

INTRODUCTION

This book is intended to familiarize students with various types of grammar questions. These questions require some basic exposure to English grammar and a knowledge of various rules involved in sentence construction and usage of English language.

This book is divided into two parts – Part I and Part II.

Part I is broadly divided into four sections.

The first section of Part I deals with the fundamentals of English grammar and is intended to be a revision of what you learnt in English grammar in your school days. It deals with all the essentials of grammar that you will require to be able to follow Standard English. Go through this section in detail, understand the examples given in different areas, and remember the various terms and their meanings.

The second section deals with each area of Sentence Correction. In each area, the concepts are discussed in greater detail than in the first section and a number of rules for sentence correction are then given with examples. There is an exercise at the end of each chapter for your practice.

The third section deals with certain basic patterns of sentence construction from the point of view of the exams you will be taking. You will get a clear insight into the patterns discussed. Examples are also given for you to be able to follow the patterns discussed and their application.

The fourth section discusses certain aspects related to styles of writing and common mistakes/errors.

This is followed by a note on phrasal verbs.

Part II of this book contains 8 exercises covering various types of grammar questions which have been appearing in the CAT exam over the years with particular focus on the types that pertain to the exams of recent years. Each exercise is divided into two parts A and B. The questions in Part A are simpler than those in Part B, so that you can improve your skills as you practise.

Each exercise is provided with exhaustive explanatory notes.

SENTENCE CORRECTION: AN OVERVIEW

Sentence correction questions present sentences which may (or may not) have obvious or subtle errors in portions that are underlined. Test-takers are expected to select, from among the given options, the one that, when used, results in a sentence that best expresses the intended idea. Of the five options that are provided, the first always repeats the original phrasing, providing the possibility that the sentence needs no correction. The other four are possible replacements, one of which would be the best replacement when the sentence needs correction.

In making the selection the test-takers display their comprehension of the ideas sought to be delivered and their familiarity with the conventional forms and grammatical rules of standard English, and demonstrate their ability to improve incorrect or inadequate expressions.

BASIC ERROR TYPES

Sentence correction questions ask the student to recognize and correct one or more of possibly erroneous grammatical structures, mainly (but not exclusively) of the following types.

AGREEMENT

This refers to the consistency required among elements within a sentence.

There are two areas of agreement: nouns with verbs and with pronouns, and pronouns with verbs.

Noun-verb agreement: Singular subjects take singular verbs, whereas plural subjects take plural verbs.

For instance - "The number of applications has dropped." (It would be incorrect to say: "The number of applications have dropped.")

Pronoun agreement: A pronoun must agree with the noun or pronoun it refers to in person, number, and gender, and if the subject of a verb, the verb needs to correspond in the singular or plural.

For instance - "When girls cry, they break your heart." (It would be incorrect to say: "When girls cry, she breaks your heart.")

PARALLELISM

Just as a mathematical equation needs balance, a sentence, too, when presenting ideas that contain different elements, must have parallel construction so that these elements balance each other.

For instance - "To listen to someone is to pay attention as you hear them." This SHOULD NOT be written as "To listen to some one is paying attention as you hear them."

VERB FORM

Errors with the use of verbs may occur in the absence of agreement or parallelism (discussed above). They may also occur in the use of tenses, use of transitive/intransitive verbs, and use of modal auxiliaries

Some examples of the correct uses of tenses -

He prayed at the temple yesterday. (Simple past)
He prays at the temple every day. (Simple present)
He will pray at the temple tomorrow. (Simple future)
He was praying at the temple (past continuous) when I met him.

He is praying at the temple now. (Present continuous)
He will be praying at the temple (future continuous) at the same time tomorrow.

He had prayed at the temple (past perfect) before it was closed to the public.

He has prayed at the temple (present perfect) and is now on his way home.

He will have prayed at the temple (future perfect) by the time you meet him tomorrow.

He had been praying at the temple (past perfect continuous) for an hour before he was disturbed.

He has been praying at the temple (present perfect continuous) for more than an hour now.

He will have been praying at the temple (future perfect continuous) for over an hour by 6 pm tomorrow.

Some examples of the correct uses of transitive / intransitive verbs -

He eats apples. He plays tricks. (Transitive, similar to – He cuts wood. He hates work.)

He eats heartily. He plays carefully. (Intransitive, similar to – He sleeps soundly. He works late.)

Some examples of the correct uses of modal auxiliaries -
He can climb that hill. (Doer's ability)

He will climb that hill. (Doer's intent or responsibility undertaken)

He shall climb that hill. (Responsibility placed)

COMPARISONS

Forms of comparison and comparative terms have precise constructions and applications. Students should ensure that they use them appropriately.

For instance – The differences between 'fewer' and 'less', 'further' and 'farther'; the need for 'between and', 'more than'; and so on.

