In order for the subject and verb to agree in a sentence, you must first be able to pick out the two in a sentence:

- **verb**: words that show state of being (am, is, are, was, been, have, etc.) or action (run, jump, spoke)
- **subject**: the noun or pronoun that performs the verb (girl, dogs, men, frog)

*When finding the subject and the verb, find the verb first. Then ask who or what did that action*

• ex: The dog jumped over the fence. 
  verb= jumped. What jumped over the fence? The dog.

**The Major Rule**: A singular verb is paired with a singular subject. A plural verb goes with a plural subject.

• ex: The package is in the mail. 
  The packages are in the mail.

**Tip #1**: Subjects and “of”
Many times, the subject will modified by a phrase beginning with the word of. Writers will sometimes make the mistake of having the verb agree with the noun in the phrase containing “of.”

• Incorrect: A group of kids run down the street.  
• Correct: A group of kids runs down the street.

**Tip #2**: “Or,” “either/or,” “neither/nor” 
The verb in a sentence containing or, either/or, neither/nor agrees with the noun or pronoun closest to it.

• ex: Neither the dog nor the cat wants to go outside.  
  Either steak or chicken fingers are being served for dinner.

**Tip #3**: Subjects connected by “and” 
When two or more subjects are connected by and, use a plural verb. However, you must check to see if the subject is a compound noun (ex: housewife, office manager)!

• ex: Softball and tennis are my favorite sports.

**Tip #4**: “Along with,” “as well as,” “not, besides” 
These phrases are sometimes found in between the subject and the verb; ignore them and use a singular verb if your subject is singular.

• ex: Rain, along with snow showers, is expected this afternoon.
**Tip #5:** Portions
Words such as *some, all, percent, fraction, majority,* etc. indicate portions and are usually followed by “of.” In this case, the noun following “of” determines the verb.

  - ex: A percent of the *winnings* are donated to charity.

**Tip #6:** Distances, sums, periods of time
Singular verbs are used when these nouns are considered a unit (measurement, amount, etc.).

  - ex: Twenty *dollars* is a good bargain for that shirt.

**Tip #7:** “Here” and “there”
When sentences begin with “there is/there are” or “here is/here are,” the grammatical subject comes after the verb.

  - ex: Here *are* the *directions* to New York City.

**Exercises:**

Choose the sentences that have correct subject-verb agreement:

1. The dog and the cat *is* taking a nap.
   The dog and the cat *are* taking a nap.

2. Neither the rain *nor* the snow *are* going to stop the parade.
   Neither the rain *nor* the snow *is* going to stop the parade.

3. The pitcher, as well as the other players, *is* taking the field.
   The pitcher, as well as the other players, *are* taking the field.

4. Here *is* the plan for the experiment.
   Here *are* the plan for the experiment.

5. The bag of chips *are* going in the lunchbox.
   The bag of chips *is* going in the lunchbox.

**Sources and Further Reading/Practice:**
*Adapted from The Blue Book of Grammar and Punctuation*