

Subject-Verb Concord or (Agreement of Subject & Verb)

Before understanding the chapter, it is essential to know what does the word 'concord' mean. It means 'agreement' i.e., in a sentence, the verb must agree with **the number and the person of the subject**. Hence we can say that **a singular subject takes a singular verb and a plural verb takes a plural verb**.

Read these sentences :

- | | |
|----------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. (a) The dog is barking. | (Singular Subject—Singular Verb) |
| (b) He sits on the chair. | (Singular Subject—Singular Verb) |
| 2. (a) The players are running a race. | (Plural Subject—Plural Verb) |
| (b) The boys were making a noise. | (Plural Subject—Plural Verb) |

Some More Sentences :

1. Mohan *sings* a song.
2. Mohan *is* singing a song.
3. The gardener *is* looking after the plants.
4. The extremists *are* looting the shops.
5. Lata *does not* sit properly in the class.
6. Khanak *hates* milk but her brother *does not*.
7. Do you *agree* with me in this matter ?
8. They *were* respecting the elders.
9. Ram *is* learning to swim.

Before proceeding further, we must keep in mind the following cases—

1. When two or more singular subjects are joined by the connector 'and', they take a plural verb. e.g.,

- (a) An old woman and her daughter *were* begging on the road.
- (b) Two and two *make* four.
- (c) Ravi, Reena, Reva and Rashi *are* close friends.
- (d) Mr. and Mrs. Raju *are* taking lunch.
- (e) Sonapat and Panipat *are* small cities.

2. If two singular subjects are joined by 'and' and they refer to the same person or things or express one idea, they take a singular verb. e.g.,

- (a) The poet and the philosopher *is* dead.
- (b) Curry and rice *is* my favourite food.
- (c) Slow and steady *wins* the race.
- (d) Honesty and glory *has* no charm for him.
- (e) All work and no play *makes* Jack a dull boy.

3. In case different things or persons are referred to, the Article is used before each Noun and the verb is plural. e.g.,

- (a) The patron and the president *have* left the meeting.
- (b) The poet and *the* philosopher *are* sitting in the same line.

4. When two or more singular subjects are joined by 'or', 'nor', 'either...or', 'neither...nor', 'not only...but also', the verb must agree with the latter subject.

Read these sentences :

- (a) Either Neelu or his friends **are** to blame.
- (b) Neither he nor I **am** in the wrong.
- (c) Rattan or his brother **is** absent today.
- (d) No boy or girl **has** come.
- (e) Not only tea but also there **was** hot milk.

5. If there are two subjects of different persons and are joined by 'Neither...nor' or 'Either...or', the verb agrees with the nearer. e.g.,

- (a) Either he or I **am** wrong.
- (b) Either Seema or her friends **are** rogues.
- (c) Neither her parents nor Kanika **was** overlooked by the secretary.

6. The following words are singular so they take singular verb :
Each, everyone, everybody, anyone, anybody, someone, somebody, either, neither, many, none, nobody, no one, many a.

Read these sentences :

- (a) Each of the brothers **has** a pen.
- (b) Everyone (everybody) **wants** to be happy.
- (c) Does anyone **know** the way to the nearest inn ?
- (d) Either of these two shirts **is** good.
- (e) Neither of the two novels **is** worth reather.
- (f) Many a man **has** done so.
- (g) Every Indian **honours** the National Flag.

7. If the nouns are taken as different units, a plural verb is used. e.g.,

Bread and butter **have** been kept separately.

8. Some Nouns are plural in form, but are singular in meaning, so they take a singular verb. e.g.,

Economics, Innings, Mathematics, News, Physics, Politics, Wages, Measles, The Arabian Nights, The West Indies, Billiards, Summons Dramatics, Aerobics, Gymnastics, Statitics, Electronics, Diabetes, Rabies, Mumps, Tuberculosis, Rickets, Cards, Darts, Athletics, Skittles and Tennis etc.

Read these sentences :

- (a) Economics **is** my favourite subject.
- (b) The news **is** correct.
- (c) The wages of sin **is** death.
- (d) Measles **has** broken out in the city.
- (e) Summons **was** served on Mallaya.
- (f) Billiards **is** my lovely game.
- (g) The second innings **was** exciting.