MODIFIERS

Students should be able to recognise whether modifiers are positioned where they clearly relate to the thoughts they are meant to modify. If not positioned clearly, they could cause illogical references, inappropriate comparisons, or distortion in the meanings of statements.

For instance - "He drove around the village, in a green shirt, looking for a pharmacy." This SHOULD NOT be written as "He drove around the village looking for a pharmacy in a green shirt."

GRAMMATICAL CONSTRUCTION

Students must guard against improperly formed constructions such as those indicated below.

Fragments are parts of sentences that are disconnected from their main clauses.

For instance - "He's not wearing his shoes because he has hurt his toe." This SHOULD NOT be written as "He's not wearing his shoes. Because he has hurt his toe."

Run-on sentences are those in which independent clauses come together without proper connectives or punctuation.

For instance – “She hasn't gone to the office today; she isn't feeling well.” This SHOULD NOT be written as “She hasn't gone to the office today she isn't feeling well.”

DICTION

When answering sentence correction questions, students should pay attention to the conventions followed with the use of words, and should choose those that properly and effectively reflect the intended thought.

For instance – Among/between. Among is used to refer to relationships involving more than two objects. Between is used to refer to relationships involving only two objects. Therefore: “The four thieves divided the loot among themselves.” (It would be incorrect to say: “The four thieves divided the loot between themselves.”)

Another example – As/like. When we use 'as' to mean “in the form of”, it's a preposition. In its other use it's a conjunction of manner followed by a verb. 'Like', on the other hand, is generally used as a preposition, and therefore is followed by a noun group. Therefore: “He commands respect as a teacher” would mean that he is a teacher, while “He commands respect like a teacher” would mean that he's being compared to a teacher.

And another – I/me/myself. “I” would always be the subject of the idea (“I hit him”); “me” would always be the object (“He hit me”); “myself” is when action carried out by the subject affects the self (“I hurt myself”).

---- and so on.

LOGICAL PREDICATION

Students should be able to identify structural errors that render sentences illogical or ambiguous.

For instance - “Some believe that Communism was a very relevant ideology when it was born in the 19th century but has lost considerable ground since the breakup of the U.S.S.R.” This SHOULD NOT be written as “Some believe that the birth of the ideology of Communism was very relevant in the 19th century but has lost considerable ground since the breakup of the U.S.S.R.”

IDIOM

Inappropriate or incorrect use of idiom would indicate unfamiliarity with idiomatic expression (such as idioms, phrasal verbs, prepositional phrases, correlative conjunctions and the like). Though idiomatic expressions are based more on convention or tradition than on conventional grammar rules, they are standard expressions and it is important to use them correctly.

For instance - “Having rested adequately overnight, the rallyists were able to resume driving at first light.” This SHOULD NOT be written as “Having rested adequately overnight, the rallyists were able to resume driving when they first saw light.”

Another example - “She lives in that small house on the corner.” This SHOULD NOT be written as “She lives at that small house by the corner.”

And another - “He advised us to read not only 'Julius Caesar' but 'Macbeth' as well.” This SHOULD NOT be written as “He not only advised us to read 'Julius Caesar' but 'Macbeth' as well.”

RHETORICAL CONSTRUCTION

Students should be able to identify constructions that are wordy, redundant, awkward, imprecise, or unclear, even if apparently free of grammatical errors.

For instance - Wordy, redundant constructions - “The meeting was cancelled for lack of quorum.” This SHOULD NOT be written as “The reason the meeting was cancelled was because there was lack of quorum.”

Another example - Awkward, imprecise, or unclear constructions - “When she entered the house, she dropped her briefcase, picked up her baby, and took her out into the sun.” This SHOULD NOT be written as “When she entered the house, she dropped the briefcase, picked up her baby, and took her to the sun.”

THE APPROACH

EFFECTIVE INTERPRETATION is facilitated when the student has adequate understanding of sentence structure (or what the grammar books refer to as Syntax). Syntax is the way that words are put together in order to make sentences. An idea of sentence syntax helps you know how to pick out the main part of a long sentence in order to understand the overall meaning.

There are three things to understand in sentence syntax:-

- (i) the basic pattern of sentences.
- (ii) the complex patterns which make sentences long and difficult and
- (iii) parts of the sentences in thought groups.

Basic Patterns

It must be kept in mind that there are, primarily, 2 things about life that need expression –

- (i) things happen
- (ii) things exist.
Consequently there are, primarily, 4 ways in which basic ideas are expressed, in a ‘subject-predicate’ sequence –
 - (i) Something happens or something/someone does something.
 - (ii) Something happens to something/someone or Something/someone does something to something/someone
 - (iii) Something/someone exists
 - (iv) Something/someone happens/does/exists in some manner.

This being so, a sentence presents an idea (or ideas), and the thoughts it contains can, generally, be identified in four ‘parts of speech’ classes. These are noun, verb, adjective and adverb. Very often there are two or more words in each word class, forming groups which are called noun groups, verb groups, adjective groups and adverb groups. These groups have different jobs to do in a sentence.

