SUBJECT-VERB AGREEMENT: A NUMBERS THING

If a subject is singular, its verb must be singular.

If a subject is plural, its verb must be plural.

Examples: [Note: Subjects below are italicized; Verbs are bold and italicized.]

Singular: 
The Murphy family is celebrating.  I am celebrating.
Stan or Sue is celebrating.  Neither Stan nor Sue is celebrating.
One of the Murphys is celebrating.  A neighbor doesn’t like it.
The Murphy family, as well as their neighbors, is awake.

Plural: The Murphys are celebrating.  We are celebrating.
Stan and Sue Murphy are celebrating.
All of the Murphys are celebrating.  The neighbors don’t like it.
The Murphy family and all of their neighbors are awake.

--When a compound subject contains both a singular and a plural noun/pronoun joined by or/nor, the verb should agree with the part of the subject that is nearer the verb.

  His friends or the boy parties every day. (singular)

  The boy or his friends party every day. (plural)

--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 those boys is an athlete.  Everybody knows the Murphys.

--Collective nouns such as committee, group, and team, as well as some nouns such as civics, mathematics, and news require singular verbs:

  Her team is practicing.  The news is bad.

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

  Ten dollars is affordable. (singular)  Dollars are acceptable. (plural)

--Nouns with two or more parts (scissors, tweezers, pants, shoes) require plural verbs.

  These scissors are dull.  Those pants are short.

--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 is a question. (singular)  There are many questions. (plural)