

**Syntax** means sentence–structure. There are certain rules of sentence–structure, which we must know and apply carefully. There are indeed some exceptions to these rules, but these exceptions are also governed by some rules. These rules must be applied keeping in mind their external forms as well as their spirit.

### Concord or Agreement

In the rules of syntax the most important ones are those of **concord** or **Agreement**. Every sentence has a subject, a verb and a predicate. There must be an agreement between these three parts of a sentence. There must be an agreement between the **Person, Number, Gender** and **Tense** used in the different parts of the sentence.

“By concord is meant formal agreement in person, number, gender or tense between two or more parts of a sentence.”

#### Agreement of the Verb with the Subject Subject—Verb Agreement

**Rule 1**—The **Verb** must agree with its **Subject** in **Number** and **Person**. The Number and Person of the verb must be in agreement with the Number and Person of its Subject. A Singular subject must have a Singular Verb, and a Plural Subject must have a Plural Verb.

##### Formula—

Subject	Verb
I	go
We	go
You	go
He	goes
They	go
Ram	goes
A bird	flies
Birds	fly

##### Formula—

Subject	Verb
Singular	Singular
Plural	Plural

##### Note—

(i) It should be remembered that a verb has a **Singular** or a **Plural** Number in the **Present Tense** only. In the Past Tense the Singular and the Plural forms of the verb are the same. In the original form a verb is supposed to be in the Plural Number and Present Tense. When ‘s’ or ‘es’ is added to the verb, it becomes a verb in the Present Tense and Singular Number. As—

Plural Verb in the Present Tense	Singular Verb in the Present Tense
Sit	Sits
Run	Runs
Eat	Eats
Go	Goes
Fly	Flies
Play	Plays
Smile	Smiles

It should be remembered here that when ‘s’ or ‘es’ is added to a verb, it becomes Singular, but when ‘s’ or ‘es’ is added to a Noun, it becomes Plural.

Singular Noun	Plural Noun
Book	Books
Dog	Dogs
House	Houses
Bench	Benches
Branch	Branches

##### Formula—

Verb + s/es	=	Singular
Noun + s/es	=	Plural

(ii) Special attention needs to be paid to verbs 'to be'. **Am, is, are, was, were** are called verbs 'to be'. Their forms change according to their Person in the Singular Number only, but in the Plural Number they remain the same with all Persons. As—

	Singular	Plural
First Person	I am/was	We are/were
Second Person	You are/were	You are/were
Third Person	He is/was	They are/were
		It is/was

(iii) The following are the **Singular** and **Plural** forms of Verbs '**to be**' and **has** and **have**—

Singular	Plural
is	are
am	are
was	were
are	are
has	have
have	have

(iv) **will, shall, would, should** always take **have** after them; they never take **has**, whether the subject is Singular or Plural. As—

1. I **shall have** a new ball.
2. We **shall have** new balls.
3. He **will have** a new ball.
4. They **will have** new balls.

Thus, according to Rule 1 above—

(a) If the subject is in First Person, Singular Number or Plural Number, the verb will be accordingly in the First Person, Singular Number or Plural Number. As—

1. I **am** late.
2. We **are** late
3. I **love** children
4. We **love** children.

(b) If the subject is in Second Person, Singular Number or Plural Number, the verb will be accordingly in the Second Person, Singular Number or Plural Number. As—

1. You **are** a scholar.  
(‘you’ Singular Number)
2. You **are** all afraid. (‘you’ Plural Number)
3. You **go** there. (Singular Number)
4. You **go** there. (Plural Number)

**Note**— It should be remembered that in English **I** and **you** are used as if they are in Plural Number. Therefore, with **I** and **you** the verb is always used in Plural Number. However, **I** takes **am** in the Present tense and **was** in the Past tense.

(c) If the subject is in Third Person, Singular or Plural Number, the verb will be accordingly in Third Person, Singular or Plural Number. As—

1. He **is** poor.
2. They **are** poor.
3. He **reads** a book.
4. They **read** books.
5. He **has** a new house.
6. They **have** a new house.

### Exercise

(A) Correct the following Sentences :

1. Birds flies.
2. Dogs is barking.
3. The child weep.
4. Darkness prevail.
5. Flowers is blooming.
6. The sun rise in the east.
7. The father and son works in the field.
8. All the students is present today.
9. He love his friend.
10. You and I goes to school.
11. I reads a novel.
12. You has a new pen.

**Hints**— 1. fly; 2. are; 3. weeps; 4. prevails; 5. are; 6. rises; 7. work; 8. are; 9. loves; 10. go; 11. read; 12. have.

(B) Fill in the blanks in the following sentences with the correct verb from those given in brackets :

1. His teeth ..... dirty. (are, is)
2. Where ..... all these men going ? (are, is)
3. Whose books ..... these ? (is, are)
4. All his sheep ..... grazing in the field. (are, is)
5. Do you know who this gentleman ..... ? (is, are)

6. My parents ..... here yesterday.  
(was, were)
7. My work ..... been finished.  
(has, have)
8. All my friends ..... gone. (has, have)

**Hints**— 1. are; 2. are; 3. are; 4. are; 5. is; 6. were; 7. has; 8. have.

### Exceptions To Rule 1. Above

It has been said in Rule 1. above that a Singular Subject takes a Singular Verb and a Plural Subject takes a Plural Verb. There are, however, the following **three exceptions** to this general rule :

#### (1) Dare not and Need not

These are the two typical Verbs which in **Negative Sentences** (where **dare** and **need** are followed by **not**) are used in the Plural form even with Singular Subjects.

