

VERBAL

# Sentence Correction

eBOOK



**hitbullseye**

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## Sentence Correction E-Book

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## Chapter 1: Introduction to Sentence Correction

### 1.1 Introduction:

The Sentence Correction section tests your knowledge of written English grammar. This section gives you a sentence that may contain errors of grammar or usage. You must select the answer that best corrects the sentence.

The questions will require you to be familiar with the stylistic grammatical rules of standard written English and to demonstrate your ability to improve incorrect or ineffective expressions.

**This section tests two aspects:**

- A. Correct Expression:** A correct sentence is grammatically correct and structurally sound. It conforms to all the rules of standard written English such as:
- Subject-verb agreement
  - Subject Pronoun Agreement
  - Verb tense consistency,
  - Modifier reference and position,
  - Parallel construction
- B. Effective Expression:** It should express an idea or relationship clearly and concisely, as well as grammatically. Ensure you abide by the following
- No superfluous words or unnecessarily complicated expressions.
  - Use of proper diction
  - Use of correct idiomatic phrases

### 1.2 Relevance in entrance tests

Generally, 3-8 questions are asked from Grammar and Sentence correction section in the verbal component of the test. The questions could be asked in fill in the blank format or correct the underlined portion of the sentence or find the sentence which is grammatically correct. Basically these questions expect you to check for grammar rules and usage.

### 1.3 Skills required

Your ability to identify sentences that are grammatically incorrect

- a. For this you need to assimilate basic grammar and sentence correction rules
- b. Sometimes your ear can alert you to some answer choices that are hopelessly awkward, and it's not worth the time to dissect them grammatically in order to pinpoint exactly what's wrong. I do, however, caution against relying on your ear too much.
- c. Practise few questions everyday
- d. Solve questions under time limit. The entrance tests are time bound and you should not spend too much time on one question.

### 1.4 Format of questions asked

#### Format 1

**Directions:** Which of phrases given below each sentence should replace the phrase printed in bold type to make the grammatically correct?

If the sentence is correct as it is, mark 'd' as the answer.

1.     **The long or short of it** is that I do not want to deal with that new firm.
- |                              |                               |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| (a) The long and short of it | (b) The long and short for it |
| (c) The long or short for it | (d) No correction required    |
2.     Most of the Indian workers are **as healthy as, if not healthier than**, British workers.
- |                                    |                                  |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| (a) as if healthy as not healthier | (b) healthier but not as healthy |
| (c) as healthy, if not healthier   | (d) No correction required       |

#### Format 2

**Directions:** Choose the correct options for the given blanks.

1.     You would \_\_\_\_\_ surprised to get this letter.
- |                            |                            |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| A. doubtless be somewhat   | B. doubtlessly be somewhat |
| C. somewhat doubtlessly be | D. doubtlessly somewhat be |
2.     If you had been a little more proactive, this golden opportunity would not have\_\_\_\_\_
- |                              |                                 |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| A. Escaped your fingers      | B. Slipped through your fingers |
| B. Slipped through your head | D. Escaped your hands           |

### Format 3

**Directions:** Part of the given sentence is underlined. Choose the answer choice which is the best version of the underlined part.

1. It ought to be her with whom you share your secrets, not me.
- A. her with whom you share your secrets, not me
  - B. her with whom you share your secrets, not I.
  - C. she with whom you share your secrets, not me.
  - D. she with whom you share your secrets, not I.
  - E. her with who you share your secrets, not me.

### Format 4

**Directions:** In each of the questions below, four different ways of writing a sentence are indicated. Choose the best way of writing the sentence.

1. The main problem with the notion of price discrimination is that it is not always a bad thing, but that it is the monopolist who has the power to decide who is charged what price.
- A. The main problem with the notion of price discrimination is that it is not always a bad thing, but that it is the monopolist who has the power to decide who is charged what price.
  - B. The main problem with the notion of price discrimination is not that it is always a bad thing, it is the Monopolist who has the power to decide who is charged what price.
  - C. The main problem with the notion of price discrimination is that it is not always a bad thing, but that it is the monopolist who has the power to decide who is charged what price.
  - D. The main problem with the nation of price discrimination is that it is not always a bad thing, but t that it is the monopolist who has the power to decide who is charged what price.

## Chapter 2 Sentence Correction Rules- I (Correct Expression)

### 2.1 Subject Verb Agreement

A very common error generally asked in Sentence correction revolves around the agreement between the subject of a sentence and the verb. The subject and verb must agree in number, that is, a plural verb must have a plural subject and a singular verb must have a singular subject.

**A flock** of birds, flying south for the winter, **was** above us.

**Incorrect:** **My group** of fourth graders **are** so well behaved.

↑  
Singular

↑  
plural

**Correct:** **My group** of fourth graders **is** so well behaved.

#### a. When the subject and verb are separated

Find the subject and verb and make sure they agree.

Ignore the words in-between because they do not affect agreement.

**Incorrect:** **The characters** in Shakespeare's Twelfth Night **lives** in a world that has been turned upside-down.

↑

↑

**Correct:** **The characters** in Shakespeare's Twelfth Night **live** in a world that has been turned upside-down.

↑

↑

#### b. If the subjects are joined by "nor" or "or,"

- the verb agrees with the closer subject (the last one)

**Incorrect:** Neither Simran's **neighbours** nor her **husband** agree with her decision.

↑

↑

**Correct:** Neither **Simran's neighbours** nor her **husband** agrees with her decision.

↑

↑

#### c. Indefinite pronouns

Single indefinite pronoun: e.g., anyone, anybody, each, either, none

They use singular verbs.

Plural indefinite pronouns: both, few, many, several

They use plural verbs.

All, any, most, and some depend on the situation. They can be either singular or plural.

**Incorrect:** **Each** of Sylvia Plath's "bee poems" **use** the theme of beekeeping to express aspects of the human condition.

↑

**Correct:** **Each** of Sylvia Plath's "bee poems" **uses** the theme of beekeeping to express aspects of the human condition.

↑

#### d. Collective nouns

These are nouns that are singular in form, but plural in meaning.

Examples: band, minority, majority, class, community, dozen, family, public, team

When they act as one entity, use a singular verb.

When they do separate things, use a plural verb, BUT it is easier to reword the sentence. For example, write “the members of the team” instead of “the team.”

**Incorrect:** The majority of English majors read Conrad’s Heart of Darkness while at university.

**Correct:** The majority of English majors reads Conrad’s Heart of Darkness while at university.

#### e. Plural nouns that are singular in meaning

Some plural nouns take singular verbs, for example, athletics, economics, politics, news, mumps, and measles.

**Incorrect:** Politics are an issue in R. K. Narayan’s The Man-eater of Malgudi.

**Correct:** Politics is an issue in R. K. Narayan’s The Man-eater of Malgudi.

## Practise Exercise on Subject Verb Agreement

Fill in the blanks with appropriate forms of verb. Choose the answers from the options given in the brackets.

1. One of my friends ..... gone to France. (has / have)
2. Each of the boys ..... given a present. (was / were)
3. Neither of the contestants ..... able to win a decisive victory. (was / were)
4. Oil and water ..... not mix. (do / does)
5. He and I ..... at Oxford together. ( was / were)
6. Slow and steady ..... the race. (win / wins)
7. Neither Peter nor James ..... any right to the property. (has / have)
8. No prize or medal ..... given to the boy, though he stood first in the examination. (was / were)
9. Either Mary or Alice ..... responsible for this. (is / are)
10. Neither the Minister nor his colleagues ..... given any explanation for this. (have / has)

### Answers

1.	One of my friends <b>has</b> gone to France.
2.	Each of the boys <b>was</b> given a present.
3.	Neither of the contestants <b>was</b> able to win a decisive victory.
4.	Oil and water <b>do</b> not mix.
5.	He and I <b>were</b> at Oxford together.
6.	Slow and steady <b>wins</b> the race.
7.	Neither Peter nor James <b>has</b> any right to the property.
8.	No prize or medal <b>was</b> given to the boy, though he stood first in the examination.
9.	Either Mary or Alice <b>is</b> responsible for this.
10.	Neither the Minister nor his colleagues <b>have</b> given an explanation for this.



## 2.2 Subject Pronoun Agreement

An antecedent is a word for which a pronoun stands. (*ante* = "before")

The pronoun must agree with its antecedent in number.

Rule: A singular pronoun must replace a singular noun; a plural pronoun must replace a plural noun.

- a. A phrase or clause between the subject and verb does not change the number of the antecedent.

The jar of lima beans sits on its shelf.

↑                      ↑                      ↑  
Singular    Prepositional    Singular  
                    Phrase

All of the jewellery has lost its glow.

