

SUBJECT VERB AGREEMENT –PART 3

Indefinite Pronouns

Indefinite pronouns refer to non-specific people or things. When an indefinite pronoun is used as the subject of a sentence, it, like any other subject, needs to agree with its corresponding verb. Some pronouns require singular verbs (**everyone, each**); some require plural verbs (**both, many**). Other indefinite pronouns can be either singular or plural.

Singular Indefinite Pronouns

A singular verb is required when any word in the table below is used as a subject or as an adjective. Even though most of these indefinite pronouns seem to have plural meanings, treat them as singular subjects.

Singular Indefinite Pronouns			
The words in the chart below are always singular and require singular verbs.			
“-ONE” words	“-BODY” words	“-THING” words	Other
One	-	-	each
anyone	anybody	anything	
every			
everyone	everybody	everything	either
no one	no body	nothing	
neither			
someone	somebody	something	another
any one	-	-	much
every one	-	-	none
some one	-	-	many a or many an

Each ...

Each physicist, chemist, and biologist is highly intelligent.	
Subject: each	Verb: is

Since all compound subjects with **each** and **every** take **singular verbs**, the singular verb **is** is required for this sentence.



Plural Indefinite Pronouns

Just as there are indefinite pronouns that are always singular, there also are plural indefinite pronouns.

Plural Indefinite Pronouns				
All of the words in the chart below are plural and require plural verbs .				
both	few	many	others	several

Both ...

Both of us should **decide** what our weekend plans are.

Subject: Both	Verb: decide
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In this example, the plural subject is **both** and a **plural verb** is chosen to agree with this subject.

Singular or Plural Indefinite Pronouns

There are also some unique indefinite pronouns that can be singular or plural, depending on the noun they refer to. The noun can usually be found in a phrase beginning with **of**. All of the words in the table below can be singular or plural indefinite pronouns.

Singular or Plural Indefinite Pronouns					
Depending on their meaning, all of the words in the chart below can be either singular or plural and require singular or plural verbs .					
all	none	any	some	more	most

Singular Subject All

All of the jewelry **is** made of genuine gold and silver.

Subject: all	Verb: is
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In this example, **all** (meaning all of the jewelry) is a singular subject and therefore needs the singular verb **is** to agree with its subject.

Plural Subject All

All of the rings and necklaces **are** made of genuine gold and silver.

Subject: all	Verb: are
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In this example, **all** (meaning all of the rings and necklaces) is a plural subject and therefore needs the plural verb **are** to agree with its subject.

Exercise 1: Indefinite Pronouns

First, determine whether the indefinite pronoun subject in each sentence is singular (S) or plural (P). Complete each sentence with a verb that agrees with the given subject.

1. (**S**) **Each** flavour of ice cream **tastes** delicious.
2. () Everybody on the ski hill _____.
3. () Much of the money _____.
4. () Anyone in the newspaper headlines _____.
5. () Most of the strawberries _____.
6. () Several students at Humber College _____.
7. () No one who was invited to my birthday party _____.



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Nouns Ending in -s

Even though some nouns appear to be plural, they can actually be singular in meaning. **Note:** An –s ending on a noun does not automatically mean the noun is plural. Therefore, if a noun with an –s ending is singular, it will require a singular verb.

Plural Word

Mathematics is an intriguing field to study since it is closely related to technology.	
Subject: mathematics	Verb: is

Plural Name

The New York Times captures all of the top news stories around the globe.	
Subject: The New York Times	Verb: captures

Nouns ending in –s

Nouns which fall into this category can include those which **end in –ics, organizational names, geographic names and names of publications and products.** These words or names that are plural in form but singular in meaning take a singular verb.

Exercise 2: Nouns Ending in –s

Determine which of the plural words and names are singular in meaning. Indicate whether the subject in each sentence is singular (S) or plural (P). Complete each sentence with a verb that agrees with the given subject.

1. (**S**) The **Solomon Islands produces** cocoa beans, coconuts, palm kernels and rice.
2. () The Royal Botanical Gardens _____.
3. () Trinidad and Tobago _____.
4. () Kellogg's _____.
5. () Economics _____.
6. () Mathematics and Business _____.

Collective Nouns/Group Nouns

A collective noun is a word that is singular in form, but it consists of a group of persons, animals, or things.

Collective/Group Nouns

Nouns which fall into this category include **army, audience, band, board, cabinet, class, committee, company, corporation, council, crowd, department, faculty, family, firm, group, jury, majority, minority, public, school, society, staff and team.**



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The noun requires a singular verb when it refers to a group as a **whole unit**; however, the noun requires a plural verb when the group is being considered as **individual members**. In some situations, the collective noun can be treated as singular or plural. Use either a singular or plural verb to emphasize a group or a collection of individuals.

Singular Whole Unit

The jury provides a verdict in record time. Subject:	
jury	Verb: provides

In this example, the **jury** provides a verdict as a group. Thus, the subject of this sentence requires a singular verb.

Plural as Individual Members

The jury are arguing amongst themselves.	
Subject: jury	Verb: are

In this example, the members of the **jury** are acting separately as individuals. Thus, the subject of this sentence requires a plural verb.

Singular or Plural

Their family is going on a vacation to Switzerland.	
Subject: family	Verb: is

In this example, the members of the **family** are acting as a group. Thus, the subject of this sentence requires a singular verb.

Singular or Plural

I hope Mathuiri's family are well for the holidays.	
Subject: family	Verb: are

In this example, the members of the **family** are being considered separately as individuals. Thus, the subject of this sentence requires a plural verb. This sentence could also be rewritten: "I hope the members of Julie's family are well for the holidays." This sentence more clearly states that the speaker is talking about each individual member of Julie's family.

Exercise 3: Collective Nouns

Determine whether the collective nouns are singular (S) or plural (P) in meaning. Complete each sentence with a verb that agrees with the given subject. The first question has been completed for you.

1. (**S**) The **company is** recruiting members for its management team.
2. () The council ___ on the verdict of the case.
3. () The staff _____ planning an intervention program.
4. () Forty-two kilometers _____ the length of a full marathon.
5. () My family _____ each allergic to peanuts.
6. () The rock band _____ performing a magnificent concert.

