**2.5 PARALLELISM & MODIFIERS**

**Introduction to the Topic**

Modifiers and Parallelism is one of the topics of English grammar which is not happily welcomed by the students because of its complexity, mainly the modifiers. But it holds a important place in sentence correction questions in CAT.

The rules will help you to understand the nitty gritty of the placement of modifiers and also the rules of parallelism help in making serveral items in a test to put them in a column to see if they are parallel.

**Relevance in CAT**

The topic Modifiers and Parallelism helps you to successfully handle the errors pertaining to it in the sentence correction questions in CAT.

**MODIFIERS**

A **Modifier** is a word or a phrase that applies to the adjective, adverb or the preposition in a sentence. Thus, modifiers help in conveying the meaning and are attributes of nouns, pronouns or verbs.

**■ Types of Modifiers**

● Misplaced Modifier

● Dangling Modifier

● Squinting Modifier

**■ Misplaced Modifier:**

It is a single word, phrase or clause that does not point clearly to the word or words it modifies. Misplaced Modifiers are wrong because they say something that writer did not intend to say.

Misplaced Modifiers are of two types.

**■ Misplaced Adverb Qualifiers:**

In this, the placement of an adverb changes the meaning of the sentence completely.

e.g.

**(Wrong):** John nearly ate the whole chocolate.

**(Right):** John ate nearly the whole chocolate.

**Explanation:**

In the first case, it seems as if John wanted to eat the whole chocolate. But for some reason, didn’t. In the second case, it means John ate almost the entire chocolate. The problem is with the placement of the adverb nearly, which completely changes the meaning of the two sentences.

**■ Misplaced Prepositional Phrases:**

The problem with prepositional phrases is that when

they occur at the end of the sentences the reader

interprets in a different manner than the one intended by

the writer.

e.g.

**(Wrong):** He went to the conference where he gave the presentation in BMW.

**(Right):** He went in a BMW to the conference where he gave the presentation

**Explanation:**

In the first case it seems as if the presentation was given inside the BMW, but what the writer meant was that the person went in a BMW to the conference.

**Note:** The best way to monitor misplaced prepositional phrases is to always make sure that the prepositional phrase is directly attached to the word that it should modify. Pay special attention to prepositional phrases at the end of the sentences. They are the ones most likely to be misplaced.

**■ Dangling Modifier:**

It is usually a phrase whose subject and verb are implied rather than expressed. The phrase often functions as an adjective but doesn’t modify any specific word in the sentence. Or (worse) modifies the wrong word. To correct a dangling modifier we sometimes need to invent a subject.

e.g.

**(Wrong):** While going to sleep, the doorbell rang.

**(Right):** While Rohan was going to sleep, the doorbell rang.

**■ Squinting Modifier:**

It is an ambiguously placed modifier (usually an adverb) that can modify either the word before it or the word after it. In other words, it's squinting in both the directions at the same time.

Place it next to the word that the modifier is actually meant to modify and the error ambiguity will be removed.

**(Wrong):** He admitted to his parents recently that he had lied to them.

**(Right):** Recently, he admitted to his parents that he had lied to them.

**(Wrong):** He recently admitted to his parent that he had lied to them.

**(Right):** He admitted to his parents that he had lied to them.

In case of squint modifiers, place the modifier in such a way that the sentence communicates the intended meaning.

**■ Split Infinitives:**

Inserting something between 'to' and 'the verb' (as in **to go**) is called a split infinitive. Generally, such interruptions (**to quickly go,** rather than **to go quickly**) are considered an error. However, it is not always an error.

We may have to break the infinitive to place the modifier next to the verb for clarity and elegance in certain sentences.

**(Wrong):** The team was unable to discuss the case completely owing to lack of evidence.

**(Right):** The team was unable to completely discuss the case owing to lack of evidence.

Though one word interruption like the above are acceptable, long and unwarranted interruptions are always an error.

**■ Resumptive Modifiers:**

A resumptive modifier picks up a word or phrase from a sentence that seems to be finished and adds information and takes the reader in to a new territory of thought.

**Example:**

I. **(Wrong):** Since the 1930s, aircraft manufacturers have tried to build airplanes with frictionless wings. Shaped so smoothly and perfectly that the air passing over them would not become turbulent.