9. The following words are plural and they take plural verb. e.g.,
Both, few, a few, many, several.

Examples :

- (a) Both the roads **are** smooth.
- (b) Many **were** called but few **were** selected.
- (c) A few of the boys **were** present.
- (d) Several of his books **enjoy** a good sale.

- 10. When two or more singular subjects are connected with 'besides', 'no less than', 'and not', 'together with', 'with', the verb is either singular or agrees with the 1st subject.**

Read these sentences :

- (a) Rajan no less than you *is* guilty.
- (b) No one besides, the doctor *treats* the patient.
- (c) He and not you, *is* to come here.
- (d) Raj Kumar together with his friends *is* absent.
- (e) The purse with all its documents *was* picked.

- 11. The verb agrees with the number of the Noun that follows the verb, e.g.,**

- (a) There *is* no leaf on the tree.
- (b) There *are* ten students in Computer Science.
- (c) There *were* many birds in the sky.

- 12. A plural noun which is the name of a country or province, or title of a book, it is followed by a singular verb. e.g.,**

- (a) The United States *is* a powerful nation.
- (b) The Arabian Nights *contains* interesting stories.

- 13. A Relative Pronoun must agree with its antecedent in Gender, Number and Person.**

Read these sentences :

- (a) It is I who *am* to answer your question.
- (b) He, who *is* my friend, *will* help me.
- (c) It is you who *are* to speak.
- (d) It is they who *are* to see the chairman.
- (e) Rishi has sold *the* cow which *gives* milk.

- 14. A Collective Noun takes a singular verb when the subject stands for the collection as a whole, and a plural verb when the subject stands for the individuals of which it is composed; as—**

Read the following sentences :

- (a) The whole group *is* absent today.
- (b) The committee *has* issued its report.
- (c) The jury *has* four members.
- (d) The jury *have* different opinions.
- (e) The crew *were* arrested.

- 15. When a plural Noun denotes some specific quantity, amount, distance, weight, or amount of money and represents a single figure or quantity, it is considered as a whole and it takes a singular verb. e.g.,**

- (a) Two kilometres *is* a short distance.
- (b) Nine kilometres *is* a long distance.
- (c) Five thousand rupees *is* not enough for me.

Now read some of the following sentences :

- 1. None of them *is* right.
- 2. Two thirds of this lesson *is* easy.
- 3. Many people *live* in poverty.
- 4. The quality of the bananas *is* not good.
- 5. A large number of people *were* present there.
- 6. A pair of shoes *is* lying under the table.

7. One of my brothers *has* not come.
8. What I say or do *are* none of her business.
9. The mother and her daughters *are* present here.
10. The majority of the applicants *are* below standard.
11. Neither he came here nor *did* his brother.

MORE ABOUT SUBJECT AND VERB AGREEMENT

1. Introductory "there"

If a sentence begins with 'there', the verb must agree with the subject that follows it : e.g.,

- (i) There *was* no milk in the jug.
- (ii) There *are* five boys in this section.
- (iii) There *is* little hope of his recovery.
- (iv) There *were* many pictures in the exhibition.

2. The Error of Proximity :

Sometimes the subject is separated from its verb by a phrase or a clause. In such cases one should be careful as :

- (i) All the workers in this factory *are* in holiday today.
- (ii) The teacher, along with the students, *has* left the class.
- (iii) The boys, who *are* in the hall, *are* the students of X-B.

3. Nouns Singular in form, but plural in meaning take a plural verb etc : e.g.

- (i) Many people *live* in the slums of Delhi.
- (ii) The cattle *are* grazing in the field.
- (iii) The cannon *are* fired from here.

4. A pair of shoes etc . are treated as singular and take a singular verb as :

- (i) A pair of *shoes is* lying there.
- (ii) A pair of *gloves is* lying on the floor.

5. When adjectives i.e., "much", "more", "little", "less" are used as nouns, they take singular verb, as :

- (i) Much of his wealth *has* been wasted.
- (ii) Less than half the amount *was* paid.
- (iii) More cream *is* needed to make the soup tasty.
- (iv) A little help *will* do me more.

