

Technical English for Engineers
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Lecture - 08
Subject -Verb Agreement

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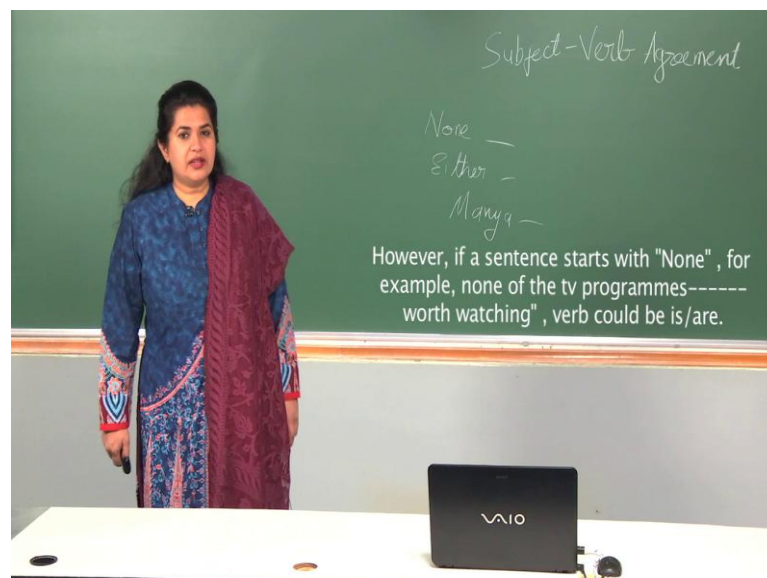
Hi, so one important aspect of a sentence construction, sentence formation is adherence to subject-verb agreement. We are going to see certain rules where certain subjects take a certain kind of verb. A verb as you know must agree with its subject in number and person. What is number, so singular plural, and person - first person, second person, third person. First person – I, we; second person - you, so, you never say you is going where, you are going where, right. So, there are certain rules in English language where, which, that have to be adhered to perfectly and subject-verb agreement is one of the most frequently confused areas of the written spoken English.

Now, let us consider a sentence such **as is** the quality of her journal paper. Let us say, the quality of a paper, the quality of writing, the quality of the journal are not good. Now here very; obviously, the subject the quality is singular, no matter how many qualities are implicit, but the quality is here used as the singular. Therefore, the quality of papers is

not good. So, we do not say let because we say the quality of a papers are not good again; this is not correct, it is a fallacy, it is called error in agreement, where we assume that just because the verb is closer or nearer to the subject, it has to adhere to that subject. Just because it says papers, it does not mean that the verb will be in plural form. The quality is the one that determines what verb, which verb is going to go. So, error is that the verb agrees with the noun closer to it here.

Another sentence, let us take down a sentence call **a** like his knowledge of econometrics is far beyond the best; his knowledge of econometrics is far beyond the best. So, what kind of verb would you need here or would you use here 'is' or 'are' or 'were'; obviously, you are going to say use a singular verb, the his knowledge is the subject here. So, singular verb is knowledge of econometrics is far beyond. So, this is the sentence; it is correct his knowledge of econometrics is. So, knowledge is an uncountable noun. You have sentences that begin with none or either, either or kind of construction neither, neither nor kind of construction many a, many a, everyone eat. All these constructions, must be followed by a singular verb, this is **a** rule.

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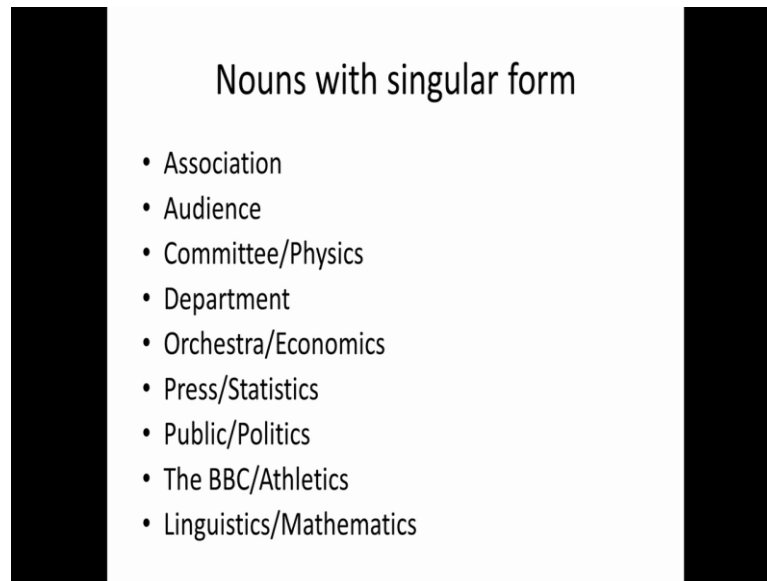
I repeat sentences that begin with each, everyone, either, neither, many a, all these are followed by a singular verb. If a sentence has a singular subject, it is followed by a