A simple example would be: *College students* (noun group) *are always trying to fool* (verb group) *new lecturers* (noun group).

The noun groups identify the persons or things that are named in the sentence. (As can be seen, there is a modifier in the second noun group, describing the noun.) The verb group identifies what the subjects do. (As can be seen, there is a modifier in the verb group, adding meaning to the verb).

Another example: *Teasing a dobermann* (noun group) *can prove to be* (verb group) *very hazardous* (adjective group).

As can be seen, the adjective group describes the noun group

Reading in thought groups

A slow reader usually reads word by word and may find it difficult to grasp the ideas in a long sentence. It is better to break down the sentence (or its clauses) into, broadly, the doer (subject) and the action (verb-predicate). The verb of the sentence is the most important word in the predicate, saying something about the subject. Therefore, a good way to identify subject and predicate is to identify the verb of the sentence. Once so identified, these parts can be divided into units of thought, i.e., word groups according to their jobs, as explained earlier.

As the context of a sentence expands, it often becomes necessary to add structural elements, such as connectives, to bring in more thought groups.

For example: *During the 1990s* (prepositional phrase) *Indian investors* (noun group) *lapped up* (verb group) *new issues* (noun group) *very eagerly* (adverb group). Here, the prepositional phrase, consisting of a preposition and a noun group, adds more information to the sentence by indicating when the investors made investments. The adverb group, in this instance, consists of 2 adverbs ('very' to add intensity to 'eagerly') and adds more information to the sentence by indication of the manner in which the investors acted.

There are different ways to add more information to a sentence and this renders some sentences very long and, perhaps, difficult to understand. This is because they may have expanded word groups and combined clauses as a result of additions.

For instance – a noun group consists of a head noun or a pronoun and its modifiers which may precede or follow it. The head noun is the headword or the most important word of the noun group. The modifiers, which may be single words (adjective or adverbs) phrases, or clauses, give or add more details about the head noun.

These can be added through –

- (i) prepositional phrase: eg. In the rain – *Playing football in the rain* (noun group) *is* (verb group) *fun* (adjective group)
- (ii) present participle phrases: eg. involving logical thought- *Mathematicians* (noun group) *love* (verb group) *puzzles involving logical thought* (noun group).
- (iii) past participle phrases: eg. taught as optionals – *Two subjects taught as optionals* (noun group) *will be dropped* (verb group) *next year* (adverb group).

(iv) adjective phrases: eg. prone to headaches – *This drug* (noun group) *can help* (verb group) *people prone to headaches* (noun group).

(v) nouns in apposition (subsidiary noun or noun group referring to the same thing as the head noun): eg. the caped crusader – *Batman, the caped crusader*, (noun group) *terrorizes* (verb group) *crooks* (noun group)

(vi) relative clauses: eg who is shy – *A child who is shy* (noun group) *avoids* (verb group) *others* (noun group)

Try this with the following sentence:

Quite often, if the family of an Alzheimer's afflicted person does not see him very frequently, and if he can carry on a good social conversation on the phone and seem like himself, they may not realize that anything is wrong until they get a call from a neighbour or the police, telling them that something awful has happened, like a serious kitchen fire because he forgot to turn the stove off.

COMMON TESTING AREAS

I. Nouns:

Nouns, which are naming words denoting the name of a person, place, thing, animal, concept etc are divided into five main kinds:

1. **Common Noun:** A name given in common to every person or thing of the same class.
Example: city, girl
2. **Proper Noun :** Name of a particular noun.
Example: New York, Sarah.
3. **Collective Noun :** Name given to a number of persons or things taken together.
Example: herd, crowd, bunch etc.
4. **Abstract Noun:** Name of the quality, a state of mind, stage of life etc.
Example: Love, Beauty, Infancy
5. **Material Noun :** Name used to refer to metals and materials.
Example: gold, brick

Nouns are further divided into Countable and Uncountable nouns.

1. **Countable nouns:** They are nouns that we can count.
Example: one girl, two girls, three girls.
2. **Uncountable Nouns :** They name things that cannot be counted.
Example : gold, iron, milk etc.

Important points in the usage of nouns :

1. Nouns like advice, news, baggage, information, traffic, scenery etc cannot be used in the plural.
Example: Incorrect : She gave me a valuable advice.
Correct : She gave me some valuable advice. (OR a piece of valuable advice).

