

Rules for Singular and Plural Verbs

- Define the following terms:
 - 1) Subject –
 - 2) Verb –
 - 3) Singular –
 - 4) Plural –
 - 5) Base Form of a Word –
- The base form of a verb can be changed to show:
 - 1)
 - 2)
- Single Present Tense Verb Notes
 - 1) Present Tense is
 - 2) Singular verb ends in
 2. Examples:
- Plural Present Tense Verb Notes
 - 1) Plural verb does **NOT** end in
 2. Examples:

- Singular & Plural Past Tense Verb Notes

- 1) Past Tense is
- 2) To make a verb past tense, add
- 3) To change irregular past tense verbs,
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-
- 4) Examples:

- Singular & Plural Future Tense Verb Notes

- 1) Future Tense is
- 2) To make a verb present tense, add
- 3) Examples:

PRACTICE 1

Directions: Identify the verb tense – write your answer on the line.

- | | | | |
|--------------|-------|---------------|-------|
| 1. Rides | _____ | 7. Hike | _____ |
| 2. Smiles | _____ | 8. Laughs | _____ |
| 3. Ran | _____ | 9. Will sleep | _____ |
| 4. Stir | _____ | 10. Coughed | _____ |
| 5. Will cook | _____ | 11. Reads | _____ |
| 6. Sketched | _____ | 12. Will look | _____ |

PRACTICE 2

Directions: Identify if the verb is singular, plural, or both – then write your answer on the line.

- | | | | |
|--------------|-------|---------------|-------|
| 2. Ran | _____ | 9. Will sleep | _____ |
| 3. Stir | _____ | 10. Coughed | _____ |
| 4. Will cook | _____ | 11. Reads | _____ |
| 5. Sketched | _____ | 12. Will look | _____ |

Rules for Subject Verb Agreement

RULE 1 – A verb agrees with its subject in number.

Singular subjects take singular verbs:

The car stays in the garage.

The flower smells good.

There is an old saying: “Opposites attract.” The rule for singular and plural verbs is just the opposite of the rule for singular and plural nouns. Remember this when you match subjects and verbs. You might guess that stays and smells are plural verbs because they end in s. They aren’t. Both stays and smells are singular verbs.

RULE 2 – The number of the subject (singular or plural) is not changed by words that come between the subject and the verb.

One of the eggs broke. Of the eggs is a prepositional phrase. The subject one and the verb broke are both singular. Mentally omit the prepositional phrase to make the subject verb-agreement easier to make.

PRACTICE 1

Directions: Circle the correct verb in each of the sentences below.

1. Your friend (talk-talks) too much.
2. The man with the roses (look-looks) like your brother.
3. The women in the pool (swim-swims) well.
4. Bill (drive-drives) a cab.
5. The football players (run-runs) five miles every day.
6. That red-haired lady in the fur hat (live-lives) across the street.
7. He (cook-cooks) dinner for his family.
8. The boys (walk-walks) to school every day.
9. The weather on the coast (appear-appears) to be good this weekend.
10. The center on the basketball team (bounce-bounces) the ball too high.

PRACTICE 2

Directions: Write four sentences of your own illustrating the first two subject-verb agreement rules.

Rule 1: _____

Rule 1: _____

Rule 2: _____

Rule 2: _____

PRACTICE 3

Directions: Read the sentences and circle the correct form of the verb.

1. All porcupines (float/floats) in water.
2. Flamingos (turn/turns) pink from eating shrimp.
3. A hummingbird (weigh/weights) less than a penny.
4. Children (grow/grows) faster in the spring.
5. A ball of glass (bounce/bounces) higher than a ball of rubber.
6. Chewing gum while peeling onions (prevent/prevents) you from crying.
7. Termites (eat/eats) through wood two times faster when listening to rock music.
8. If you keep a goldfish in a dark room, it eventually (turn/turns) white.
9. A snail (breathe/breathes) through its foot.
10. Fish (cough/coughs).
11. A cat's lower jaw cannot (move/moves) sideways.
12. The average woman (consume/consumes) six pounds of lipstick in her lifetime.
13. You (blink/blinks) over 10,000,000 times a year.
14. A sneeze (travel/travels) out of your mouth at over 100 miles an hour.
15. The average human (produce/produces) 10,000 gallons of saliva in a lifetime.
16. Americans, on average, (eat/eats) 18 acres of pizza a day.
17. No word in the English language (rhyme/rhymes) with month.
18. The average person (spend/spends) 2 weeks over his or her lifetime waiting for a traffic light to change.
19. About 18 percent of animal owners (share/shares) their bed with their pet.
20. A ten gallon hat (hold/holds) less than one gallon of liquid.
21. Honeybees (navigate/navigates) by using the sun as a compass.
22. Nearly 9,000 people (injure/injures) themselves with a toothpick each year.
23. Ferret (come/comes) from the Latin word for little thief.

RULE 3 – Some subjects always take a singular verb even though the meaning may seem plural.

These subjects always take singular verbs:

each	someone
either	anyone
neither	nobody
one	somebody
no one	anybody
everyone	everybody

Someone in the game was (not were) hurt.

Neither of the men is (not are) working.

RULE 4 – The following words may be singular or plural, depending upon their use in a sentence, some, any, all, most.

Most of the news is good. (singular)

Most of the flowers were yellow. (plural)

All of the pizza was gone. (singular)

All of the children were late. (plural)

PRACTICE 3

Directions: Circle the correct verb in the sentences below.

1. Each of the girls (look-looks) good on skis.
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.