Today’s Topics

Nouns
Articles
Pronouns
Clauses
Subject/Verb Agreement
Word Usage
NOUNS - Count

Count Nouns:

• Things that exist as separate and distinct individual units. They usually refer to what can be perceived by the senses.

• Can take a plural form

• Examples:
  - cat → cats
  - season → seasons
  - method → methods
  - study → studies
NOUNS - Noncount

Noncount Nouns:

• Things that can't be counted because they are thought of as wholes that can't be cut into parts. They often refer to abstractions and occasionally have a collective meaning.

• Cannot take a plural form (usually)

• Examples:
  - milk
  - air
  - research
  - equipment
**NOUNS – Using Adjectives**

Certain adjectives can only be used with count or noncount nouns.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Noncount</th>
<th>Both</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>many</td>
<td>much</td>
<td>enough</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>few</td>
<td>little</td>
<td>a lot of/lots of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fewer (number)</td>
<td>less (amount)</td>
<td>plenty of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a little bit of</td>
<td>some/any</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a, an</td>
<td>the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Count Singular</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Count Plural</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noncount</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Count Singular:**
- I ate an apple.
- I rode the bus.
- Does she live in this house?
- No, she lives in that house over there.

**Count Plural:**
- I like to feed the birds.
- Do you want these books?
- No, I want those books up there.
- Cats are interesting pets.

**Noncount:**
- *The* water is cold.
- *This* milk is going sour.
- *Music* helps me relax.
DO I NEED AN ARTICLE?

Yes

Use an article when you classify...

• What job someone has
  *He’s a researcher for NASA.*

• What class, group, or type something belongs to
  *The kangaroo is a marsupial.*

• What something is used for
  *The artist used the sidewalk as a canvas.*

No

Don’t use an article when you are writing about things in general and using uncountable, plural nouns

*The theater is showing the foreign films.*
*Your brother studied the economics.*
GENERAL RULES – A/An or The?

**A/An:** Indefinite Article

When writing about something that is not specific or not known by both the speaker and the reader

*I need to buy a new wide-angle lens for my camera. (any wide-angle lens)*

**The:** Definite Article

When writing about something that is specific or known by both the speaker and the reader

*Did you understand the art history lecture? (this specific lecture)*
GENERAL RULES – A or An?

Once you’ve determined that you need an indefinite article, look at the word that follows to determine if you should use a or an.

The key in deciding is not the word’s spelling but its pronunciation

- Use a when the word immediately after begins with a consonant sound
- Use an when the word immediately after begins with a vowel sound
PRONOUNS – General Rules

Pronouns should agree in number
• Every one should complete his or her report by Monday.
• Neither of the options is satisfactory.

Pronoun case should correspond to its role in the sentence
• The coach picked he and I. ✗
• The coach picked him and me. ✓

A pronoun must refer clearly to the noun it represents
• Take the radio out of the car and fix it. ✗
PRONOUNS – Unclear Reference

A possessive noun should not be the antecedent for a pronoun.
- Kevin's fingers were strumming the guitar when he winked at Donna. ✗
- As Kevin strummed the guitar, he winked at Donna. ✓

Use it with precision
- In our math textbook, it claims that statistics analysis will be one of the most important skills in the future. ✗
- Our math textbook claims that statistics analysis will be one of the most important skills in the future. ✓

Use they with precision
- The witness called the television station, but they didn’t answer. ✗
- The witness called the television station, but the reporters didn’t answer. ✓
PRONOUNS – Using They

- English does not have a singular gender-neutral third person pronoun.
- In the past, the use of he was standard use, but is now unaccepted as a generic gender pronoun.
- Conventions such as s/he are also not universally accepted.
- The singular they is gaining prominence in informal speech, but it is still not the standard use for formal writing.
- To avoid the problem, it is often best to use he or she or to change the sentence to plural if possible.
  - If a student has a question, he or she should raise his or her hand.
  - If students have questions, they should raise their hands.
RELATIVE PRONOUNS – That/Which

Restrictive Clauses: contain essential information and are introduced with *that*

*The class that I want has a waitlist.* (no commas)

Nonrestrictive Clauses: contain “extra” information that can be omitted from a complete sentence

*Lab experiments, which can be dangerous, often lead to breakthroughs.* (with commas)
SUBJECT/VERB AGREEMENT

The subject of a sentence does not agree with the verb when they do not match in terms of the number.