**(Right):** Since the 1930s, aircraft manufactures have tried to build airplanes with frictionless wings, wings so smooth and so perfectly shaped that the air passing over them would not become turbulent.

II. **(Wrong):** In a crowded, acquisitive world, the disappearance of lifestyles such as those once followed by Southern Africa’s Bushmen and Australia’s aborigines, doomed requiring vast wild spaces and permitting little accumulation of goods, seems inevitable.

**(Right):** In a crowded, acquisitive world, the disappearance of lifestyles such as those once followed by Southern Africa’s Bushmen and Australia’s aborigines, lifestyles requiring vast wild spaces and permitting little accumulation of goods, seems inevitably doomed.

**PARALLELISM**

When a sentence has several idea in it, the pattern of word used to express these ideas must have the same grammatical forms (i.e. nouns, verbs, infinitives, gerunds, adjectives) . The consistency in the structure is required to show that these ideas have the same level of importance in the sentence.

Parallelism creates clarity elegance and symmetry in sentences.

e.g. I Came, I saw, I conquered – Julius Caesar.

**Usage of parallelism**

I. A gerund is paired with a gerund.

e.g. 1. Shreya loves swimming and dancing.

2. He likes officiating tennis more than playing it.

II. An infinitive is paired with an infinitive.

e.g. Shreya loves to swim and to dance.

He likes to officiate tennis more than he likes to play it.

Whereas if the sentence is,

1. Shreya loves swimming and to dance. And

2. He likes to officiate tennis more than he likes playing it.

Both of the above sentences are incorrect, as here infinitive is paired with gerund.

III. An adjective cannot be made parallel to a noun phrase.

e.g.

**(Wrong):** Young princess was truculent and a bit of a rebel.

**(Right):** Young princess was truculent and rebellious.

IV. A verb phrase cannot be made parallel to a noun phrase.

e.g.

**(Wrong):** Lee would either campaign for the Prime Minister or the Governor.

**(Right):** Lee would campaign for either the Prime Minister or the Governor.

V. Many times correlative ideas linked with the correlative conjunction – both…. and, either…or, neither….nor, and not only …but also.

e.g. Rohan is talented not only as a tennis player, but also as a badminton player.

(A noun paired with a noun.)

Similarly: Karan is talented not only at playing tennis, but also at playing badminton.

(A gerund paired with a gerund.)

But if the sentence is, Rohan is talented not only as a tennis player, but also at playing badminton.

This is a wrong sentence as noun is paired with a gerund.

VI. While making comparisons, whatever you compare should be couched in parallel structures whenever that is possible and appropriate.

e.g.

**(Wrong):** My bat is bigger than my friend.

**(Right):** My bat is bigger than my friend.

VII. When we use string of three or more noun phrases and the third phrase doesn’t follow the pattern of modification established by the first and second phrases it is a case of faulty parallelism .

e.g.

**(Wrong):** Raj always brings his cell phone, his briefcase and iphone to the office.

**(Right):** Raj always brings his cell phone, his briefcase and his iphone to the office.

**Additional examples**

I. The Britisher’s conquered, colonised and governed much of the world. **(Past Tense)**

II. **(Wrong):** That coffee should not be served hot but at cold temperature.

**(Right):** That coffee should not be served hot but cold.

III. **(Wrong):** Heena likes swimming, dancing and to ride a bicycle.

**(Right):** Heena likes swimming, dancing and riding a bicycle.

IV. **(Wrong):** The Training centre needs trainers who are ambitious, motivate themselves and exhibit dedication.

**(Right):** The Training centre needs trainers who are ambitious, who are self motivated and who are dedicated.

V. **(Wrong):** The cat ran across the yard, jumped over the fence and down the alley it sprinted.

**(Right):** The cat ran across the yard, jumped over the fence and sprinted down the alley.

VI. **(Wrong):** Her husband had found a job, bought a car and chose a school for the children before she arrived.

**(Right):** Her husband had found a job, bought a car and chosen a school for the children before she arrived.

**Points To Remember**

**Modifiers**

● The Modifiers way to correct a misplaced modifier is to move the modifying phrase next to the verb it modifies.