singular verb and if it has a plural subject, it is followed by a plural verb this is the simplest form of subject-verb agreement, but things may get a little more complicated here. He is the subject; he studies at JJ College of Arts. He studies singular noun; they study at JJ College of Arts. More people prefer this college than any other colleges in India. More people prefer, 'people' is a collective noun. So, there may be a bunch of people, but we are not using it as a plural, but therefore the verb is again in plural, it is not peoples. So, more people prefer, but she prefers this college than any other college singular; singular will take a singular verb; many people plural will take a plural verb that is 'prefer'.

Next rule is when the subject of the sentence is complex the verb that follows should agree with the main noun in the subject. We will be doing several sentences like that. So, take down a sentence for example, as many prominent scientists in the field of Applied **in** Mechanics were seen at the conference. Now, many prominent scientists is the subject here and therefore, the verb agrees with the main noun in the subject, main noun is scientists, this is a complex variety, you find several subjects, but the main noun is scientists. So, the verb agrees with the main noun and therefore, it is plural scientists will take a plural form. Let us take another example, the only excuse that she gave was that she was unaware of the rules; the only excuse that she gave was that she was unaware of the rules. So, 'was' this is important; the only excuse; 'excuse' is a singular, therefore 'was' is a singular verb.

Another rule is if the noun suggests one idea or refers to the same person or thing then verb becomes singular. If the noun suggests one idea or refers to same person or thing like for example, time and tide waits for none; bread and butter is his main breakfast. We do not say bread and butter are although all sentences which are joined by and that are we consider. Ram and Shyam are good students, but here it is single unit - bread and butter. So, it is his main breakfast, therefore, singular verb. She is my friend, philosopher and guide. Remember, she - the girl is given three attributes friend, philosopher and guide, but she that does not make her, make the verb as a plural. Remember the rule none, either, many a, each, everyone, **neither**, so all these when sentence begins with these they it is followed by a singular verb.

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Nouns with singular form

- Association
- Audience
- Committee/Physics
- Department
- Orchestra/Economics
- Press/Statistics
- Public/Politics
- The BBC/Athletics
- Linguistics/Mathematics

Here is a list of words for you; take a look at this. Now, these please consider the list of words. Take a good look at the slide here. These are nouns with singular form of verb association, although all of these may appear as plural, but they take a singular kind of a verb is or are. We do not say the association are go in the association is going to me today. The audience is excited, not audience are excited. When we use it is a collective, so the verb is always singular, that is just a rule. **So, C**ommittee; a subject like physics, department, orchestra; subject like economics, press, statistics, public, politics, the BBC, athletics, linguistics, mathematics, all these nouns take singular form of verb. Please make a good note of these.

Take down a sentence like, the committee dash important decisions to make, has or have? We have already seen the committee is a group of people; however, the verb is always going to take a singular form of verb, so committee has important decisions to make. Politics is a popular or an important topic of discussion in this family. The statistics is her favorite subject. Economics is a very important subject, everybody should have some understanding of this subject; economics is an important subject, an interesting subject. Diabetes is a disease that can be controlled; diabetes is a disease that can be inherited. So, in spite of the seemingly plural form of these nouns, they take a singular verb.

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Fill in the blanks using ***are/was/were***
or has/have

- i. The crowdgetting violent after the result of the match.
- ii. The police.....announced a reward for the criminal.
- iii. The institute.....spent over 100, 000INR on this equipment.
- iv. The only people interested in this book.....microbiologists.
- v. Statistics.....a compulsory subject for the students of engineering sciences.

Here is an exercise for you, please look at the slide. I am going to read out and then you have to fill in the blanks using was or were or has or have. The crowd dash getting violent after the result of the match. The police dash announced a reward for the criminal. The institute dash is spent over this much of rupees on this equipment. The only people interested in this book dash microbiologists. Statistics dash compulsory subject for the students of engineering sciences. Let us take a moment. So, let us solve it. The crowd was getting violent - singular form. The police has announced. The institute has spent. The only people interested in this book are microbiologists. A statistics is a compulsory. In the fourth sentence, it is a plural because the verb will agree with the main noun here, microbiologists.

