

Agreement Rules

1. No word in a prepositional phrase is ever the subject.

Examples: An acre of trees surrounds the building.

Each of the boys has his book.

2. When or or nor joins the subjects, match the verb to the last subject.

Example: Tim or Mike has finished his test.

3. When and joins subjects, the subjects are usually plural.

Example: Tim and Mike have finished their test.

Exceptions: a) each and every override and. (Every table and chair is put away.)

b) one unit exception--items that make up one unit are considered singular

(Peanut butter and jelly is my favorite sandwich. [PB & J = one sandwich])

4. Confusing Subjects--among the most important rules are these:

a) here and there are never subjects (There are many choices.)

b) each, every, either, and neither are always singular when used as subjects.

(Neither of the boys was happy.)

c) titles and names of courses are singular (The Simpsons is a TV show; civics is a class.)

5. Pronouns must always agree with each other in number. Never use a plural pronoun with a singular antecedent.

a) or or nor keeps words separate

Example: Neither Tim nor Mike has finished his test.

b) each, every, either, neither, -one, -body, -thing pronouns are always singular.

Examples: Someone has lost his book.

Neither knew her way home.

c) Never use any -self pronoun unless there is a clear antecedent.

Incorrect: See John or myself about the problem.

Correct: See John or me about the problem.

Correct: I solved the problem myself.