Subject-Verb Agreement

Verbs should agree with their subjects in number (singular or plural) and in person (first, second, or third).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st person</td>
<td>I love</td>
<td>we love</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd person</td>
<td>you love</td>
<td>you love</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd person</td>
<td>he/she/it loves</td>
<td>they love</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The present-tense ending –s (or –es) is used on a verb if its subject is third-person singular; otherwise the verb takes no ending.

The verb should agree with its subject, not with a word that comes between.

- *The governor as well as his press secretary was shot.*

Treat subjects joined with AND as plural:

- *Leon and Jan often jog together.*

With subjects joined with or, nor, either…or, or neither…nor, the verb should agree with the part of the subject closest to it:

- *Neither the teacher nor the students were in the lab.*

Treat most indefinite pronouns as singular:

- *Each of the furrows has been seeded.*

Treat collective nouns as singular unless the meaning is clearly plural.

- *The class respects the teacher.*

The verb should agree with its subject even when the subject follows the verb:

- *There are surprisingly few children in our neighborhood.*

The verb should agree with its subject, not with a subject complement:

- *A tent and sleeping bag are the required equipment.*
Words such as athletics, economics, mathematics, physics, statistics, measles, and news are usually singular, despite their plural form.

Titles of works, company names, words mentioned as words, and gerund phrases are singular.

This handout is adapted from the Indiana University Writing Center Website. Only the format has been changed.