



Help With: Number Agreement

Missing or mismatched 's's seem trivial, but they confuse readers, particularly if pronouns and verbs conflict in number. The reader may not know which person or persons the writer means:

Therefore faculties tend to apply for large campus that provides good treatment.

This sentence is meaningless—all because of missing or wrong 's' markers. Here are some more general rules for number agreement.

There are two ducks in the room. Are, two, and ducks all agree.

Please buy me a box of grapes. Although grapes are plural, the sentence refers to the box, which is singular. Use *a*.

My favorite hobby is dancing and meeting people. My favorite hobbies are dancing and meeting people. Both sentences are correct because the first sentence treats both activities as a group, and the second does not.

- Singular words: Anybody, Someone, Nobody, Each, Either, Neither.

Each of the members has one vote.

No: *One of the girls gave up their seat.*

Yes: *One of the girls gave up her seat.*

- Plural words: Both, Few, Many, Others, Several.

A few of the justices were stating their opposition. Many raised their voices.

No: *Both of the students brought his textbook.*

Yes: *Both of the students brought their textbooks.*

- Singular or plural words: All, Any, More, Most, None, Some.

More people are arranging their own flights nowadays. (plural group)

I will give you all of the orange; I don't want it. (all parts of one thing)

More rain is leaking through the roof every day! (part of an uncountable quantity)

Exercises

1. She certainly don't think he's telling the truth.
2. The best reward for teachers are on their students' graduation day.
3. Karen and Nicole occupies Room 109.
4. The town's oldest citizen and his son own orange car.
5. The stack of new books are on that table over there.
6. The passengers, not the driver, was taken to hospital in an ambulance.
7. Paul, who is always taking photographs, want to hold an exhibition one day.
8. Each of the new students have been given a guide to the center.
9. Neither Paul nor John have been to Europe.
10. Either the teacher or the students is responsible for cleaning the board.
11. Has Kate and Julia come to class yet?
12. Have Kate or Julia come to class yet?