

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

## Measurements, amounts and quantities

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

<p>A singular verb is preferred</p>	<p>Â€200 <b>isn't</b> enough.</p> <p>I think 75km <b>is</b> too far to travel.</p>
<p>With percentages, it depends whether the noun in the sentence is singular or plural</p>	<p>40% of his <u>time</u> <b>is</b> spent in meetings.</p> <p>10% of the <u>employees</u> <b>want</b> to work in a different department.</p>

## 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. ✓

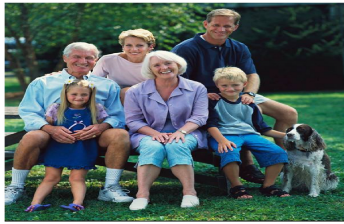
One of my colleagues are sick. ✗

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

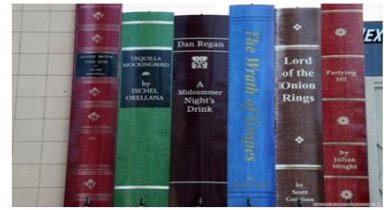
# Examples



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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Last update: 2023/02/14 14:21

