**The Agreement of Subjects & Verbs**

**Subject/Verb Agreement**

In academic writing, it is important for every sentence to balance. Each subject needs a matching verb that agrees with it in number; therefore, a singular subject always needs a singular verb, and a plural subject always takes the action of a plural verb. Typically, people do not have problems when they use first or second person, but they often encounter this grammar error when using third person.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Person</th>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First</td>
<td>I want</td>
<td>We want</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second</td>
<td>You want</td>
<td>You (all) want</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third</td>
<td>He/She/It wants</td>
<td>They want</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**How it works**

Ex. He wants to attend the poetry reading.
Ex. They want to attend the poetry reading.
Ex. Math and science courses are hard for me.
Ex. English or history is my favorite subject.
Ex. An umbrella or galoshes are required today.
Ex. Not only the students but also the faculty is against the new budget cuts.
Ex. Neither this book or that book appeals to me.
Ex. Few cars attract my attention.
Ex. Others want to own Porsches, Audis, and corvettes.
Ex. Most of the students are ready for the exam.
Ex. Most of the pie is left over.

**Words that Require a Singular Subject and Verb**

Each  
Every  
Anybody  
Anyone  
Anything  
Either  
Neither  
Everybody  
Everyone  
Everything  
Much  
One  
Somebody  
Someone  
Something  
Another  
Many a/an  
Nobody  
No one  
Nothing

**Words that Require a Plural Subject and Verb**

Both  
Few  
Many  
Others  
Several

**Words that May Take a Singular or Plural Verb**

All  
None  
Any  
Some  
More  
Most

**Rules to Remember**

1. And  
   * And always requires a plural verb.
   Ex. Poems and novels are my favorite things to read.

2. Or  
   * Use the subject closest to the verb to determine if you need a singular or plural verb.
   Ex. Books or poems interest me.

3. Neither/nor  
   * Either/or 
   * Not Only/But Also
   * Like Or, use the subject closest to the verb to determine what form of the verb is needed.
   Ex. Not only the novels but also the poem is interesting.

**Collective Nouns**

When using a singular word to describe a group, use a singular verb.

Ex. The Board of Directors votes on the issue today.