

Subject-Verb Agreement

Remember:

1. With compound subjects joined by **and**, use a plural verb.

Incorrect: The movement of the girl's dress and the tossing of her hair *captivates* the boy.

Correct: The movement of the girl's dress and the tossing of her hair *captivate* the boy.

But when **each or **every** precedes the compound subject, use a singular verb.

Incorrect: Every boy and girl are required to have parental permission.

Correct: Every boy and girl *is* required to have parental permission.

2. With compound subjects joined by **or** or **nor**, make the verb agree with the subject nearer to the verb.

Incorrect: Either *Hamlet* or *Othello* *are* going to be performed this year.

Correct: Either *Hamlet* or *Othello* *is* going to be performed this year.

Incorrect: Maria could not decide whether her math class or her two science classes *was* harder.

Correct: Maria could not decide whether her math class or her two science classes *were* harder.

Incorrect: Neither the clerks nor the assistant manager *were* watching the register.

Correct: Neither the clerks nor the assistant manager *was* watching the register.

- **3. **Each, either, neither, one, everybody, somebody, nobody, everyone, someone, and anyone** require singular verbs.

Incorrect: Each of the team members *were* given a small replica of the championship trophy.

Correct: Each of the team members *was* given a small replica of the championship trophy.

Incorrect: Neither of the teachers are receiving tenure this year.

Correct: Neither of the teachers *is* receiving tenure this year.

4. Quantitative words such as **some, half, all, part, most, and more** are singular and plural depending on the nouns to which they refer.

Correct: All of the members *were* notified, and most have arrived.

Correct: Most of the committee's time *was* wasted in senseless debate.