



SNS COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY

(An Autonomous Institution)
Coimbatore-35



SUBJECT VERB AGREEMENT (CONCORD)

‘Concord’ can be defined as the agreement of the verb with its subject in number and in person. Concord means a harmonious relationship between two grammatical items.

Concord of Number:

A singular subject takes a singular verb. A plural subject takes a plural verb.

1. The teacher writes on the blackboard.

The teachers write on the blackboard.

2. The child plays on the lawn.

The children play on the lawn.

Concord of Person:

First person (singular/plural) takes a plural verb.

I/we like this book.

Second person (singular/plural) takes a plural verb.

You/you all like this book.

3. If the subject is in the third person singular, the verb, in the present tense ends with an inflection ‘s’ or ‘es’ and in the case of 1st or 2nd or 3rd person plural, the verb requires no addition.

She likes ice-cream.

He plays the piano well.

They play football.

Number system of Nouns:

Noun - singular

Noun+s - plural

Number system of verbs:

Verb+s - singular - for third person singular (simple present) only.

Simple present form of the verb – I person singular and plural, II person singular and plural and III person plural

4. When singular subjects are joined by ‘and’, they take a plural verb.

Mohan and Rohan have passed.

He and his brother were absent.

5. If two singular nouns refer to the same person or thing, the verb must be singular.

The horse and carriage is ready.

The poet and philosopher is coming for the function.

When the singular nouns refer to two different persons, (which is understood by the use of the article the before the second noun also), a plural verb is used.

The poet and the philosopher are coming for the function.

6. If two or more singular subjects are connected by 'neither...nor' 'either... or' the verb must be singular.

Neither my brother nor my sister gets up early.

Either my brother or my sister gets up early.

Either Neela or Leela is in the room.

7. When two different persons follow 'either' and 'or' the verb should agree with the subject that immediately comes before it.

Either you or I am mistaken.

Neither I nor you are mistaken.

8. When 'either' and 'or' are followed by subjects, one in singular and the other in plural, the verb agrees with the number of the subject which immediately comes before it.

Either the leader or the subordinates are responsible.

Neither the subordinates nor the leader is responsible.

9. If two nouns are joined by 'with', 'along with' or 'as well as', the verb agrees with the first noun.

Rahul as well as his friends, has reached the target.

Sixty students, along with a teacher have gone on a tour.

A teacher, along with sixty students has gone on a tour.

10. A collective noun/ noun phrase takes a singular or plural verb according to the sense. If the idea of oneness is expressed, the verb must be singular.

A bunch of keys is lying on the floor.

A team of speakers has been selected.

The jury were divided in their opinion.

The jury has elected its president.

11. Either, neither, each, everyone, many a, must be followed by a verb in the singular. Each of these boys has given his best performance in the test.

Neither of the two applicants is suitable for the post.

Many a man was injured.

12. When a plural noun denotes some specific quantity or amount considered as a whole, the verb must be singular. If a plural number applies to distances, heights, accounts

of money or represents the single figure or quantity, it is treated as singular.

Five miles is a long way to walk.

Ten litres of petrol is required for a journey.

Seven thousand rupees has been paid to him.

Five kilograms of rice costs Rs. 100.

13. When the subject is 'one of' followed by a plural noun it is considered singular and the verb agrees not with the plural noun but with one.

One of my friends always stays in hotel.

One of the teachers has a good grasp over his subject.

14. But if 'one of' is preceded by a singular he is/she is/he was etc. the noun that follows is in plural followed by 'who' / 'that' should take a plural verb.

He is one of those men who hate smoking.

She is one of those players who have been selected for Olympics.

15. Some sentences begin with the formal subject there. The real subject comes after the verb. The verb agrees with the real subject that follows.

There are many children in the park.

There is a hundred rupee note in the hands of the child.

There have been many such incidents in the past.

16. 'Many a' and 'more than one' are followed by a singular noun and takes the singular verb.

