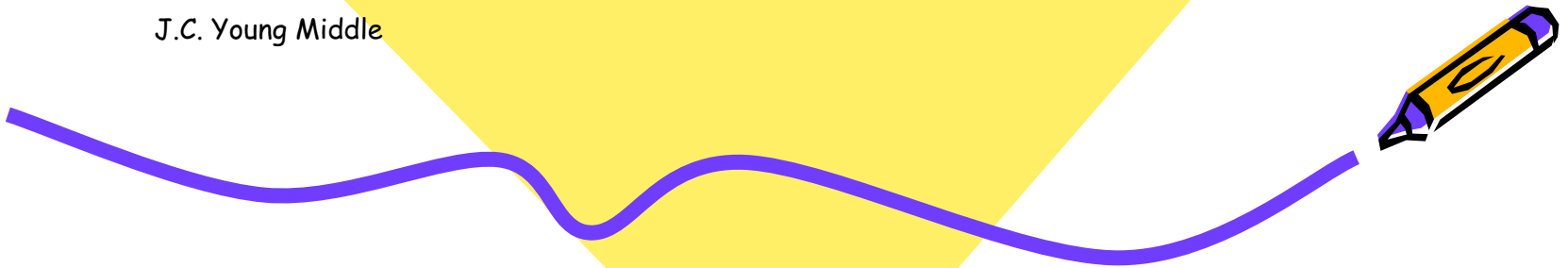




Subject-Verb Agreement

J.C. Young Middle



Subject & Verb Review



- What is a Subject?
 - Your subject is the person, place, or thing that your sentence is about.
 - Important reminders:
 - Your sentence may have a compound subject.
 - Your subject will never be in a prepositional phrase.
 - *Usually* your subject comes before your verb.



Subject & Verb Review



- What is a Verb?
 - The main verb tells what the subject does or links the subject to another word that describes it.
 - Action Verb: shows action subject performs
 - I walk three miles every day.
 - Linking Verb: connects subject to another word or words that describe it
 - I am tired.
 - Helping Verb: joins an action verb to form the complete verb
 - I was walking three miles every day when the weather was warmer.



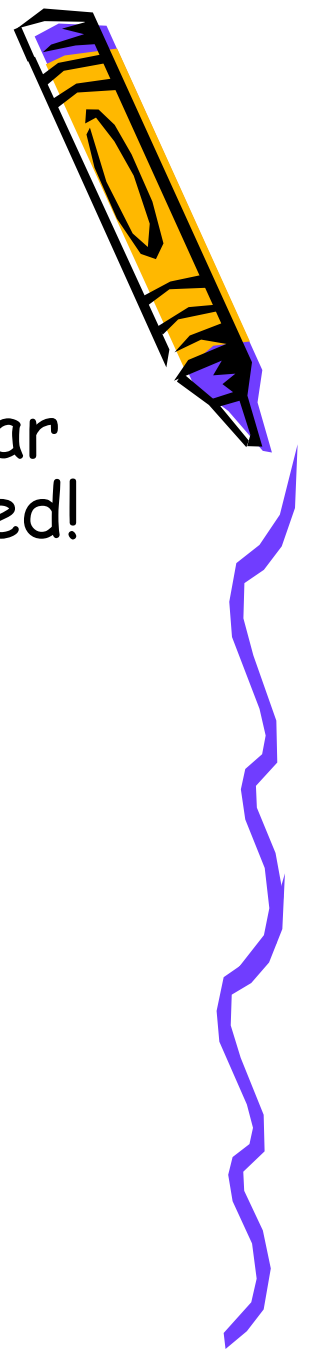
What is Subject-Verb Agreement?



- Subject-verb agreement means your subject and verb must match, or agree, in number.
 - If you have a singular subject, then you must use a singular verb.
 - The dog barks at every sound he hears.
 - If you have a plural subject, then you must use a plural verb.
 - The dogs bark at every sound they hear.