● When the modifiers is dangling either the modifier or the main sentence must be rewritten.

● Using adverbs like nearly, almost, just, only, we need to be aware that they are easily misplaced.

**Parallelism**

● The elements that are made parallel by the coordinating conjunction can be nearly anything − words, phrases or clauses.

● The parallel element must all be of exactly the same grammatical category.

**MODIFIERS**

**Practice Exercise – Easy**

**Directions (Q. Nos. 1** − **5):** *Each of the following sentences are divided into four underlined segments. Choose the part that contains an error.*

1. Smiling cheerfully, Bhavin handed his girlfriend

A B

a huge packet of food. No error.

C D

2. He fell in love with a beautiful girl with long hair

A B

from a small village in Rajasthan. No error.

C D

3. While watching sports on television,

A B

our dog keeps on barking. No error.

C D

4. Having delivered a lengthy lecture on Tenses,

A B

the students received an assignment on the day's topic.

C D

5. The nurses and the doctors managed just to extract

A B C

Kiara's stem cells.

D

**Directions (Q. Nos. 6** − **10):***Choose the correct option*.

6. a. Arnold with the green stripes t-shirt is wearing.

b. Arnold is wearing a t-shirt with the green stripes.

c. Arnold with the green stripes is wearing a t-shirt.

d. Arnold with the stripes green is wearing a t-shirt.

7. a. While at the obstacle, he was thrown by his jumping horse.

b. Jumping the obstacle, he was thrown by his horse.

c. He was thrown by his horse, while jumping the obstacle.

d. He, while jumping the obstacle, was thrown by his horse.

8. a. Raj's a rounded open jaw, a short depressed nose and bottlegaurd-like face.

b. Raj had a long, bottlegaurd-like face with a rounded open jaw and a short depressed nose.

c. Raj had a rounded open jaw and a short depressed nose long, bottlegaurd-like face.

d. Raj's face was long and bottlegaurd like, and he had a rounded open jaw, and he had a short depressed nose.

9. a. The southern India is squant and horizontal and architecture of villages is dictated by the area's high winds and flat plateaus.

b. The architecture of villages in southern India is squat and horizontal and is dictated by the area's high winds and flat plateaus.

c. The squat, horizontal architecture of villages in southern India is dictated by the area's high winds and flat plateaus.

d. The squat, horizontal architecture by the area's high winds and flat plateaus of villages in southern India is dictated.

10. a. Please give to Mansi with the brass inlaid figures the mirror.

b. Please give Mansi with the mirror to the brass inlaid figures.

c. Please give inlaid figures the mirror to Mansi with the brass.

d. Please give the mirror with the brass inlaid figures to Mansi.

**Practice Exercise – Medium**

**Directions (Q. Nos. 1** − **10):** *Choose the grammatically correct sentence.*

1. a. The robber was described as a six-feet-tall man weighing 150 pounds with a black moustache.

b. To become a good writer, it is essential that one is a good reader too.

c. I am writing a research paper about Queen Elizabeth in my English class.

d. The doctor was able to quickly and quietly administer the injection to the sleeping child.

2. a. Walking stealthily, the thief stalked his victim.

b. He kept the photograph of his wife in a silver frame in his bedroom.

c. The dog was chasing the boy with the spiked collar.

d. My brother nearly ate a whole box of treats on Sunday.

3. a. Walking to college on subzero morning, my left ear froze.

b. If it has to get published, the publishers should find your story credible.

c. To impove his results, the experiment was done again.

d. Using a microscope, the wings of the butterfly were examined.

4. a. Before buying a new computer, it is necessary that you carefully consider the configuration & price.

b. The waiter finally served us after sitting at the table for nearly an hour.

c. After shamelessly admitting his guilt and begging the Principal for mercy, he was able to avoid punishment for his mistake.

d. Without knowing his name it was difficult to introduce him.

5. a. Deciding to join the navy, the recruiter happily pumped Jay's hand.

b. A small book lay on the desk that Sarah had read.

c. Sharon put the hat on her head that she bought yesterday.

d. Our dog ran around the yard almost twenty times.

