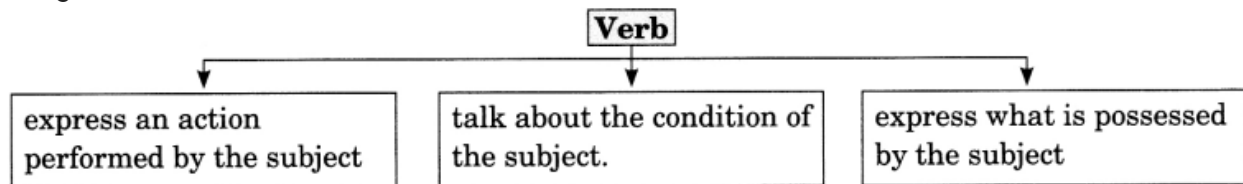


Subject Verb Agreement Exercises

Verb comes from the Latin verbum, meaning, a word. It is so called because it is the most important word in a sentence. A verb is a word used to assert something about some person or thing.



Basic Rule: A singular subject (she, Amit, car) takes a singular verb (is, goes, shines), whereas a plural subject takes a plural verb.

Example:

- The list of items is/are on the desk.
- If you know that list is the subject, then you will use is as the verb.

Rule 1: A subject will come before a phrase beginning with of. This is a key rule for understanding subjects. The word of is the culprit in many, perhaps most, subject- verb mistakes.

- Incorrect: A bouquet of yellow roses lend colour and fragrance to the room.
- Correct: A bouquet of yellow roses lends ... (bouquet lends, not roses lend)

Rule 2: Two singular subjects connected by or, either/or, or neither/nor require a singular verb.

Examples

- My brother or my sister is arriving by airplane today.
- Neither Paval nor Ditva is available.
- Either Kiran or Jvoti is helping today with stage decorations.

Rule 3: The verb in an or, either/or, or neither/nor sentence agrees with the noun or pronoun closest to it.

Examples

- Neither the plates nor the serving bowl goes on that shelf.
- Neither the serving bowl nor the plates go on that shelf.

Rule 4: As a general rule, use a plural verb with two or more subjects when they are connected by and.

Example:

- A car and a bike are her means of transportation.

Rule 5a: Sometimes the subject is separated from the verb by such words as along with, as well as, besides, not, etc. These words and phrases are not part of the subject. Ignore them and use a singular verb when the subject is singular.

Examples

- The actor, along with the actress, is expected shortly.
- Excitement, as well as nervousness, is the cause of her shaking.

Rule 5b: Brackets are not part of the subject.

Example:

- Chetan (and his trusty mutt) was always welcome.
- If this seems awkward, try rewriting the sentence.

Rule 6: In sentences beginning with here or there, the true subject follows the verb.

Examples

- There are seven hurdles to jump.
- There is a high hurdle to jump.
- Here are the books.

Rule 7: Use a singular verb with distances, periods of time, sums of money, etc., when considered as a unit.

Examples

- Nine miles is too far to walk.
- Two years is the maximum sentence for that offense.
- Thousand rupees is a high price to pay.

Rule 8: With words that indicate portions—For example, a lot, a majority, some, all—

Rule 1 given earlier in this section is reversed, and we are guided by the noun after of. If the noun after of is singular, use a singular verb. If it is plural. We use a plural verb.

Examples

- A lot of the pie has disappeared.
- A lot of the pies have disappeared.
- A third of the city is unemployed.
- A third of the people are unemployed.

- All of the pie is gone.
- All of the pies are gone.
- Some of the pie is missing.
- Some of the pies are missing.

Rule 9: With collective nouns such as group, jury, family, audience, population, the verb might be singular or plural, depending largely on the writer's intent.
Examples

- arrived OR has arrived.
- Most of the jury is here OR are here.
- A third of the population was not in favour OR were not in favour of the bill.

Rule 10: The word 'were' replaces 'was' in sentences that express a wish or are contrary to a fact:

Example:

- If Jiwan were here, you'd be sorry.

Shouldn't Jiwan be followed by was, not were, given that Jiwan is singular? But Jiwan isn't actually here, so we say were, not was. The sentence demonstrates the subjunctive mood, which is used to express things that are hypothetical, wishful, imaginary, or factually contradictory.