2. Some nouns like scissors, spectacles, earnings, etc. are always used in the plural.
3. Some nouns like measles, electronics, economics, ethics etc. are apparently plural in form and singular in use.
4. Some nouns like cattle, police, people, vermin, poultry etc. are always used in the plural.
5. Some nouns like deer, aircraft, offspring, species etc. have the same form for the plural as well as the singular.
6. A material noun denotes a mass of matter, it is not used in the plural form.
Example: The house is built of bricks and stones. (Incorrect).
The house is built of brick and stone. (Correct).
7. The possessive case is used with nouns of living things but not with inanimate objects.
Example: Table's leg. (Incorrect)
Leg of the table. (Correct)
8. In plural nouns ending in 's', the possessive case is formed by adding only an apostrophe (after s).
Example: Birds' cage
9. When one noun is qualified by two possessive nouns both must have the possessive sign unless joint possession is indicated.
Example: Baker and Spencer's cookies.
10. When a noun or title consists of several words, the possessive case is formed by adding 's' to the last word.
Example: The President of America's speech.
11. For certain abstract nouns, the possessive case is formed by adding (') only.
Example: For goodness' sake, for conscience' sake.

II. Pronouns:

A pronoun is used in the place of a noun. Pronouns are divided into the following types:

1. **Personal pronouns:** I, you, he/ she, it / we, you, they
2. **Possessive Pronouns:** my / mine, his / her / hers / its/ their / theirs, our/ours
3. **Reflexive pronouns:** herself, themselves, myself.
4. **Emphatic Pronouns:** myself / herself
5. **Demonstrative Pronouns:** that, those, this, these etc.
6. **Indefinite pronouns:** Some, Anyone.
7. **Pronouns of number:** many, three. etc.
8. **Pronouns of Quantity:** more, much, little etc.
9. **Distributive Pronouns:** everyone, every body, each, either, neither, one, no one, none.
10. **Reciprocal Pronouns:** each other, one another
11. **Relative pronouns:** who, that, what, which, whose

Important points in the correct usage of pronouns:

1. While expressing a negative idea or while confessing a fault, the first person should be used first, followed by the second person and lastly the third person.
Example: I, you and he have broken the window pane.
2. While expressing a positive idea or praise, the sequence of the personal pronouns should be as follows :
Example: You, he and I will receive the prize.
3. When a personal pronoun is connected by a conjunction with some other word, it must be in the objective case or accusative case.
Example: These chocolates are for you and me. (Correct)
These chocolates are for you and I. (Incorrect)
4. The personal pronouns- yours, ours, theirs and its – are written without the apostrophe (s).
Example: Your's truly (Incorrect)
Yours truly (Correct)
5. When 'one' is used as the subject it should be followed by one's.
Example: One should safeguard his health. (Incorrect)
One should safeguard one's health. (Correct)
6. The pronouns who, whom and whose are used in the nominative case, objective case and possessive case respectively.
7. Use of Which: is used for infants, small objects and animals.
This is the puppy which was gifted to me by my aunt.
'Which' is also used when selection is expressed.
Example: Which of these books do you prefer to need.
8. Use of that: Care must be taken when that is used as a substitute for a singular noun particularly in the comparative degree:
The weather of Los Angeles is far better than New York (Incorrect).
The weather of Los Angeles is far better than that of New York (Correct).

III. Verbs and Tenses:

A verb indicates the action done by the subject or the state of being of the subject.

Transitive and Intransitive verbs:

- A transitive verb is a verb that denotes an action which passes over from the doer or subject to an object.
Example: The boy kicked the football.
- An intransitive verb is a verb that denotes an action which does not pass over to an object
Example: The baby sleeps.

Verb : Voice

There are two voices:

1. Active voice

Example: The mayor delivered the speech
(Active voice).

2. Passive voice

Example: The speech was delivered by the
mayor (Passive voice).

Depending on the emphasis we want to lay, we use a particular voice in a particular context.

Intransitive verbs do not have a passive voice i.e, we cannot transform a sentence from Active to Passive if the verb is intransitive.

Verbs can be Regular or Irregular:

Regular verbs form their past tense and past participle by adding 'ed' to the verb. Irregular verbs form their past tense and past participle in a different way from adding 'ed' to the verbs.

Base form	Past - tense	Past - participle
Dig	Dug	Dug
Feed	Fed	Fed
Feel	Felt	Felt
Fight	Fought	Fought
Find	Found	Found
Get	Got	Gotten ; got
Give	Gave	Given
Hang	Hung	Hung
Hide	Hide	Hide; Hidden
Hit	Hit	Hit
Hint	Hunt	Hunt
Kept	Kept	Kept
Lay	Laid	Laid
Lead	Led	Led
Learn	Learnt/Learned	Learnt/learned
Leave	Left	Left
Let	Let	Let
Made	Made	Made
Mean	Meant	Meant
Pay	Paid	Paid
Run	Run	Ran
Say	Said	Said
Sell	Sold	Sold
Send	Sent	Sent
Shine	Shone	Shone
Show	Showed	Showed; shown
Shoot	Shot	Shot
Sit	Sat	Sat
Sleep	Slept	Slept
Smell	Smelt/Smelled	Smelt/Smelled
Speed	Sped	Sped
Spell	Spelt	Spelt
Spring	Sprang	Spring
Stand	Stood	Stood
Steal	Stole	Stolen
Stick	Stuck	Stuck
Sting	Stung	Stung
Swim	Swam	Swimming
Sweep	Swept	Swept
Swing	Swung	Swung
Take	Took	Taken
Teach	Taught	Taught
Tell	Told	Told

