The Writing Center
DLA: Subject-Verb Agreement

This DLA is a writable PDF form. You can enter your answers directly into this document.

YOU MUST DOWNLOAD AND SAVE THIS FILE TO YOUR COMPUTER.

Do not complete this form in a web browser. You will not be able to save your work.

Student Name:

Important Note

To get completion credit for this DLA, make sure you complete all the required activities. If you'd like help while working on a specific DLA, you can meet with a specialist at the Writing Center. Keep in mind that you might need to schedule a second appointment to review your work, check your understanding, and get your completion credit. You can only review **ONE** DLA per appointment. (Check the last section of this DLA for information on making your appointment and receiving completion credit for your work).

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**.

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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 *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!
- There are many students.
- Here is your check.
- 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.
- There ***are*** some flowers and a card for me.
- Here **is** my sweater and my glasses.
- 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.
- Many ***have tried***.
- Nobody **is** home.
- Others ***were*** absent.

Some nouns end in ***–s***, but they are **singular**. EX: 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.

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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.

What does *subject verb agreement* mean?

What does *third person singular* mean?

☐ 2. Online Quiz

Complete the Subject Verb Agreement DLA Quiz by clicking the link or using the QR Code below. You must score at least 80% on the quiz before meeting with a specialist. After you complete the task, please take a screenshot of the page that has your score and show it to your specialist. Do not exit the quiz until you take the screenshot.

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.

1a. Original Sentence:

1b. Corrected Sentence:

2a. Original Sentence:

2b. Corrected Sentence:

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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 and I**	**the woman who makes pies**
you	**the instructions for this game**	**some of the children**
Mr. Kim	**the government**	**the jury**
the Bensons	**a person**	**politics**
people	**smoking cigarettes**	**fifty percent of the population**
the United States	**two-fifths of the students**	**twenty dollars**

don't give	doesn't give
I **you**	

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☐ 4. Review the DLA/Receive Completion Credit

1. Go to EAB Navigate and make an appointment (online or in-person).
2. Attend your session and be prepared to explain your understanding of the information you've learned in the DLA. Consider the main concept you learned and how you might use this in your future assignments/classes.
3. If your professor asks you to provide proof, you can review the "appointment summary report" through EAB Navigate (app or desktop). You will find all Writing Center appointments under "appointment summary reports" (app or desktop). Look for the summary report for your DLA appointment. This is where your writing specialist will indicate the title of your DLA and state whether it is "completed" or "not completed." If it is marked as "not completed," book a follow up appointment to complete.

Note: Appointment summary reports are also sent weekly to your instructor on record. If there is an issue, please contact us at writingcenter@mtsac.edu or (909) 274-5325.

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, (909) 274-4290.

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