↑                      ↑                      ↑  
Singular    Prepositional    Singular  
                    Phrase

- b. Indefinite pronouns as antecedents

- Singular indefinite pronoun antecedents take singular pronoun referents.
- Each, neither, one, no one, everyone, someone, anybody, nobody etc are singular.

Each of the students was carrying his book.

↑                      ↑                      ↑  
Singular    Prepositional    Singular  
                    Phrase

Plural indefinite pronoun antecedents require plural referents.

**PLURAL:** *several, few, both, many*

Both do a good job in their office.

↑                      ↑  
Plural                      Singular

- Some indefinite pronouns that are modified by a prepositional phrase may be either singular or plural.

Either Singular Or Plural: *some, any, none, all, most*

- c. When the object of the preposition is uncountable -----use a singular referent pronoun.

**Some** of the sugar fell out of **its** bag.

Sugar is *uncountable*; therefore, the sentence has a singular referent pronoun.

**All** of the jewellery has lost **its** glow.

Jewelry is *uncountable*; therefore, the sentence has a singular referent pronoun.

- d. When the object of the preposition is countable -----Use a plural referent pronoun.

**Some** of the books fell out of **their** bag.

Books are countable therefore, the sentence has a plural referent pronoun.

**All** of the jewels have lost **their** glow.

Jewels are countable; therefore, the sentence has a plural referent pronoun.

- e. With compound subjects joined by *or/nor*, the referent pronoun agrees with the antecedent closer to the pronoun.

Neither the **boy** nor the **girls** did **their** jobs.

↑                      ↑                      ↑  
Singular          plural          plural

Neither the **girls** nor the **boy** did **his** job.

↑                      ↑                      ↑  
plural          singular          singular

- f. **Every or Many a** before a noun or a series of nouns requires a singular referent.

**Every** cow, pig and horse had lost **its** life in the tsunami.

↑                      ↑  
singularsingular

**Many a girl** wishes that **she** could act like Alia Bhatt.

↑                      ↑  
singular                  singular

- g. **The number of vs A number of** before a subject:

*The number of* is singular.

**The number** of students offering **his or her** help in charity functions is increasing every year.

**A number** of volunteers are offering **their** help.

*A number of* is plural.

## Practise Exercise on Subject- Pronoun Agreement

**Directions:** Choose the correct pronoun in each sentence given below.

1. During early rehearsals, an actor may forget (his or her, their ) lines.  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. The Washington team was opportunistic; (it, they ) took advantage of every break.  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. A person needs to see (his or her, their) dentist twice a year.  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. The committee members put (its, their) signatures on the document.  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. If any one of the sisters needs a ride, (she, they) can call me.  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. When someone has been drinking, (he or she, they) may drive poorly.  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. If the board of directors controls the company, (it, they) may vote for a raise.  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. Neither the pilot nor the attendants gave (his or her, their) opinion about the mishap.  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. Each of these companies had (its, their) books audited.  
\_\_\_\_\_
10. Some of the china has lost (its, their) luster.  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Answers

1.	The correct answer is <b>his or her</b> .
2.	The correct answer is <b>it</b> . The Washington team was opportunistic; ( <b>it</b> , they) took advantage of every break
3.	The correct answer is <b>his or her</b> . A person needs to see ( <b>his or her</b> , their) dentist twice per year.
4.	The correct answer is <b>their</b> . The committee members put (its, <b>their</b> ) signatures on the document.
5.	The correct answer is <b>she</b> . If any one of the sisters needs a ride, ( <b>she</b> , they) can call me.
6.	The correct answer is <b>he or she</b> . When someone has been drinking, ( <b>he or she</b> , they) may drive poorly.
7.	The correct answer is <b>it</b> . If the board of directors controls the company, ( <b>it</b> , they) may vote for a raise.
8.	The correct answer is <b>their</b> . Neither the pilot nor the attendants gave (his or her, <b>their</b> ) opinion about the mishap.
9.	The correct answer is <b>its</b> . Each of these companies had ( <b>its</b> , their) books audited
10.	The correct answer is <b>its</b> . Some of the china has lost ( <b>its</b> , their) luster.

## 2.3 Misplaced Modifiers

Misplaced Modifiers (and Dangling Participles) Modifiers are phrases that modify another part of the sentence. In order to be correct, the modifying phrase must be as close as possible to what it modifies.

- a. **Misplaced phrases** may cause a sentence to sound awkward and may create a meaning that does not make sense.

To fix the errors and clarify the meaning, put the phrases **next to** the noun they are supposed to modify.

<p><b>Incorrect:</b> The dealer sold the Toyota car to the <b>buyer with leather seat</b> covers.</p> <p><b>Correct:</b> The dealer sold the <b>Toyota car with leather seat</b> covers to the buyer</p>
<p><b>Incorrect:</b> They saw a fence behind the house made up of barbed wires.</p> <p><b>Correct:</b> They saw a fence made up of barbed wires behind the house.</p>
<p><b>Incorrect:</b> The waiter served bread to the old lady that was well buttered .</p> <p><b>Correct:</b> The waiter served bread that was well buttered to the old lady.</p>
<p><b>Incorrect:</b> Hrithik piled all the clothes in the hamper that he had worn.</p> <p><b>Correct:</b> Hrithik piled all the clothes that he had worn in the hamper.</p>

- b. **Dangling Modifiers**

A **dangling modifier** is a phrase or clause that is not clearly and logically related to the word or words it modifies (i.e. is placed next to).

**Note:**

- Unlike a misplaced modifier, a dangling modifier cannot be corrected by simply moving it to a different place in a sentence.
- In most cases, the dangling modifier appears at the beginning of the sentence, although it can also come at the end.

Sometimes the dangling modifier error occurs because the sentence fails to specify anything to which the modifier can refer.

<p><b>Incorrect:</b> Looking towards the west, a boat shaped cloud stirred up the dust.</p>
---

This sentence does not specify **who** is **looking toward the west**. In fact, there is nothing at all in the sentence to which the modifying phrase **looking toward the west** can logically refer. Since the modifier, **looking toward the west**, is sitting next to **the funnel shaped cloud**, the sentence suggests that the **cloud** is doing the looking.

**Correct:** Looking towards the west, I saw a boat shaped cloud stir up the dust.

**Incorrect:** When nine years old, my mother enrolled in medical school.

**Correct:** When I was nine years old, my mother enrolled in medical school.

### How to correct dangling modifiers

Dangling modifiers may be corrected as:

1. Change the main part of the sentence so that it **begins** with the term **actually modified**.
2. This change will put the modifier **next to** the term it modifies.

## Practise Exercise on Misplaced Modifier

**Directions:** Rewrite each sentence, moving the misplaced modifier to its correct position.

1. Making only minimum wage, I nearly earned \$2,000 last summer.  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. The bus station was located by a river which was made of red brick.  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. A fish was found in the Pacific Ocean that had been considered extinct.  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. The cowboy was thrown by the bull in a leather vest.  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. Sam asked me to go for a ride on the telephone.  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. She was making a sweater for her lover that was warm.  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. The results will only be known after all the votes have been counted.  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. The contractors needed all kinds of artists to paint the mural badly.  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. The opera singer was upstaged by the mime with the robust voice.  
\_\_\_\_\_
10. Left alone in the house, the thunderstorm terrified the two small children.  
\_\_\_\_\_

### Answer Key

1.	Making only minimum wage, I earned nearly \$2,000 last summer.
2.	The bus station which was made of red brick was located by a river.
3.	A fish that was considered extinct was found in the Pacific Ocean.
4.	The cowboy in a leather vest was thrown by the bull.
5.	On the telephone, Sam asked me to go for a ride.
6.	She was making a sweater that was warm for her lover.
7.	The results will be known only after all the votes have been counted.
8.	The contractors badly needed all kinds of artists to paint the mural.
9.	The opera singer with the robust voice was upstaged by the mime.
10.	The thunderstorm terrified the two small children left alone in the house.