Common Irregular verbs

Infinitive participle	Past participle	Future participle
Begin	Began	Begun
Blow	Blow	Blown
Break	Broken	Broken
Do	Did	Done
Eat	Ate	Eaten
Swim	Swam	Swum
Throw	Threw	Thrown
Lie	Lay	Lain
Get	Got	Got or gotten

List of irregular verbs

The following list should be studied carefully in order to use the verbs correctly in different tense forms.

Base form	Past - tense	Past – participle
Awake	Awaked , awoke	Awaked, awoken
Become	Become	Become
Bend	Bent	Bent
Bleed	Bled	Bled
Breed	Bred	Bred
Bite	Bit	Bitten
Burn	Burnt/Burned	Burnt / burned
Buy	Burst	Burst
Catch	Caught	Caught
Come	Came	Come
Creep	Crept	Crept
Deal	Dealt	Dealt
Dig	Dug	Dug
Dream	Dreamt/Dreamed	Dreadmt/Dreamed
Do	Did	Done
Draw	Drew	Drawn
Understand	Understood	Understood
Win	Won	Won
Write	Wrote	Written

Tenses

Tense Form	Rule	Example
Simple Present Tense	To express a habitual action	She drinks coffee every morning.
Present Continuous Tense	For an ongoing action at the time of speaking	The boys are playing cricket
	For a temporary action which may not be actually happening at the time of speaking	I am reading the Da Vinici Code.(but, not at this moment)
	For an action that has already been arranged to take place in the near future.	I am going to the pub tonight.
Present Perfect Tense	To indicate completed actions in the immediate past (with just).	the clock has just struck eight He has just gone out.
	To express past actions whose time is not given and not definite.	Have you read 'The Lonely Island'? Stephen has been to Germany.
	To describe past events when we think more of their effect in the present than of the action itself.	John has eaten all the cookies (i.e, there aren't any left now)
Present Perfect continuous Tense	To denote an action which began at some time in the past and is still continuing	The baby has been sleeping for four hours (and is still sleeping)
Future Continuous Tense	To talk about actions which will be in progress at a time in the future	This time tomorrow I will be in a meeting with the Board of Directors.
	To talk about actions in the future which are already planned or which are expected to happen in the normal course of things.	He will be visiting us next week.
Future Perfect Tense	To denote actions that will be completed by a certain future time.	I shall have finished my work by then.
Simple Future tense	Used to express the future as fact.	I shall be forty next month It will be Christmas in a week.
	Used to express what we think or believe will happen in the future.	I think our team will win the match.

Future Continuous Tense	To talk about something that we have planned to do in the future	The chairman is arriving next week. Dad is going to Mexico tomorrow.
Simple Past tense	To indicate an action completed in the past	I received a mail from him yesterday.
Past Continuous Tense	To denote an action going on at some time in the past	They were playing football all evening.
Past Perfect Tense	To describe an action completed before a certain moment in the past	I met him in New York in 2010. I had seen him last three years before.
Past Perfect continuous Tense	To denote an action that began before a certain point in the past and continued up to that time.	When James had joined the organization in 2005, Edward had already been working there for five years
	To denote an action beginning at some time in the past and continuing up to the present moment (often with since and for phrases)	He has been living in Canada for the past ten years. She has been ill since last week.
Future Perfect continuous	To denote actions which will be in progress over a period of time that will end in the future.	By next April we shall have been living in the U.S. for five years.

IV. Adjectives

An adjective is a word which qualifies a noun or a pronoun.

Important points in the correct usage of adjectives:

- Most adjectives of one syllable and some of more than one, form their comparative and superlative degrees by adding - er and - est respectively.

Example:

Positive	Comparative	Superlative
Dear	Dearer	Dearest

- Some adjectives having more than two syllables form their comparative and superlative using 'more' and 'most' respectively.

Example:

Positive	Comparative	Superlative
Beautiful	more beautiful	most beautiful

- When two objects are compared with each other, the latter term of comparison must exclude the former by using 'any other'.

Example: Steve is more intelligent than any boy in the school. (Incorrect)
Steve is more intelligent than any other boy in the school.(Correct)

- When two qualities in the same person or thing are compared, the comparative degree is formed by writing 'more' instead of - er.

Example : Jane is more clever than hardworking. (Correct)
Jane is cleverer than hardworking. (Incorrect)

- Adjectives like unique, perfect, chief, eternal, excellent etc. are not used in the comparative or superlative degree.

- Adjectives ending in "or" are followed by the preposition to.