6. The number of, a number of : When 'the number of' is used with a subject, singular verb is used.

When 'a number of' is used with a subject, the plural verb is used; as

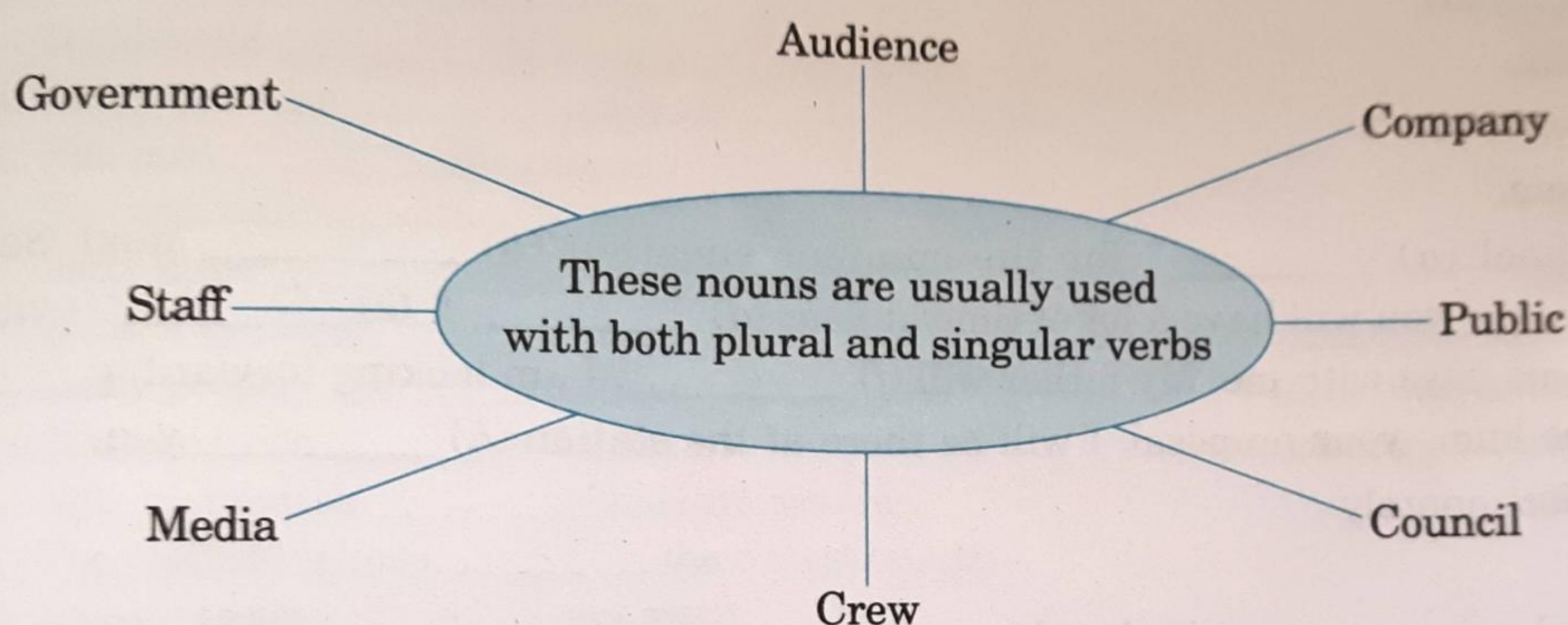
- (i) A number of boys were absent.
- (ii) The number of absentees is very large.

7. "A lot of", "A great deal of", "Plenty of", "Most of", "Some of" : When they refer to amount, a singular verb is used but when they refer to number, a plural verb is used, as :

- (i) A lot of work *has* been finished.
- (ii) A lot of people *were* present there in the meeting.
- (iii) A great deal of work *remains* to be done.
- (iv) Plenty of work *has* been completed.
- (v) Most of the people *were* honoured.
- (vi) Some of the students *were* fined.

8. **“The majority of” is used only for number and takes a plural verb, as :**
The majority of people *want* peace in Kashmir Valley.

Now study the following :



Note : If you use a plural verb, you will always be correct, but if you use a singular noun, you may be wrong. So to be on the safer side, use plural verb with these nouns.

Read the following sentences :

1. Audience : Were the audience asked to behave properly ?
2. Company : Have the Luxar Company been put in doll-drum ?
3. Public : Have common public to submit their opinion about the peace in the valley ?
4. Council : Have the Council of Ministers been asked to detail the problem of inflation in the country ?
5. Crew : Have the crew of the ship been rescued ?
6. Media : Have the media been very particular in their reports ?
7. Staff : Have the nursing staff resorted to hunger strike ?
8. Government : Have the Government arrested the extremists ?