Many a book is interesting.

More than one candidate was absent in the meeting.

But 'many' and 'more' used alone refer to numbers and so take the plural verb.

Many students were present at the function.

More volunteers are needed.

'A great many' also takes a plural verb.

A great many food items lie unused.

The expression 'a number of' takes a plural verb.

A number of students are playing in the ground.

The expression 'the number of' takes a singular verb.

The number of students good at sports is very few.

17. When two or more nouns make a compound name (generally used together) of one thing, person or idea the compound name is considered singular.

Age and experience brings wisdom to man.

Bread and butter is a complete food.

18. Class nouns such as food, clothing, crockery, cutlery, furniture, stationery and

footwear are singular.

The cutlery you bought yesterday is beautiful.

Stationery has become costly these days.

If the words "a pair of" are not used and only plural word is used it is considered plural.

A pair of shoes is placed in the corner.

His shoes were good.

Those trousers are good.

19. a lot of, a great deal of, most of, some of, and plenty of are considered plural when they refer to number. They are considered singular when they refer to quantity or amount.

Most of the people in India are intelligent.

There are a lot of opportunities for talented men.

Some of the work is still to be done.

20. nobody, no one, nothing, somebody, someone, something should be followed by a singular verb.

Eg. (a) No problem is harder to solve than this one.

(b) Something is better than nothing.

None can take either a singular or plural verb depending on the noun which follows it.

Eg. (a) None of the counterfeit money has been found.

(b) None of the students have finished the exam yet.

EXERCISE

I Choose the correct forms of the verb given in brackets.

1. I wish, I _____ [was/were] a millionaire.
2. The milk in the bottles _____ [is/are] fresh.
3. Half of his house _____ [was/were] burnt.
4. A number of students' _____ [is/are] absent today.
5. Lots of food _____ [has been/have been] wasted.
6. The jury _____ [has found/have found] him guilty.
7. The students' union _____ [have called/has called] off for a rally.
8. India _____ (has/have) won the match by three goals to one.
9. Australia _____ (has/have) lost the test match by three goals to one.
10. The white house _____ (is/are) to review the bill.
11. Not all _____ (is/are) well now.
12. Some of the eggs _____ (is/are) rotten.
13. More than one man _____ (was/were) killed in the accident.

14. He or his friends _____ [has/have] stolen my watch.
15. The number of students' _____ [is/are] increasing.
16. A building consisting of seven floors _____ [was/were] constructed.
17. Plucking flowers _____ [is/are] forbidden.
18. The teeth of a comb _____ [do/does] not bite us.
19. Every tree and every plant _____ [need/needs] water.
20. One of the students in the class _____ [is/are] extraordinarily brilliant.
21. The crowd _____ [is/are] furious.
22. Everyone _____ [is/are] tired.
23. Each one of these books _____ [is/are] expensive.
24. Many a brave man _____ [has/have] fallen.
25. Bread and butter _____ [is/are] his favorite food.

II Correct the following sentences using Subject -Verb agreement.

- 1) The book about the changes in airplanes during the two World Wars were quite interesting.
- 2) None of the tomatoes was salvaged from the overturned truck.
- 3) Each are confident that he or she knows all the facts.
- 4) The cost of the computers are dropping day-by-day.
- 5) A series of lectures were delivered last month.
- 6) A team of civil engineers have just inspected the site.
- 7) The Equipments from Delhi have not arrived yet.
- 8) Either Raja or Mani have taken my key.
- 9) I am now remembering what he said.
- 10) You are ready, isn't it?
- 11) One must do his duty.
- 12) Kumar is one of my good friend.
- 13) One of the students have a car.
- 14) Neither his father nor his mother are alive.
- 15) The difficulty of obtaining pure milk and ghee are great.
- 16) Iron as well as gold are found in India.
- 17) Bread and butter are wholesome food.
- 18) Not one of you have done their work properly.
- 19) Each of the boys were rewarded.
- 20) No news are good.