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 receiving credit for completion. Students are welcome to meet with a tutor if they need help, but please be aware that students might need a second appointment for review and signature in that case. 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 “**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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