## Practise Exercise on Dangling Modifier

1. After walking for hours, the car looked wonderful.  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. While watching a classic film, commercials are irritating.  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. To please the children, some fireworks were set off early.  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. At the age of twelve, my mother entered me in a contest.  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. By taking good care of myself, the flu never kept me from work this winter.  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. Budgeting his money carefully, his debts were finally paid.  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. To lose weight, fatty foods should be avoided.  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. By digging test wells, new oil sources were located.  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. Dropped in the bushes, the child found the missing keys.  
\_\_\_\_\_
10. Carrying a heavy pile of books, her foot caught on the step.  
\_\_\_\_\_

### Answer Key

1.	After we walked for hours, the car looked wonderful. After walking for hours, we thought the car looked wonderful.
2.	While I am watching a classic film, commercials are irritating. While watching a classic film, I find commercial irritating.
3.	To please the children, they set off some fireworks early. The children were pleased when some fireworks were set off early.
4.	When I was twelve, my mother entered me in a contest. At the age of twelve, I was entered in a contest by my mother.
5.	Because I took good care of myself, the flu never kept me from work this winter. By taking good care of myself, I never had to take off work for the flu this winter.
6.	Budgeting his money carefully, he finally paid his debts. Because he budgeted his money carefully, his debts were finally paid.
7.	To lose weight, you should avoid fatty foods. If you want to lose weight, fatty foods should be avoided.
8.	By digging test wells, they located new oil sources. When they dug new test wells, new oil sources were located.
9.	Dropped in the bushes, the missing keys were found by the child. The child found the missing keys that were dropped in the bushes.
10.	Carrying a heavy pile of books, she caught her foot on the step. When she was carrying a heavy pile of books, her foot caught on the step.



## 2.4 Tenses

While the tenses in a sentence do not have to be the same, they must relate to each other in a way that makes the sequence of actions clear to the reader. The term sequence of tenses refers to the rules which govern how we alter verb tenses to make clear that all events, past, present or future, are not simultaneous.

Keep tenses consistent within sentences.

- a. **Do not change tenses when there is no time change for the action.**

**Incorrect:** During the movie, John **got up** and **drops** his wallet.

**Correct:** During the movie John **got up** and **dropped** his wallet.

Since there is no indication that the actions happened apart from one another, there is no reason to shift the tense of the second verb.

**Incorrect:** When Mary **walks** into the room everyone **will stare**.

**Correct:** When Mary **walks** into the room everyone **stares**.

The above sentence means that Mary walks into a room at times. The action is habitual present. The second action happens when the first one does. Therefore, the second verb should be present as well.

- b. **Change tense only when there is a need to do so.**

Usually, the timing of actions within a sentence will dictate when the tense must change.

**Incorrect:** He reached out for the sandwich after he ate 2 pieces of pizza

**Correct:** He reached out for the sandwich after he had eaten 2 pieces of pizza.  
the second action took place in the past; the first action occurred before the past action. Therefore, the first action requires the past perfect tense (had + verb).

## Practise Exercise on Tense Consistency

**Directions :** Check the following sentences for confusing shifts in tense. If the tense of each underlined verb expresses the time relationship accurately, write S (satisfactory). If a shift in tense is not appropriate, write U (unsatisfactory) and make necessary changes.

1. If the club limited its membership, it will have to raise its dues.
2. As Barbara puts in her contact lenses, the telephone rang.
3. Thousands of people will see the art exhibit by the time it closes.
4. By the time negotiations began, many pessimists have expressed doubt about them.
5. After Capt. James Cook visited Alaska on his third voyage, he is killed by Hawaiian islanders in 1779.
6. I was terribly disappointed with my grade because I studied very hard.
7. The moderator asks for questions as soon as the speaker has finished.
8. Everyone hopes the plan would work.
9. Harry wants to show his friends the photos he took last summer.
10. Scientists predict that the sun will die in the distant future.

### Answer Key

Correct responses are in bold, and incorrect responses are in italics.

U 1. If the club **limited** its membership, it *will* have to raise its dues. (**change *will* to *would***)

U 2. As Barbara *puts* in her contact lenses, the telephone **rang**. (**change *puts* to *put***) OR As Barbara *puts* in her contact lenses, the telephone **rings**. (**change *rang* to *rings* to illustrate ongoing action**)

S 3. Thousands of people **will see** the art exhibit by the time it **closes**.

U 4. By the time negotiations **began**, many pessimists *have* expressed doubt about them. (**change *have* to *had***)

U 5. After Capt. James Cook **visited** Alaska on his third voyage, he *is* killed by Hawaiian islanders in 1779. (**change *is* to *was***)

U 6. I **was** terribly disappointed with my grade because I *studied* very hard. (**change *studied* to *had studied***)

S 7. The moderator *asks* for questions as soon as the speaker **has finished**. (***asks* as habitual action; *will ask* is also possible**)

U 8. Everyone *hopes* the plan **would work**. (**change *hopes* to *hoped***)

S 9. Harry **wants** to show his friends the photos he **took** last summer.

S 10. Scientists **predict** that the sun **will die** in the distant future.

## 2.5 Parallelism

Sentence elements that are alike in function should also be alike in construction. These elements should be in the same grammatical form so that they are parallel.

Here are few parallelism rules.

- a. Use parallel structure with elements joined by coordinating conjunctions.

**Incorrect:** The product and what it's potential is are a great help to me.

**Correct:** The product and it's potential is are a great help to me.

- b. Use parallel structure with elements in lists or in a series.

**Incorrect:** He liked swimming, dancing and to read.

Parallel      Parallel not parallel

**Correct:** He liked swimming, dancing and reading.

- c. Use parallel structure with elements being compared. (X is more than / better than Y)

**Incorrect:** I like investing in shares better than to save in banks

**Correct:** I like investing in shares better than saving in banks.

- d. Use parallel structure with elements joined by a correlative conjunction.

**Incorrect:** He not only likes coffee but also tea.

**Correct:** He likes not only coffee but also tea.

**Correct:** He not only likes coffee but also like tea.

Clues to identify error of parallelism are:

- Items in a list.
- Long phrases or clauses connected by a conjunction

**Faulty Comparisons** Frequently a sentence with a comparison will appear at first glance to be correct but will actually compare two or more elements which are not expressed in similar form.

**Incorrect:** The judge of the baking contest liked the pastry Sally made better than Bob.

In this sentence, the judge is evaluating the comparative merits of Sally's pastry and Bob himself. Put it in another way, he is comparing Sally's pastry to Bob, rather than comparing Sally's pastry to Bob's pastry.

**Correct:** The judge of the baking contest liked Sally's pastry better than Bob's.

## Practise Exercise – Parallel Construction

**DIRECTIONS:** Choose the option that maintains parallel structure in the sentence.

1. When Dolly realized that her father had made lima beans and rice for dinner, she \_\_\_\_\_, claimed to feel nauseous, and excused herself from the table. The bag of stale popcorn in her room would tide her over until breakfast.  
A. clutched her stomach      B. was clutching her stomach      C. did clutch her stomach
2. Not only did John despise the way June chewed with her mouth open, \_\_\_\_\_ finding her wet towels all over the bathroom floor.  
A. but also disliked      B. but also disliking      C. but he also disliked
3. To protect her delicate hands, Fran will not rake the yard, do the dishes, or \_\_\_\_\_.  
A. refuses to scrub the bathtub      B. won't scrub the bathtub      C. scrub the bathtub
4. When Diane takes her beagle for a walk, Santana enjoys sniffing for edible garbage, \_\_\_\_\_, and lunging at squirrels.  
A. howls at bicyclists      B. howling at bicyclists      C. she howls at bicyclists
5. After Amanda cashes her paycheck, the money goes to her savings account, cappuccino fund, and \_\_\_\_\_.  
A. paying her credit card bill      B. toward her credit card balance      C. credit card balance
6. In preparation for her run, Alicia \_\_\_\_\_, applied sunscreen, and increased the volume on her iPod.  
A. tightened her shoelaces      B. was tightening her shoelaces      C. did tighten her shoelaces
7. We searched the car trunk, \_\_\_\_\_, and the top of the refrigerator, but we could not find the box of cornflakes that we remember buying.  
A. looked on the pantry shelves      B. on the pantry shelves      C. the pantry shelves
8. Bonkers, our ninety pound golden retriever, chews on furniture, \_\_\_\_\_, and snots up the car windows—inconveniences we didn't anticipate when we adopted him.  
A. would drag us around the neighborhood during walks  
B. he drags us around the neighborhood during walks  
C. drags us around the neighborhood during walks
9. Belinda saw very little of the horror movie, for she shut her eyes \_\_\_\_\_, when she heard the monster's footsteps in the dead leaves, and when characters started screaming.  
A. when the violins began to play      B. while listening to the violins play  
C. during the violin music
10. In Mrs. Curall's office, Ruben feigned the flu. He hoped to be excused from class, get an extension on his paper, and \_\_\_\_\_.  
A. spend the afternoon playing tennis with his friends  
B. to spend the afternoon playing tennis with his friends  
C. then to spend the afternoon playing tennis with his friends