This cloth is superior than that. (Incorrect)
This cloth is superior to that. (Correct)

- The adjective "preferable" is used as a comparative. It is followed by 'to'. It is not used with 'more'.

Example: This is more preferable than that. (Incorrect)
This is preferable to that. (Correct)

V. Adverbs:

An adverb is a word which modifies a verb, an adjective or another adverb.

Important points in the correct usage of adverbs:

- The adverb must be placed as near as possible to the word it modifies.

Example: We only have six days to complete this work (Incorrect).
We have only six days to complete this work (Correct)

- When a verb consists of an auxiliary and a main verb, the adverb is placed between the auxiliary and the main verb.

Example: I have told him often to mend his ways. (Incorrect)
I have often told him to mend his ways. (Correct)

3. The adverb 'only' should be placed immediately before the word it is intended to modify.

Example: Only Jane could solve the problem.
He ate only two cookies.

4. Use of hard, hardly, scarce, scarcely

→ Hard as an adjective means 'diligently'. It usually follows the verb.

Example: John works hard to get good grades.

→ Hardly when used as an adverb means scarcely.

Example: Hardly had he reached home, when there was a heavy downpour.

→ Scarce as an adjective means 'not plentiful', hard to find, not often found.

VI. Agreement: Subject – Verb Agreement

A verb must agree with the subject (noun or pronoun) in number and person.

1. Noun 1 and Noun 2

- (a) My sister and my cousins **are** at the party.

This is correct because Noun 1 and Noun 2 are two separate entities and hence must be treated as plural. So, the verb is also plural.

- (b) Economic and social development **is** essential for the well-being of the country.

This is correct because Noun 1 and Noun 2, though may seem to be two separate entities, are actually not. Economic and social development is expressing a single idea and hence the subject must be treated as singular. So, the verb is also singular.

Had the subject been 'economic development and social development...', then the subject is referring to two separate entities and hence must be treated as plural. Then, the verb would be 'are'.

- (c) Each boy and each girl **gets** a chocolate.

If the subject consists of two singular nouns joined by 'and' and preceded by 'each' or 'every' the subject is treated as singular.

2. Noun 1 [along with/ as well as/ apart from/ in addition to/ together with/ with] Noun 2

- (a) My sister along with my cousins **is** at the party.

In this usage, the verb always agrees with the first noun.

If Noun 1 is singular, the verb is singular.

If Noun 1 is plural, the verb is plural.

Here, it does not matter what number Noun 2 is (singular or plural does not matter).

- (b) My cousins along with my sister **are** at the party.

3. Either Noun 1...or Noun 2

Neither Noun 1...nor Noun 2

- (a) Either my sister or my cousins **are** at the party.

In this usage, the verb always agrees with the second noun (or the noun that is closest to the verb).

If Noun 2 is singular, the verb is singular.

If Noun 2 is plural, the verb is plural.

Here, it does not matter what number Noun 1 is (singular or plural does not matter).

4. When an amount, distance or weight is mentioned as a whole, the subject is treated as a singular one.

Five thousand dollars a month **is** not much these days .

5. Collective nouns like team, committee, class etc, take a singular verb when referred to as a united entity but a plural verb when referred to as a divided entity (individual members).

The committee **was** quiet about this issue .

The committee **were** fighting among themselves.

<p>6. If the sentence has the structure:</p> <p>One of the many + Verb, then the verb agrees with One.</p> <p>One of my friends lives nearby. (Correct)</p> <p>One of my friends live nearby. (Incorrect)</p>
<p>7. If the sentence has the structure:</p> <p>One of the many + Relative pronoun + Verb, then the verb agrees with many.</p> <p>He is one of my friends who live nearby. (Correct)</p> <p>He is one of my friends who lives nearby. (Incorrect)</p>
<p>8. Distributive/Indefinite pronouns such as <i>each, every, everyone, everything, anyone, anything, someone, something, one, no one, either, neither</i> are always singular. <i>None</i> can be singular or plural.</p> <p>Each of the students has a book.</p> <p>Also, anyone and someone always go with he/she, him/her or his/her and not they/them/their. But, one always goes with one.</p> <p>Someone in the class forgot his/her books. (Correct)</p> <p>Someone in the class forgot their books.</p> <p>One has to deal with one's own problems. (Correct)</p> <p>One has to deal with his/her own problems. (Incorrect)</p> <p><i>If none means 'not a single one' it takes a singular verb.</i></p> <p>None of these boys is doing anything worthwhile.</p> <p><i>If none refers to amount or quantity it takes a singular verb.</i></p> <p>None of the oil in the tanker has spilt.</p> <p>But when <i>none</i> means 'not any' it takes a plural verb.</p> <p>None of these books have been covered so far.</p>

VII. Misplaced Modifiers and Dangling Modifiers

- (a) A modifier is a word, phrase or clause that describes another part of the sentence and should be placed as close as possible to whatever it is modifying. Adjectives modify nouns, adverbs modify verbs, adjectives or another adverb. Modifiers often attach themselves to the closest word. They sometimes appear to modify words they actually don't.

