Subject-Verb Agreement, *Barron’s* pp. 116-117

Just like in your foreign language classes, nouns, verbs, and pronouns have special forms or endings that indicate their *number*—whether the word is singular (*one*) or plural (*more than one*).

- A verb always has to agree in number with its subject.
  - **Singular:**
    
    The house has three bedrooms.

    Mrs. Sikora teaches one ACT course.

    The student is completing his homework.

    She leaves for school at 7:15 a.m.

    Notice that **singular verbs often end in *s***.

  - **Plural:**

    Many houses have three bedrooms.

    Mrs. Sikora and Mr. Neville teach ACT courses.

    The students are completing their homework.

    They leave for school at 7:15 a.m.

    Notice the **plural nouns often end in *s***.

- Intervening words and phrases do not affect subject-verb agreement; **CROSS OFF INTERVENING WORDS AND PHRASES.**
  - Cross off prepositional phrases to help you clearly see the subject-verb agreement.
  - Cross off parenthetical phrases (such as along with, as well as, in addition to, together with).
A column of wounded prisoners, townspeople, and exhausted soldiers was spotted struggling over the horizon. (cross off the prepositional phrase starting with of).

She, her brother, and her friends from upstate have always bought tickets to the rock concert. (Plural/compound subject; cross off from upstate).

The carrier, together with three destroyers and two frigates, was dispatched to the Mediterranean Sea. (Cross off the parenthetical expression starting with together with).

My sister, as well as three of my friends, has Mrs. Sikora for English. (Cross off the phrase beginning with as well as).

- **Singular indefinite pronouns:** anybody, anyone, everybody, everyone, somebody, someone, nobody, no one, either, neither, one
  - All of the indefinite pronouns have the word one in them, the word body in them, or can be followed by the word one.

  Neither of my children has an interest in music.

  Somebody in the class knows the answer.

  Everyone at Saint Viator wears a uniform.

- **Plural indefinite pronouns:** both, few, many, several

  Both are my favorite foods.

  Few in my class are studying for the quiz.
• **There and Here** are never subjects. In sentences beginning with these adverbs, the subject falls later in the sentence.

  There are fifteen students in my ACT class.

  Here is your homework for next week.

• **Compound subjects joined by and are usually plural.**

  Mary and Jane are my friends.

  The Pendletons, the Riviers, and the Kleins are coming to dinner.

• **For subjects joined by or, nor, either...or, neither...nor, refer to the subject closest to the verb to determine its agreement.**

  Either my uncle or my aunt is making dinner tonight.

  Either my uncles or my aunt is making dinner tonight.

  Either my uncle or my aunts are making dinner tonight.

  Neither the doctor nor the nurses are waiting for you.

  Neither the doctors nor the nurse is waiting for you.

  Lemon or lime is the garnish of my choice.

• **Collective nouns are nouns that designate a collective group of individuals.**

  o Treat collective nouns as singulars if you are referring to the group as one unit acting together as a whole.

    The army inspires hard work and dedication.

    The orchestra is playing a piece by Bach.
o Treat collective nouns as plurals if you are referring to the individuals within the unit.

The army rely on each other for support.

The orchestra tune their instruments daily.

• Words like aeronautics, cybernetics, mathematics, physics, news, and dollars are usually plural in form but singular in usage.

The news covers eight top stories each night.

The fifteen dollars in my pocket is going to the Lenten campaign.