“The third person singular is **need**,’ and not ‘**needs**’ just as ‘**dare**’ is used for ‘**dares**’ provided it is followed by a negative.” —(Nesfield)

As—

1. He **dare** not oppose me.
2. They **dare** not oppose me.
3. He **need** not go.
4. They **need** not go.

**Note**—If **dare** and **need** are used in the affirmative sense (*i.e.* without ‘**not**’) they take Plural form with the Plural Subject and Singular form with the Singular Subject.  
As—

- |                      |                       |
|----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. He <b>dares</b> . | 2. They <b>dare</b> . |
| 3. He <b>needs</b> . | 4. They <b>need</b> . |

#### (2) Verbs of Supposition/ Subjunctive Mood

The second exception to Rule 1 above is that **Plural Verb** is used with **Singular Subjects** in sentences expressing mere imagination or impossible hope, wish or condition. As—

1. If I **were** a bird.
2. **Were** I a king.
3. How I wish she **were** here.
4. If I **were** you, I would do it.
5. He behaved as if he **were** our master.

#### (3) Verbs of Wish/Blessing

The third exception is that in sentences expressing deep and sharp wish, blessing or hope, Plural Verb is used with Singular Subjects. In these sentences the verb is used in the Subjunctive Mood. This use is now confined to a few sentences only. As—

1. Long live the King.
2. God save the King.
3. Lord bless you.
4. Long live our friendship.

### Exercise

**Fill in the blanks with the correct verb from those given in brackets :**

1. She ..... not come before me. (dare, dares)
2. He ..... not to do it. (need, needs)
3. He ..... to challenge me. (dare, dares)
4. She ..... to go very early. (need, needs)
5. Ram ..... not tell a lie. (dare, dares)
6. I wish my father ..... alive. (was, were)
7. .... he in England to see the coronation ! (was, were)
8. If I ..... you, I would never accept it. (was, were)

**Hints**— 1. dare; 2. need; 3. dares; 4. needs; 5. dare; 6. were; 7. were; 8. were.

**Rule 2**—If **two or more Singular Subjects** are joined with **and**, they take verb in the Plural Number. As—

1. Ram **and** Mohan **come** here every day.
2. The father **and** son **work** together.
3. Lightning **and** thunder **come** together.
4. Shyam, Mohan **and** Ashok **have** come.

**Rule 3**—If **two Singular Nouns** point to only **one** person or thing, they take verb in the Singular Number. As—

1. The great poet and scholar **is** dead.
2. My friend and benefactor **has** come.
3. The great warrior and patriot **is** being honoured.
4. The chief Engineer and Manager of the factory **has** agreed.

**Note**— It should be kept in mind that when two Nouns point to only one person or thing, the article is used **only once** with the first noun. If the article is used before both the Nouns separately, they would mean to point to two persons or things, and in that case Plural Verb would be used. As—

**The** Chief Engineer and **the** Manager of the factory **have** agreed.

### Exercise

**Correct the following sentences :**

1. Hari and Ram is close friends.
2. A man and his wife is standing at the door.
3. Your house and mine has been damaged.
4. The father and son was here yesterday.
5. Mohan and his friend was travelling together.
6. A car and a scooter has collided.
7. I and my friend was injured.
8. The great orator and scholar have been honoured.
9. The noted actor and musician are giving a demonstration.
10. My guide and guardian are here today.
11. The Chairman and Director are going to preside over the meeting.
12. The Governor and Chancellor of the University have passed this ordinance.

**Hints**— 1. are; 2. are; 3. have; 4. were; 5. were; 6. have; 7. were; 8. has; 9. is; 10. is; 11. is; 12 has.

**Rule 4**—If **two** Subjects taken together mean **one thing only**, they take the verb in the Singular Number. As—

1. **Bread and butter makes** a good breakfast.  
(Taken together)
2. The horse and carriage **stands** at the door.
3. Slow and steady **wins** the race.
4. Early to bed and early to rise

**Makes** a man healthy, wealthy and wise.

**Rule 5**—If two or more Subjects have **each** or **every** before them, they take the verb in the Singular Number. Remember that **each** and **every** are used before Singular Nouns only. As—

1. Each boy and girl **has** to go.
2. Every man, woman and child **was** glad.
3. Each day and each hour **is** important.
4. Every boat and every sailor **was** lost in the storm.

**Rule 6**—If two or more **Singular Subjects** are joined by **or, nor, either... or, or neither ... nor**, they take a Singular Verb. As—

1. Either Ram or Shyam **is coming** today.
2. Neither he nor I **was** there.
3. Neither food nor water **was** available there.
4. No boy or girl **was** present on the field.

**Rule 7**—If two or more Subjects are joined by **or, nor, either ... or, or neither ... nor**, and if they are of **different Numbers**, the **Plural Subject** is placed near the verb and the verb is used in the **Plural Number**. As—

1. Neither the teacher nor his **students were** present there.
2. Either Ram or his **friends have** broken the glass.
3. Ram or his brothers **are** expected to come.
4. Mohan nor his **friends were** invited.

**Rule 8**—If two or more Subjects are joined by **or, nor, either ... or, or neither ... nor**, and if they are of **different Persons**, the verb is used according to the **subject nearest to it**. As—

1. You or Ram **is** responsible for it.
2. Either you or I **am** correct.
3. Neither he nor you **are** to blame.
4. Either she or you **have** to do it.

