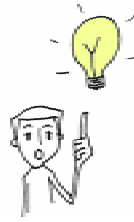


Mr. Taylor's Language Arts Class

Notes on Subject-Verb Agreement



The subject and verb must agree in number: both must be singular, or both must be plural.

- Most likely, **your verb will agree with the first noun to the left** of the verb:

The Supreme Court judge decides the appropriate penalty. The committee members were satisfied with the resolution.	
Subject: judge Subject members	Verb: decides Verb: were

- Occasionally, a sentence has the **subject after the verb** instead of before it. This strategy is often used for poetic effect.

Over the ripples of the water glides a small canoe.	
Subject: a small canoe	Verb: glides

- If subjects are joined by **and**, they are considered **plural**.

[Compound subject]

The quarterback and the coach discuss the play on the sidelines.	
Subjects: the quarterback and the coach	Verb: discuss

- If subjects are joined by **or** or **nor**, the verb should agree with the **closer subject**. [Ignore the other subject that is not close to the verb]

Either the actors or the director is at fault. Either the director or the actors are at fault.	
Neither the players nor the coach is at fault. Neither the coach nor the players are at fault.	
Subjects: actors, director Subjects: director, actors	Verb: is [singular] Verb: are [plural]
Subjects: players, coach Subjects: coach, players	Verb: is [singular] Verb: are [plural]

- **Indefinite pronouns** that are considered **singular** (someone, somebody, each, either one, everyone, or anyone) need singular verbs.

Anyone, including students in this room, is permitted to use rulers.

Everybody, including seventh graders, guesses the answers sometimes.

Subject: anyone

Verb: is

Don't let interrupters, appositives, or prepositional phrases interfere with your subject and verb agreeing!