

CONCORD (ALSO CALLED AGREEMENT)

The words in a sentence must match or agree with one another.

1. THE SUBJECT AND VERB MUST AGREE IN NUMBER AND PERSON

a. To decide whether the verb should be singular or plural:

- Find the subject.
- Decide whether it is singular or plural.
- Match the verb to the subject.

I (1st person singular) **eat**

You (2nd person singular) **eat**

Joe (he) (3rd person singular) **eats**

We (1st person plural) **eat**

All of you (2nd person plural) **eat**

Joe and Bobby (they) (3rd person plural) **eat**

b. The subject may consist of a group of words.

A common example is the collective noun, which refers to the group as a single unit.

The class of students **was** kept in after school.

(The subject is the class not the students.)

My brother and sister **are** coming for a visit.

(The subject is my brother and sister.)

c. The subject may govern more than one verb.

All these verbs must agree with the subject.

The film **deals** with the dangers of drug abuse and **is targeted** at teenagers.

(The subject is singular, therefore all the verbs are singular.)

2. AGREEMENT BETWEEN NOUNS AND PRONOUNS

a. A pronoun must agree with the noun that it is replacing in number and in gender:

The woman paid for **her** ticket. The women paid for **their** tickets.

b. Some pronouns are paired with singular pronouns:

anyone, everyone, nobody, no-one, somebody, someone, each, every, either, neither ... nor

Everyone is doing **his** best. ✓

No-one may hand in **his / her** work late. ✓

Everyone is doing **their** best. ✗

No-one may hand in **their** work late. ✗

Take note of the Concord in the following passage:

A group of teenagers **is** planning a trip to the Orange River. (referring to the group)

Roger and I **have** been invited to lead this excursion.

Neither of us **is** afraid of this responsibility.

On behalf of Roger and me, I would like to thank the team for **its** confidence in **us**.

The cost of the canoes **is** expensive.

They will spend many hours rowing in **their** canoes.

Every boy **is** looking forward to water-rafting with **his** friends on the Orange River.

All the boys **are** expected to do **their** best.

Every one of the boys **has** passed **his** First Aid Examination.

The use of these skills often **saves** lives.

One **has** to make sure that **one's** kit is correct and up to standard. (One is always followed by one or one's.)

No-one **is** exempt from wearing **his** life-jacket.

My girlfriend, Pam, **is** jealous when she hears of **these** outings, but **they** would not suit her personality.

Fish and chips **is** a special treat for these rafters. (Fish and chips is regarded as a single unit.)

Experiences of this nature **are** unforgettable.