

Concord: Subject/verb agreement

GET THIS!

The word *concord* means agreement.

The **verb** in a sentence must agree with the **subject** in person and number.

In its simplest form the rule is as follows:

Singular subjects take singular verbs:



Plural subjects take plural verbs:



The form of the verb must also match the subject depending on whether it is a first person, second person or third person subject.

In the **simple present tense** the verb changes in the third person singular.

Look at the simple present tense table below:

Person	Regular verb: <i>to walk</i>	Irregular verb: <i>to have</i>
First person singular	I walk	I have
Second person singular and plural	You walk	You have
Third person singular	He / she / it walks	He / she / it has
First person plural	We walk	We have
Third person plural	They walk	They have

There are no changes in the simple past tense of most verbs no matter what the person or number, other than the addition of **-ed** or **-d** to the base form for regular verbs and an entirely different form for irregular verbs.

Look at the **simple past tense** table below:

Person	<i>to walk</i>	<i>to live</i>	<i>to go</i>
First-person (singular)	I walked	I lived	I went
Second-person (singular and plural)	You walked	You lived	You went
Third-person (singular)	He / she / it walked	He / she / it lived	He / she / it went
First-person (plural)	We walked	We lived	We went
Third-person (plural)	They walked	They lived	They went

All nouns are considered to be in the **third person** (*he, she or it*).

Here are some tips about subject-verb agreement:

1. When the **subject** is **singular**, the **verb** must take the **singular** form:
For example: *The boy kicks the ball.*
2. When a sentence has **two or more subjects**, the **verb** has to be in its **plural** form:
For example: *The boys and the coach kick the ball.*
3. **Collective nouns** almost always take a **singular verb** because they refer to **ONE** group:
For example: *Our team is going to win.*
4. **Indefinite pronouns** always take a **singular verb**:
For example: *Everybody is excited by the announcement.*

To decide which form of the verb you need, ask yourself the following questions about the sentence:

- What is the **subject**?
- What **person** is it in (first/second/third)?
- Is it **singular** or **plural**?
- What **tense** is needed?

Exercise:

Copy the following sentences into your workbook and underline the correct form of the verb in brackets:

1. You and I (am/are) writing a test tomorrow.
2. He (write/writes) fast.
3. Lerato (is/are) a beautiful singer.
4. The chair (has/have) a broken back.
5. Nobody (is/are) here yet.
6. There (is/are) some cows in the field.
7. That shop (sell/sells) sweets.
8. Those dogs (bark/barks) all the time.
9. I (have/has) had plenty of time to study for exams.
10. The villagers (has/have) lots of problems