

## Subject – Verb Agreement Clues or "Rules"

Sentences: Clue (or rule):

- 1-2 Make the subject and verb agree when words intervene between them.
- 3 The grammatical number of the subject does not change with the addition of expressions beginning with such words as the following: *accompanied by, along with, as well as, in addition to, including, no less than, not to mention, together with.*
- 4-6 Subjects joined by *and* are usually plural.
- 7-9 Singular subjects joined by *or, either . . . or, neither . . . nor* take a singular verb.
- 10-11 If one subject is singular and one is plural, the verb agrees with the nearer subject.
- 12-13 The verb also agrees with the nearer subject in person.
- 14 Do not let inverted word order cause you to make a mistake in agreement.
- 15-17 When used as subjects, such words as *each, either, one, everybody, and anyone* regularly take singular verbs.
- 18-19 *Every* or *each* preceding singular subjects joined by *and* calls for a singular verb.
- 20-23 Collective nouns take a singular verb when they refer to the group as a unit.
- 24-26 Collective nouns take a plural verb when they refer to individuals or parts of the group.
- 27-28 Some nouns (such as *athletics, politics, series, deer, and sheep*) can be either singular or plural depending on meaning.

This quiz is provided by Eryn Baack at <http://eslbee.com>. This quiz and other subject-verb agreement quizzes are available online at [http://eslbee.com/subject\\_verb\\_agreement.htm](http://eslbee.com/subject_verb_agreement.htm).

## Subject – Verb Agreement

Directions: Circle the correct verb in the following sentences. If you have a doubt about the correct verb, refer to the clues on the following page.

1. The rhythm of the pounding waves is / are calming.
2. All of the dogs in the neighborhood were / was barking.
3. A high tax, not to mention unemployment, influence / influences votes.
4. My friends and my mother like / likes each other.
5. The team and the band was / were on the field.
6. Building a good marriage and building a good log fire is / are similar in many ways.
7. John or Doris write / writes to us regularly.
8. Neither Carol nor Ted is / are excluded from the meeting.
9. Either Patty or Tom was / were asked to lead the meeting.
10. Neither the basket nor the apples was / were expensive.
11. Neither the apples nor the basket was / were expensive.
12. Either Maria or you was / were late for class.
13. Either you or Maria was / were late for class.
14. Hardest hit by the high temperatures and the drought was / were the farmers.
15. Neither of them like / likes going to the show.
16. Each of them has / have a good seat.
17. Everybody in the class has / have tickets.
18. Every silver knife, fork, and spoon has / have to be counted.
19. Each cat and each dog has / have its own toy.
20. The committee is / are meeting today.
21. Ten million gallons of oil is / are a lot of oil.
22. The jury vote / votes today.
23. The number is / are very small.
24. A number of students was / were absent.
25. Ten million gallons of oil was / were spilled.
26. The majority of us is / are in favor.
27. Statistics is / are an interesting subject. Statistics is / are often misleading.
28. The sheep stray / strays when the gate is left open. Sheep stray / strays when the gate is left open.

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