



# Making Subjects and Verbs Agree

Notes from Chapter 4, Section 1  
*Inside English*

# Key Principle

If the SUBJECT of your sentence is singular...

ONE BIRD

Then the VERB form must also be singular:

TWITTERS



# However...

If the subject of your sentence is PLURAL

TWO BIRDS

Then the verb form must also be PLURAL:

TWITTER





One bird twitters.



Two birds twitter.





# Things to Remember

Two or more subjects joined by ***and*** ?

Use the plural form of the verb

Tweetie and Cutie **are singing.**



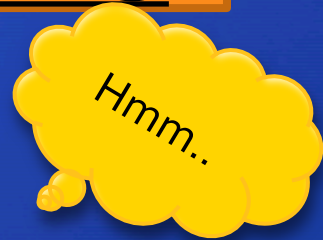
Easy!

# Still More Things to Remember

Two or more *singular* subjects joined by **or** or **nor**?

Use the singular form of the verb

Neither Tweetie nor Cutie **is singing.**



# Even More Things to Remember

Compound subject containing both a *singular* and a *plural* subject joined by **or** or **nor**?

Use the form of the verb that agrees with the subject closer to the verb.

Neither Tweetie nor his friends **are singing.**



Huh?



**INTERRUPTING PHRASE ALERT!**  
**DON'T GET TRIPPED UP!**

THE **VERB** ALWAYS  
AGREES WITH THE  
**SUBJECT...**

**NOT** WITH A NOUN OR  
PRONOUN IN A PHRASE THAT  
**COMES BETWEEN** THE  
SUBJECT AND THE VERB



One of the  
boxes is  
open.

The people  
who listen to  
that music are  
few.

The team  
captain, as well  
as his players,  
is anxious.

The book, including  
all the chapters in  
the first section, is  
boring.

The woman with  
all the dogs  
walks down my  
street.

If a subject is modified by *each* or *every*, it is singular:



Each bird sings a song.

However...

# SINGULAR PRONOUNS

EACH  
EITHER  
NEITHER  
EVERYONE  
EVERYBODY  
ANYBODY  
ANYONE  
NOBODY  
SOMEBODY  
SOMEONE  
NO ONE



ALL  
REQUIRE A  
SINGULAR  
VERB



Each ~~of these hotdogs~~ is juicy.



Everybody knows Mrs. Jones



Either is correct.

# Special Cases....

Some nouns look like they may be plural because they end in an "s"

But they're not.



Even though these nouns end in “s”



CIVICS



NEWS



MATHEMATICS



ECONOMICS



GYMNASTICS

They are singular

Civics is an elective.

NOT

Civics are an elective.

# “DOLLARS” is a special case

Talking about a  
specific amount?

Use a singular verb:

Five hundred dollars is  
a lot of money!



Talking about the  
dollars as a concept?

Use a plural verb:

Dollars are used instead of rubles in Russia.

# THESE ARE THE BASICS

---

Review Section 1 for a few other examples of subject-verb agreement rules that may not have been included in this presentation.





LET'S  
PRACTICE



Prepared by Elaine Minamide for English 10  
Palomar College.  
Updated Fall 2016.