

# SUBJECT-VERB REMINDERS

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1. To study a sentence, first find the verb; then ask "who" or "what?" The answer to that question is the subject.

*Waythorn waited for his wife. (Who waited? Waythorn is the subject.)*

2. **Is, are, was, and were** are verbs, even though they don't show any action.

*The hills were long and white. (What was long and white? Hills is the subject.)*

3. If a sentence gives a command, the subject is **you** (understood).

*Find the verb first. (Who finds? You [understood] is the subject.)*

4. The verb tells what the subject does or is.
5. Sometimes the verb contains more than one word.
6. There may be more than one subject or more than one verb in a sentence.
7. **Not** is not a verb and **never** is never a verb
8. An **-ing** word without a helping verb is not a verb.
9. An infinitive (to go, to see, to be) is never a verb. It can be a subject.

*To err is human.      To know her is pleasure.*  
S                    V                    S                    V

10. The subject and verb are never found in a prepositional phrase.
11. Sometimes the verb, or part of the verb, comes before the subject.

## SUBJECT-VERB RULES

1. A singular verb in third person ends in an S.

*He goes.      The car runs.      She was tired.      It is sad.*  
S                    V                    S                    V                    S                    V

2. A plural verb does not end in an S.

*They go.      The cars run.      They were tired.      They are sad.*  
S                    V                    S                    V                    S                    V

3. The object of a prepositional phrase may be near the verb, but it is not the subject even though it sounds correct. (**of, about, across, on, to, from, with, in**)

*One of the boys is bad.      The pictures across the room were beautiful.*  
S                    V                    S                    V

4. When a complete subject has "either-or" or "neither-nor" in it, use the simple subject closest to the verb.

*Either the boys or Nancy has to go.      Neither Nancy nor the boys have to go.*  
S                    V                    S                    V

5. **And** between two subjects makes the subject and verb plural.

*Tom and I are sorry.      Dogs and cats have four legs.*  
S                    S V                    S                    S V

6. The phrases **one of, neither of, each of, either of** are singular.

*One of the boys sings.      Neither of the cars is here.      Each of the parents laughs.*  
S                    V                    S                    V                    S                    V

7. The phrases **both of** and **some of** are plural.

*Both of the men are sad.      Some of the children are happy.*  
S                    V                    S                    V

8. In a sentence which begins with **there**, the subject is after the verb. **Note: here, there and where are not subjects.**

*Here is your change.      There are no problems.      Where are my keys?*  
V                    S                    V                    S                    V                    S