

Agreement of the verb with the subject

We have already learned that a singular noun takes a singular verb.

John likes science fiction. (Here the singular verb 'likes' agrees with the singular subject John.)

A plural subject requires a plural verb.

My children like video games.

Notes

A verb becomes singular when we add -s to it. Study the examples given below.

I enjoy classic music.

My son enjoys classic music. (By adding -s to the verb enjoy, we make it singular.)

Many students find this rule confusing because in the case of nouns -s is added to the plural. For example, the noun 'boy' is singular whereas 'boys' is plural.

My son enjoys singing and dancing. (Here the singular noun 'son' takes the singular verb 'enjoys'.)

My sons enjoy singing and dancing. (Here the plural noun 'sons' requires the plural verb 'enjoy'.)

The pronouns I and you are unusual. They take plural verbs although they are singular in number. Note that the pronoun 'you' can also be plural.

I like to paint. (NOT I likes to paint.)

You play cricket. (NOT You plays cricket.)

This means that only a subject in the third person singular requires a singular verb.

The pronoun I is in the first person. The pronoun you is in the second person.

I speak English.

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You speak English.

He speaks English.

She speaks French.