

Problem Subjects

Collective Nouns

Collective Nouns can take singular or plural verbs, depending on how they are used.

Common Collective Nouns: Group, Class, Team, Staff, Jury, Family, Committee

Ex. The **choir performs** each year in a talent show. (The choir is acting as a group – singular.)

Ex. The **jury arrive** from their homes each morning at 9 a.m. (The jury members are acting as individuals – plural.)

Singular Nouns Ending in S

Some nouns that end in “s” or “ics” look plural but are actually singular.

Singular Nouns with Plural Forms – Measles, News, Politics, Mathematics, Physics, Economics, Ceramics, Molasses

Ex. **Politics** **attracts** people with strong leadership qualities.

Ex. The weekend **news** **features** local personalities.

Titles

Titles of works of art, literature, and music are singular.

Ex. *The Outsiders* is a popular young adult novel.

Measures and Amounts

Words that express weights, measures, numbers, and lengths of time are usually singular.

Ex. **Three pounds** **is** the approximate weight of an adult human's brain.

Ex. **Five hours** **is** a long time to wait for lunch.

Practice

1. Pediatrics (is, are) the branch of medicine dealing with infants and children.
2. Our class (has, have) learned the four emotions that newborns experience: excitement, surprise, relaxation, and distress.
3. Six weeks (is, are) the age when infants first express joy.
4. The public often (seek, seeks) advice about raising a child.
5. *Dr. Spock's Baby and Child Care* (is, are) a classic book.