



## Grammar Tidbit #19 Compound Subjects



Two nouns joined by and are normally treated as plural and take a plural verb:

Precision and accuracy are essential for this task.

When the subject of the sentence is a single noun followed by another element tagged on by a phrase such as 'accompanied by', 'as well as', or 'together with', then the verb should be singular and not plural. In these cases, it's the singular noun that is the true subject:

John, together with his friend Kerry, was writing profanities on the wall.

Your enrollment form, accompanied by a document, needs to reach us by tomorrow.

One easy way to check the agreement in these cases is to think of the sentence without the extra element. Some expressions are tricky because they are grammatically ambiguous, for example phrases such as 'more than one':

More than one in ten married men admit to have extramarital affairs.

The subject of this sentence may at first glance appear to be singular. However, it's actually **plural** (men rather than one man), so you need to use the plural verb admit.