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Sample Text Tate Gallery
http://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/paintings/history/collection-history/collection-history/*/viewPage/4

- In 1889 the wealthy industrialist, Henry Tate, offered his collection to the nation. After lengthy negotiations, a site **was** selected a mile away from Trafalgar Square, at Millbank, and the Gallery opened in 1897. The new gallery **was** officially known the National Gallery of British Art, changing its name to the National Gallery, Millbank in 1917. However, it soon became known as the Tate Gallery. The majority of the British pictures **were** transferred to the Tate Gallery, and only a selection of works remained at Trafalgar Square. At first, the Tate Gallery **was** under the administration of the National Gallery. In 1955 the Tate **was** formally established as an independent institution.

Here is a sample text for you; please look at the slide. Some of the major verbs are highlighted for you. I will read out the passage for you, and get a custom to the way subject-verb agree. In 1889 the wealthy industrialist, Henry Tate, offered his collection to the nation. After lengthy negotiations, a site **was** selected a mile away from Trafalgar Square, at Millbank, and the gallery opened in 1897. The new gallery **was** officially known the National Gallery of British Art, changing its name to the National Gallery, Millbank in 1917. However, it soon became known as the Tate gallery. The majority of the British pictures **were** transferred to the Tate gallery, and only a selection of works remained at Trafalgar Square. At first, the Tate gallery **was** under the administration of the National Gallery. In 1955 the Tate **was** formally established as an independent institution.

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'The Four Times of Day'

- In around 1858, Jean Baptiste Camille Corot **was** commissioned by his friend and fellow artist Alexandre Gabriel Decamps (1803–1860) to paint the panels for the studio of his house in the Rue de France in Fontainebleau. The panels, depicting four different landscapes, framed on either side by tall graceful trees, **trace** the day's progress from glowing dawn to starry night. They **are** without narrative; the figures that appear in each panel illustrate man's place in nature in what **are** meditative evocations of the beauty of the landscape. They **are** composed from memories or sketches of real landscapes, including, as in much of Corot's late work, the landscape and light of Italy.
- In 'Morning' the sky **fades** from the intense orange glow of the rising sun to a pale blue. A figure on the right in a red hat **holds** a stick in one hand, and **raises** the other **two to** the tree trunk in an attitude typical of so many of the artist's figures, perhaps intended as an echo of reaching branches. He **is** conjured up out of a few fluid strokes and his features **are** not delineated. At the centre **are** two goats, barely visible against the undergrowth.

'The Four Times of Day', this is the title of a painting, read on. In around 1858, Jean Baptiste Camille Corot **was** commissioned by his friend and fellow artist Alexandre Gabriel Decamps to paint the panels for the studio of his house in the Rue de France in Fontainebleau. The panels, depicting four different landscapes, framed on either side by tall graceful trees, **trace** now here is a plural verb for you, which is agreeing with the main noun the panels. So, trace the day's progress from glowing dawn to starry night. They **are** without narrative; the figures that appear in each panel illustrate, the figures that appear in each figure illustrate. So, illustrate again is a verb that agrees with a plural subject figures, man's place in nature in what **are** meditative evocations of the beauty of the landscape. So, here the verb agrees with the other is a complex sentence, so meditative evocations may noun evocations. So, therefore, verb is plural are. They **are** composed from memories or sketches of real landscapes, including, as in much of Corot's late work, the landscape and light of Italy.

In 'Morning' the sky **fades** from the intense orange glow of the rising sun to a pale blue. A figure on the right in a red hat **holds** a stick in one hand, and **raises** the other **two to** the tree trunk in an attitude a typical of so many of the artist's figures, perhaps intended as an echo of reaching branches. He **is** conjured up out of a few fluid strokes and his features **are** not delineated. At the centre **are** two goats, barely visible against the undergrowth.

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- In 'Noon', a figure in a red hat in the foreground **rests** his foot on a rock to adjust his laces, and further back, a couple **walks** along the path. In 'Evening', two women in the boat, one sitting, the other standing, and carrying what **is** probably a mandolin evoke an 18th-century 'fête champêtre'. On the bank, a mysterious monk-like figure **turns** away from the boat.
- In 'Night', a figure in a red cap, his dog at his side, **makes** his way homewards down the path, his head bowed. The dark blue sky **is** dotted with white, and the moon **shines** out over the topmost house of the Italianate village which **clings** to the hillside.

Next slide, please read on. In 'Noon', a figure in a red hat in the foreground **rests** his foot on a rock to adjust his laces, and further back, a couple **walks** along the path. In 'Evening', two women in the boat, one sitting, the other standing, and carrying what **is** probably a mandolin evoke an 18th century 'fete champetre'. On the bank, a mysterious monk like figure **turns** away from the boat.

