

Writing Mechanics & Grammar → Subject-Verb Agreement Level: High School

When the noun or subject of a sentence is singular, it takes a singular verb in the predicate of the sentence, and when the subject is plural, it requires a plural verb. That basic rule applies even if other modifiers and phrases stand between the noun and verb. Things get more complicated if you have two or more noun subjects joined by "nor" or "which" which means that the noun nearest to the verb determines whether it's singular or plural. But two or more noun subjects joined by "and" always require the plural. You also need to watch for collective nouns, which are singular nouns describing a group (like "family"), two nouns that work together to name a single thing (like "rock and roll"), or words like "each" and "every." These all take singular verbs as well.

Which noun(s) determined whether a singular or plural verb was used?

Example: members The members of a very important international forum are meeting today.

1. _____ Neither the doctor nor the nurses operate if conditions are unsanitary.
2. _____ Each firefighter in all departments responds immediately when the alarm goes off.
3. _____ The treasurer and secretary count the weekly fees after each chess club meeting.
4. _____ Some of the moon dust is still left on the old boots of the first astronauts.
5. _____ Several friends of my little sister maintain weekly book blogs.
6. _____ The volunteers who work each summer with the agency recruit in the autumn.
7. _____ Either my cousins or my aunt organizes the family reunion every year.
8. _____ Many who read this inspirational book change their lives when they finish it.
9. _____ None of the wisdom of the sages actually prepares us for real life.
10. _____ The pencil and pen are about to become obsolete as everything goes digital.
11. _____ A panel of judges interviews the two finalists in the science fair.

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