If the subject is singular, the verb must also be singular.

*The book* (singular subject) contains (singular verb) many chapters.

If the subject is plural, the verb must be plural as well.

*The particles* (plural subject) are (plural verb) suspended in the solution.
SUBJECT/VERB AGREEMENT

1. When the subject of a sentence is composed of two or more nouns or pronouns connected by **and**, use a plural verb.

   She and her friends are at the fair.

2. When two or more singular nouns or pronouns are connected by **or** or **nor**, use a singular verb.

   The book or the pen is in the drawer.
3. When a compound subject contains both a singular and a plural noun or pronoun joined by or or nor, the verb should agree with the part of the subject that is closest to the verb.

The boy or his friends run every day.

His friends or the boy runs every day.
SUBJECT/VERB AGREEMENT

4. **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 in the case of the first person and second person pronouns I and you. With these pronouns, the contraction don't should be used.

   He doesn't like it.
   They don't like it.
   I don’t like it.
SUBJECT/VERB AGREEMENT

5. Do not be misled by a phrase that comes between the subject and the verb. The verb agrees with the subject, not with a noun or pronoun in the phrase.

One of the boxes is open
The people who listen to that music are few.
The team captain, as well as his players, is anxious.
The book, including all the chapters in the first section, is boring.
The woman with all the dogs walks down my street.
6. The words each, each one, either, neither, everyone, everybody, anybody, anyone, nobody, somebody, someone, and no one are singular and require a singular verb.

Each of these hot dogs is burned.
Everybody knows Mr. Jones.
Either is correct.
7. Nouns such as civics, mathematics, dollars, measles, and news require singular verbs.

The news is on at six.
Measles is a highly contagious infection.
Mathematics is subdivided into the study of quantity, structure, space, and change.

Note: the word dollars is a special case. When talking about an amount of money, it requires a singular verb, but when referring to the dollars themselves, a plural verb is required.

Five dollars is a lot of money.
Dollars are often used instead of rubles in Russia.
8. Nouns such as scissors, tweezers, trousers, and shears require plural verbs. (There are two parts to these things.)

These scissors are dull.
Those trousers are made of wool.
9. In sentences beginning with **there is** or **there are**, the subject follows the verb. Since **there** is not the subject, the verb agrees with what follows.

There are many questions.
There is one question.
10. Collective nouns are words that imply more than one person but that are considered singular and take a singular verb, such as group, team, committee, class, and family.

The team runs during practice.
The committee decides how to proceed.
The family has a long history.
My family has never been able to agree.
The crew is preparing to dock the ship.
11. Expressions such as with, together with, including, accompanied by, in addition to, or as well do not change the number of the subject. If the subject is singular, the verb is too.

The President, accompanied by his wife, is traveling to India.

All of the books, including yours, are in that box.
about/approximately: *approximately* is preferred in the sciences. Avoid coupling approximately with other words like *guess* or *estimate*.

afterward/afterword: *afterward* means “later”; *afterword* means “an epilogue.” (Both *afterward* and *afterwards* are correct usages.)

attain/obtain: *attain* is to accomplish something; *obtain* is to gain possession. (You *attain* a degree but *obtain* a diploma.)
can/could: *can* means “to be able to”; *could* is used for a sense of uncertainty or a conditional statement

can/may: *can* refers to physical or mental ability; *may* refers to possibility or permission

in contrast/on the contrary: *in contrast* is used to show the differences between two things or ideas; *on the contrary* is used to intensify a denial of what has just been implied or stated
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Subject/Verb Agreement
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Word Usage
Chicago Manual of Style, 16th edition
## UPCOMING EVENTS

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<td>Missouri 207A, Havener</td>
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<td>Mar. 4</td>
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