In 'Night', a figure in a red cap, his dog at his side, **makes** his way homeward down the path, his head bowed. The dark blue sky **is** dotted with white, and the moon **shines** out over the topmost house of the Italianate village which **clings** to the hillside. So, many singular nouns and so many singular verbs, here is another exercise for you. **So, right now I gave you a sample text.**

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Exercise
Correct the S-V agreement

If there is such a thing as a rock-star scientist, Stephen Hawking **embody** it. His forays into popular culture **has** included guest appearances on *The Simpsons*, *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, a comedy spoof, and even a recorded voice-over on the Pink Floyd song "Keep Talking."

Now, here I have given you an exercise you have to correct the subject-verb agreement in the highlighted verbs. Please look at the slide I will read on. If there is such a thing as a rock-star scientist, Stephen Hawking **embody** it. His forays into popular culture **has** included guest appearances on *The Simpsons*, *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, a comedy spoof, and even a recorded voice-over on the Pink Floyd song "Keep Talking".

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- Hawking **were** back in the headlines in the summer of 2015. In July, he held a news conference in London to announce the launch of a project called Breakthrough Listen. Funded by Russian entrepreneur Yuri Milner, Breakthrough Listen **were** created to devote more resources to the discovery of extraterrestrial life. *The Grand Design* (2010) **were** Hawking's first major publication in almost a decade.

Read on the next slide. Hawking **were** back in the headlines in the summer of 2015. In July, he held a news conference in London to announce the launch of a project called Breakthrough Listen. Funded by Russian entrepreneur Yuri Milner, Breakthrough Listen **were** created to devote more resources to the discovery of extraterrestrial life. The Grand Design **were** Hawking's first major publication in almost a decade.

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- In 2012, it was revealed that he had participated in a 2011 trial of a new headband-styled device called the iBrain. The device is designed to "read" the wearer's thoughts by picking up "waves of electrical brain signals," which **is** then interpreted by a special algorithm.

(<http://www.biography.com/people/stephen-hawking-9331710#space-travel-and-further-fame>)

In 2012, it was revealed that he had participated in a 2011 trial of a new headband-styled device called the iBrain. The device is designed to “read” the wearer’s thoughts by picking up “waves of electrical brain signals,” which **is** then interpreted by a special algorithm. Here is a source and the answers are first is embodies rock-star kind of a scientist; second have; third is ‘was’, and then it is followed by was and was again, the last one which is then interpreted by a special algorithm.

What should be the correct answer, the device is designed to read the wearer’s thoughts by picking up “waves of electrical signals”, which is then interpreted by a special algorithm. What should be the answer, the device is designed and what is it picking up, “waves of electrical brain signals”, and which is then interpreted. So, it should it be ‘is’ or should it be ‘are’. Please look at the slide, and **we be** very careful about it, which noun

should this particular verb agree with picking up “waves of electrical brain signals”. Therefore, the answer is ‘are’, it does not agree with the device.

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Exercise

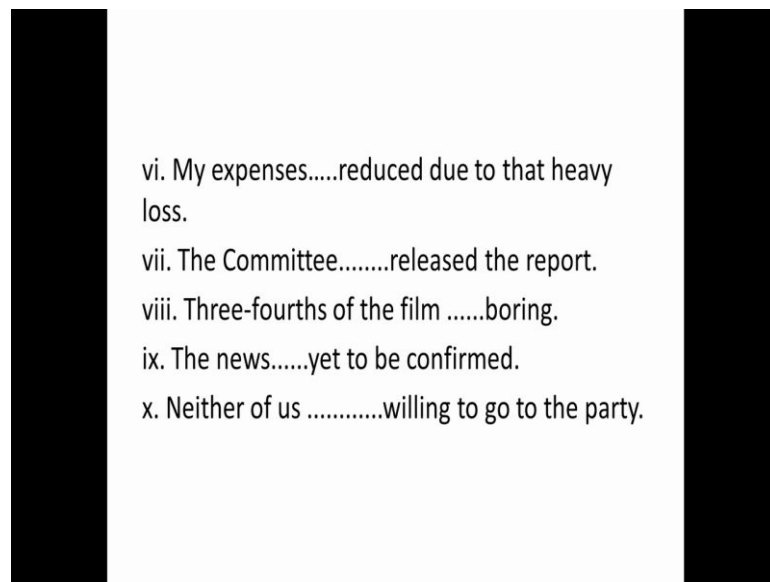
- i. There.....fewer students than expected.
- ii. The results of his experiment to be seen.
- iii. Hiroshima, a city that.....virtually destroyed during the WWII, flourishes again.
- iv. The Cabinettaken the oath.
- v. The president of the company, along with his executives,accepted the plan.

