

Subject-verb agreement



One of these cheeses **is** mild; the others **are** strong.

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Construction

Singular noun + singular verb

My son **is** 12 years old.

This box of chocolates **is** expensive.

Plural noun + plural verb

My colleagues **are** very nice.

The people in the IT team **are** very helpful.

Nouns that can be singular or plural

For a group or organisation, we can use a singular or plural verb:<?xml:namespace prefix = "o" ns = "urn:schemas-microsoft-com:office:office" />

The IT team **is/ are** based in Lyon.

The government **want/wants** to increase taxes.

Other examples include: audience, class, company, crowd, department, family, population, school and the names of companies or organisations such as the BBC, Apple, the Stock Exchange and the World Health Organisation.

Nouns ending in 's'

The choice of verb depends on the noun. Here are some examples: `<?xml:namespace prefix = "o" ns = "urn:schemas-microsoft-com:office:office" />`

| | Singular verb | Plural verb |
|---|---|---|
| A single entity | <p>Jaws is my favourite film.</p> <p>The United States aims to promote democracy.</p> | |
| Nouns that appear to be plural but are not | <p>The news wasn't good.</p> <p>Physics includes the study of heat and light. [see below]</p> | |
| Some names of academic subjects have another, more general meaning | <p>Politics seems to be more popular now.</p> <p>Economics isn't my favourite subject.</p> | <p>His politics are changing. [political beliefs]</p> <p>The economics of this industry are interesting. [its financial system]</p> |
| Some have no singular form and always take a plural verb | | <p>His clothes are unfashionable.</p> <p>Other examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · shorts · trousers · goods · premises |

Measurements, amounts and quantities

| | | |
|---|---------------|-------------|
| <code><?xml:namespace prefix = "o" ns = "urn:schemas-microsoft-com:office:office" /></code> | Singular verb | Plural verb |
|---|---------------|-------------|

A singular verb is preferred

Â€200 **isn't** enough.

I think 75km **is** too far to travel.

With percentages, it depends whether the noun in the sentence is singular or plural

40% of his time **is** spent in meetings.

10% of the employees **want** to work in a different department.

More than one subject

We usually use a plural verb: `<?xml:namespace prefix = "o" ns = "urn:schemas-microsoft-com:office:office" />`

My sister and I **are** going to Italy next year.

But if we see the items as a single entity, we use a singular verb:

Blackcurrant crumble and ice cream **is** my favourite dessert.

Health and Safety **has** to be a priority.

'One of'

'One of' is followed by a plural noun but does not take a plural verb because it refers to 'one of a pair or group':

One of my colleagues **is** sick. ✓

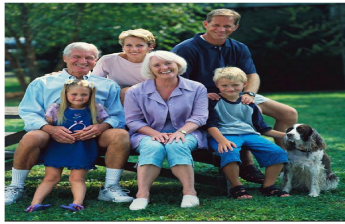
One of my colleagues **are** sick. ✗

See also **Quantifiers** and **plural nouns**.

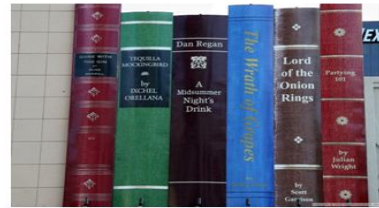
Examples



The goods **are** loaded onto ships.



My family **like/likes** going to the park.



"Angels and Demons" **is** Dan Brown's second novel.



Two hours **wasn't** long enough.



Moules frites **is** a popular French dish.



These trousers **are** perfect for the party!

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