Many modification errors involve misplaced modifiers that occur at the beginning of the sentence.

Example: Misplaced Modifier

Based on the findings of research, the company expected to rake in profit from the new medicine.

The modifier 'Based on the findings of research' does not qualify the company – the company is not based on the findings of research, it is the new medicine that the modifier qualifies, hence we must have 'the new medicine' immediately after the comma.

The sentence then becomes

Based on the findings of research, the new medicine promised to rake in profit for the company.

- (b) 'Dangling modifier' does not modify any word.

Example: Dangling Modifier

Whether simple or hard, Amy likes Math.

The sentence does not give clarity on what is simple or hard. In fact, it is implying that Amy is simple or hard when it should actually be Math!

The corrected sentence is
Amy likes Math, whether hard or simple.

- (c) *Only, just, hardly, almost* are known as **limiting modifiers** and must be placed immediately before the part of the sentence they modify.

Example: Limiting Modifier

Brendon only plays baseball on Saturdays in the afternoon. (Incorrect)

There are many ways to correct the sentence depending on which part of the sentence “only” modifies.

The corrected sentence can be

Brendon plays only baseball on Saturdays in the afternoon.

OR

Brendon plays baseball only on Saturdays in the afternoon.

OR

Brendon plays baseball on Saturdays only in the afternoon.

- (d) Modifying clauses using “that” vs “which”

When a relative clause

- merely adds additional information that does not add value to the meaning of the sentence and
- is not used to specifically identify the noun that precedes it,

which is used and is preceded by a comma.

Example:

The car, which is red in color, is a gas guzzler.

The sentence simply means:

The car is a gas guzzler. It happens to be red in color.

When a relative clause

- specifically identifies the noun that precedes it and
- adds additional information that does add value to the meaning of the sentence,

that is used without a comma.

Example:

The car that is red in color is a gas guzzler.

The sentence simply means:

The red car is a gas guzzler and not the white car.

Remember that in a sentence you cannot use **that** after a comma. You have to use **which**.

VIII. Parallelism

Similar elements in a sentence – such as items in a list, or verbs in a series – must be in similar form.

Example:

She loves to sing, to dance and playing violin.

The various activities in the above sentence are linked to the verb ‘loves’ she loves – what? To sing, to dance and hence it should be ‘to play the violin’ and not ‘playing violin.’

The same holds good for two part constructions:

From ---- to ----

(n) either --- (n) or ---

not only --- but also ---

Finally, items linked by ‘and’ should be structurally similar.

The basic concept behind parallelism is that ideas with the same importance and function – nouns, verbs or phrases – should be expressed in the same grammatical form.

Look out for sentences that have a list or series of actions set off from each other by commas.

Example:

Among the reasons cited by the director to resign from office were the pressure of work and responsibilities, the outstation duties and desiring to pursue her own hobbies.

We have a list of three reasons which are connected to the verb 'were' of

- (1) the pressure of work and responsibilities
- (2) the outstation duties
- (3) desiring to pursue her own hobbies

While the first two are essentially nouns, the third is a verb. 'Desiring' has to be changed to a noun – the desire to pursue ---

In sentences that have two parts, both the parts must have the same structure.

Example:

Tourists' images of India range from exotic to the bizarre.

Obviously if you say 'the bizarre' it should be 'the exotic' or it should be 'exotic' and 'bizarre'.

Let's take another example:

Exited about visiting Japan, Rohit minded neither the long hours of flight nor waiting in the customs interminably.

Since we have 'the long hours of flight' we must have 'the interminable wait in customs'.

In sentences where a comparison is made between two entities, both the parts must have the same structure.

Example:

The temperature in Dallas is higher than Chicago. (Incorrect)

Let us look at what can be compared:

- Dallas to Chicago
- temperature in Dallas to temperature in Chicago

We cannot compare:

- temperature in Dallas to Chicago itself!
- temperature *in* Dallas to temperature *of* Chicago!

The corrected sentence is:

The temperature in Dallas is higher than the temperature in Chicago.

OR

The temperature in Dallas is higher than that in Chicago.

Testing Area:

IX. Comparisons

(a) Like vs As

Like is used to express similarity. It is normally used to show similarity between two nouns or noun phrases.

Example: A big colony is like a mini city.

As is normally used to compare two clauses and not two nouns.

Example: He looks as if he is drunk.

