SUBJECT/VERB AGREEMENT

What is SUBJECT/VERB AGREEMENT?

English grammar rules require that in a sentence, the subject and its corresponding verb must agree in person and number.

Hint One:

Most verbs in English only change for third person singular, with the exception of the verb TO BE.

Examples:

- I stop, you stop, he/she/it stops, we stop, they stop.
- TO BE: PRESENT AND PAST
  - I am, you are, he/she/it is, we/they are.
  - I was, you were, he/she/it was, we/they were.

Hint Two:

When the subject is two or more nouns joined by AND, use a plural verb.

Examples:

- My mom and I are happy when we are together.
- Cheeseburgers and French fries are my favorite meal.

Hint Three:

When using multiple verbs, make sure that ALL the verbs and nouns agree.

Examples:

- My active friend runs and swims and plays tennis.
- My parents always call me and write letters every week.
Hint Four:

If the multiple subjects in the sentence are connected with OR/NOR, use a singular verb.

Examples:

- Neither the kitchen nor the dining room smells good today.
- A dog or cat always wants attention from their owners.

Hint Five:

If the sentence has both a SINGULAR and PLURAL subject joined by OR/NOR, the verb should agree with the subject closest to the verb.

Examples:

- A cheeseburger or French fries are very unhealthy for you.
- French fries or a cheeseburger is very unhealthy for you.

Hint Six:

When a subject and a verb are broken up by a noun phrase, the verb corresponds with the subject, NOT the noun in the intermediary phrase.

Examples:

- The girl in the yellow dress is very pretty.
- A truck weighing seven tons just drove by on the narrow bridge.

Hint Seven:

Indefinite pronouns such as: anyone, anything, every, each, nobody, someone, etc. take singular verbs.

Examples:

- Nobody likes to get bad grades.
- Each box has the same present inside.