

30. SUBJECT-VERB AGREEMENT: BASIC RULES

To make sure the verb agrees with the subject:

- **First, find the subject(s) of the sentence.** The subject is who or what is performing the action or being described.
 - *Nurses prepare the patients for surgery, and the head nurse inspects the patients' rights before the surgery.*
 - *The topic is controversial, so the students have strong opinions.*
 - *I am studying biology because it has always interested me.*
- **Then, look for these three types of verbs** to make sure the verb agrees with the subject.
 - Verbs in the simple present
 - *BE* verbs
 - *HAVE* verbs

	How to make the verb agree with the subject	Example of subject-verb agreement	Remember
Verbs in the simple present	If the subject is any noun that can be replaced with <i>he, she, or it</i> , add <i>-s</i> to the simple form of the verb.	<i>The head <u>nurse</u> <u>inspects</u> the patients.</i>	The <i>-s</i> at the end of a verb means third person singular (e.g., <i>she <u>inspects</u></i>).
	If the subject is any noun that can be replaced with <i>they</i> (or is the pronouns <i>I, we, you or they</i>), just use the simple form.	<i><u>I</u> / <u>you</u> / <u>we</u> / <u>they</u> <u>inspect</u> the patients.</i>	The <i>-s</i> at the end of a noun means plural (e.g., <i><u>patients</u></i>).
BE verbs	<i>BE</i> verbs can be used alone.	<i><u>I am</u> a nursing major.</i> <i>The topic <u>is</u> controversial.</i> <i>You / We / They <u>are</u> helpful.</i>	Used alone or as a helping verb, the <i>BE</i> verb needs to agree with the subject.
	<i>BE</i> verbs can be helping verbs.	<i><u>I am</u> studying biology.</i> <i>My friend <u>is</u> studying biology.</i> <i>You / We / They <u>are</u> studying biology.</i>	
HAVE verbs	<i>HAVE</i> verbs can be used alone.	<i><u>I</u> / <u>You</u> / <u>We</u> / <u>They</u> <u>have</u> strong opinions.</i> <i>The school <u>has</u> helpful teachers.</i>	Used alone or as a helping verb, the <i>HAVE</i> verb needs to agree with the subject.
	<i>HAVE</i> verbs can be used as helping verbs.	<i><u>I</u> / <u>You</u> / <u>We</u> / <u>They</u> <u>have</u> studied already.</i> <i><u>It</u> <u>has</u> always interested me.</i>	