6. a. He was almost disappointed with every test he took.

b. I happened to hit a yound girl with my bag.

c. My friend told me that on her way back home from school she saw the dead body.

d. To avoid sport injuries, the right kind of protective gear has to be worn.

7. a. When we were cruising at an altitude of 1500 feet or so the land below looked a strange place.

b. She admitted to her brother recently that she had lied to him.

c. She could barely answer five questions in the grammar section.

d. After finishing her presentation, the members were invited to comment about it.

8. a. The panel was unable to discuss the case completely owing to lack of evidence.

b. The employees decided to before going on a strike to demand salary hike, petition the management once again.

c. While one is taking the CAT even, concentration is everything.

d. To like him, it need great patience.

9. a. Pimples is just considered a teenage problem.

b. Nitin nearly stared at me in silence for 30 seconds.

c. The farmer need to sow one row of corn only.

d. The applause of the audience almost frightened all the performers.

10. a. A family showing the same genes is a collection of people.

b. Repeating the instructions for the umpteenth time, the students failed to correct the sum.

c. Having fled in order to escape the wrath of his father, the police decided to start air investigation.

d. Because the headers were being disturbed by our slightly raised voices, we came out of the library room.

**Practice Exercise – Difficult**

**Directions (Q. Nos. 1** − **5):** *Choose the grammatically correct sentence/s.*

1. A. Upon setting foot in the Akashardham temple, the spectacular stained glass windows amazed camera wilding tourists.

B. Although Shakira seems healthily, she feels very unwell and is unlikely to sing well at tonight's college fest.

C. Shreya buys cookies made with sugarfree, an artificial sweetener, which tastes as sweet as the chocolate syrup that her brother loves but which contains fewer colories than does an equivalent amount of chocolate syrup.

D. Well informed people know that Assam is an Indian region whose most famous export is the tea leaves that bears its name.

a. C & D b. A, B, C & D

c. C only d. B & C

2. A. The people whom we love most are those who flatter us best.

B. People who talk loudly on their mobile phones in hospitals show little respect for patients out there.

C. Of all the earthquakes in Indian history, the earthquake that destroyed Gujarat in 2002 is perhaps the most famous.

D. Ankita returned the dress to me, which was torn

during one of the scenes.

a. A, B, C & D b. A, B & C

c. D only d. A & C

3. A. This patient's rare disease was treated using sound techniques developed at the medical college in the UK.

B. Last night our neighbour's air conditioner broke, which caused great consternation to them.

C. Because of the recent decline in enrollment, the coaching institute decided to revaluate its different courses packages.

D. The houses on Juhu Beach, of which many had been damaged in the Tsunami, looked abandoned.

a. A only b. B only c. C only d. D only

4. A. The top management tried to calm the worried employees parents, as a result of those employees disappearing in the storm.

B. When my parent read an article about Armenia's adorable manatees, they promised each other that they would soon go to Armenia and see one.

C. It would hardly be fair for the shoe packing industry to blame regulatories for the harm that it has inflicted upon itself in the sub-prime shoe sector.

D. Reeta is a natural fertilizer that has become popular among growers of heirlooms potatoes, who generally are willing to pay extra for organic products.

a. C only b. B, C & D c. B & D d. B & A

5. A. Upon landing at the airport, we were met by a BMW car sent by the Taj Hotel.

B. Based on the most current facts available, budget was made to diversify the company's holdings.

C. Small and taciturn, Rohit Juneja often goes unnoticed by those he will later write about.

D. I took several lessons to learn how to play badminton without getting the shuttle cock over the net even once.

a. A, B & C b. B & D

c. A & C d. D only

**Directions (Q. Nos. 6 − 8):** *In the sentence given below, find the part which has an error.*

6. On arriving at the airport, her friends greeted Shreya

A B

who immediately took her to her speaking engagement

C

in the cafe house. No error

D

7. Rohan's father, preferring meat to vegetables, made

A B

a dinner of eggs and ham every night. No error

C D

8. Your tumbler, having a leak in the bottom, was

A B

thrown away yesterday. No error

C D

**PARALLELISM**

**Practice Exercise – Easy**

**Directions (Q. Nos. 1** − **16):** *In the sentence given below, find the part which has an error.*

1. For his birthday, Jaz received a cake,

A B

some chocolates and he got a new music system.