## Answer Key

1.	A	The blank needs to begin with a simple past tense <b>verb</b> .
2.	C	The blank requires a <b>main clause</b> .
3.	C	The blank requires a future tense <b>verb</b>
4.	B	The blank requires a <b>gerund phrase</b> . <i>howling ...</i> , which matches <i>sniffing ...</i> and <i>lunging ...</i> , keeping the structure parallel.
5.	C	The blank requires a <b>noun phrase</b> . <i>Credit card balance</i> , which matches <i>savings account</i> and <i>cappuccino fund</i> , keeping the structure parallel.
6.	A	The blank needs to begin with a simple past tense <b>verb</b> . <i>tightened ...</i> , which matches <i>applied ...</i> and <i>increased ...</i> , keeping the structure parallel.
7.	C	The blank requires a <b>noun phrase</b> . You chose <i>the pantry shelves</i> , which matches <i>the car trunk</i> and <i>the top</i> , keeping the structure parallel.
8.	C	The blank needs to begin with a simple present tense <b>verb</b> . <i>drags ...</i> , which matches <i>chews</i> and <i>snots</i> , keeping the structure parallel.
9.	A	The blank requires a <b>subordinate clause</b> . <i>when the violins began ...</i> , which matches <i>when she heard ...</i> and <i>when characters started ...</i> , keeping the structure parallel.
10.	A	The blank needs to begin with an <b>infinitive</b> . <i>spend ...</i> , which matches <i>be</i> and <i>get</i> , keeping the structure parallel. When you have a series of infinitives, as you do in this sentence, the <b>to</b> at the beginning of the series covers all of the infinitives that follow.

## 2.6 Faulty Comparison

Any comparison between two or more items must have three characteristics:

- a. **Completeness**
- b. **Consistency**
- c. **Clarity**

### a. **Completeness**

At least two items are needed for a comparison.

**Incorrect:** He ran so fast

The above example is incomplete: He ran so fast that what happened?

**Correct:** He ran so fast that he broke the record

### b. **Consistency**

Items being compared must have a basis in similarity; in other words, the basis of comparison must be logical.

**Incorrect:** The **pickup of my car** is better than **Shahrukh**

The example above compares pick up of my car to Shahrukh

**Correct:** The pickup of my car is better than that of Shahrukh's car.

### c. **Clarity**

**Incorrect:** Jacquelline always gave her sister more affection than her brother.

In this example, the meaning is unclear. The sentence could mean  
Jacqueline gave her sister more affection than she gave her brother.

OR

Jacqueline gave her sister more affection than her brother gave to her sister.

**Correct:** Jacqueline always gave her sister more affection than she gave to her brother.

OR

Jacqueline always gave her sister more affection than her brother did.

**Clues** are: Key words such as than, like, unlike, as, compared to, more than, and less than should alert you to check what is being compared in the sentence

## Practise Exercise – Faulty Comparison

**Directions: Choose the sentence which is grammatically correct**

1.     A. The Sahara is larger than any other desert in the world.  
       B. The Sahara is the largest of any other desert in the world.  
       C. The Sahara is larger than any desert in the world.
2.     A. French wine is better than all the wines in the world.  
       B. French wine is better than any wine in the world.  
       C. French wine is the best of all the wines in the world.
3.     A. The ants ate more of the potato chips than Andrew.  
       B. The ants ate more of the potato chips.  
       C. The ants ate more of the potato chips than Andrew did.
4.     A. Fluorescent light is as cheap, if not cheaper than, any other light.  
       B. Fluorescent light is as cheap as, if not cheaper than, any other light.  
       C. Fluorescent light is cheaper than any light.
5.     A. Walter was the cruelest person I ever met.  
       B. Of all the other people I've met, Walter was the cruelest.  
       C. Walter was the cruelest person.
6.     A. Forgetting a school assignment is worse than making any mistake you could make in school.  
       B. Forgetting a school assignment is worse than making any other mistake you could make in school.  
       C. Forgetting a school assignment is the worst of any other mistake you could make in school.
7.     A. Billboard advertising is as effective as or more effective than any advertising.  
       B. Billboard advertising is as effective as or more effective than radio advertising.  
       C. Billboard advertising is as effective or more effective than radio advertising.
8.     A. Our substitute teacher speaks more faster than we can write.  
       B. Our substitute teacher speaks faster than we can write.  
       C. Our substitute teacher speaks more fast than we can write.
9.     A. Was Opal or one of her sisters the better athlete?  
       B. Was Opal or her sister the best athlete?  
       C. Was Opal or her sister the better athlete?
10.    A. The greatest batter I ever saw was Ted Williams.  
       B. Ted Williams was the greatest batter of all other batters I've ever seen.  
       C. Ted Williams was the greater batter of all batters I've ever seen.

## Answer Key& Explanations

1.	A	<p>A. The Sahara is larger than any other desert in the world. A is correct. <i>The Sahara</i> has been removed from the set it is compared to by adding the word <i>other</i>. Now, two things are being compared using the comparative <i>larger</i> rather than the superlative <i>largest</i>: <i>The Sahara and all other deserts</i>.</p> <p>B. The Sahara is the largest of any other desert in the world. B is incorrect. <i>Largest of any other</i> is an incorrect comparison. A thing may be the largest, or it may be larger than any other, but not largest of any other because <i>larger</i> removes it from the set of things it is being compared to: <i>The Sahara and all other deserts</i>.</p> <p>C. The Sahara is larger than any desert in the world. C is incorrect. This sentence implies that the Sahara is larger than itself since it is included in <i>any desert in the world</i>. To differentiate between the Sahara and other deserts, a better choice would be "The Sahara is larger than any other desert in the world."</p>
2.	C	<p>A. French wine is better than all the wines in the world. A is incorrect. This sentence implies that French wine is better than itself since it is included in <i>all the wines in the world</i>. To differentiate between French wine and other wines, a better choice would be "French wine is better than all the other wines in the world."</p> <p>B. French wine is better than any wine in the world. B is incorrect. Since French wine is included in the set <i>any wine in the world</i>, it cannot be better than <i>any wine in the world</i> because it cannot be better than itself.</p> <p>C. French wine is the best of all the wines in the world. C is correct. This sentence has not removed French wine from the set to which it is compared, but it has correctly used the superlative <i>best</i> to establish its place among all other wines.</p>
3.	C	<p>A. The ants ate more of the potato chips than Andrew. A is incorrect. This rather ambiguous sentence implies that the ants ate more of the chips than they ate of Andrew. Since it is unlikely that the ants ate Andrew, a better choice would be "The ants ate more of the potato chips than Andrew did."</p> <p>B. The ants ate more of the potato chips. B is incorrect. The word <i>more</i> indicates a direct comparison with another group, in this case another potato-chip eating group. You will need to show who the ants ate more than in order for this sentence's intended meaning to be correctly conveyed.</p> <p>C. The ants ate more of the potato chips than Andrew did. C is correct. In this sentence, we have two things being compared using the comparison word <i>more</i>.</p>
4.	B	<p>A. Fluorescent light is as cheap, if not cheaper than, any other light. A is incorrect. Do not omit the word <i>as</i> when making a point of equal or superior comparison. A better choice would be "Fluorescent light is as cheap as, if not cheaper than, any other light."</p> <p>B. Fluorescent light is as cheap as, if not cheaper than, any other light. B is correct. If the part of the sentence marked by commas were removed, the sentence would still make sense.</p> <p>C. Fluorescent light is cheaper than any light. C is incorrect. Since fluorescent light is included in the class of <i>any light</i>, it cannot be cheaper than <i>any light</i>. This comparison has fluorescent light being cheaper than itself. It may be cheaper than <i>any other light</i> but not <i>any light</i>.</p>
5.	A	<p>A. Walter was the cruelest person I ever met. A is correct. Assuming that the speaker has met more than two people, this comparison is correct.</p> <p>B. Of all the other people I've met, Walter was the cruelest. B is incorrect. <i>Cruelest</i> is the superlative form of <i>cruel</i>. In order for a thing to be compared using a superlative, it has to be a member of the group of things it is compared to. Since <i>he</i> is</p>