**Rule 9**—If two or more Subjects are joined by **and**, and if they are of **different Numbers** and **different Persons**, the verb is always used in the **Plural Number**. Also, if the subjects have any **First Person**, the verb will be in **First Person Plural**, but if there is no First Person, but there is a Second Person, the verb is used in the **Second Person Plural Number**. As—

1. He and I **are** going.

2. My father and I **have** known him for many years.
3. You and he **are** well known here.
4. You and I **have** done our best.

### *Exercise*

**Correct the following sentences :**

1. Pen and ink are my first requirement.
2. The crown and glory of life have departed.
3. Rice and fish make my favourite dish.
4. Milk and honey are a rich tonic.
5. Truth and honesty are the best policy for success in business.
6. The sum and substance of the matter are that his policy is bad.
7. The joy and happiness of life come from honest labour.
8. Bread and water are the basic need.
9. The long and short of the matter are this.
10. Mercy and kindness are the teaching of all religions.

**Hints**— 1. is; 2. has; 3. makes; 4. is; 5. is; 6. is; 7. comes; 8. is; 9. is; 10. is.

### *Exercise*

**In each of the following sentences supply a verb in agreement with its subject :**

1. Each boy and girl ..... ready to go.
2. Every table and chair ..... broken.
3. Every man, woman and child..... to work in the field.
4. Each hour and each minute ..... important in life.
5. Every horse and camel ..... sold away in the fair.
6. Every cup and saucer ..... the name of the company printed on it.
7. Each boy and girl ..... given a prize.
8. Each page and line ..... badly printed.
9. Each man and woman ..... ashamed of the incident.
10. Each car and scooter ..... been removed.

**Hints**— 1. is; 2. is; 3. has; 4. is; 5. has been; 6. has; 7. was; 8. is; 9. was; 10. has.

### *Exercise*

**Fill in the blanks in the following sentences with appropriate verbs from those given in brackets against each sentence :**

1. Neither of these men ..... come here before. (**has, have**)
2. Either Ram or Mohan ..... a fool. (**is, are**)
3. Neither tree nor bush ..... there. (**was, were**)
4. No man or woman ..... found there. (**was, were**)
5. Neither of these sisters ..... qualified for the post. (**is, are**)
6. Neither the leader nor his followers ..... arrested. (**was, were**)
7. Either he or his friends ..... answerable for it. (**is, are**)
8. Neither the principal nor his teachers ..... ever attended the meeting. (**have, has**)
9. Neither the commander nor his soldiers ..... hurt in the action. (**was, were**)
10. Either she or her sisters ..... responsible for it. (**are, is**)
11. Either I or he ..... to blame. (**is, are**)
12. Neither he nor you ..... expected there. (**are, is**)
13. Either I or he ..... to bear the brunt. (**has, have**)
14. Either he or you ..... spoilt the game. (**has, have**)
15. He or I ..... to suffer. (**has, have**)
16. Ram and I ..... class-mates. (**are, am**)
17. I and you ..... participating in the debate. (**are, am**)
18. He and you ..... well known here. (**is, are**)
19. She and you ..... to be present there. (**has, have**)
20. He and I ..... lived in the same house. (**has, have**)

**Hints**—1. has; 2. is; 3. was; 4. was; 5. is; 6. were; 7. are; 8. have; 9. were; 10. are; 11. is; 12. are; 13. has; 14. have; 15. have; 16. are; 17. are; 18. are; 19. have; 20. have.

### Collective Noun and the Verb

**Rule 10**—With collective Nouns verbs can be used either in the Singular or the Plural Number according to sense. If a Collective Noun represents a whole group or a body (institution), it takes a Singular Verb. But if the Collective Noun represents a part or parts or division of a body, it takes a Plural Verb.

The important Collective Nouns are these : Government, Parliament, Assembly, Council, committee, army, crew, staff, jury, fleet, crowd, majority, mob.

As—

1. The committee **has** agreed on this issue.  
(The verb is Singular because there is no division in the committee.)
2. The committee **are** divided on this issue.  
(Here the verb is Plural because the committee is divided.)
3. The crew **is** well trained.  
(Here the verb is Singular because the “crew” represents one undivided group.)
4. The crew **were** taken prisoners.  
(Here the verb is Plural because the members of the crew have to be taken prisoners separately.)

### In the same way—

5. The Parliament **has** elected its Speaker.
6. The military **were** deployed over the troubled area.
7. The fleet **has** touched the shore.
8. The Government **have** decided to introduce the Bill.
9. The Assembly **is** in session
10. The mob **has** dispersed.
11. The mob **have** started throwing stones.
12. The jury **has** come to a unanimous verdict.
13. The jury **are** divided in opinion.

### Some Typical Nouns and the Verb

**Rule 11**—Some Nouns appear to be Plural in form, but actually singular in meaning . These nouns take the verb in the singular number.

The important Nouns of this type are News, Wages, Physics, Politics, Mathematics, Economics, Innings (both Singular and Plural), Gallows.

As—

1. Politics **is** not an easy game.
2. Mathematics **is** a difficult subject.
3. The wages of sin **is** death.
4. The news **is** correct.
5. Their first innings **was** disappointing.