Subject-Verb Agreement



- It is important to know how your singular and plural subjects and verbs are formed!
 - For your subject, which is a noun
 - The singular form does not end in an -s
 - The dog barks at every sound it hears.
 - The plural form ends in an -s
 - The dogs bark at every sound they hear.
 - For your verb
 - The singular form ends in an -s
 - The dog barks at every sound it hears.
 - The plural form does **not** end in an -s
 - The dogs bark at every sound they hear.



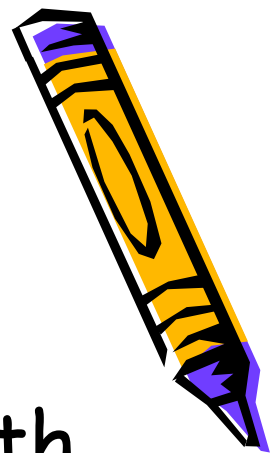
S-V Agreement Trouble Spots



1. The verb is a form of be, have, or do.
2. Words or phrases come between the subject & the verb.
3. There is a compound subject.
4. The subject is an indefinite pronoun.
5. The verb comes before the subject.
6. The subject is a collective noun.

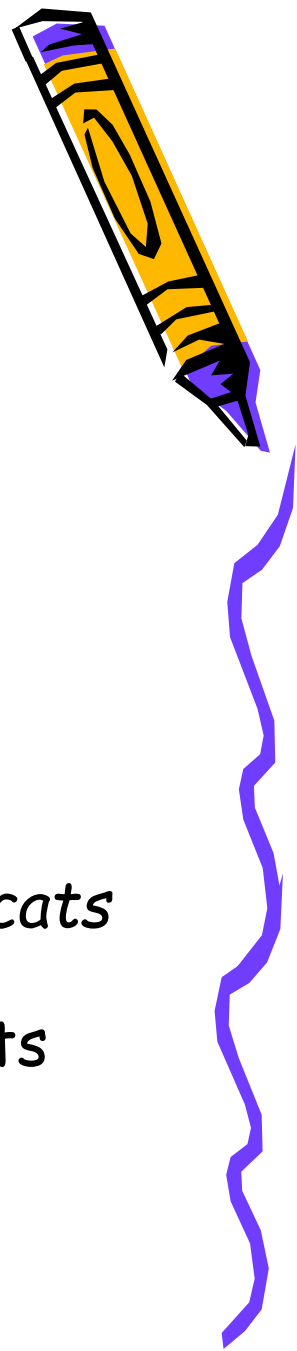


1. The Verb is a form of be, have, or do.



- Make sure a linking verb agrees with its subject, not with the word or phrase that describes the subject.
 - Incorrect: The worst backyard pest are *squirrels*.
 - Correct: The worst backyard pest is *squirrels*.





2. Words or phrases come between the subject & verb.

- Prepositional Phrases
 - Incorrect: The number of *students* have remained consistent.
 - Correct: The *number* of students has remained consistent.
- Relative Clauses
 - Incorrect: The dog who likes to chase my cats have run away.
 - Correct: The *dog* who likes to chase my cats has run away.



3. There is a compound subject joined by and, or, nor.



- If joined by and, then subjects are combined and become plural, so verb must also be plural.
 - Incorrect: *Jack and Jill walks up the hill.*
 - Correct: *Jack and Jill walk up the hill.*
- If joined by or / nor, then the subjects are *not* combined, so the verb must agree with whichever subject is **closest** to it.
 - Either the microphone or the *speakers* are broken.
 - Either the speakers or the *microphone* is broken.
 - Neither the teacher nor the *students* want to stay late.
 - Neither the students nor the *teacher* wants to stay late.



