



Subject-Verb Agreement: other cases

(Subject Verb Agreement part 3)

Correlative Conjunctions: When two subjects are joined with a correlative conjunction (**either/ or** or **neither/ nor**), the verb that follows should agree with the closest noun:

Neither the president nor his **advisors are** expected at the meeting.

Neither the president nor his **advisor is** expected at the meeting.

Either the potato chips or the **soda has** to be put back. I can't afford both.

Either the soda or the potato **chips have** to be put back. I can't afford both.

Also, **either** and **neither**, when used as pronouns, are treated as singular:

Do I want chocolate or vanilla ice cream? I guess **either is** fine.

As for my sister and brother, **neither is** coming to my wedding.

Each is always singular:

Each of you **is** responsible for your own belongings.

Both, however, is always plural:

Both my sister and brother **are** coming to my wedding.

Both are travelling by plane.

Singular Indefinite Pronouns: pronouns beginning with "no," "any," "some," or "every" are treated as singular:

No one wants ice cream?

Does anybody want cake?

Somebody wants cake, surely.

Okay, then, let's see if **anyone wants** a cookie?

Ah, good – **everyone likes** cookies!

Don't worry, Jimmy – **everything is** gluten-free.

Collective nouns can be singular or plural. If you mean the collective as a whole, you treat the word as a singular. If you mean each individual member of the group, you can use a plural verb form:

My **team is** winning. [= the team as a single entity]

The **team are** all nervous about the playoffs tomorrow. [=each member]

Uncountable nouns are always treated as singular.

The **water is** really clear today.

Love is all you need.



Exercise: Choose the correct verb:

1. Either the dictionaries or the encyclopedia (need/ needs) to be moved.
2. Actually, neither the encyclopedia nor the dictionaries (is/ are) worth keeping.
3. Everything that we need to know in them (is/ are) available online now.
4. Which one (is/ are) worth more to you?
5. I want to keep the dictionaries, which (was/ were) a gift from my uncle.
6. The furniture in the office, including the tables, (need/ needs) to be replaced.
7. Some of these peaches (has/ have) gone bad.
8. Some of this peach jelly (is/ are) starting to taste funny, too.
9. (Has/ Have) anyone found all the answers?
10. Nobody (like/ likes) a know-it-all, Jim.
11. Not one of these answers (is/ are) right.
12. (Is/ are) any of my answers even close?
13. Actually, sorry – I read this wrong. Everything (is/ are) okay.
14. (Do/ does) you have any more chocolate?
15. (Has/ have) all of this chocolate gone bad?
16. (Has/ have) all of these chocolates gone bad?
17. Both my cat and my goldfish (is/ are) taken care of by my neighbour when I'm away.
18. The clothes we bought yesterday (was/ were) really expensive.
19. One of the members of the hockey team (is/ are) waiting for you outside.
20. (Is/ are) there some coffee made?
21. (Is/ are) there some donuts we could have with it?
22. Sorry, no donuts, but here (is/ are) a Danish and three cinnamon buns.
23. I can't eat a Danish and three cinnamon buns. That (is/ are) too much sugar for me.
24. In fact, there (is/ are) six teaspoons of sugar in each bun!
25. We polled the employees, and most (is/ are) saying they want a longer lunch break.
26. Several employees (tell/ tells) us that they want an extra coffee break, too.
27. Alone among them, Kathy Roberts (is/ are) asking for fewer breaks.
28. Employees like Kathy, who argue against the desires of their coworkers, (is/ are) often unpopular with their peers, but management (like/ likes) them.
29. (Do/ does) any of your friends have bicycles they can lend us?
30. Neither Zhou nor his sisters (has/ have) received the letters of invitation.
31. The letters, which (was/ were) sent last month, (contain/ contains) invitations to the party, which (is/ are) going to be held next Friday.
32. (Is/ are) either of your sisters friends with one of Zhou's sisters?
33. Either one of your sisters, or one of my sisters, (has/ have) given Zhou an invitation.
34. That the previous invitations (was/ were) lost in the mail (is/ are) indeed, possible.
35. It (is/ are) possible that the previous invitations (was/ were) lost in the mail.
36. The traffic on these streets (is/ are) terrible.



1 needs 2 are 3 is 4 is 5 were 6 needs 7 have 8 is 9 has 10 likes 11 is 12 are 13 is 14 do 15 has 16
have 17 are 18 were 19 is 20 is 21 are 22 both are possible 23 is 24 are 25 are 26 tell 27 is 28 are...
likes 29 do 30 have 31 were... contain... is 32 Is 33 has 34 were... is 35 is... were 36 is



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