10 Rules of Subject Verb Agreement

01 and

Two or more subjects joined by "and" are considered plural and require a verb form without an "s."

Jan, John, and Bob <u>walk</u> to the store.

Bob and his brothers <u>walk</u> to the store.

02 each, every

If a subject is modified by the words "each" or "every" that subject is singular and will take a verb form that ends in "s."

Each boy and girl <u>goes</u> to school.

03 or, nor

If plural subjects are joined by "or," or "nor," the verb must only agree with the subject that is closest to it.

Either Alan or his brother <u>works</u> there.

Neither Alan nor his brothers <u>work</u> there.

04 indefinite pronouns

Indefinite pronouns are usually singular and take a verb form that ends in "s."

Everyone <u>leaves</u> by the exit.

Everything <u>stops</u>.

Other words: anybody, nobody, someone etc.

05 prepositional phrase

The subject is not in a prepositional phrase.

The **boxes** of cake mix <u>are</u> on the shelf.

06 indefinite pronouns of amount

indefinite pronouns and nouns of amount are singular or plural depending on the object of the prepositional phrase

Some of the students <u>are</u> gone.

Some of the cake <u>is</u> gone.

Other words: all, most, none, half, part

07 collective nouns

When a collective noun, such as family, group, committee, or class, is the subject, the verb will end in "s."

My family always <u>eats</u> dinner at five.

08 economics, news

A few nouns, such as economics, measles, or news end in "s" but are considered singular.

Economics <u>is</u> her favorite subject.

09 measurements

When the subject is a unit of measurement of time, distance, money, weight, etc., the unit is singular, and the verb will end in "s."

Ten pounds of chocolate is too much.

Thirteen feet of kite string tangles easily

10 relative pronouns

When using who, that or which, the noun these relative pronouns refer to determine whether the subject is singular or plural.

The girls who <u>eat</u> cake <u>are</u> happy.

The girl who <u>eats</u> cake <u>is</u> happy.