The Rules:
In a sentence, a singular subject must always have a singular verb form, while a plural subject must always have a plural verb form.

Examples:
1. Loyola University is cold in the winter. (one university; is is the singular form of to be)
2. Desserts are always sweet. (more than one dessert; are is the plural form of to be)

Two or more singular subjects connected by and usually take a plural verb.

Example:
1. Loyola University and Northwestern University are cold in the winter. (two universities; are is the singular form of to be)

Words such as each and every, and phrases such as either...or and neither...nor take a singular verb.

Example:
1. Neither cake nor ice cream would taste delicious with pickles. (two singular subjects; taste is the singular form of to taste)

Three common reasons why these rules can be confusing:
I. These rules can be confusing because of the use of -s in making words plural. A final -s or -es is added to nouns to make the noun plural. A final -s or -es is added to a simple present verb when the subject of the verb is a singular noun.

Examples:
1. Our dog makes a lot of noise. (one dog, no -s; the singular simple present tense of to make has an -s on the end of the word)
2. Our dogs make a lot of noise. (more than one dog; plural simple present tense does not have an -s.)

II. These rules can also be confusing when using there + to be:

When using there + a form of the verb to be, look for the real subject of the sentence. The number of the verb will always follow the number of the real subject of the sentence. For example, in the sentence “There are three windows in this classroom,” windows is the real subject of the sentence, and since windows is plural, the form of to be is also plural.

Examples:
1. There is an apple in his lunchbox. (one apple, therefore singular verb form)
2. Why is there a shortage of affordable apartments for rent in Chicago? (one shortage, therefore singular verb form; apartments is not the real subject of the sentence)
III. These rules can be confusing when other words or phrases come between the subject and the verb. Any words that come after a subject as a rule do not usually change that subject’s number. For example, in the sentence "That group of men going about their business is hard to see," group is the subject, which takes the singular verb is.

**How to Notice and Correct Any Errors:**
In order to find subject-verb agreement errors, you must locate the subject and verb within the sentence, no matter how many words or phrases are between them.

To correct any errors, you must make sure that a singular subject has a singular verb form, and that a plural subject has a plural verb form.

**Let’s Practice:**
Read each of the following sentences carefully. For each sentence, decide whether the subject of the sentence is singular or plural. Then choose the appropriate form of the verb in parentheses.

1. Knowing how to communicate your ideas clearly (is, are) necessary for a successful career.
2. Before enrolling at public school, every child (need, needs) to be vaccinated for certain diseases.
3. Although Indonesia is politically unified, its cultural heritage (is, are) remarkably diverse.
4. Both boys and girls (has, have) to learn how to cook.
5. Organic apples, oranges, and bananas (is, are) nutritionally equal to non-organic varieties.

**More Practice:**
Correct the errors in the following sentences. Some of the sentences have no errors.

1. The vegetable plants in my garden are both beautiful and useful.
2. A lot of the students at my school takes classes in the evening so they can work.
3. The research about the long-term effects of screen time on infants and toddlers often date from studies of children who were born before television was widely available.
4. Most of the recipes in the cookbook is based on traditional Southern dishes.
5. Until there is a profound and extensive shift towards sustainable agriculture, the welfare of future generations remains uncertain.

**Further Resources:**
https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/599/01/


http://www.pcc.edu/staff/pdf/645/SubjectVerbAgreement.pdf