Now, here is another exercise for you; please look at it and fill in the blanks with the most appropriate form of verb you can think of. There dash fewer students than expected. Use the ‘be’ form here. The results of his experiment dash to be seen. Should it be ‘remain’ or ‘remains’? Hiroshima, a city that dash virtually destroyed during the Second World War, flourishes again, Should it be ‘was’ or ‘were’? The cabinet dash taken the oath. Should it be ‘is’ or ‘are’? The president of the company, along with his executives, should it be ‘has’ or ‘have’ accepted the plan. Take a moment and let us solve it.

The first one fewer sentences it is a giveaway it has to be plural. So, there were fewer students than expected. The results of his experiments; it is not, if you say are to be seen, it is not very complete, it does not give a sense of completion though, you can use that also remain to be seen is more appropriate that is the way we use certain expression it remains to be seen. So, that is generally does the way remains to be **seen** **in** they **go** together.

Hiroshima. It is like a collocation; soon we will do something called collocation also, because it is results, so it will be now plural, so remain to be seen. Hiroshima, a city that was virtually says it is a city. The cabinet has taken not have taken; again the rule collective nouns. The president of the company, now here is a main nouns and then you have something additional, it is separated with a pair of commas along with his executives. So, **it will**, the verb will agree with the singular main subject, main noun president has accepted the plan.

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- vi. My expenses.....reduced due to that heavy loss.
 - vii. The Committee.....released the report.
 - viii. Three-fourths of the filmboring.
 - ix. The news.....yet to be confirmed.
 - x. Neither of uswilling to go to the party.

Read on and here are more sentences for you; look at the slide. My expenses dash reduced due to that heavy loss. The committee dash released the report. Three-fourths of the film dash boring. The news dash yet to be confirmed. Neither of us dash willing to go to the party. Now my expenses have reduced; due to the expenses plural. The committee has released the report, remember. Three-fourths of the film is boring or the three-fourths look like a plural, but it is a unit is boring; two-fourth, one-fourth of the salary goes into this. The news is yet to be confirmed; news is always in singular, **we know** **there is no** such thing as a plural of news, news remains news, this one of those words. Neither of us is willing to go. Remember the rule, neither, either, none, they take a singular.

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Underline the correct word

- i. The childs/children are playing in the park.
- ii. The number of students studying science has/have decreased.
- iii. How many class/classes do we have today?
- iv. Mathematics is/are an interesting subject.
- v. Many a charity organization/organizations came forward with help.
- vi. The garbage is/are collected every Saturday.

Now, here is another list of sentences for you; take a look at the slide and underline the correct word, which should be used. The childs, children are playing in the park; what is the correct form, the children are playing in the park. The number of students studying science has decreased, have decreased; so has decreased it will go with the number. How many class, classes do we have today? Classes, because it is the plural verb already given have. Mathematics is an interesting subject, not 'are'. Many a charity organization, organizations came forward with help. Many a charity organization not so many a will also take a singular form of verb as well as the noun that follows. The garbage is always in singular; the garbage is collected every Saturday, not 'are'.

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- vi. Advertising in this magazine is/are a waste of money.
- vii. My brother gave me lots of good advice/advice.
- viii. There are a lot of similarity/similarities in the two quotations.
- ix.breakfast included in the tariff?
- x.there a lot of furniture in this house?

Let us move on. Let us look at another slide. Advertising in this magazine dash is or are a waste of money is a waste of money, it goes with the main noun advertising. My brother gave me lots of good advices or advice; there is no such thing at advices, advice is the right form, whether it is in singular or plural. There are a lot of similarities in the two quotations. So, similarities, because it is already given very clearly, this is a plural. Is breakfast included in the tariff? Is a question mark so we do not say are, but here is. Dash a lot of furniture in this house, is there a lot of furniture, we do not say, are there a lot of furniture, it is just the way it goes. Furniture again can never be used in plural are furniture's, so is there a lot of furniture in this house?

So, thank you very much, and we will meet again for our next class.

Tags

Reading English, English for Engineers, English words, English Exercise, Exercises in English, Grammar usage, English Grammar, vocabulary, words and phrases, spoken communication, written communication, English writing, English speaking, scientific English, report writing, CV, formal letter, Speech-Preposition, Noun Phrases, Countable and uncountable nouns, singular, plural

Essay writing, word categories, word formation, formal tone, paragraph writing, tone in writing, speaking tone, signal words, Letter writing, understanding essays, Mechanics of Essays, publishable essays, nouns, pronouns, verbs, adverbs, adjectives, propositions, determiners, linking words, 'be' form, linking words, reading, listening, sentence, Subject, Verb, Object