**Rule 12**—Some Nouns appear to be Singular in form, but they are actually Plural in meaning and sense. These nouns take a Plural Verb. The more important of them are—Dozen, score, million, hundred, thousand, people, cattle. As—

1. A dozen **were** injured.
2. A million **were** affected by the drought.
3. A score **were** saved.
4. The cattle **are** grazing.
5. The people **are** satisfied.

**Rule 13**—If a Subject has such words or phrases as **with, together with, along with, in addition to, as well as** connected with it, these connected words or phrases do not affect the verb in any way (because they are parenthetical words or phrases) and the verb is used according to the real Subject. As—

1. The commander, with all his soldiers, **was** killed.
2. The chief cashier, together with all his men, **has** been dismissed.
3. He, as well as his friends, **has** failed.
4. Ram, like Mohan and Sohan, **is** fond of pictures.

**Note**—

Such other words and phrases are—like, and not, in addition to, no less than, rather than, more than, unlike, besides, including, excluding.

**Exercise**

**Fill in the blanks in the following sentences with appropriate verbs from those given in brackets against each sentence :**

1. The commission ..... divided in their opinion on this issue. (**are, is**)
2. The committee ..... arrived at a unanimous decision. (**has, have**)
3. The ship sank and the crew ..... seen making efforts for life. (**was, were**)
4. The Government ..... been deliberating over this issue for the last two years. (**have, has**)
5. The public ..... cast its vote in favour of those who are honest and dependable. (**has, have**)
6. The Staff Council ..... unanimously passed this resolution. (**has, have**)
7. The Governing Body ..... not yet arrived at any agreeable decision. (**have, has**)
8. The jury ... awarded death punishment on him in one voice. (**has, have**)
9. The mob ..... always fickle-minded. (**is, are**)
10. The Parliament ..... elected its Speaker without voting. (**has, have**)

**Hints**—1. are; 2. has; 3. were; 4. have; 5. has; 6. has; 7. have; 8. has; 9. is; 10. has.

**Relative Pronoun and Verb**

**Rule 14**—If the Subject of a verb is a Relative Pronoun (**who, whom, whose, which, that**), the verb is used according to the Number and Person of the Antecedent (*i.e.* Noun or Pronoun used before it). As—

1. I, who **am** your friend, should help you.
2. You, who **are** my friend, should help me.
3. He, who **is** your friend, should help you.
4. The pen, which **is** in your hand, **is** mine.
5. The book, that **is** on the table, **is** very interesting.
6. He is one of those boys who **work** very hard.

**Rule 15**—If a Plural Noun denotes a definite quantity or number, or amount, or distance, or if it denotes the name of a country or title of a book, it takes a Singular Verb with it. As—

1. **The United States of America is** the most powerful country.
2. **Gulliver's Travels is** a novel of adventure.
3. Sixty miles **is** not a long distance for a motorist.
4. Ten lakh rupees **is** a huge sum.
5. Four quintals **is** a heavy load for a camel.

**Exercise**

**Correct the following sentences :**

1. We, who is your loyal followers, should be trusted.
2. I, who is your servant, must obey you.
3. The books, which is sold here, are all old ones.
4. This is one of the books which is most popular.
5. He is one of those servants who is absolutely honest.
6. The cars that runs fastest are low-roofed.
7. He is one of the greatest leaders that has ever lived.
8. The books that was found here were mine.
9. Where are your friends who comes here every day ?
10. I don't remember the lesson that were taught yesterday.
11. Lamb's **Tales** are a very interesting book.
12. Even ten thousand rupees are a big sum for me.
13. The United States of America are the most advanced country today.
14. Twenty miles are a long distance for a pedestrian.
15. Five hundred rupees are a big sum for a poor man.

**Hints**—1. are; 2. am; 3. are; 4. are; 5. are; 6. run; 7. have; 8. were; 9. come; 10. was; 11. is; 12 is; 13. is; 14. is; 15. is.



**Rule 16**—There are certain things which are made of two major parts. Such things are supposed to be in Plural Number and a Plural Verb is used with them. (Such common things are—Trousers, Scissors, spectacles, shears, tongs, etc.)

As—

1. Your trousers **are** dirty.
2. Your scissors **are** blunt.
3. The tongs **are** missing.
4. Where **are** your spectacles ?

**Note**—These things can also be referred to as **A pair of .....** In that case only a Singular Verb will be used. As—

1. A pair of trousers **is** ready for you.
2. A pair of scissors **is** on the table.

**Rule 17**—If the Subject of a sentence is some infinitive/ gerund / phrase / clause, only a Singular Verb will be used. As—

1. **Walking** is a good exercise.
2. **To work** hard is his lot.
3. **How to reach there** is the problem.
4. **That he is honest** is known to all

### *Exercise*

**Correct the following sentences :**

1. Your trousers is ready.
2. Where is the scissors ?
3. Your scissors does not cut well.
4. My spectacles has been broken.
5. Here are a pair of trousers for you.
6. This pair of scissors are very sharp.
7. His tongs has been lost.
8. Telling lies are a bad habit.
9. Sun-bathing are good in cold countries.
10. Cheating your friends have become your habit.
11. To fish in deep waters are his hobby.
12. To insult the poor show lack of culture.
13. What to do in this case are my problem.
14. How to help this poor woman are our first consideration.
15. That he will be suspended are the foregone conclusion.
16. That he will win are certain.

17. That he is your brother now stand confirmed.

18. Late rising make him late every day.

**Hints**—1. are; 2. are; 3. do; 4. have; 5. is; 6. is; 7. have; 8. is; 9. is; 10. has; 11. is; 12. shows; 13. is; 14. is; 15. is; 16. is; 17. stands; 18. makes.