Examples

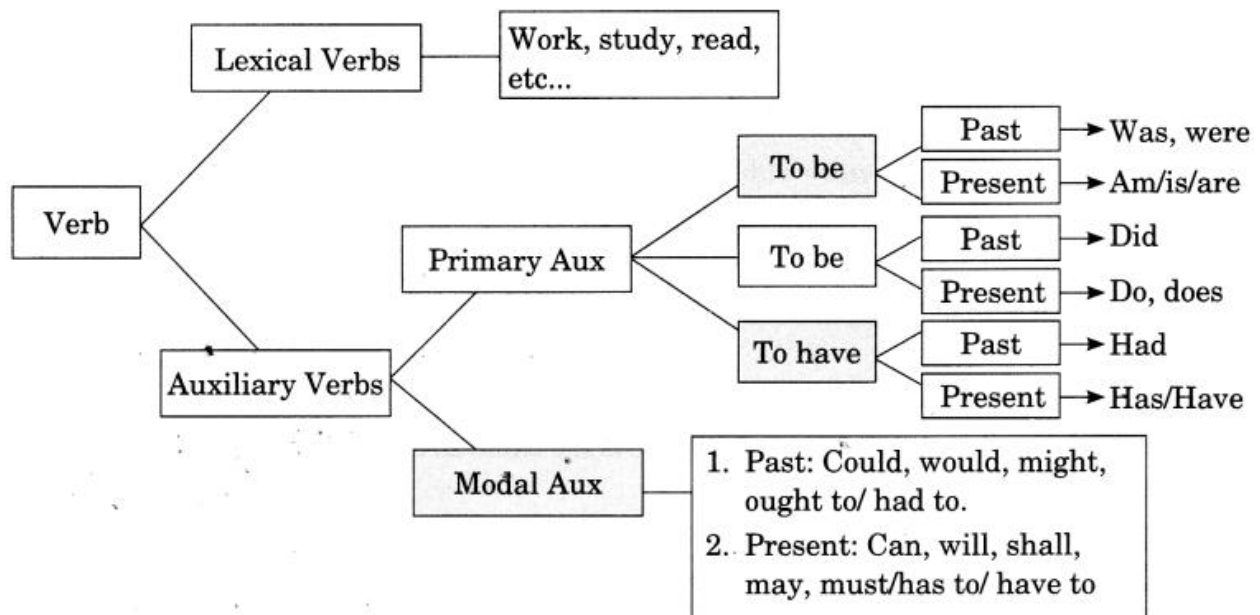
- I wish it were Sunday.
- He requested that she raise her hand.

Verb may tell us

1. What a person or thing does; as;
He sings a song.
The clock ticks.
What is done to a person or thing; as:
The teacher scolded him.
I feel sorry for what I did.
2. A verb often consists of more than one word; as;
I have read the book.
The ball has been lost.
3. Forms of Verbs:
There are three forms of verb: Infinitive, Past Simple and Past Participle For example:

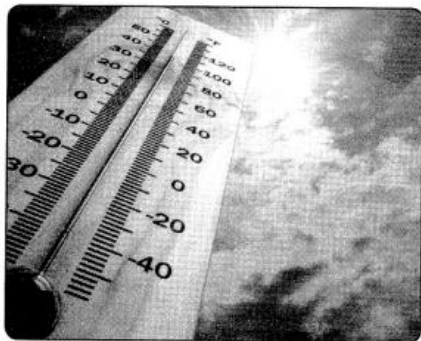
Infinitive	Past Simple	Past Participle
be	was/were	been
blow	blew	blown
drink	drank	drunk
feed	fed	fed
hang	hung	hung
know	knew	known

Types of Verbs

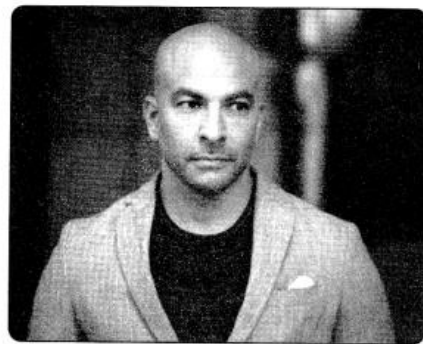


Helping Verb

The words am, is, are also verbs, but they are not action words. They are the simple present tense of the verb be. We use am with the pronoun I, and is with the pronouns he, she and it. Use are with the pronouns you, we and they.



It **is** very hot today.
It **is** not very comfortable.