		<p>compared to <i>all the other people</i>, construct a comparison using the comparative form of <i>cruel</i>, <i>crueler</i>.</p> <p>C. Walter was the cruelest person. C is incorrect. Since it is unlikely that he is the cruelest person in the history of the world - crueller than Hitler, Stalin, and Pol Pot - a more appropriate choice would be "He is the cruelest person I have ever met."</p>
6.	B	<p>A. Forgetting a school assignment is worse than making any mistake you could make in school. A is incorrect. This sentence implies that forgetting a class assignment is worse than itself since it is included in <i>any mistake you can make in school</i>. To differentiate between forgetting and other mistakes you can make, a better choice would be "Forgetting a class assignment is worse than any other mistake you could make in school."</p> <p>B. Forgetting a school assignment is worse than making any other mistake you could make in school. B is correct. <i>Forgetting a school assignment</i> has been removed from the set it is compared to by adding the word <i>other</i>. Now, two things are being compared using the comparative worse rather than the superlative worst: "Forgetting an assignment and any other mistake."</p> <p>C. Forgetting a school assignment is the worst of any other mistake you could make in school. C is incorrect. <i>Worst</i> is the superlative form of <i>bad</i>. In order for a thing, in this case forgetting an assignment, to be compared using a superlative, it has to be a member of the group of things it is compared to. Since, in this sentence, forgetting an assignment is compared to <i>any other mistake</i>, make the comparison using the comparative form of <i>bad</i>: <i>worse</i>.</p>
7.	B	<p>A. Billboard advertising is as effective as or more effective than any advertising. A is incorrect. This sentence implies that billboard advertising is as effective as or more effective than itself since it is included in <i>any advertising</i>. To differentiate between billboard advertising and other forms of advertising, a better choice would be "Billboard advertising is as effective as or more effective than any other type of advertising."</p> <p>B. Billboard advertising is as effective as or more effective than radio advertising. B is correct. All the needed elements for this comparison are present. If either element were removed, the sentence would still make a clear comparison: "Billboard advertising is as effective as radio advertising" or "Billboard advertising is more effective than radio advertising."</p> <p>C. Billboard advertising is as effective or more effective than radio advertising. C is incorrect. If you omit the second comparison, you will recognize why this sentence is incorrect: "Billboard advertising is as effective...radio advertisement." To fix this, add a second <i>as</i> to the first comparison: "... is as effective as ... radio advertisement."</p>
8.	B	<p>A. Our substitute teacher speaks more faster than we can write. A is incorrect. This sentence is an example of a double comparison where the degree of the modifier <i>faster</i> is changed incorrectly by adding <i>more</i>. The word <i>more</i> is superfluous. The better choice would be "Our substitute teacher speaks faster than we can write."</p> <p>B. Our substitute teacher speaks faster than we can write. B is correct. The teacher's speaking rate is correctly compared to the student's writing rate by using the comparison word <i>faster</i>. Since only two things are being compared, and it is clear what they are, this sentence is correct.</p> <p>C. Our substitute teacher speaks morefast than we can write. C is incorrect. The correct comparative form of <i>fast</i> is <i>faster</i>, not <i>more fast</i>.</p>
9.	C	<p>A. Was Opal or one of her sisters the better athlete? A is incorrect. The comparative <i>better</i> should be used to compare two things. Since Opal has more than one sister, there are at least three people compared here. A better choice would be the superlative use of <i>best</i>.</p> <p>B. Was Opal or her sister the best athlete? B is incorrect. When comparing only two things, do not use the superlative. In a group of two things, the better of the two must logically be the best of the group, the superlative is not necessary. Think of the sequence <i>good, better, best</i>; in this comparison, Opal is good, her</p>

		<p>sister is better, and there is no need for <i>best</i>.</p> <p>C. Was Opal or her sister the better athlete?</p> <p>C is correct. Since only two things are being compared, the comparative form better is correct.</p>
10.	A	<p>A. The greatest batter I ever saw was Ted Williams.</p> <p>A is correct. Since the speaker has apparently seen more than two batters and Ted Williams is one of those batters, it is appropriate to say that Williams is the <i>greatest</i>, and not <i>greater</i>.</p> <p>B. Ted Williams was the greatest batter of all other batters I've ever seen.</p> <p>B is incorrect. Here, <i>Williams</i> is not included in the set that he is being compared to, <i>all other batters I've ever seen</i>, so using the superlative is incorrect. There are two things being compared: <i>Ted Williams</i> and <i>all other batters</i>.</p> <p>C. Ted Williams was the greater batter of all batters I've ever seen.</p> <p>C is incorrect. The comparative <i>greater</i> is used to compare two things. Since in this sentence there are more than two batters, the superlative <i>greatest</i> is correct.</p>

## Chapter 3 Sentence Correction Rules- II (Effective Expression)

### Errors of Expression:

#### It includes

- a. No superfluous words or unnecessarily complicated expressions.
- b. Use of proper diction
- c. Use of correct idiomatic phrases

### 3.1 Avoid superfluous words or phrases /Redundancy

Redundancy is a specific error of “wordiness,” that is, the use of excessive or unnecessary words. Wordiness comes in the form of unnecessary words (words that can be deleted to aid the clarity of the sentence), redundancies (words that simply repeat what has already been stated), and clunky phrases that could be easily reduced to single words.

**Incorrect:** At first, I initially was afraid of flying.

**Correct:** Initially I was afraid of flying

**Incorrect:** My first class begins at 11 a.m. in the morning.

**Correct:** My first class begins at 11 a.m.

In the first example, both “at first” and “initially” signify the idea of “at the beginning.” We only need one of these expressions to communicate this idea. To fix the sentence, remove one of the expressions.

In the second example, both “a.m.” and “in the morning” communicate the idea that the class begins before noon. To fix the sentence, remove one of these expressions.

### 3.2 Correct diction:

Diction is about word choice, and how those choices impact the meaning, clarity, and style of a piece of writing.

Here are some typical pairs of words that are often used interchangeable, but which have distinctly different meanings.

#### Among/Between

- a. Among is used when there are more than two things: ***Among, X, Y, and Z, I prefer Z.***
- b. Between is used when there are only two things: ***You must choose between the GRE and the GMAT.***

#### As/Like

- a. “As” = “in the capacity of.” For example: ***Joseph Soandso serves as the appellate judge in the umpteenth district of Narnia.***
- b. “Like” = “similar to.” For example: ***The CAT is not like any other test you have ever taken.***

### Like/Such as

- a. “Like” = “similar to.” **So, Joe likes sports like hockey, basketball, and soccer** means that Joe likes sports that are similar to hockey, basketball, and soccer.
- b. “Such as” = “for example.” **Joe like sports such as hockey, basketball, and soccer** means that Joe likes hockey, basketball, and soccer. **Their/His or her**
- c. Substituting “their” for his or her is a common mistake that is becoming part of day to day English.
  - i. Incorrect: Does everyone have their copy of the 13<sup>th</sup> OG?
  - ii. Correct: Does everyone have his or her copy of the 13<sup>th</sup> OG?

### That/Which

- a. “That” introduces a restrictive clause – a clause that is essential to the meaning of a sentence.
- b. Example: The car that has voice activated ignition is the Chrysler on the far side of the parking lot.
- c. “Which” introduces a non-respective clause – a clause that is not essential to the meaning of a sentence. In this case the non-restrictive clause is surrounded by commas.
- d. Example: The car on the far side of the parking lot, which is a Chrysler, has voice activated ignition.

### Who/Whom

- a. “Who” is a subject pronoun, so it will perform the action of the verb. It serves the same function as “he” or “she”
- b. Example: **Who gave you this book? He gave me this book.**
- c. “Whom” is an object pronoun, so it will receive the action of the verb. It serves the same function as “him” or “her.”
- d. Example: **To whom did you give the book? I gave the book to her.**

## 3.3. Correct idiomatic usage

Sentence correction questions that revolve around idioms, usage and style generally test subtle errors in expression.

Idiomatic expressions often have no basis in grammar or even logic but have been accepted into the language. Unfortunately, the only thing to do about this problem is practice, so do as many practice questions as possible and take note of any examples in which two different versions of an idiom are used.

Idioms may be defined as expressions peculiar to a language. Many verbs, when followed by various prepositions, or adverbs, acquire an idiomatic sense. *For example-* I must think the matter *over* (i.e. consider it).

An interesting characteristic of the verb in English is that it can combine with **prepositions** and **adverb particles**. Broadly speaking, we call these combinations of **verb + preposition** or **verb + adverb particle** idioms. *For example-*

Verb (transitive) + preposition: I *got over* my fit of depression.

Verb (transitive) + particle: We must *bring up* children with lots of love and affection.

