



1. *A singular subject takes a singular verb, whereas a plural subject takes a plural verb.*

❖ A dog barks at night.

❖ Dogs bark at night.

A plural verb is used with two or more subjects when they are connected by “and”.

❖ He and his friends have arrived here.

❖ Joseph and John are planning for their friend’s birthday party.

2. *If two singular nouns refer to the same person or thing, or two subjects together express one idea, the verb must be singular.*

Note: If two singular nouns are joined by “and” and the first singular noun is preceded by articles (a/an/the) or possessive adjectives (my, our, your, his, her, their) are used as the subject of the sentence, it expresses the same person. So, it takes a singular verb.

Note: If two singular nouns are joined by “and” and the first singular noun is preceded by articles (a/an/the) or possessive adjectives (my, our, your, his, her, their) are used before each singular noun are used as the subject of the sentence, it expresses two different persons. So, it takes a plural verb.

❖ Bread and butter is my favourite breakfast.

❖ Rice and curry is a popular dish.

❖ The principal and secretary was there.

❖ The principal and the secretary were there.

3. A singular verb is used with distances, periods of time, sums of money, etc., when considered as a unit.

- ❖ Three miles is too far to walk.
- ❖ Five years is the maximum sentence for that offense.
- ❖ Ten dollars is a high price to pay.
- ❖ Two hours is a long time to wait.

4. Title and names of plural form also take a singular verb when they refer to one thing.

- ❖ Star-Wars is a popular film.
- ❖ The Arabian Nights is my favourite book.

5. We use a singular verb after a singular subject with every, each, any, everyone, someone, anything and nothing.

- ❖ Every pupil has a book.
- ❖ Someone is knocking at the door.

6. If two or more than two singular nouns are joined by 'and' and 'each'/'every' is used before the first singular noun or each singular noun, then it functions as a singular subject. So, it takes a singular verb.

- ❖ Each pen and pencil is red.
- ❖ Each pen and each pencil is red.

7. When two subjects are joined by 'or', 'nor', 'either...or', 'neither...nor', then the verb is used according to the number and person of the second subject.

- ❖ Either the father or his sons were punished.
- ❖ Nikhil or his friend has done this.

8. When two subjects are joined by 'with', 'together with', 'additional with', 'as well as', 'along with', 'accompanied by' etc, then the verb agrees with the first subject.

- ❖ The minister with all his followers is waiting inside the room.
- ❖ The principal with all the teachers is coming here.

9. If a singular countable noun is used after 'either' and 'neither', then it functions as singular subject. So, it takes a singular verb.

- ❖ Either pen writes well.
- ❖ Neither student was laborious.

10. When a plural noun is placed with a real singular subject such as one, each, either, neither, none with the help of "of", then the verb must be singular.

- ❖ Either of the two cats is black.
- ❖ Neither of the criminals has been arrested.
- ❖ One of the boys was ill.
- ❖ Each of the girls is clever.

11. If a sentence begins with 'nothing but' or 'everything but', it functions as a singular subject. So, it takes a singular verb.

- ❖ Nothing but tree was there.
- ❖ Everything but pens was available there.

12. A collective noun takes a singular verb when it is thought of as a whole and takes a plural verb when the individuals are separately thought of.

- ❖ The committee has agreed to take the unanimous decision.
- ❖ The committee are divided in their opinions.

13. Some nouns which are singular in form but plural in meaning, take a plural verb.

- ❖ The police are questioning a man.
- ❖ People have to obey the rules.



14. Some nouns which are plural in form but singular in meaning, take a singular verb.

- ❖ The news is true.
- ❖ Physics is branch of science.

15. "The number" is used in the sense of definite number. So, it functions as a singular subject and it takes a singular verb.

- ❖ The number of boys is forty.
- ❖ The number of students appeared for the examination is thirty.

16. "A number of", "a large number of", "a great number of" are used in the sense of "many" for expressing indefinite number. So, it functions as a plural subject and it takes a plural verb.

- ❖ A number of students were present in the school.
- ❖ A large number of workers were protesting in front of the office.

17.If "noun+ preposition+ same noun" is used as the subject of the sentence it functions as a singular subject. So, it takes a singular verb.

