

## Agreement between subject and verb 2

A

With <b>any of, each of, either of, neither of, or none of</b> and a <b>plural noun / pronoun</b> we can use a <i>singular</i> or <i>plural</i> verb. (We use a singular verb for careful written English.)	<input type="checkbox"/> I don't think <b>any of</b> them <i>knows</i> (or <i>know</i> ) where the money is hidden. <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Neither of</b> the French athletes <i>has</i> (or <i>have</i> ) won this year.
With <b>a / the majority of, a number of, a lot of, plenty of, all (of), or some (of)</b> and a <b>plural noun / pronoun</b> we use a <i>plural</i> verb. (We use a singular verb with <b>the number of</b> .)	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>A number of</b> refugees <i>have</i> been turned back at the border. <input type="checkbox"/> <b>The number of</b> books in the library <i>has</i> risen to over five million.
After <b>one of</b> and a <b>plural noun / pronoun</b> we use a <i>singular</i> verb. However, after <b>one of + plural noun / pronoun + who</b> we can often use either a singular or plural verb. (A plural verb is more grammatical.)	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>One of</b> the reasons I took the job <i>was</i> that I could work from home. <input type="checkbox"/> He's <b>one of</b> those teachers who <i>insist / insists</i> on pupils sitting silently in class.
With <b>any of, none of, the majority of, a lot of, plenty of, all (of), some (of)</b> and an <b>uncountable noun</b> we use a <i>singular</i> verb.	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>All</b> the furniture <i>was</i> destroyed in the fire. <input type="checkbox"/> <b>None of</b> the equipment <i>appears</i> to be damaged.
With <b>every</b> or <b>each</b> and a <b>singular noun or coordinated noun (x and y)</b> we use a <i>singular</i> verb. (For <b>each of</b> , see above.)	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Every</b> room <i>looks</i> over the harbour. <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Every</b> boy and girl <i>takes</i> part in the activity. <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Each</b> child <i>has</i> drawn a picture. <i>but</i> <input type="checkbox"/> The children <i>have</i> <b>each</b> drawn a picture.
With <b>everyone, everybody, everything</b> (and similar words beginning <b>any-, some- and no-</b> ) we use a <i>singular</i> verb.	<input type="checkbox"/> Practically <b>everyone</b> <i>thinks</i> that Phil should be given the job.

B

When a subject has two or more items joined by **and**, we usually use a plural verb:

- Ingrid and Tobias** *are* moving back to Australia.

However, phrases connected by **and** can also be followed by singular verbs if we think of them as making up a single item:

- The lorry, its cargo and passengers** *weighs* around 35 tonnes. (or ... *weigh* ...)

C

When a subject is made up of two or more items joined by (**either**) ... **or** ... or (**neither**) ... **nor** ... we use a singular verb if the last item is singular (although a plural verb is sometimes used in informal English), and a plural verb if the last item is plural:

- Either the station or the cinema** *is* a good place to meet. (or ... *are* ... in informal English)  
 **The President or his representatives** *are* to attend the meeting.

If the last item is singular and previous item plural, we can use a singular or plural verb:

- Either the teachers or the principal** *is* to blame for the accident. (or ... *are* to blame ...)

D

In **there + be / have** (see Unit 95) we use a singular verb form with singular and uncountable nouns and a plural form with plural nouns. However, in informal speech we often use a shortened singular form of **be** or **have** (= **There's**) with plural nouns:

- Over the last few years **there** *have* been many **improvements** in car safety.  
 **There's** been lots of good films on lately. (or **There've** been ...)

# Exercises

**41.1** Complete each set of sentences using nouns or phrases from (i) and appropriate present simple verb forms (active or passive) from (ii). If singular and plural verb forms are possible, write both. **A**

(i) his early paintings    ~~my children~~    Dr Jones's acquaintances    the food

(ii) remain    ~~remember~~    taste    know

- 1 a I'd be surprised if any of my children remember / remembers my birthday.
- b It's unlikely that any of ..... It seems that he destroyed most of the work he produced during the 1930s.
- c I don't think any of ..... particularly good. In fact, the restaurant is rather disappointing.
- d An investigation is underway to discover whether any of ..... where he is.

(i) vegetarians    victims    other museums    medicines

(ii) exceed    charge    expect    relieve

- 2 a Mainly because of recent health scares involving beef and chicken, the number of ..... to rise dramatically in the next five years.
- b A number of ..... the symptoms of influenza, but none can cure it.
- c It is estimated that the number of ..... of the flooding ..... 100,000.
- d You can still go into the National Museum for free, although a number of ..... in the capital ..... people for entry.

(i) player    these factors    the cars    the pieces

(ii) last    test    influence    try

- 3 a The whole concert includes twenty short items from young musicians. Each of ..... about five minutes.
- b The aim of the game is quite simple. Each ..... to buy as many properties on the board as possible.
- c Each of ..... for safety, fuel economy and reliability.
- d There are four major influences on exchange rates: price levels, tariffs, preference for imported goods, and productivity. Here we investigate how each of ..... the exchange rate.

**41.2** Complete the sentences with present simple forms of the verb in brackets. If both singular and plural verb forms are possible, write both. **A-D**

- 1 Plenty of jobs ..... available, but no one ..... them because they're so poorly paid. (*be / want*)
- 2 The majority of those questioned ..... that the government's economic policies have failed, although neither the Prime Minister nor the Education Minister ..... indicated that these policies will change. (*think / have*)
- 3 It's the first time that either of us ..... been to China, but everyone we've met here ..... been very welcoming and helpful. (*have / have*)
- 4 Professor Smith and Dr Peters ..... that the wreck of the ship and its cargo ..... a danger to local people fishing near the island. (*claim / constitute*)
- 5 A: Oh, good, sausages and chips ..... my favourite.  
B: Sorry, all the sausages ..... gone, but there ..... plenty of chips left if you want some. (*be / have / be*)