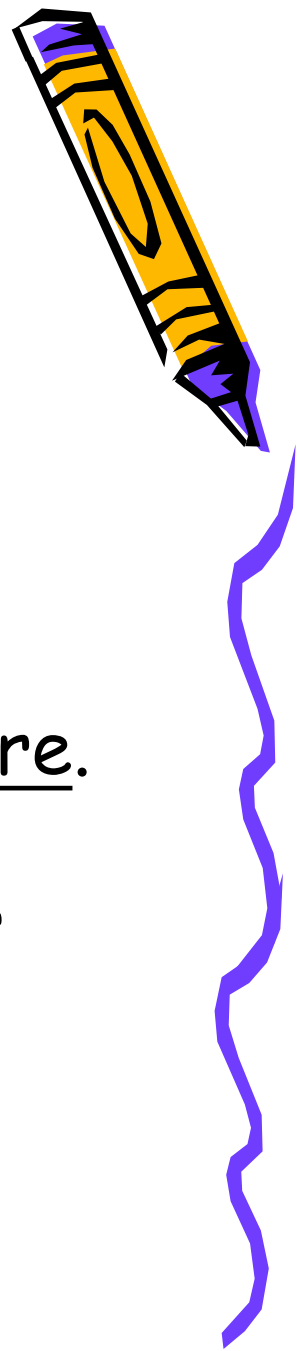
4. The subject is an indefinite pronoun.



- What is an indefinite pronoun?
 - A pronoun that does not replace a specific person, place, or thing; it is general (i.e. someone, anyone, everyone, each, every, some, all).
- Most indefinite pronouns are either always singular or always plural.
 - Beware: indefinite pronouns are often followed by a prepositional phrase or dependent clause.
 - Incorrect: Each of my *classes* are difficult in some way.
 - Correct: Each of my classes is difficult in some way.



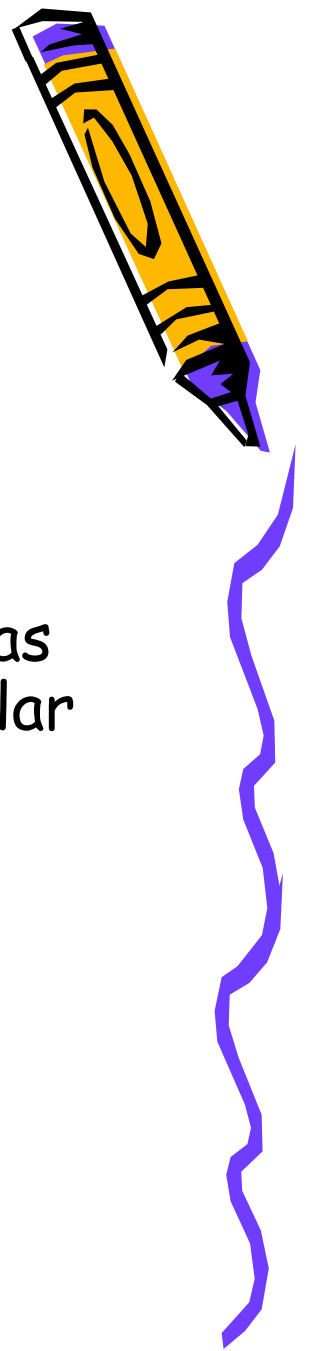
5. The verb comes before the subject.



- Sentences that ask a question.
 - Is the book in the library?
 - Turn the sentence into a statement.
 - The *book* is in the library.
- Sentences that begin with Here or There.
 - Here is your textbook.
 - There are three more exams scheduled for this class.
 - Turn the sentence around.
 - Your *textbook* is here.
 - Three more *exams* are scheduled for this class.



6. The subject is a collective noun.



- What is a collective noun?
 - A collective noun names a group (i.e. family, team, committee).
- Most collective nouns refer to a group acting as one unit; therefore, they are treated as singular and must have a singular verb.
 - The *family* rides bikes together each day.
 - The *team* practices every Saturday.



One Final Note

- Watch for words that name something that we think of as a single unit, but that actually consist of two parts; these are always plural.
 - Scissors, pants, trousers, tweezers.
 - The scissors are on the table.
 - The pants need ironing.
 - If you add “pair of” to the front of any of these, then they become singular.
 - The pair of scissors is on the table.
 - The pair of pants needs ironing.