These are some common idioms:

### **Bear**

1. Bear down- overthrow or crush by force
2. Bear away- win
3. Bear up- not to despair
4. Bear out- support or confirm
5. Bear with- tolerate

### **Break**

1. Break down- fail, collapse
2. Break into- enter by force
3. Break off- stop suddenly
4. Break out- appear suddenly
5. Break with- quarrel with
6. Break up- end, disperse

### **Bring**

1. Bring about- cause
2. Bring down- lower
3. Bring forth- produce
4. Bring in- earn, yield as the result of sale
5. Bring on- cause
6. Bring out- publish, show
7. Bring one round- persuade
8. Bring up- rear and train

### **Call**

1. Call for- demand
2. Call in- summon, send for
3. Call on- pay a brief visit
4. Call off- cancel
5. Call up- recollect

### **Carry**

1. Carry away- bear off
2. Carry on- continue, manage
3. Carry out- execute
4. Carry through- sustain

## Come

1. Come about- happen
2. Come by- get
3. Come down- become lower or cheaper
4. Come out- transpired
5. Come to- amount to
6. Come up- raised for discussion
7. Come round- be persuaded/recover/agree

## Fall

1. Fall back- retreat
2. Fall back upon- have recourse to
3. Fall flat- fail to produce any effect
4. Fall in- stand in a line
5. Fall off- decrease/deteriorated
6. Fall out- quarrel
7. Fall through- fail

## Get

1. Get along- make progress
2. Get at- recover
3. Get down- descend
4. Get off- escape punishment
5. Get on- advance, make progress
6. Get over- overcome
7. Get through- pass

Here are some selected examples of common words and phrases tested.

From ....to
Between..... and
The same to .....as to
No less .....than
The more .....the greater
Better served by .....than by
Not only .....but also
Both .....and
Different from (not “than” or “to”)
Either .....or
Neither .....nor
Whether to do something or not
They do not know x or y (NOT x nor y)
Doubt that
At the urging of somebody
Between is used for (2) vs Among is used for (> 2)
Affect (verb) vs Effect (noun)
Assure (give an assurance) vs Ensure (make sure something happens) vs Insure
Equivalent in number (vs “as many as people”)
A number of (not “numbers of”)
Whether vs. If - “I had to decide whether”, not “I had to decide if”
Whether is typically used to introduce doubt regarding two equal possibilities or two alternatives.

It is preferred to use “whether” over “if” when the word “if” is not used to signal a condition and instead takes the meaning of “whether”.

Using “whether” exclusively avoids the possible confusion between different possible meanings of “if”.

**Incorrect:** I don’t know if I am ready to take the test now and if I will ever be ready in the future.

**Correct:** I don’t know whether I am ready to take the test now and whether I will ever be ready in the future.

**Example of idiomatic Prepositions:**

based on
composed by meaning “created by” vs composed of meaning “made up of”
credit with (not credit to)
depend on
differ with (meaning “disagree with”) vs differ from (meaning “be different from”)
discourage from doing something/encourage to do something (from is a preposition here; to is the infinitive here)
prefer to
prevent from
prohibit from
Idiomatic Phrases Involving or Omitting “As”
consider x y (not to be y)
defined as
depicted as
regard x as y
regarded as
think of x as y
view x as y

## Practise Exercise on Wordiness and Redundancy

- The acrid odor of burnt gunpowder filled the room with a bitterly pungent smell after the pistol had been fired. No error.  
A B C  
D E
- We were all agog at the news that the celebrated movie star was giving up his career when he was so famous, in order to enter a monastery. No error.  
A B C  
D E
- Shakespeare's reference to clocks in 'Julius Caesar' is an anachronism; it is something misplaced in time as no clocks existed in Caesar's time. No error.  
A B  
C D E
- Student exchange programs such as the Experiment in International Living were established to promote international amity and friendship. No error.  
A B C D E
- Being diligent, it took Rembrandt weeks of assiduous labor before he was satisfied with his portrait of his son. No error.  
A B C  
D E
- Although critics bemoaned the serious flaws in the author's novels, each year his latest book topped the best-seller list. No error.  
A B  
C D E

### Answer key

Q.no	Key	Explanation
1.	C	C is redundant as 'with a bitterly pungent smell' means the same as 'acrid odor'.
2.	D	D is redundant as B already mentions that he was a 'celebrated movie star'.
3.	C	C explains in a redundant manner what B states. The sentence becomes too wordy.
4.	D	D is redundant as 'amity' means friendship.
5.	A	A is redundant as B explains again that he was diligent.
6.	E	No errors



## Practise Exercise on Faulty Idioms

**Important Instructions:** The underlined and lettered parts of each sentence below may contain an error in expression (idiom). Read each sentence carefully and identify which item, if any, contains an error. No sentence contains more than one error. Some sentences may contain no error. In that case, the correct choice will always be E (No error).

1. The new leader has been able to tear down all opposition to establish his own rule.  
 A                      B                                      C                                      D  
No error.  
 E
  
2. After a market survey, the publishers have recently brought in a cheap edition of their new dictionary. No error.  
 A                                      B                                      C                                      D  
 E
  
3. At last the rioters fell back when the Special Squad was called in to tackle the grave situation. No error.  
 A                                      B                                      C                                      D                                      E
  
4. Everyone was impressed by the way his son efficiently carried over his business in his absence. No error.  
 A                                      B                                      C                                      D  
 E
  
5. All parents think that children will come over to their views and vice versa. No errors.  
 A                                      B                                      C                                      D                                      E

### Answer key

Q.No	Key	Explanation
1.	B	The correct idiom is 'bear down' which means to overthrow or crush by force.
2.	C	The correct idiom is 'brought out' which means to publish.
3.	E	'Fell back' means to retreat or yield.
4.	C	The correct idiom is 'carried on' (managed).
5.	B	The correct idiom is 'come round' (agree).

## Practise Exercise on diction ( who/ whom)

Directions: Choose the correct answer (who or whom?)

1. To \_\_\_\_\_ have you offered the flowers?
2. \_\_\_\_\_ wrote that beautiful love poem?
3. I just want to know \_\_\_\_\_ made this delicious dish.
4. Do you know the man \_\_\_\_\_ is standing there?
5. My parents will accept \_\_\_\_\_ I choose as my husband.
6. For \_\_\_\_\_ are you buying this present?
7. He is a kind of person for \_\_\_\_\_ family is very important.
8. Tell me \_\_\_\_\_ told you this wonderful news?
9. The electrician \_\_\_\_\_ I asked for assistance was helpful.
10. \_\_\_\_\_ gave you permission to get into this room?

### Answer key

Q. No	Explanation
1.	To <b>whom</b> have you offered the flowers?
2.	<b>Who</b> wrote that beautiful love poem?
3.	I just want to know <b>who</b> made this delicious dish.
4.	Do you know the man <b>who</b> is standing there?
5.	My parents will accept <b>whomever</b> I choose as my husband.
6.	For <b>whom</b> are you buying this present?
7.	He is the kind of person for <b>whom</b> family is very important.
8.	Tell me, <b>who</b> told you this wonderful news?
9.	The electrician <b>whom</b> I asked for assistance was helpful.
10.	<b>Who</b> gave you permission to get into this room?

## Chapter 4 Strategy to Approach Sentence correction Question

### 4.1 Strategy to approach Sentence Correction Questions

1. **Start solving any SC problem by reading the original sentence in its entirety.** Although it is the underlined part that can contain errors and be modified, errors often reveal themselves only when you look at the rest of the sentence.
2. **Look for errors in grammar first.** If nothing jumps out at you, focus on the key elements of the sentence; break it down into parts, and look for a subject, a verb, and perhaps an object.

Making yourself thoroughly familiar with the kinds of errors.

3. **Predict the error type** just by looking at some clues in the structure of a sentence.
  - For example, if a sentence begins with a modifying phrase, your first action should be to check whether the modifier refers to the right subject.
  - Similarly, whenever you spot such words as *like*, *as*, *more than*, or any other form of comparison, check whether the things compared are logically and structurally parallel.
  - Several actions occurring at different times, which may lead to errors in verb tenses;
  - A subject separated so from its verb that subject-verb agreement error occurs; or
  - The use of *it* or *they*, pronouns often used incorrectly.
- A. **Be aware of the meaning of the sentence.** Mistakes on SC are not limited to grammar—you must be sure the meaning of the original sentence is absolutely clear and does not lend itself to different interpretations, you do not want to change it.
- B. **Move on to the answer choices.** Do not read each choice separately! Rather, you need to compare answer choices by scanning them vertically and trying to spot obvious differences. For example, if you notice that three of the choices say *that of* when you need *those of*, eliminate them.
- C. **Compare the answer choices looking for further differences.** Get rid of the grammatically incorrect ones. Thus, you will be left with the right one at the end.
- D. **Check for correct expression.** Conciseness, your last resort might be to go for the shortest choice. Do not, however, start by eliminating longer choices, since the most concise answer is not always the best. Let's say you have two choices left. You have scanned them both for flaws in grammar and meaning and found none. This is the time to go for the shorter one.

Finally, among choices that seem equally good to you, you can usually eliminate any that contain passive expressions.

