Subject-Verb Agreement

Singular subjects take singular verbs.
For example:
The *phone* rings.

Plural subjects take plural verbs.
For example:
The *phones* ring.

When multiple subjects are joined by *or*, *either... or*, *neither... nor*, or *not...but*, the verb agrees with the nearest subject.
For example:
Not the parents, *but* the child seems to control the family.
Neither the man *nor* we were able to control the class.

Plural subjects with intervening phrases take plural verbs.
For example:
All my *courses*, including law, are interesting.

Singular subjects with intervening phrases take singular verbs.
For example:
My history *book*, not the math and science texts, is for sale

Words ending in … *one*, … *thing*, or …*body* take singular verbs.
For example:
Everybody was questioned.
Everyone believes the butler did it.
Nothing was left as evidence.

Each, *either*, and *neither*, when used as *subjects*, take singular verbs.
For example:
Each (of the boys) wants to win.
Either was suitable for the job.

Collective nouns include such words as *staff*, *jury*, and *team*. When referring to the *group as a unit or whole*, use a singular verb.
For example:
The *committee* was meeting with the strikers.

When referring to the members of the *group acting individually*, use a plural verb.
For example:
The *committee* were disagreeing *among themselves*.

Units of *money*, *time*, *mass*, *length*, and *distance* take singular verbs.
For example:
Four dollars is too much money to pay for a cup of coffee.