

10 English Language

AGREEMENT OF THE VERB WITH THE SUBJECT

We have already learnt that the Verb agrees with its subject in number and person ; as,

The bird flies. The birds fly.

He is wise. They are wise.

I am poor. He is poor.

Two or more Singular nouns or pronouns joined by 'and' usually take a verb in the plural; as,

Rita and her sister are identical twins.

Mohan and I are great friends.

Are not your father and mother out of town?

Raman and Harry work hard.

Nomta, Lily, and Sheila go to the same school.

High mountains and large deserts are found in India.

There are a cow and an ox in the field.

But if two Nouns suggest only one idea, or refer the same person or thing, the verb must be singular; as,

Time and tide waits for none.

Slow and steady wins the race.

Bread and butter is a wholesome food.

The horse and carriage is at the door.

My friend and benefactor has come.

The poet and statesman is dead.

Words joined to a Singular subject by with or as well as do not affect the number of the Verb. The Verb, therefore, is in the Singular; as,

Manish, as well as you, is at fault.

The captain, with all his men, was drowned.

The house, with its furniture, was burnt.

Ashok, as well as Anil, likes tea.

Raman, as well as Harry and John, deserves praise.

The master as well as his servant is guilty.

The king with all his sons was thrown in the dungeon.

When two or more Subjects in the Singular are joined by Or; nor; either or; neither nor, the Verb is put in the Singular ; as,

Either he or I am to blame.

Jack or Tom is to blame.

Either Raman Or Anil was absent.

Either Lily, Mary or she has passed.

Neither Ramannor Harry was present.

Neither Peter, Harry nor John was present ,

But when the subjects connected by or , nor are of different numbers (if one of the Subjects is in the Plural,) the Verb must be in the Plural. The Plural Subject is placed nearer the Verb; as,

Neither Vishal nor his lawyers were there.

The farmer or his servants were caught.

Neither Tom nor his friends have come.

Either the boy or his parents have done this.

But such sentences can be put in a better way; as,

Either he is to blame, or I am.

My friend is not guilty, nor am I.

Either; neither; each, every, every one, many a must be followed by a Verb in the Singular ; as,

Either of the two boys has done this. Neither of them was found guilty.

Each of these boys is intelligent.

Every man, women and child was happy. Every one of the answers is wrong.

Many a boy has not done his duty.

When a Plural Noun comes between a Singular Subject and its Verb, the Verb is often wrongly made to agree with the nearest Plural Noun. We should guard against such an error (It is called error of proximity) and say,

The state of affairs is sure to cause him anxiety. (not, are)

A course of lectures was arranged. (not, were)

The introduction of reforms was not liked by the aristocracy. (not were)

Each one of these houses is (not are) to let.

A combination of colours charms (not charm) the eye.

The quality of the apples was (not were) good.

A Collective Noun (like committee, assembly, congress, jury) may take a Singular or a Plural Verb. If the collection is thought of as a whole, the Verb is Singular; if the individuals or members of the group are thought of separately, the Verb is Plural.

The committee has decided this.

The jury has given its verdict.

The jury were divided in their opinions.

NOTE: 'The committee have decided this' means, 'the members of the committee have decided this'. Similarly --' The jury were divided in their verdict means 'The committee were divided in their opinions'.

Some Nouns which are plural in form but singular in meaning (dynamics, economics, electronics, ethics, gallows, innings, physics, statistics, whereabouts, measles, billiards etc.,) take a Singular Verb ; as,

Mathematics is a difficult subject.

No news is good news.

Mumps is common among children.

When a Plural Noun is the name of one thing (say, a book or a country), it takes a Singular Vêrb; as,

‘The Arabian Nights’ is an interesting book. The United States has a big army.

When the Subject of the Vêrb is Relative Pronoun the Verb must be made to agree in number and person with the Antecedent of the Relative;as,

Nikhil is one of the brilliant boys who *have* (not, has) taken the examination.

This is the only one of his poems that *is* (not, are) worth reading.[Here the antecedent of *that* is *one* and not *poems*]

I, who *am* your friend, will help you with money.

You, who *are* my friend, should not blame me.

He, who *is* my friend, should stand by me.

She is one of the bravest women that *have* ever lived.

The following nouns, though singular in form, always take a Plural Verb: (cattle, folk, gentry, majority, mankind, nobility, police, poultry, public, people.)

The cattle are grazing in our field.

Village folk wake up when the cock crows.

The police have arrested the murderer.

When two subjects are joined by not only....but, not only..... but also, the verb agrees with the second subject in number and person:

Not only Raju, but also I am responsible for the loss.

Assignment:

1. Write the exercise of Chapter 1 based on the given topic, in the English Language copy.
2. Write Q.No.5 (b,c,d,) of Test paper –I in the Eng.Language copy.
3. Watch the video on youtube.The link is given below-