

03

Subject-Verb Concord

We often need to write sentences which contain only a subject and a verb. The subject could be a noun, a proper noun (name of a person or place) or an abstract noun.

Rules Involved in Subject-Verb Agreement

- The basic rule is Singular Subject → Singular Verb
Plural Subject → Plural Verb
- When we make a sentence, we tell something about a person or a thing. The part of the sentence which states the person or thing in the sentence is called the **subject** of the sentence and the part which gives us more information about the subject is called the **predicate** of the sentence.

A subject can be

Singular	–	A book, an egg, a key
Plural	–	Women, boys, flowers
Uncountable	–	Sugar, water, air

Subject and Verb in Person and Number

The subject and verb must agree in person and number. If the subject is singular, the verb should also be singular. If the subject is plural, the verb should also be plural.

- (i) Singular Subject → Singular Verb
e.g. **I am** in the classroom.
- (ii) Plural Subject → Plural Verb
e.g. **They are** in the classroom.

- (iii) When two or more singular subjects are joined together, plural verb is used.
e.g. Mrs and Mr Gupta **are** going to the market.
- (iv) When two subjects together express one idea, singular verb is used.
e.g. Earning your bread and butter **is** essential for living. (Bread and butter is symbolic and expresses one idea)
- (v) Everybody, somebody, nobody, anybody and anyone take a singular verb.
e.g. Nobody **is** perfect in this world.
- (vi) Nouns joined by 'and' take a plural verb.
e.g. Sita and Gita are going to Mumbai.
- (vii) If subjects are joined by 'or', 'nor', 'either', 'neither', the verb agrees with the subject nearest to it.
e.g. He or his friends **are** to be blamed.
- (viii) The title of a book, play, story or a musical composition, even though plural, takes a singular verb.
e.g. The Three Musketeers **is** a very good book.
- (ix) When a plural noun comes between a singular subject and its verb, the verb agrees with the singular subject.
e.g. Each of the apples **is** juicy.
- (x) If the words are joined to a singular subject by 'with', a singular verb is used
e.g. The Prime Minister, **with** his cabinet colleagues, is supposed to be present.

- (xi) If subjects are joined by 'as well as', the verb must agree with the first subject, irrespective of whether it is singular or plural.
e.g. My friends **as well as** my father **are** going abroad.
- (xii) Two nouns qualified by each or every, even though connected by 'and', require a singular verb.
e.g. Every boy and every girl **was** given vaccination.
- (xiii) *None* is singular but takes a plural/singular verb according to the sense involved in the sentence.
e.g. (a) None **were** given a chance to speak.
(b) I asked for a maid, but none **was** there.
- (ivx) When the plural noun is a proper name for some single object or some collective unit, it must be followed by a singular verb.
e.g. The United Nations **is** not an effective body for world peace.
- (xv) Nouns like glasses (spectacles), pants, trousers, shoes, people, police, scissors always take a plural verb. Also, descriptive nouns like the rich, the blind, the guilty are always plural.
- e.g. (a) Your shoes **are** glossy.
But when used with 'a pair of ', they are singular.
(b) A pair of branded shoes **is** quite expensive these days.
- (xvi) Uncountable nouns like advice, news, media, stationery, weather, progress are singular and take a singular verb.
e.g. One must not offer **advice** unless asked.
- (xvii) Nouns like news, physics, economics, measles, cards, aerobics are plural in form, but they are treated as singular.
e.g. Aerobics **is** a good exercise.
- (xviii) A collective noun takes a singular verb when the collection is thought of as one whole. It takes a plural verb when the stress is on the individuals.
e.g. (a) The cartel of oil supplying countries **has** submitted its report.
(b) The cartel of oil supplying countries **are** divided over the issue.
- (ixx) A singular verb is used when a plural noun denotes some specific quantity or amount.
e.g. (a) One-fifty rupees **is** too much for this bag.
(b) Two-thirds of the city **is** in ruins.

