

AGREEMENT IN NUMBER (I)

There are two numbers in grammar: **singular** and **plural**. A word is singular in number if it refers to one person or thing. A word is plural if it refers to more than one person or thing.

Except for *be*, English verbs show a difference between singular and plural only in the third person and only in the present tense. The third person singular present form ends in *s*.

I, you , we, they **talk** he, she, it **talks**

The second person pronoun *you* is always used with the plural form of the verb: *you are, you were*. The difference between singular and plural forms of *be* is shown in the past tense as well as the present tense.

PRESENT		PAST	
SINGULAR	PLURAL	SINGULAR	PLURAL
<i>I am</i>	<i>we are</i>	<i>I was</i>	<i>we were</i>
<i>you are</i>	<i>you are</i>	<i>you were</i>	<i>you were</i>
<i>he, she, it is</i>	<i>they are</i>	<i>he, she, it was</i>	<i>they were</i>

Choosing the Standard Form of the Verb. Underline the standard form of the verb in each sentence below.

1. (Was, Were) you at the meeting last night?
2. We (was, were) walking down the street when I stumbled.
3. (Is, Are) *Little Women* your sister's favorite book?
4. As the dentist (was, were) drilling, I tried to think of pleasant things.
5. (Is, Are) your team ahead of mine in the conference?
6. Sarah (commutes, commute) to her job in the city.
7. (Was, were) you playing tennis with Joe last night?
8. The concert (was, were) too long to hold my interest.
9. Where (was, were) they going when we saw them last night?
10. How fast (was, were) they going at the time of the accident?
11. (Wasn't, Weren't) the twins good in the play?
12. The Olsons (is, are) going to Vermont next week.
13. They (was, were) not amused by the comedian.
14. They (was, were) out of town when the house burned.
15. (Has, Have) the Nelsons bought a new car?
16. The Millers (was, were) happy about the outcome of the election.
17. You (was, were) up early this morning.
18. How (does, do) Art manage to do so much in one day?
19. (Was, Were) you at the class reunion?
20. The Hefkes (was, were) sitting on their patio when we called.

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