

Subject-Verb Agreement Handout

Functional Skills English Entry 3 Grammar

What does subject-verb agreement mean?

The verb must match the subject. First find the subject: Who or what is the sentence about? Then choose the correct verb.

Step 1: Find the subject and verb

Question	Example	Answer
Who or what?	The learner writes a short email.	The learner = subject
What does the learner do?	The learner writes a short email.	writes = verb

Main rules

Rule	Use it with	Examples
Base verb	I, you, we, they and plural nouns	I work. They work. The learners write.
Verb + s/es	he, she, it and one singular noun	She works. He watches. The bus arrives.
Be verbs	am / is / are	I am ready. She is here. They are late.
Have / has	have with I/you/we/they; has with he/she/it	We have a lesson. He has a pen.
Do / does	do with I/you/we/they; does with he/she/it	They do homework. She does homework.
There is / There are	one thing / more than one thing	There is one form. There are two forms.

Common mistakes

Incorrect	Correct	Why?
She have a question.	She has a question.	She = has
The instructions is clear.	The instructions are clear.	Instructions = plural
There is two emails.	There are two emails.	Two emails = plural
He doesn't works on Sunday.	He doesn't work on Sunday.	After doesn't, use base verb

Tricky sentences

Tip

Sometimes extra words come between the subject and verb. Ignore the extra phrase and match the real subject.

Sentence	Real subject	Correct verb
The box of books is heavy.	box	is
The learners in my class are friendly.	learners	are
The list of names is on the desk.	list	is

Mini practice

Choose the correct verb:

1. She work / works in a care home. Answer: _____

2. They has / have a lesson today. Answer: _____

3. There is / are three forms to complete. Answer: _____

Exam tip

When proofreading writing, ask: Who or what is the subject? Does the verb match?