HOW TO ENGLISH
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Can We Say “The Class Disagree”? Collective Nouns Explained

S06E19 | For teachers to adapt to their learners

Purpose

In British English, yes. A collective noun such as class , team or staff can take a singular verb when the group is treated as one unit, or a plural verb when the speaker is focusing on the individual members.

Try this in your next lesson

The team ___ ready for the match.

Our suggested routine

Ask learners to choose is/are and explain whether they are imagining one unit or individual members.

☐ The team ___ ready for the match.

☐ The team ___ arguing about where to sit.

☐ The staff ___ meeting at 10.

☐ The staff ___ all wearing different uniforms today.

Answers and teacher guidance

Both singular and plural can be possible in British English when the intended meaning supports the choice. Ready for the match naturally permits is for one unit; arguing and different uniforms invite are for individual members. The staff meeting at ten can be presented either way. Accept a clear consistent explanation rather than marking every alternative wrong.

After the attempt

What worked? What needs another model or a smaller step? Note one change for next time.

Read the full explanation and examples:
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