

Check Subject-Verb Agreement

In English, the subject of the sentence and its verb must agree. In other words, if the subject is singular (Rule 1, below), the verb must take the singular form. If the subject is plural (Rule 3, below), the verb must take the plural form. The verb pattern for both singular and plurals subjects is the same in the simple past tense and future. Have a look at the chart below (adapted from Fernando et al., 1998, pp. 201–204) for a set of guidelines on Subject-Verb agreement.

S-V Agreement Rules (Fernando et al., 1998, pp. 201–204).	Examples (with verb/verb phrase in bold)
1. Singular pronouns (e.g. “each,” “every,” “anyone,” “everybody,” “someone,” “nobody,” “either,” “neither”) and other singular subjects take a singular form of the verb.	Each child is eligible. No one wants to pay taxes.
2. Compound subjects modified by “each” and “every” take a singular form of the verb.	Every nurse and doctor carries a great responsibility. Each boy and girl receives a new school bag.
3. Plural pronouns (e.g. “all,” “both,” “several,” “many”) and other plural subjects take a plural form of the verb.	All angles need to be considered.
4. Words joined to a subject by “with,” “including,” “as well as,” “together with,” and “in addition to” do not affect the verb (i.e. the verb stills agree with the subject).	The cupboard with all its fixtures sells for \$300. The computer and table—including the mouse— are brand new.
5. A collective noun takes either a singular or plural verb, depending on whether the group is thought of as one unit or as several individuals.	Our team is the best. The Hawks are playing tomorrow.
6. Nouns plural in form but singular in meaning take a singular form of the verb.	Politics is boring at times. The measles is still spreading .
7. If two subjects are joined by “or,” “either ... or,” or “neither ... nor” the verb agrees with <u>the closest subject</u> .	Either the President or <u>the senators</u> are making the decision. Neither the workers nor <u>the boss</u> likes this venue.

References

Fernando, J. N., Habana, P. I., & Cinco, A. L. (1998). *College English for today*.

National Bookstore.