(b) Like vs Such as

<p>Like is used to express similarity. It is normally used to show similarity between two nouns or noun phrases. Example: I enjoy eating fruits like apples and mangoes.</p> <p>In the above example, I need not enjoy eating apples and mangoes, but fruits similar to them – maybe fruits of the same shape, same color etc.</p>
<p>Such as is used to give examples. Example: I enjoy eating fruits such as apples and mangoes.</p> <p>In the above example, apples and mangoes are definitely inclusive of the fruits I enjoy eating.</p>

(c) Compared to vs Compared with

<p>Compared to is used to show comparison between unlike things. Example: The poet compared her hair to the waves of the sea.</p>
<p>Compared with is used to show comparison between like things. Example: The detective compared the fake stamp paper with the original.</p>

(d) Between vs Among

When two things are compared, between is used.
When more than two things are compared, among is used.

(e) If vs Whether

<p>If is used to introduce a condition. Example: You should take the test if you are well-prepared for it. (Correct) You should take the test whether you are well-prepared for it. (Incorrect)</p>
<p>Whether is used to introduce a choice between two alternatives or to indicate a doubt regarding two alternatives. Example: John does not know whether he is well-prepared for the test. (Correct) John does not know if he is well-prepared for the test. (Incorrect)</p>

(f) Agree to vs Agree with

<p>Someone agrees to something. Example: I agree to what you said this morning.</p>
<p>Someone agrees with someone else. Example: I agree with you on the proposal.</p>

(g) Fewer vs Less

<p>Fewer is equivalent to 'not as many'. Fewer is used with nouns which are countable. Example: Fewer number of students came to the event this year.</p>
<p>Less is equivalent to 'not as much'. Less is used</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• with nouns which are quantifiable,• sums of money,• periods of time and distance, and• citations of numerical/statistical data. <p>Example: A milkshake requires less milk than an ice-cream. They spent less than \$50.</p>

(h) Greater than vs More than

Greater than is appropriate when referring to numbers alone.

Example: The number of people who attended the party is **greater than** 50.

*NOTE: "A number of" always takes a plural verb.
"The number of" always takes a singular verb.*

More than is appropriate when referring to the number of objects or when making a comparison.

Example: **More than** 50 people attended the party.

REMEMBER:

- (a) For countable items, use: fewer, many, number
- (b) For non-countable items, use: less, much, amount or quantity

(i) Each vs Every

Each is used to refer to two objects/times.

Example: The kid hurt himself twice during play and each time he rejoined with renewed vigor.

Every is used to refer to more than two objects/times.

(j) Twice vs Double

Twice is used for comparison.

Example: The United States of America has nearly **twice** as many big cities as China.

'Twice as many' should be used with a countable noun.

Example: The class has **twice as many** boys as girls.

'Twice as much' should be used with an uncountable noun.

Example: **Twice as much** milk has been wasted...

In sentences where the noun by virtue of its meaning itself is countable, then neither 'many' nor 'much' may be used.

Example: twice as much the decrease in per capita income... (Incorrect)
twice the decrease in per capita income (Correct)

Twice is an adverb, can modify verbs.

Example: I went to the grocery store twice last week.

Double is a verb:

Example: John more than **doubled** his savings last year.

Double is an adjective:

Example: His hourly wages are now in the high **double** digits.

Double is a noun:

Example: The actor's body **double**...

Double is an adverb:

Example: She ran to the kitchen **double quick**.

X. Idioms and Usage

Some idioms/usages to remember:

- (1) not only . . . but also
- (2) either . . . or ; neither . . . nor
- (3) so . . . that
- (4) so that
- (5) as well as
- (6) both X and Y (both X as well as Y is incorrect)
- (7) regarded as
- (8) indebted to
- (9) as a result of
- (10) with regard to
- (11) based on
- (12) along with
- (13) according to
- (14) agree with; agree to - See 'Comparisons' for details
- (15) compare with; compare to – See 'Comparisons' for details
- (16) consequence of
- (17) appear with
- (18) in addition to
- (19) credit X with discovering Y (Credit with doing something)
- (20) credit X Dollars to Y's account (When money is involved)
- (21) believed to have
- (22) concerned for – worried; concerned with – related/affiliated
- (23) mistake X for Y
- (24) not X; but rather Y
- (25) persuaded X to do Y
- (26) modeled after
- (27) intent on
- (28) native of (a place) ; native to (something)
- (29) compensate for
- (30) adapted for
- (31) descendent of (descendent for is incorrect)
- (32) estimated to be (estimated at is incorrect)
- (33) believe X to be Y
- (34) acclaimed as (acclaimed to be is wrong)
- (35) distinguish between X and Y (distinguish X from Y is incorrect)
- (36) attempt to 'do something' (attempt at doing is incorrect)
- (37) as much as
- (38) X forbids Y to do Z
- (39) X prohibits Y from doing Z
- (40) exchange X for Y
- (41) from X to Y
- (42) just as...so too
- (43) rates for (when 'rates' mean prices)
- (44) likely to be
- (45) so X as to be Y
- (46) not X, but rather Y
- (47) targeted at (targeted to and targeted towards are wrong)
- (48) between X and Y
- (49) in contrast to
- (50) similar to