## Practise Exercise -1

1. Parents' disagreements on how to discipline their child, has made problems for teachers as they are teaching such spoiled students.  
  - A. has made problems for teachers as they are teaching such
  - B. has made problems for teachers teaching such
  - C. has made problems for teachers as they are teaching
  - D. have made it problematic for teachers to teach such
2. It was us who had left before he arrived  
  - A. we who had left before time he had arrived
  - B. us who had went before he arrived
  - C. C.us who had went before had arrived
  - D. we who had left before he arrived
3. Added to the increase in monthly wages discussed last spring, the dining hall employees are currently seeking improved insurance coverage.  
  - A. Added to the increase in monthly wages which had been discussed last spring, the employees of the dining hall are currently seeking an improved insurance coverage.
  - B. The dining hall employees are currently seeking improved insurance coverage added to the increase in monthly wages that were discussed last spring.
  - C. In addition to the increase in monthly wages that were discussed last spring, the dining hall employees are currently seeking improved insurance coverage.
  - D. In addition to the increase in monthly wages discussed last spring, the employees of the dining hall are currently seeking improved insurance coverage.
4. Since the advent of cable television, at the beginning of this decade, the entertainment industry took a giant stride forward in our country.  
  - A. this decade, the entertainment had taken
  - B. This decade, the entertainment industry has taken
  - C. This decade saw the entertainment industry taking
  - D. This decade the entertainment industry took
5. We are forced to fall back on fatalism as an explanation of irrational events.  
  - A. fall back on fatalism as an explanation
  - B. falling back on the fatalism as an explanation
  - C. fall back on fatalism as explanations
  - D. fall back to fatalism as an explanation
6. This government may promise autonomy to the navratnas but there is no telling what the subsequent one will do.  
  - A. whether the subsequent government will do so
  - B. if the government to follow will accept the policy
  - C. if the government to follow will adhere to the policy
  - D. whether the subsequent one will do so

7. The running of large businesses consist of getting somebody to make something that somebody else sold to somebody else for more than its cost.
- A. The running of large businesses consist of getting somebody to make something that somebody else sold to somebody else for more than its cost.
  - B. The running of a large business consists of getting somebody to make something that somebody else will sell to somebody else for more than it costs.
  - C. The running of a large business consists of getting somebody to sell something that somebody else made for more than it cost.
  - D. The running of large businesses consist of getting somebody to make something else that somebody else will sell to somebody else for more than it costs.
8. Creativity in any field is regarded not only as valuable for itself but also as a service to the nation.
- A. Creativity in any field is regarded not only as valuable for itself but also as a service to the nation.
  - B. Creativity in any field is not regarded only as valuable on its own, but also as a service to the nation.
  - C. Creativity, in any field, is not only regarded as valuable, but also as a service to the nation.
  - D. Creativity in any field is regarded not only as valuable in itself but also as a service to the nation.
9. Many of these environmentalists proclaim to save nothing less than the planet itself.
- A. that they save nothing less than
  - B. that they are saving nothing lesser than
  - C. to save nothing less than
  - D. to save nothing lesser than
10. His father made great sacrifices to educate him, moving house on three occasions, and severing the thread on his loom's shuttle whenever Mencius neglected his lessons to make him understand the need to persevere.
- A. Severed the thread on his loom's shuttle whenever Mencius neglected his lessons to make him understand the need for persevering.
  - B. Severed the thread on his loom's shuttle whenever Mencius neglected his lessons to make him understand the need to persevere.
  - C. Severing the thread on his loom's shuttle whenever Mencius neglected his lessons to make him understand the need to persevere.
  - D. Severing the thread on his loom's shuttle whenever Mencius neglected his lessons to make them understand the need to persevere.

## Practise Exercise - 2

1. The skills required for succeeding in the test is a combination of knowledge and logic.
  - A. is a combination of knowledge and logic.
  - B. always combine knowledge and logic.
  - C. are a combination of knowledge and logic.
  - D. combines knowledge and logic.
  - E. is a combination of general knowledge and logic.
2. After being in school & College for 16 years, Anuj couldn't wait to get out to get a job.
  - A. They was a great desire in Anuj to get out and get a job.
  - B. Anuj was eager to get a job.
  - C. Anuj arranged to look for a job.
3. Unlike Amir Khan, whose films clearly transcend any ideological purpose, Rajni Kant is generally dismissed with merely being a propagandist for a morally repugnant political cause.
  - A. with merely being a propagandist
  - B. as being a propagandist merely
  - C. for being merely a propagandist
  - D. as a mere propagandist
  - E. merely for being a propagandist
4. Due to current limitations in scientific methods, the age of many inorganic substances, including the minerals that largely constitute the inner layers of the earth, are impossible to determine precisely.
  - A. are impossible to determine precisely.
  - B. may precisely not be determined.
  - C. is impossible to determine precisely.
  - D. are not able precisely to be determined.
  - E. is impossible for precise determination.
5. Once almost hidden under centuries of soot and grime, skilled preservationists have now restored Michelangelo's famous frescoes on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel.
  - A. skilled preservationists have now restored Michelangelo's famous frescoes on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel.
  - B. Michelangelo's famous frescoes on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel now have been by skilled preservationists restored.
  - C. the restoration of Michelangelo's famous frescoes on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel has been done by skilled preservationists.
  - D. skilled preservationists on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel have now restored Michelangelo's famous frescoes there.
  - E. Michelangelo's famous frescoes on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel have now been restored by skilled preservationists.

6. The average person's conception of scientific method is fundamentally flawed insofar as it assumes that theory develops automatically from observations of natural events; which are essentially unaffected by the preconceptions of the observers.
- A. events; which are  
C. events, these are  
E. events, such events being
- B. events, which are  
D. events, themselves
7. The remarkable growth in increased attendance currently being enjoyed by such formerly moribund sports franchises as baseball's Cleveland Indians shows that building a new stadium can have a powerful effect on the popularity of a team.
- A. The remarkable growth in increased attendance currently being enjoyed  
B. Remarkably, the growth in attendance that is currently enjoyed  
C. The growth in attendance remarkably being enjoyed currently  
D. The remarkable growth in increased attendance boom currently enjoyed.  
E. The remarkable growth in attendance currently enjoyed.
8. The Beach Boys, as other rock bands of the 1960s, considered the Beatles as the preeminent innovators whose creativity and style they strove to emulate.
- A. The Beach Boys, as other rock bands of the 1960s, considered the Beatles as  
B. Like other rock bands of the 1960s, the Beach Boys considered the Beatles  
C. The Beach Boys, as did other rock bands of the 1960s, considered the Beatles to be  
D. As did other rock bands, the Beach Boys of the 1960s, considered the Beatles as being  
E. The Beatles were considered by the Beach Boys, like other rock bands of the 1960s.

## EXERCISE - 3

1. Although just inside the orbit of Jupiter, amateur astronomers with good telescopes should be able to see the comet within the next few weeks.  
  
A. Although just inside the orbit of  
B. Although it is just inside the orbit of  
C. Just inside the orbit of  
D. Orbiting just inside  
E. Having orbited just inside
2. After the Civil War, contemporaries of Harriet Tubman's maintained that she has all of the qualities of a great leader, coolness in the face of danger, an excellent sense of strategy, and an ability to plan in minute detail.  
  
A. Tubman's maintained that she has  
B. Tubman's maintain that she had  
C. Tubman's have maintained that she had  
D. Tubman maintained that she had  
E. Tubman had maintained that she has
3. According to US officials, a cannon shooting dead chickens at airplanes has proved helpful to demonstrate the kind of damage that can result when jets fly into a flock of large birds.  
  
A. shooting dead chickens at airplanes has proved helpful to demonstrate  
B. shooting dead chickens at airplanes has proved itself helpful as a demonstration of  
C. shooting dead chickens at airplanes proves itself helpful as demonstrating  
D. that shoots dead chickens at airplanes proves itself helpful to demonstrate  
E. that shoots dead chickens at airplanes has proved helpful in demonstrating
4. Visitors to the park have often looked up into the leafy canopy and saw monkeys sleeping on the branches, whose arms and legs hang like socks on a clothesline.  
  
A. saw monkeys sleeping on the branches, whose arms and legs hang  
B. saw monkeys sleeping on the branches, whose arms and legs were hanging  
C. saw monkeys sleeping on the branches, with arms and legs hanging  
D. seen monkeys sleeping on the branches, with arms and legs hanging  
E. seen monkeys sleeping on the branches, whose arms and legs have hung
5. After gradual declension down to about 39 hours in 1970, the workweek in the United States has steadily increased to the point that the average worker now puts in an estimated 164 extra hours of paid labor a year.  
  