**Rule 18**—There are certain Adjectives which, when joined with the Article **the**, become Plural Nouns. They take the verb in the Plural Number. (The more common of these adjectives are—Poor, rich, humble, blind, honest, dumb, etc.)  
As—

1. **The poor are** honest.  
("The poor" means "poor men")
2. **The rich are** not used to physical labour.  
("The rich" means "rich men".)
3. **The dumb do** not speak.
4. **The virtuous are** respected.

**Rule 19**—If in a certain sentence the **Subject** carries its **Apposition** with it, the verb will be used according to the actual Subject, not according to its Apposition.  
As—

1. **I, the Manager of the Mill**, am not happy with your work.
2. **You, my servant**, are not loyal to me.
3. **He, your teacher**, was here yesterday.
4. **We, your students**, are playing a match today.

**Note**—Apposition is the word or phrase used to explain or identify the Subject. In the above sentence '**the Manager of the Mill**' is the Apposition of the subject **I**. Similarly, **my servant**, **your teacher**, **your students** are Appositions.

**Rule 20**—When Adjectives of Quantity (**much**, **more**, **little**, **less**) are used as subjects, they take a Singular Verb. As—

1. **Much has** already been done.
2. **Little has** been done so far.
3. **Much more is** still needed.
4. **Much less was** expected.



### Exercise

#### Correct the following sentences :

1. The meek is blessed.
2. The rich lacks in human sympathy.
3. The noble is respected in society.
4. The poor deserves our sympathy.
5. The blind needs to get social recognition.
6. We, your admirers, wants to hear you.
7. He, your employer, are highly pleased with you.
8. You, my cousin, is my only supporter.
9. I, your guardian, is not pleased with your behaviour.
10. Mohan, your ward, have been absenting himself for the last four days.
11. Much remain to be done.
12. Little progress have been made since July this year.
13. Less than this were not acceptable.
14. More were expected from a friend like you.
15. More need to be done.

**Hints** — 1. are; 2. lack; 3. are; 4. deserve; 5. need; 6. want; 7. is; 8. are; 9. am; 10. has; 11. remains; 12. has been; 13. was; 14. was; 15. needs.

### Numeral Expressions and the Verbs

#### Rule 21—Indefinite Number/Definite Number + of A number of/The number of

- (a) **A number of** is Indefinite number.
- (b) **The number of** is Definite number.

Therefore **A number of + Noun** always takes the verb in the Plural Number because Indefinite Number is believed to be Plural. **The number of + Noun** takes Singular Verb because Definite Number is believed to be in the Singular Number. As—

- (a)
  1. A number of boys have come.
  2. A number of books have been purchased.
  3. A number of children are playing.
  4. A number of students are absent.
- (b)
  1. The number of students is going down.
  2. The number of graduates is increasing.
  3. The number of employees is fixed.
  4. The number of guests varies.

In the same way the following are some more phrases showing Indefinite Number / Definite Number in which the same rule applies—

(many of, a handful of, the rest of, half of, a quarter of, some of, most of, majority of, minority of, part of, percent of, none of, all of, a few of, etc.)

### Quantitative Expressions and the Verbs

#### Rule 22—Indefinite Quantity/Definite Quantity.

Some expressions suggest Indefinite / Definite quantity. Quantity whether definite or indefinite is always taken to be in Singular Number. The verb used with it is always in the Singular Number. As—

1. Much of milk **has** turned sour.
2. Plenty of tea **has** gone waste.
3. A lot of butter **has** been purchased.
4. A good deal of food **was** found to be tasteless.

In the same way some other expressions showing Indefinite / Definite Quantity are—a lot of, lots of, heap of, plenty of, half of, a quarter of, some of, much of, most of, part of, all of, rest of, a great deal of.

**Note**—Some expressions given above under Rules 21 and 22 can express both **Number** and **Quantity**. If the noun used after **of** in these expressions is **countable**, it would show **Number**; if it is **uncountable**, it would show **Quantity**. A **Plural Verb** is used with countable nouns, and a **Singular Verb** with uncountable nouns.

### Exercise

#### Choose the correct alternative verb in the following sentences :

1. A number of agitators **has / have** been arrested.
2. Some of the books **is/are** useless.
3. A handful of strikers **was/were** agitating.
4. Many of them **is/are** known to me.
5. Half of my old friends **has/have** retired.
6. The number of seats **is/are** fixed.
7. The number of my followers **is/are** increasing.
8. The number of books **is/are** not known.

9. The number of visitors **has/have** considerably increased.
10. The number of members in the Parliament **does/do** not increase every time.
11. Much of time **has/have** been wasted.
12. A lot of energy **has/have** gone waste.
13. A great deal of patience **was/were** shown by him.
14. A lot of labour **is/are** needed to complete this task.
15. A great amount of suffering **was/were** involved in it.
16. Some of the milk **has/have** been set apart.
17. Some of the people **has/have** already gone back.
18. Plenty of time **has/have** been spent.
19. Plenty of men **has/have** already turned up.
20. None of my friends **has/have** arrived.

**Hints**—1. have; 2. are; 3. were; 4. are; 5. have; 6. is; 7. is; 8. is; 9. has; 10. does; 11. has; 12. has; 13. was; 14. is; 15. was; 16. has; 17. have; 18. has; 19. have; 20. both are correct—**has** in the singular sense and **have** in the plural.

