

Beginner Rules in Subject and Verb Agreement



The basic rule states that a singular subject takes a singular verb, while a plural subject takes a plural verb.

NOTE: The trick is in knowing whether the subject is singular or plural. The next trick is recognizing a singular or plural verb.

Hint: Verbs do not form their plurals by adding an s as nouns do. In order to determine which verb is singular and which one is plural, think of which verb you would use with *he* or *she* and which verb you would use with *they*.

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Rule 2.

Two singular subjects connected by either/or or neither/nor require a singular verb as in Rule 1.

Examples: *Neither Juan nor Carmen is available.*
Either Kiana or Casey is helping today with stage decorations.

Rule 3.

When I is one of the two subjects connected by either/or or neither/nor, put it second and follow it with the singular verb am.

Example: *Neither she nor I am going to the festival.*

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Rule 4.

When a singular subject is connected by *or* or *nor* to a plural subject, put the plural subject last and use a plural verb.

Example: *The serving bowl or the plates go on that shelf.*

Rule 5.

When a singular and plural subject are connected by *either/or* or *neither/nor*, put the plural subject last and use a plural verb.

Example: *Neither Jenny nor the others are available.*

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Examples: *The politician, along with the newsmen, is expected shortly.*
Excitement, as well as nervousness, is the cause of her shaking.

Rule 8.

The pronouns each, everyone, every one, everybody, anyone, anybody, someone, and somebody are singular and require singular verbs. Do not be misled by what follows of.

Examples: Each of the girls sings well.
Every one of the cakes is gone.

NOTE: Everyone is one word when it means everybody. Every one is two words when the meaning is each one.