject | Be | Example |
| --- | --- | --- |
| I/he/she/it/singular subjects | **was (not)** | I **was** late. Sue **was** late. |
| you/we/they/plural subjects | **were (not)** | We **were** late. The students **were** late. |

With any other verb, there is only one form in the past tense.

| Singular Subject | Plural Subject |
| --- | --- |
| I cried. | We **cried**. |
| Sue cried. | The students **cried**. |

## Subject-Verb Agreement in the Present Perfect Tenses

There are two forms in the present perfect: **have/has + past participle**

| Subject | Verb | Example |
| --- | --- | --- |
| I/you/we/they/plural subjects | **have (not)** | I **have finished**. You **have finished**. |
| he/she/it/singular subjects | **has (not)** | John **has finished**. The cycle **has finished**. |

There are two forms in the present perfect progressive: **have/has + been + verb-ing**

| Subject | Verb | Example |
| --- | --- | --- |
| I/you/we/they/plural subjects | **have (not)** | I **have been waiting** Sue and Lee **have been waiting**. |
| he/she/it/singular subjects | **has (not)** | My mother **has been waiting**. |

## Subject-Verb Agreement in Other Tenses

In the past perfect tense or with modals, the helper verbs have only one form.

| Past Perfect | Will | Might |
| --- | --- | --- |
| I had finished the project. | You **will be** famous. | They **might come** tomorrow. |
| He had finished the project. | She **will be** famous. | It **might come** tomorrow. |

## Two or More Subjects

When two or more subjects are joined by *and*, use the ***plural*** form of the verb.

* Doug *and* Jenny ***have*** cars.
* Lanai, Maui, *and* Oahu ***are*** part of the Hawaiian islands.

*Neither* and *either* take **singular verbs**. However, when two or more subjects are joined by *or* or *nor*, the verb has to agree with the subject that it is closer to.

* Either Amy *or* the children ***are***  home.
* Neither the children *nor* Amy **is**  home.

## Here and There

When we begin a sentence with *here* or *there*, the verb may be **singular** or **plural** depending on the nouns that follow.

* Here ***are*** my keys !
* Here **is** your check .
* There ***are*** many students .
* There **is** too much noise .

When two or more nouns follow *here* or *there*, the verb agrees with the nearest noun.

* Here ***are*** my glasses and my sweater .
* Here **is** my sweater and my glasses .
* There ***are*** some flowers and a card for me .
* There **is** a card and some flowers for me .

# Special Subject forms

Indefinite pronouns refer to a person, place, or thing in general (not specific).

**Singular**: another, anybody, anyone, anything, each, everybody, everyone, everything, nobody, no one, nothing, one, other, somebody, someone, something, either, neither

**Plural:** both, few, many, several, others

* Everybody **is** here.
* Nobody **is** home.
* Many ***have tried***.
* Others ***were*** absent.

Some nouns end in ***–s***, but they are **singular**. 🡪 economics, mathematics, news, physics, politics

* Mathematics **is** my favorite subject.
* The news **doesn’t look** good.

A gerund (verb + -*ing*) will take a **singular verb** when there is only one, but if there are two or more, they take a ***plural verb***.

* Playing checkers **is** my favorite hobby.
* Swimming and skiing ***are*** my favorite sports.

## Collective Nouns

This is a group of people or things that act as ONE unit, so these nouns take a **singular verb**.

**Collective Nouns:** army, association, audience, band, class, club, committee, company, crowd, family, gang, government, group, jury, organization, population, public, society, team

* The government **exists** for us.
* Society **needs** to participate.
* Our team **is** **winning**.

## Irregular Singular and Plural Nouns

Some nouns end in *s* but are singular: **news, politics, mathematics**.

Some nouns are plural although they do not end in *s*: **children, people, police**.

Use a dictionary when you are unsure of whether a word is singular or plural.

## Interrupting Words and Phrases

Prepositional phrases, adjective clauses, and phrases like *along with, together with, accompanied by, as well as,* and *in addition to* DO NOT AFFECT the verb.

