



Writing Centre

VERB AGREEMENT

1. Use a plural verb when the subject of a sentence is composed of two or more nouns or pronouns connected by "and"

Example:

She *and* her friends **are** at the mall

2. Use a singular verb when two or more singular nouns or pronouns are connected by "or" or "nor".

Example:

The book *or* the binder **is** in the drawer

3. *Doesn't* is a contraction of 'does not' and should be used only with a singular subject.

Don't is a contraction of 'do not' and should be used only with a plural subject.

The exception to this rule appears cases of first person and second person pronouns 'I' and 'you'. With these pronouns, the contraction don't should be used.

Example:

She doesn't like pizza.

They don't like pizza.

4. Nouns with only one part require singular verbs. (E.g. civics, mathematics, dollars, measles, and news.)

Example:

The car **is** in the driveway

5. Nouns with two parts require plural verbs. (E.g. tweezers, scissors, pants, shears.)

Example:

The tweezers **are** dull

6. Expressions such as *with*, *together with*, *including*, *accompanied by*, *in addition to*, or *as well* do not change the (number singularize or pluralize/grammatical number) of the subject. If the subject is singular, the verb is as well.

Example:

The teacher, *accompanied by* his son, **is** travelling to Florida.

All of the toys, *including* yours, **are** in the toy chest.



Resources:

Handouts by Nicole McDermott

"Making Subjects and Verbs Agree." (n.d.). Retrieved from
<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/599/01/>