I **am** Peter. I **am** not Paul.
Here's table to help you remember how to use **am**, **is** and **are**:

	Singular	Plural
First-person	I am	we are
Second person	you are	you are
Third-person	he is	they are
	she is	they are
	it is	they are

Learn these short forms called contractions:

- I am = I'm
- they = they're
- you are = you're
- we are = we're

Use the present progressive tense to talk about things you have planned to do, or things that are going to happen in the future. To form the present progressive tense, use am, is

and are as helping verbs or auxiliary verbs.



We **are** you **taking** me to the zoo?

Have and Has

The verbs have and has are used to say what people own or possess. They are also used to talk about things that people do or get, such as illnesses. These words are the simple present tense of the verb have.



We have breakfast at 7:00 A.M.

He **has** a lot of stamps.

She **has** long hair.

Our house **has** large windows.

I **have** a younger brother.



Peter has a sore knee



Monkeys have long tails.

Use has with he, she, it and with singular nouns. Use have with I, you, we, they and with plural nouns. Here is a table to help you remember the rules:

	Singular	Plural
First-person	I have	we have
Second person	you have	you have
Third-person	he has	they have
	she has	they have
	it has	they have

Subject Verb Agreement Exercises Solved Examples

Question 1.

Choose the correct form of the verb that agrees with the subject.

1. Annie and her brother (is, are) at school.
2. Either my mother or my father (is, are) coming to the meeting.
3. The dog or the cats (is, are) outside.
4. Either my shoes or your coat (is, are) always on the floor.
5. George and Tamara (doesn't, don't) want to see that movie.
6. Benito (doesn't, don't) know the answer.
7. One of my sisters (is, are) going on a trip to France.
8. The man with all the birds (live, lives) on my street.
9. The movie, including all the previews, (take, takes) about two hours to watch.
10. The players, as well as the captain, (want, wants) to win.

Answer:

1. are
2. is

- 3. are
- 4. is
- 5. don't
- 6. doesn't
- 7. is
- 8. lives
- 9. takes
- 10. want

Question 2.

Complete the following sentences using an appropriate auxiliary verb form.

(i) You have been riding non-stop for hours. You _____ be very tired.

- (a) must
- (b) can
- (c) ought

(ii) She _____ be about forty.

- (a) must
- (b) will
- (c) can

(iii) I know I left my phone on this table and it is not here now. Somebody _____ it.

- (a) must take
- (b) will have taken
- (c) can have taken

(iv) That _____ be true. She will never do something like that.

- (a) can't
- (b) shouldn't
- (c) wouldn't

(v) You _____ him a fool. It really upset him.

- (a) needn't call
- (b) couldn't have called
- (c) shouldn't have called

(vi) The doctor said I _____ give up smoking.

- (a) must
- (b) can
- (c) ought

Subject Verb Agreement Exercises Practice Examples

Question 1.

1. Each of the girls (look-looks) _____ good on stage.
2. Everybody (was-were) _____ asked to remain quiet.
3. Neither of the men (is-are) _____ here yet.
4. (Is-Are) _____ each of the girls ready to leave?
5. Several of the sheep (is-are) _____ sick.
6. Some members of the faculty (is-are) _____ present.
7. Nobody in the class (has-have) _____ the answer.
8. Each of the girls (observe-observes) _____ all the regulations.
9. All of the milk (is-are) _____ gone.
10. Most of the seats (was-were) _____ taken.

Question 2.

Choose the correct verb and fill in the blanks:

1. The taste of these mangoes different, (is/are)
2. I milk every day, (drink/drinks)
3. My mother food, (cook/cooks)
4. Gulliver's Travels a famous book, (is/are)
5. The teacher the students, (teach/teaches)
6. Farmers seeds in the field, (sow/sows)
7. My sister a cake on my birthday, (bake/bakes)
8. The sun in the east, (rise/rises)
9. Lata Mangeshkar beautifully, (sing/sings)
10. Slow and steady the race, (win/wins)

Question 3.

Circle the correct verb in each of the sentences given below.

1. Cancer (is-are) one of the most deadly diseases.
2. One hundred rupees (is-are) not a lot of money for some people.
3. She (doesn't-don't) look very well today.
4. Twenty minutes (is-are) the amount of time it takes me to get home from work.
5. It (doesn't-don't) seem so cold today.
6. Gymnastics (is-are) easy for Anita.
7. Interesting news (is-are) what sells our paper.
8. A pound of cookies (cost-costs) about a dollar.
9. They (doesn't-don't) think they'll win the game tonight.
10. He (don't-doesn't) speak very well.