- ❖ **Woman after woman has come to see my wife.**
- ❖ **Day after day has been passed.**



18.Nouns like furniture, news, information, luggage, baggage, percentage, poetry, knowledge, electricity, behaviour, scenery crockery, stationery, bakery etc. are used as singular uncountable nouns. So they take a singular verb.

- ❖ **The news is true.**
- ❖ **Her knowledge of physics is rich.**

19.The verb, after relative pronouns -which, that, who, is used according to the number and person of the noun or pronoun used before them.

- ❖ **The girl who is playing is my daughter.**
- ❖ **It is I who have written this letter.**

20. Nouns like scissors, trousers, spectacles, pants etc are used as plural noun because they have two parts. So a plural verb is used with them in a sentence.

- ❖ His spectacles have been framed.
- ❖ The trousers are new.

Note: If "a pair of" is used before the above mentioned plural nouns like scissors, trousers etc, it is considered to be singular. So, a singular verb is used after it.

Example:

A pair of trousers is new.



21. When an "of" (one third of, half of, some of, a quarter of, enough of etc) phrase follows a percentage, fraction or an amount, the verb agrees with the noun/pronoun closest to it.

- ❖ One third of the milk is yet to be sold.
- ❖ Ten percent of the tea is useless.
- ❖ Three fourths of the books are ready.
- ❖ Half of the mangoes were rotten.

22. If "more than one + singular countable noun" is used as the subject of the verb, it functions as a singular subject. So it takes a singular verb.

- ❖ More than one girl was absent.
- ❖ More than one boy has gone to the party.

Note: If "more than two/ three + plural countable noun" is used as the subject of the sentence, it functions as a plural subject. So, it takes a plural verb.

- ❖ More than two boys were present.
- ❖ More than three glasses were broken.

Note: If "more+ plural countable noun+ than one" is used as the subject of the sentence then it takes a plural verb.

- ❖ More pens than one were brought.
- ❖ More clothes than one were displayed.



WORKSHEET

1. *Everyone (has/have) done his or her homework.*
2. *Each of the students (is/are) responsible for doing his or her work.*
3. *Either my father or my brothers (is/are) going to sell the car.*
4. *Neither my sisters nor my mother (is/are) going to sell the house.*
5. *The samples on the tray in the lab (need/needs) testing.*
6. *Neither the dogs nor the cat (is/are) very hungry.*
7. *Either the girls or the boy (walk/walks) in the evening.*
8. *Either the boy or the girls (walk/walks) in the evening.*
9. *At the end of the fall (comes/come) the hard tests.*
10. *The slaughter of animals for their fur (has/have) caused controversy.*
11. *The student, as well as his teacher, (was/were) going on the field trip.*
12. *Both of my roommates (has/have) decided to live in the dorms.*
13. *Your friendship over the years and your support (has/have) meant a great deal to us.*
14. *Hamilton Family Center, a shelter for teenage runaways in San Francisco, (offers/offer) a wide variety of services.*
15. *The main source of income for Trinidad (is/are) oil and pitch.*
16. *The chances of your being promoted (is/are) excellent.*
17. *There (was/were) a Pokémon card stuck to the refrigerator.*
18. *Neither the professor nor his assistants (was/were) able to solve the mystery of the eerie glow in the laboratory.*
19. *Many hours at the driving range (has/have) led us to design golf balls with GPS locators in them.*
20. *Discovered in the soil of our city garden (was/were) a button dating from the Civil War dating from the turn of the century.*
21. *Every year, during the midsummer festival, the smoke of village bonfires (fills/fill) the sky.*
22. *The story performers (was/were) surrounded by children and adults eager to see magical tales.*
23. *One of the main reasons for elephant poaching (is/are) the profits received from selling the ivory tusks.*
24. *Not until my interview with Dr. Chang (was/were) other possibilities opened to me.*
25. *Batik cloth from Bali, blue and white ceramics from Cambodia, and a bocce ball from Turin (has/have) made Hannah's room the talk of the dorm.*

26. The board of directors, ignoring the wishes of the neighbourhood, (has /have) voted to allow further development.

27. Measles (is/are) a contagious childhood disease.

28. The presence of certain bacteria in our bodies (is/are) one of the factors that (determine/determines) our overall health.

29. Leah is the only one of the many applicants who (has/have) the ability to step into this job.

30. Neither the explorer nor his companions (was/were) ever seen again.

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