**Rule 23—Many a/an + Singular Noun, More than one**

Look at expressions like these—**Many a boy, Many an opportunity, More than one chance.** They are all correct expressions. They are **Singular** in form, but **Plural** in meaning. Therefore according to their form, they take a **Singular Verbs**. As—

1. Many a boy **is** absent today.
2. Many a ship **is** lost in the ocean.
3. Many an **opportunity** **is** missed by negligence.
4. More than one chance **was** given to him.

**Note**—The above noted expressions can be changed and formed thus also—**More boys than one, More opportunities than one, More chances than one.** The Subject in all these expressions is Plural, therefore, they require a Plural Verb.

**Rule 24—Singular Collective Noun + of + Plural Noun**

There are some expressions in which Plural Nouns are used after Singular Collective Nouns joined with **of**, as **a group of boys, a team of players, a band of singers**. In these expressions the Subjects are **group, team, band**, and not **boys, players, singers** (they being Objects of the Preposition **of**.) Moreover, they are joined into **one unit** by a Singular Collective Noun. All these will take Singular Verb. As—

1. A team of players **is** staying here.
2. A garland of flowers **is** ready.
3. A batch of students **is** studying here.
4. A bunch of grapes **has** fallen from the creeper.

Some other singular collective nouns are these—

a chain of, a garland of, a class of, a bunch of, a series of, a herd of, a flock of, a band of, a set of, a bouquet of, a galaxy of, a fleet of, a pair of, a gang of, etc.

**Exercise**

**Correct the following sentences :**

1. Many a chance were given to him.
2. Many a beggar sleep here.
3. Many a player were injured.
4. Many a game are lost for want of coordination.
5. Many a life are saved by timely help.
6. More chances than one was given to him.
7. More beggars than one sleeps here.
8. More games than one is lost for want of coordination.
9. A team of actors are going to give a demonstration.
10. A chain of pearls have been broken.
11. A flock of birds nest here every year.
12. A band of robbers were detected by the police.
13. A pair of shoes are urgently needed.
14. A galaxy of stars are visible in the sky.
15. A series of questions were put to me.

**Hints**—1. was; 2. sleeps; 3. was; 4. is; 5. is; 6. were; 7. sleep; 8. are; 9. is; 10. has; 11. nests; 12. was; 13. is; 14. is; 15. was.

**Rule 25—Hyphenated Expressions/Singular Noun repeated after a Preposition**

There are some expressions in which the same Singular Noun is repeated after a certain Preposition. As—**wave after wave, ship after ship, brick upon brick, row upon row.** With all such expressions Singular Verb is used.

1. Ship after ship **arrives** here.
2. Wave after wave **follows**.
3. Brick upon brick **is** laid.
4. Shot after shot **was** heard.

**Rule 26—Verb ‘to be’ + Complement**

The verbs ‘to be’ are—**am, is, are, was, were.** These verbs always take a complement after them. This complement cannot be the subject of the verb ‘to be’. The subject comes before the verb ‘to be’ and the complement comes after it. In all such sentences the verb should be used according to the subject, and not according to the complement of the verb ‘to be’. As—

1. It **is** I. (Not—**It am I.**)
2. It **is** they. (Not—**It are they.**)
3. It **is** my students who won the match. (Not—**It are my students**)
4. My great hope **is** my sons.
5. Here the greatest danger **is** the snakes.

**Exercise**

**Choose the correct alternative verb in the following sentences :**

1. Question after question **was/were** asked to me.
2. Problem after problem **was/were** brought before me.
3. Box into box **was/were** placed and locked.
4. Attempt after attempt **was/were** made.
5. Storey upon storey **is/are** being built.
6. It **is/are** they who will help.
7. My great disappointment **is/are** my repeated failures.
8. It **is/are** we who have to take the responsibility.
9. It **is/are** they who have deceived me.
10. It **is/are** I who shall have to go.

**Hints**—1. was; 2. was; 3. was; 4. was; 5. is; 6. is; 7. is; 8. is; 9. is; 10. is.

**Rule 27—As follows**

**As follows** is always used in the Singular Number. Therefore we can never say ‘As follow’. As—

1. The conditions are **as follows**.
2. The details of the case are **as follows**.
3. The account of expenditure is **as follows**.
4. The main points are **as follows**.

**Rule 28—Not only ..... but.**

If two subjects are connected by ‘**Not only ..... but**’, the verb should agree in Person and Number with the second subject. As—

1. **Not only** the teacher **but** all his students were injured.
2. **Not only** I **but** all my brothers are worried about him.
3. **Not only** his sons **but** he himself is a great artist.
4. **Not only** they **but** you are also to blame.

**Rule 29—Nothing but + Noun Singular/Plural**

Some sentences begin with ‘**Nothing but**’, and after this phrase a Singular or a Plural noun comes. In such sentences a **Singular Verb** is always used whether the noun following it is singular or Plural. The reason is that its subject is **Nothing** which is always Singular. As—

1. Nothing but blue waters **was** seen.
2. Nothing but smoke **was** there.
3. Nothing but ceaseless toil **was** his lot.
4. Nothing but hills **is** seen there.

**Verb ‘to be’ and the Complement****Rule 30—There is/There are**

In sentences beginning with **There**, the verb **is** or **are** is used according to the Number of the Noun coming after the verb. As—

1. There **is** a book on the table.
2. There **are** some books on the table.
3. There **are** many chairs.
4. There **is** a chair in the room.