C D

2. Ankit wanted to scare us by telling us an eerie story and

A B

he showed us a horror movie the day before yesterday.

C D

3. Though Kaira's plan is creative but a hazard,

A B

she wants all of us to follow her blindly.

C D

4. But Michelin Group, a big Indian tyremaker, is flourish-

A B

ing even though the price of oil-the single

B C

most important ingredient in making and to sell tyres D

has reached record highs.

5. In April Dr. Paul set out to test whether a recording of

A B

him singing the "gathering songs" used during tradi-

C

tional round-ups would be as effective at to herd cattle

D

as irritating sounds such as barking dogs.

6. 'Enjoying the day with you is better than

A

if we were apart' is the comment made by Rohan

B C

to his newly wed bride.

D

7. Although most customers are suspicious of such offers,

A

Rohit is desirous of purchasing the two for - one vaca-

B C

tion package. No error

D

8. Most interviewers agree that how an interviewee dresses

A

for a job interview or he positions himself

B

in his seat leave a lasting impression. No error

C D

9. Dr. Reddy's "Letter from a Rohini Jail" is a condemning

A B

of racial injustice and a calling for nonviolent resistance

C

to that injustice. No error

D

10. The IT team of the company is responsible for

A

the detection of new viruses and the creation of

B

advanced software patches to block those viruses.

C

No error

D

11. The teacher would like not only to hear your side of the

A B

story but also to provide a response. No error

C D

12. Priya ate pasta, drank lemonade and was dancing the

A B C

tango. No error

D

13. All management students should learn accounting, word

A B

process and computer programming. No error

C D

14. On the morning of her 18th birthday, Ankita was giggly,

A B

energetic and couldn't wait fot the party to begin.

C

No error

D

15. If one decides to not abide by the rules of the company,

A

they must be willing to face the consequences for the

B C

same. No error

D

16. Saif Ali Khan is not only a terrific actor but also a great

A B C

guitarist. No error

D

**Practice Exercise – Medium**

**Directions (Q. Nos. 1** − **8):** *Choose the grammatically correct sentence*.

1. a. Her speech not only was long but was also very monotonous.

b. Either you must take the CAT or appear for CET in order to get into B - school.

c. The requirements for IIPMs are not strict as IIMs.

d. The students expressed their support for appreciation of the new plans.

2. a. She likes tea better than soft drinks.

b. Sohan’s sense of humour is better than Mohan.

c. For breakfast, he has every day a sandwich, glass of milk and apple.

d. Men & women want three thing in life: health, wealth and to be loved.

3. a. You should not be so worried or discouraged by the inconsistency in performance.

b. Our way to reduce the time required for accurate computing is using parallel processing.

c. She loves eating samosas but not to make them.

d. Her husband promised her to cook the meal, wash the dishes and clean the house.

4. a. Heena likes swimming, hiking and to ride bicycle.

b. The children at the camp can learn cooking, canoeing, swimming or rope making

c. The puppy ran across the yard, jumped over the fence and down the alley it sprinted.

d. The cooking centre needs professors who areambitious, motivate themselves and exhibit dedication.

5. a. Sophie not only wants money but also fame.

b. The society members emphasized collective survival, mutual aid and being responsible for one another.

c. She not only corrected my vocabulary but also suggested several new ideas.

d. My income is smaller than my husband.

6. a. Either you must grant her request or incur her ill will.

b. The ceremony was both long and wearisome.

c. We found the film repulsive, offensive and we thought it was embrassing.

d. She wanted three things out of college: to make good friends, to learn a skill and learning about life.

7. a. Deepika Padukone has a wit charm and pleasing personality.

b. In Sanskrit class, Vaibhav learned to read proverbs critically and he appreciated good prose.

c. Bill Gates is a brilliant strategist, a caring mentor and businessman.

d. Mr. Hari kept his cabin neat, clean and he made it conveniently arranged.

8. a. Professor Naidu rewarded his students for their hard work on the final presentation and going beyond the call of duty.

b. Priya’s motivation to succeed in this project seems to be greater than her brother.

c. His condition for signing the contract are first the chairman of the board has to approve the terms; second, that the other players must sign go well.

d. Formerly, chemistry was taught by the textbook method; now it is taught by the laboratory method.