A. After gradual declension down  
B. Following a gradual declension down  
C. After gradual declining down  
D. After gradually declining  
E. Following gradually declining



6. One legacy of Madison Avenue's recent campaign to appeal to people fifty years old and over is the realization that as a person ages, their concerns change as well.
- A. the realization that as a person ages, their
  - B. the realization that as people age, their
  - C. to realize that when a person ages, his or her
  - D. to realize that when people age, their
  - E. realizing that as people age, their
7. Although partially destroyed, the archaeologists were able to infer from what remained of the inscription that the priest Zonainos was buried in the crypt.
- A. Although partially destroyed, the archaeologists were able to infer
  - B. Although partially destroyed, the archaeologists had inferred
  - C. Although it had been partially destroyed, the archaeologists were able to infer
  - D. Partially destroyed though it had been, the archaeologists had been able to infer
  - E. Destroyed partially, the archaeologists were able to infer
8. Contrary to popular belief, victors in the ancient Greek Olympic Games received cash prizes in addition to their laurel wreaths.
- A. Contrary to
  - B. In contrast with
  - C. Opposite of
  - D. Unlike
  - E. In spite of
9. Convinced at last of the soundness of her advice, the villagers tried crop rotation, built crude sanitary facilities, and even the use of goat's milk for the making of cheese.
- A. the use of goat's milk for the making of cheese
  - B. used goat's milk to make cheese
  - C. the use of goat's milk in cheese making
  - D. making cheese from goat's milk
  - E. goat's milk to make cheese
10. If the reporter would have known the landlord's side of the story, she would not have written an article so favorable to the 81-year-old tenant.
- A. would have known the landlord's side of the story, she would not have written
  - B. would of known the landlord's side of the story, she would not of written
  - C. had known the landlord's side of the story, she would not have written
  - D. had known the landlord's side of the story, she would not have wrote
  - E. knew the landlord's side of the story, she would not have written

## Answer key & Explanations

### Practice Exercise - 01

Q.no	Key	Explanation
1	D	The first thing you should look at here is subject/verb agreement. Is the subject in this sentence singular or plural? The word 'disagreements' is plural, so you should use the verb "have". Note how test setter tries to trick you by putting the word 'child', which is singular, next to a verb that should be plural. That eliminates choices A, B and C. Choice D is the correct answer.
2	D	Here we need subjective pronoun. Hence we is correct as given in option D
3	D	There is a misplaced modifier in this sentence. As it stands it implies that the employees were the ones who were added to the increase in monthly wages. That means choice A IS incorrect. Choice B has an obvious grammatical mistake in it. 'Increase' is singular so it should be 'the increase in wages was discussed'. Choice C has the same error. Choice D is the correct answer
4	B	Present perfect tense- has taken is appropriate- refers to a condition that started in the past. Since indicates that took is wrong (It should be taken). Right option is B
5	C	Fall back on is the right idiom
6	D	Whether is used when there is a Yes/No situation. The sentence is incomplete as 'will do' does not have an object. It should therefore be followed by 'so'. (1) is not correct as 'government' is repeated. 'Policy' is undefined in (2) and (3).
7	B	consist does not gel with running, the subject in this case. It should be consists. Also in the end, the it stands for something – so it costs to replace its cost.
8	D	In itself not for itself is the correct idiom. Line C makes unnecessary use of two commas apart from having a wrong placement for not only. Line B changes the intended meaning by using not regarded, while line A uses the idiomatically wrong valuable for itself.
9	A	Is correct as it is.
10	C	Rule of Parallelism

### Practice Exercise - 02

1	C	The subject in the given sentence is skills. As it is a plural noun, the verb governing it should also be plural.
2	B	The shortest answer has maximum clarity without change in meaning.
3	D	Does any part of this sentence sound wrong to you? The "wobbly" piece of this sentence is the phrase "dismissed with merely being"; it's not the normal wording for the idea being expressed here. The error here lies in the phrase that follows the verb "dismissed," which is not worded normally. (The technical term for this error is non-idiomatic usage.)
4	C	In this case, answers 2 and 5 introduce new errors. Answer 2 moves the location of the adverb "precisely" into an awkward and unclear spot. (Generally speaking, an adverb should be as close as possible to the word it modifies. In this sentence, "precisely" should be as close as possible to "determine," since that is the word whose meaning it affects.) And 5 uses the unidiomatic, "weird - "sounding location "impossible for precise determination." In normal English, one speaks of something as being "impossible to do," not "impossible for doing." Thus, both 2 and 5 are wrong, leaving choice 3 as the correct answer.
5	E	The mistake is another common error known as a misplaced modifier. The opening phrase "Once almost hidden....", is a modifying phrase because it describes something else in the sentence. The rule is that a modifying phrase should be right next to the word or phrase that names what is being described. Now, what is being described here? – in other words, what was "Once almost hidden..."? The answer is "Michelangelo's famous frescoes"; those frescoes are what was "Once almost hidden" ..... Therefore, the words "Michelangelo's famous frescoes" should follow the modifying phrase immediately, so as to make it clear that the frescoes are being modified by the words "Once almost hidden...". The way the original sentence is written, it almost sounds as through "the skilled preservationists" were "Once almost

		hidden..”
6	B	<p>Notice how this simplified version makes the grammatical error more obvious. The last part of the sentence, following the semicolon, is a dependent clause, because it starts with the pronoun “which.” This makes it wrong to use the semicolon. Only an independent clause - a clause that can stand alone as a sentence - may follow a semicolon. Read what follows the semicolon in this case, and you can probably “hear” that it cannot stand alone as a sentence.</p> <p>To correct it, the connection between the final clause and the rest of the sentence needs to be repaired. Changing the semicolon to a comma, as in answer 2, fixes the error. Answer 4 retains the error, and answer 3 and 5 introduce a new error by inserting the non-idiomatic “being” construction.</p>
7	E	<p>The original phrasing here contains not one but two examples of redundancy. The words “growth” and “increased” both convey the same idea. And the word “being” tells you merely that this phenomenon is happening now – the same idea that the word “currently” expresses.</p> <p>The best rephrasing is choice 5, which eliminates both redundancies without changing the meaning of the sentence (as answers 2 and 3 do by changing “remarkable” to “remarkably”).</p> <p>Listen for redundancy when reading sentence correction items. It’s a very straightforward and concrete type of “ineffectiveness,” which makes it popular with the test makers.</p>
8	B	<p>The original sentence contains two flaws. One is a confusion between “as” and “like.” “As” is a conjunction which should be followed by a clause, which is not the case here. In this case, the proposition “like” should be used instead. The second flaw lies in the fact that the sentence needlessly separates the subject – “The Beach Boys” –from the verb “considered.” The best answer, choice 2, corrects both flaws.</p>

### Practice Exercise - 03

1	B	The sentence carries a dangling modifier. What is inside the orbit of Jupiter-there is no mention. The phrase must have a subject. Options A, C, D, and E don’t carry a subject.
2	D	Contemporaries of warrants that Tubman should not be followed by an apostrophe s. This requirement straightway rules out B and C, leaving us with only two options D and E, out of which we can reject E on account of its using had unnecessarily.
3	E	Options A, B and C are not idiomatic as helpful should be followed by in. D contains not only a wrong preposition, but also a redundant expression.
4	D	<p>Choices A, B and C use have ... saw where have ... seen is required.</p> <p>Choices A, B and E awkwardly separate the relative clause beginning whose arms and legs ... from monkeys, the noun it modifies.</p> <p>Choices A and E also confusingly use the present tense hang and the present perfect have hung, respectively; neither verb conveys clearly that, at the time the monkeys were spotted sleeping, their arms and legs were hanging in the manner described. Choice D, the best answer, not only forms a correct and clear sentence by supplying the present perfect verb have ... seen, but also solves the problem of the whose... clause by using the appropriately placed adverbial phrase with arms and legs hanging ... to modify sleeping.</p>
5	D	Declension does not need down after it as the word itself implies a downward trend. Consequently, options A, B and C are safely ruled out. E is unidiomatic as it should have used a noun in place of declining, a continuous action verb.
6	B	<p>In choice A, the plural pronoun their does not agree in number with the singular noun person.</p> <p>Choices C, D, and E can be faulted for failing to complete the construction One legacy ... is with a noun that matches the noun legacy; these choices use verb forms - the infinitive to realize or the present participle realizing - in place of a noun such as realization.</p> <p>Further, when in C and D is less precise than as in characterizing a prolonged and gradual process such as aging. B is the best answer.</p>
7	C	Dangling modifier. The modifier must be supplied a subject.
8	A	<b>Option A</b> is the best one.
9	B	The past tense tried should match with used, which happens only in B.
10	C	The correct usage is, “if .....had,” this rules out option A, B and E. Option D does not carry the correct verb.