In the sentences given above, in sentences at No. 1 and 4 the Nouns **book** and **chair** are singular, therefore the verb is singular (**is**); in sentences at No. 2 and 3 the Nouns **books** and **chairs** are Plural, therefore the verb is also Plural (**are**).

**Exercise**

**Correct the following sentences :**

1. My comments are as follow.
2. His observations were as follow.

3. My story is as follow.
4. The details of the accident are as follow.
5. His concluding remarks were as follow.
6. Not only I but all my sons am ready to go.
7. Not only the strikers but also their leader were arrested.
8. Not only my watch but all my belongings has been stolen.
9. Not only Mahatma Gandhi but all his followers in the march was arrested.
10. Not only my sister but I also is innocent.
11. Nothing but green fields were seen over the whole area.
12. Nothing but darkness prevail there.
13. Nothing but heads of men were seen over the field.
14. Nothing but peak over peak appear over there.
15. Nothing but memories of the past last in the end.
16. There are a lion in the cage.
17. There is parrots of all colours in the cage.
18. There are no fact to hide.
19. There is no facts to hide.
20. There are my son with his friends.
12. Each of these brothers have started a good business.
13. The cattle is theirs.
14. Not only silver but also gold are widely popular in our country.
15. Every bush and tree were blossoming.
16. This is one of the best novels that has appeared this year.
17. Every one of the boys were on the playground.
18. The number of men employed were very small.
19. The sum and substance of the matter are that he is wrong.
20. Nothing but funny stories delight him.
21. Those who lives in glass houses should not throw stones.
22. A variety of charming scenes appear before the eye.
23. Good news have come today.
24. Neither of the sisters were liked.
25. Five thousand rupees a month are a good income.
26. Either of these books are worth reading.
27. Neither you nor Ram seem to be interested in the matter.
28. One of my cousins have settled in America.
29. The quality of the mangoes were not good.
30. Justice, as well as mercy, allow it.

**Hints**—1. follows; 2. follows; 3. follows; 4. follows; 5. follows; 6. are; 7. was; 8. have; 9. were; 10. am 11. was; 12. prevails; 13. was; 14. appears, 15. lasts; 16. is; 17. are; 18. is; 19. are; 20. is.

### Miscellaneous : Test Exercise I

**Correct the following sentences :**

1. Our only guide were the teachers.
2. Fifty years are a long period.
3. His friend and benefactor are dead.
4. Many a man have read this book.
5. He, as well as his friends, have come.
6. What is wanted are not buildings but good students.
7. **Arabian Nights** are a book for children.
8. Our followers is but a handful.
9. The great poet and dramatist are dead.
10. You, who is my friend, should support me.
11. The father, with his two sons, are standing outside.

**Hints**—1. was; 2. is; 3. is; 4. has; 5. has; 6. is; 7. is; 8. are; 9. is; 10. are; 11. is; 12. has; 13. are; 14. is; 15. was; 16. have; 17. was; 18. was; 19. is; 20. delights; 21. live; 22. appears, 23. has; 24. was; 25. is; 26. is; 27. seems; 28. has; 29. was; 30. allows.

### Test Exercise II

**Supply a verb in agreement with its subject :**

1. Two and two ..... four.
2. There ..... many proposals before us.
3. There ..... no provision for it.
4. Neither his father nor his mother ..... any knowledge of it.
5. The Board ..... chosen its chairman.

6. The public ..... requested not to cross the Railway track.
7. The popular leader with his followers ..... been arrested.
8. Not one of you ..... capable of doing this.
9. No news ..... good news.
10. One or the other of those boys ..... stolen my watch.
11. Neither of the guests ..... known to me.
12. Two-thirds of the city ..... in ruins.
13. Neither pleasure nor profit ..... my weakness.
14. Milton was one of the greatest poets that ..... ever lived.
15. The cost of all these articles ..... risen.

### Test Exercise III

Explain why the following sentences are correct or incorrect :

1. Much of time has been wasted.
2. Every one of them were present.
3. Mohan, with all his friends, have missed the train.
4. Three parts of the work still remains to be completed.
5. Three-fourths of the books has been eaten by white-ants.
6. Either he or I has to go.
7. One of the most serious accidents has occurred.
8. Many a passenger have missed the train.
9. The Parliament have been debating on the Bill since the morning.
10. She and I was playing in the garden.
11. Mystery within mystery was revealed before me.
12. A chain of accidents have occurred.

### Concord of Nouns, Pronouns and Possessive Adjectives

We have explained above the rules of agreement of Subject and Verb. In addition to these, there are also some rules of agreement between **Noun, Pronoun** and **Possessive Adjectives**. We give below these rules.

#### Rule 1—First Person Pronoun

- (a) First Person Pronoun Singular Number **I** takes **me, my, mine, myself**.
- (b) First Person Plural **We**, takes **our, us, ours, ourselves**. As—
  1. **I** shall do it **myself**.
  2. **I** shall have **my** chance.
  3. **We** shall do it **ourselves**.
  4. **We** shall have **our** chance.

#### Rule 2—Second Person Pronoun

Second Person Pronoun **you** remains the same both in Singular and Plural Numbers. It takes **your, yours, yourself, yourselves**. As—

1. **You** can do it **yourself**.
2. **You** should do **your** work.