**Practice Exercise – Difficult**

**Directions (Q. Nos. 1** − **11):** *Choose the grammatically correct sentence/s.*

1. A. I have worked in USA and in UK.

B. Rohan is smart, intelligent and a hard worker.

C. My boss is a hero and a polite man.

D. In English, Rehan learned to read poems critically and to appreciate good prose.

a. A & B b. A, C & D

c. B & D d. B only

2. A. Priya is a professor of thermodynamics but who teaches in Maths department.

B. Algebra and Geometry are the core area of Mathematics.

C. I hope to explore either Australia or Malaysia.

D. Either she will or she will not.

a. C & D b. A, B

c. B, C & D d. A, B & D

3. A. Rohit not only passed the test but also wrote the best paper in the class.

B. My brother and my sister are highly employable.

C. They found the act repulsive, offensive and embrassing.

D. Mr. Pal kept his shop neat, clean and properly arranged.

a. A, B & C b. A only

c. A, B, C & D d. B, C & D

4. A. Gagan not only helped me with my homework, but also she walked my dog while I was on vacation in UK and I didn't even buy her a dress. I feel like a dumb. Duh!

B. I was happy and my parents were happy too when I postgraduated.

C. My teacher is a man who has many talents and who will help anyone who asks.

D. Suman has wit, charm and a pleasing personality.

a. A & D b. A, B, C & D

c. B, C & D d. B & C

5. A. They bought Swift and Duster.

B. Garima's IQ is higher than Harman's.

C. She wanted three things out of this workshop: to learn a skill, to make good friends and to dream about life.

D. ABC Company's chairman Mr. Rakesh was a brilliant strategist, a caring mentor, and a good human being.

a. A, B, C & D b. B & C

c. B only d. D only

6. A. The workers were annoyed by the organisation's low wage, poor woking conditions, and shortage of out lets for worker's innovation.

B. It was important to leave the jewellery in the drawer rather than on the table.

C. They claimed that the party was biased and that it should be disband.

D. The canopee was set up to increase awarness, to spark interest and to motivate puchases.

a. A & B b. C & D

c. B & C d. C & A

7. A. She wants to retire to a place where she pays low taxes and she can relax.

B. There are many children who speak French but whose parents do not.

C. Krishna likes both those who are popular and those who are not.

D. Rohan applied himself in his new bank job, arrived early every day, skipped lunch daily and left late every night.

a. A & D b. A, B, C & D

c. B & C d. B, C & D

8. A. The nomination of this union leader represents a step forward in management workers cordial relations in the organisation.

B. Researchers have found a correlation between exercise and loosing weight.

C. Many people choose to seek employment in the suburbs rather than facing low salaries in the city.

D. A sound night's sleep not only gives your body chance to rest, but also energizes you for the next day.

a. A & D b. A & B

c. B & D d. B & C

9. A. This joint venture will intensity employee satisfaction and improve relations between top management and staff.

B. The exhibition displays the paintings of a wide variety of artists, from those who are world renowned to who are virtually unknown.

C. I was dismayed to learn that one of our team

members is untidy, disagreeable and he was

uninterested to work in a team.

D. The pupils did poorly in the semester exams because they had not studied for the exam and prepared well.

a. B & C b. A, B & C

c. A, B, C & D d. B, C & D

10. A. The experiences we have in childhood influence our behaviour when we are adult.

B. The band chosen for the alumni party in the college appealed to both the alumnus body as well as to the administration.

C. Liquour companies which have been shaken by a string of legal setbacks in the UK, but which retain strong growth prospects in the developing world, face an uncertain future.

D. She is looking for a cafe that has comfortable chairs and that provides free internet access.

a. A & D b. A & B

c. B & C d. C & D

11. A. Her cousin's images of Switzerland range from cosmopolitan to the pastoral.

B. Excited about visiting Singapore, Shreya minded neither riding the subways nor to cope with the crouded sidewalks.

C. I remember my uncle making her own red wine and playing the piano.

D. To visualize final goal is not the same as achieving it.

a. C only b. B only

c. A only d. D only