

Agreement

Agreement means that sentence parts match.

The Rule: A subject must agree with its verb in number (singular or plural)

A singular subject takes a singular verb.

-*He* who hesitates is probably right.

(*He* agrees with the singular verb *is*)

-*Spaghetti and meatballs* is my favorite dish.

(*spaghetti and meatballs* works as one singular subject and agrees with *is*)

-*The Valachi Papers* is a good read.

(*The Valachi Papers* is a title and all titles are singular and agrees with *is*)

-*Either* the witness *or* the defendant was lying.

(singular subjects connected by *either/or, neither/nor, not only/but also* need a singular verb)

A Plural subject takes a plural verb.

-*Lizards* make excellent pets.

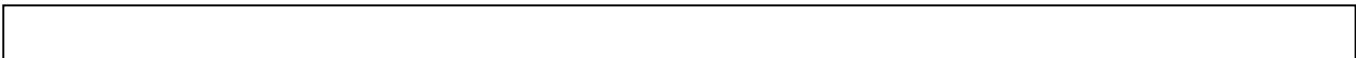
(Plural subject: *lizards* matches plural verb: *make*)

-*Anwar and Hosni* are going to the movies.

(conjunctions are used as ‘plus signs’ making the subject plural)

-*Neither* the contract *nor* the page proofs are arriving in time to meet the deadline.

(the subject is made up of two or more nouns by *or, nor, not only, but only*, the verb agrees with the closest noun.)



-The *purpose* of working out for several hours is to get fit and buff.

(ignore words or phrases that come between the subject and the verb)

Now try these:

1. A typical Radio City Music Hall Rockette (is/are) between 5 feet and 5 feet 9 inches tall.
2. An apple or a pear (contains/contain) about 75 calories each.
3. The supply of stupid drivers (increase/increases) during holidays.
4. In winter, camels (is/are) able to go without water for 8 weeks.
5. Contrary to popular thinking, camels (does/do) not store water in their humps.
6. The average person (breathes/breathe) 7 quarts of air per minute.
7. Every year the Washington Monument (sink/sinks) an average of 6 inches into the ground.