Multiple Choice Questions

Directions (Q. Nos. 1-20) Choose the correct option to complete the sentence.

- 01.** Climbing up steep mountain slopes both endurance and stamina.
(a) require (b) requires
(c) required (d) requiring
- 02.** After using the computer for a long time, looking into the distance for about five minutes the eyes.
(a) relax (b) relaxes
(c) relaxed (d) relaxing
- 03.** The disabled easier access to public buildings.
(a) demand (b) has demanding
(c) were demanded (d) demanding
- 04.** The French noted for their food and fashion.
(a) are (b) is
(c) was (d) has
- 05.** Buying a life insurance policy to ensure your children have some security.
(a) help (b) helps
(c) helped (d) helping
- 06.** At least half an hour of exercise a day wonders for one's health.
(a) do (b) does
(c) done (d) doing
- 07.** The owner of these books
(a) have gone (b) were gone
(c) has gone (d) is gone
- 08.** Ten books of this library
(a) is missing (b) are missing
(c) has been missing (d) has missed
- 09.** Either he or you
(a) has to go (b) have to go
(c) is to go (d) was going
- 10.** The father with his sons
(a) was sleeping (b) have slept
(c) are sleeping (d) sleep
- 11.** He and I like them.
(a) does not (b) has not
(c) do not (d) cannot
- 12.** The news by him.
(a) were brought (b) have brought
(c) has brought (d) was brought
- 13.** Neither he nor I
(a) is going (b) am going
(c) were going (d) has gone
- 14.** The frogs at the cottage very loudly.
(a) croaks (b) croak
(c) croaked (d) croaking
- 15.** Many a girl
(a) has seen this movie
(b) have seen this movie
(c) see this movie
(d) are going to see this movie
- 16.** There a cow and a horse in the field.
(a) was (b) is
(c) were (d) will
- 17.** Your friend too much.
(a) talk (b) talks
(c) talking (d) None of these
- 18.** The man with the roses like your brother.
(a) look (b) looks
(c) looking (d) None of these
- 19.** The women in the pool well.
(a) swimming
(b) swims
(c) swim
(d) had swimming

20. Basant a cab.

- (a) drives (b) drive
(c) driving (d) were driving

Directions (Q. Nos. 21-30) Find out which part of the sentence has an error. If a sentence is free from error then choose option (d) as your answer.

21. The safety of (a)/my brothers and (b)/sisters are in danger. (c)/No error (d)

22. There is only (a)/a few companies that can (b)/ handle projects of this magnitude. (c)/ No error (d)

23. Neither the woman (a)/nor the children (b)/was admitted. (c)/No error (d).

24. Do you know that it was(a)/ I who has done (b)/ this piece of beautiful work? (c)/ No error (d)

25. Curry and Rice are (a)/the favourite food (b)/of the Punjabis. (c)/No error (d)

26. Much of your success (a)/and prosperity depend (b)/on your own efforts. (c)/No error (d)

27. The branch manager (a)/ and the area officer (b)/ is on leave today. (c)/ No error (d)

28. The Prime Minister (a)/ as well as his ministers are (b)/ busy in campaigning for elections. (c)/ No error (d)

29. Rohit and Suneel (a)/ has played very well (b)/ in the recent cricket tournament. (c)/ No error (d)

30. The number of accidents are (a)/ increasing day by day (b)/ on the Delhi Metro Route. (c)/ No error (d)

ANSWERS

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|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 1. (b) | 2. (b) | 3. (a) | 4. (a) | 5. (b) | 6. (b) | 7. (c) | 8. (b) | 9. (b) | 10. (a) |
| 11. (c) | 12. (d) | 13. (b) | 14. (b) | 15. (a) | 16. (c) | 17. (b) | 18. (b) | 19. (c) | 20. (a) |
| 21. (c) | 22. (a) | 23. (c) | 24. (b) | 25. (a) | 26. (b) | 27. (c) | 28. (b) | 29. (b) | 30. (a) |