Writing Center Subject/Verb Agreement

Subject:

The noun or pronoun that the sentence is about. To locate the subject, ask: Who or what is performing the action of the verb?

Example: In my English class, my teacher tells lots of jokes.

Verb:

A word that expresses "action" in a sentence or makes a statement about the subject. Example: You dance very beautifully. He is smart.

- The verb in a sentence must agree with the subject in person and number:
- Subject-verb agreement usually matters only in the present tense, not the past or the future.

| | Singular (1) | Plural (2 or more) |
|---------------|--------------|--------------------|
| First Person | I | We |
| Second Person | You | You (Y'all) |
| Third Person | He/She/It | They |

- Exception: The verb "to be" requires subject-verb agreement in the past tense I was, 0 You were, He/She/It was, We were, You (y'all) were, They were. (Regular verbs don't change in past tense – I walked, you walked, they walked, etc.)
- Third-person singular subjects require a third-person singular verb that ends in 's'. First-person, second-person, and plural subjects do not require the verb to end in 's'.
 - Examples of third-person singular: She eats. The dog barks. Jeremy is tall. It 0 feels weird.
 - Examples of others: I eat tacos. You sing. We talk about life. You (y'all) sleep. They drive a truck.
- When two subjects are joined by *and*, they are compound subjects and require a plural verb.
 - Kelly and I walk to school every day.