#### Rule 3—Third Person Pronoun : Masculine/ Feminine, Singular/ Plural Number.

- (i) Third Person, Singular Number, Masculine Gender takes **he, him, his, himself**.
- (ii) Third Person, Singular Number, Feminine Gender takes **she, her, hers, herself**.
- (iii) Nouns of Neuter Gender and most of the animals in the Singular Number take **It, Its, Itself**.
- (iv) Third Person Plural Number, both in Masculine and Feminine genders, all neuter nouns and all animals in Plural Number take **They, them, their, theirs, themselves**. As—
  1. **He** will do **his** work **himself**.
  2. **She** will do **her** work **herself**.
  3. Those **boys** will do **their** work **themselves**.
  4. Those **girls** will do **their** work **themselves**.
  5. This **book** is mine. I lent **it** to you some time back.
  6. Those **books** are mine. I lent **them** to you some time back.
  7. **Every student** has completed **his** work.

#### Rule 4—Common Gender

Some Nouns are of **Common Gender**, i.e., they can be used both in the Masculine and Feminine Genders. With such nouns **Masculine Pronoun** is mostly used. These Nouns of Common Gender are :

Person, student, pupil, candidate, member, scholar, reader, etc. As—

1. A candidate should know **his** strong and weak points.
2. A student should do **his** home work regularly.
3. Readers are advised to keep **their** belongings outside.

But if in a definite context the suggestion is clearly for a girl or a woman, **Feminine Pronoun** can be used. As—

1. A **student** of the Women's College should be regular in **her** work.
2. Every **member** of our club should pay **her** fee in time.

**Rule 5—Baby, child,**

The words **Baby** and **child** connote no sense of Gender. Therefore, for them we generally use **It**. As—

1. The small **child** was crying for **its** mother.
2. The **baby** fell down from **its** cradle.

**Rule 6—Animals**

Neuter Gender (It) is generally used for animals. As—

1. The cow is not in **its** shed.
2. The dog has hurt **its** leg.

**Note**—For pet domestic animals **He / his** or **She / her** are used.

**Rule 7—Possessives : His, Her, Its**

The Gender of a Possessive Pronoun / Adjective is determined by the gender of the noun that comes before it, and not by the one that comes after it. As—

1. A **son** must obey his mother. (not **her mother**)
2. A **girl** can learn many things from her father. (not **his father**)
3. The purse has been returned to **its** owner. (not **his owner**)

**Note**—The difference between a Possessive Pronoun and a Possessive Adjective is that—

- (a) Possessive Adjective takes a Noun after it—  
My book, your house, his pen, their college.
- (b) Possessive Pronoun has no Noun after it.  
This book is **mine**. This house is **yours**.  
This pen is **his**. This college is **theirs**.

On the basis of the rules explained above the following **two Tables** can be made for the correct use of **Pronouns**—

**Table I : Third Person Pronoun**

Noun	Corresponding Pronoun
man, boy, everyone, everybody, every person	he, him, his, himself
woman, girl, every woman, every girl	she, her, hers, herself
a thing, an animal	it, its, itself
one	one, one's, oneself
men, women, people, animals, things	they, them, their, theirs, themselves.

**Table II : All Forms of Personal Pronouns**

Personal Pronoun		Posses-sive Adjective	Posses-sive Pronoun	Reflexive Pronoun
Nomi-native	Accus-ative			
I	me	my	mine	myself
you	you	your	yours	yourself
he	him	his	his	himself
she	her	her	hers	herself
it	it	its	its	itself
one	one	one's	one's	oneself
we	us	our	ours	ourselves
you	you	your	yours	yourselves
they	them	their	theirs	themselves

**Exercise**

**Fill in the blanks in the following sentences with correct pronouns or possessive adjectives :**

1. You must write ..... essays more carefully.
2. The dog is very faithful to ..... master.
3. The children have gone on a picnic with ..... parents.
4. Sheela has misplaced ..... books somewhere.
5. Could you please lend.....your dictionary for a day ?

6. She speaks so softly that we cannot hear .....
7. We offered to help.....in their difficulty.
8. They will go there .....
9. My sister and ..... friends have come.
10. She cannot go against the wishes of ..... father.
11. The baby is in ..... mother's arms.
12. The train is running on ..... track.

**Hints**— 1. your; 2. its; 3. their; 4. her; 5. me; 6. her; 7. them; 8. themselves. 9. her. 10. her; 11. its; 12. its.

### *Test Exercise*

**Insert suitable pronouns or possessive adjectives in the blank spaces in the following sentences :**

1. The baby was crying because ..... was hungry.
2. Neeru is two years older than ..... brother.
3. These children are waiting for ..... father to return.
4. He and his two sons have gone to visit ..... grandfather.

5. The pet dog is playing with..... master.
6. The street dog has hidden ..... behind the wall.
7. She received a beautiful present from ..... husband.
8. One should honour ..... word.
9. Visitors are requested to put..... signatures in the register.
10. This pen is ..... . Where is ..... ?
11. They should not have spent that money, as it was not ..... .
12. We should be very careful in spending ..... money.
13. Do you remember.....and.....address ?
14. .... house is bigger than ..... .
15. The principal asked the students to meet ..... in ..... office.
16. A reader has left.....book on the table.

**Hints**— 1. it; 2. her; 3. their; 4. their; 5. his; 6. itself; 7. her; 8. one's; 9. their; 10. mine, yours; 11. theirs; 12. our; 13. her, her; 14. her, his; 15. him, his; 16. his.