Subject Verb Agreement

The subject should agree in number with the verb.

- Singular subject – singular verb
- Plural subject – plural verb

First determine the subject:

A system of lines (extend/extends) horizontally to form a grid.

There (is/are) an estimated 29,000 women living in our city.

Rules:

1. **Sentences that begin with there is/was/were…..** The subject follows the verb.

   There were a social worker and a crew of twenty volunteers at the scene of the accident.

2. **Relative pronouns** such as who, which, and that use verbs that agree with their antecedents (noun or pronoun to which they refer).

   Dr. Barker knew Frank was the only one of his sons who was responsible enough to handle the estate.

3. **Indefinite subject pronouns** such as each, everyone, anybody, and somebody usually take a singular verb.

   Everyone in the group has practiced long hours.

4. **Collective nouns** (herd, group, army, team, etc.) take a singular or plural noun depending on your meaning.

   The Committee meets weekly to discuss new business.
   The editorial board are all published authors.

5. **When two subjects are joined by either... or or neither... nor:**
   - If both subjects are singular, the verb is singular
   - If both subjects are plural, the verb is plural
   - If subjects are mixed, the verb agrees with the one closer to the verb

   Neither John nor Bill works regularly.
   Either apples or oranges are good.
   Either Felix or his friends are crazy.

6. **When two subjects are joined by both ... and, the verb is plural.**

   Both John and Bill are resigning