

AN INFORMAL NOTE ON GRAMMATICAL CONCORD

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‘Concord’ means ‘agreement’, in this case between the subject and the verb of a sentence.



"My subject and verb have agreed to disagree."

Concord errors occur in the usage of both L1 and L2 speakers, but more commonly in the usage of L2 speakers, partly because in some cases their home language does not vary the verb to agree with the subject.

NOTE THE FOLLOWING:

1. The verb agrees with the *main word* in the subject if it consists of a phrase (e.g. ‘The lonely **dog** *is* eating its food’; ‘**One** of the apples *is* bad’).
2. Concord is only relevant to the *present* tense, except for the verb *be* (*was* vs *were*).
3. The plural form of a **verb** is the one *without* an *s* (e.g. ‘walk’). By contrast, the plural form of **noun** is the one *with* an *s* (e.g. ‘dogs’).
4. **Some nouns**, however, do not take *s* for their plurals – e.g. ‘mice’, ‘men’, ‘people’.
5. *Has* is singular and *have* is plural; *does* is singular and *do* is plural.

Choose the correct form of the verb in each of the following:

The dog (is/are) chasing the cat.	Why (does/do) people behave like that?
The cats (is/are) frightened of the dog.	Why (does/do) that child behave like that?
The people (is/are) angry.	The dogs (has/have) all died.
The tasks (is/are) difficult.	Most people (has/have) weaknesses.
The women (is/are) difficult.	The teachers (is/are) on strike.
Women drivers (is/are) less likely to have accidents.	These teachers (is/are) on strike.
University (is/are) special.	These teachers (was/were) on strike.
University life (is/are) special.	Politicians (is/are) usually corrupt.
Universities (is/are) special places.	(Does/Do) politicians (has/have) consciences?
Money (is/are) the root of all evil.	Many parents (does/do) not discipline their children.
The early bird (catch/catches) the worm.	Most people (doesn't/don't) practise what they preach.
Early birds (is/are) more likely to succeed in life.	They (has/have) a problem with your attitude.
That woman (has/have) no life.	Birds of a feather (flocks/flock) together.