* The value ~~of his homes~~ **is** **dropping**  quickly.
* Some students ~~who are in my creative writing class~~ ***write***  for the school newspaper.
* One ~~of the students~~  **is** absent.
* My parents , ~~along with my brother~~, ***are going to visit*** me next week.

## Expressions of Quantity

Fractions, percentages, and expressions of quantity, like *some of, all of, any of, most of, none of,* and *a lot of,* can be **singular** or ***plural***, depending on the noun that follows.

| Singular | Plural |
| --- | --- |
| Two-fifths of the milk is gone. | Two fifths of the students ***are*** early. |
| Fifty percent of the student body works . | Fifty percent of the students ***work*** . |
| Some of the orange is moldy. (part of it) | Some of the oranges ***are*** moldy. |
| Most of the pizza is gone. | Most of the pizzas ***are*** gone. |

We usually use a **singular verb** with expressions of time, money, distance, weight, and measurement because it is considered a SINGLE UNIT.

* Thirty dollars **is**  all I have.
* Three miles **is** not too far to run.
* Three days **is** a long time to wait.
* Twenty minutes **is**  enough.
* Two cups of milk **is**  enough.
* Two grams of chocolate **is** enough.

# Activities

Check off each box once you have completed the activity.

## 1. Subject-Verb Agreement Review

Review the information on this sheet. Then, answer the following questions.

| Write the answers. |
| --- |
| What does *subject verb agreement* mean? |
|  |
| What does *third person singular* mean? |
|  |

## 2. Online Quiz

Go to http://tinyurl.com/SubjectVerbAgreementDLAQuiz and take the [Subject Verb Agreement DLA Quiz](http://tinyurl.com/SubjectVerbAgreementDLAQuiz). You must score at least 80% on the exercises before seeing a tutor. After you complete the task, **PLEASE ASK A LAB TUTOR OR FRONT DESK ATTENDANT TO PRINT THE PAGE THAT HAS YOUR SCORE. DO NOT EXIT THE PROGRAM UNTIL THIS PAGE HAS BEEN PRINTED (FREE OF CHARGE).** If you have any other questions, do not hesitate to ask a lab tutor.

## Choose 3a or 3b Below

## 3a. Correct Your Own Writing

Collect some of your graded work. Find examples of mistakes that you made with subject-verb agreement, write them down below, and then correct them.

| Write your sentences. |
| --- |
| 1a. Original Sentence: |
| 1b. Corrected Sentence: |
| 2a. Original Sentence: |
| 2b. Corrected Sentence: |
| 3a. Original Sentence: |
| 3b. Corrected Sentence: |
| 4a. Original Sentence: |
| 4b. Corrected Sentence: |

**If you do not have your own essay to work with, please complete the supplemental activity below (3b).**

Place the following nouns under the correct verb: *don’t give* or *doesn’t give*. Make sure you pay attention to subject-verb agreement. The first two have already been done for you.

**I**

**you**

**Mr. Kim**

**the Bensons**

**people**

**the United States**

**you and I**

**the instructions for this game**

**the government**

**a person**

**smoking cigarettes**

**two-fifths of the students**

**the woman who makes pies**

**some of the children**

**the jury**

**politics**

**fifty percent of the population**

**twenty dollars**

| don’t give | doesn’t give |
| --- | --- |
| I  you |  |

## 4. Review

Go to https://mtsac2.mywconline.com and use the [Mt. SAC Writing Center Appointment System](https://mtsac2.mywconline.com/) to make a DLA appointment, or sign-up to see a tutor on the “**DLA Walk-in**” list in the Writing Center. During your session with a tutor, explain your work to demonstrate your understanding of subject-verb agreement. Refer to your own graded writing (or the completed activity) and explain to the tutor strategies that you used to create sentences with subject-verb agreement.

Student’s Signature:

Tutor’s Signature

Date:

Date:

If you are an individual with a disability and need a greater level of accessibility for any document in The Writing Center or on The Writing Center’s website, please contact the Mt. SAC Accessible Resource Centers for Students, [access@mtsac.edu](mailto:access@mtsac.edu), (909) 274-4290.

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