

VERBS AND TENSES

Verb

What is a verb?

- Verbs are the action words in a sentence that describe what the subject is doing.
- Along with nouns, verbs are the main part of a sentence or phrase, telling a story about what is taking place.
- In fact, without a verb, full thoughts can't be properly conveyed, and even the simplest sentences, such as Maria sings, have one.
- Actually, a verb can be a sentence by itself, with the subject, in most case you, implied, such as, Sing! and Drive!
- These are some important points you need to keep in mind for this topic:
 - **Subject:** Doer of the verb.
 - **Object:** Receiver of the Verb
 - **Verb:** Action or state in a sentence.

What is Subject-Verb Agreement?

- A simple subject-verb agreement definition implies that the subject of the sentence and the verb of the sentence must be in agreement in number.
- **Basic rule of subject verb agreement: A subject must agree with its verb in number.**
- This has two implications:
 - A singular subject takes a singular verb.
 - Plural subjects take plural verbs.

Tips & Tricks for Subject Verb Agreement

Let's explore some interesting tips and tricks of subject verb agreement and extend your learning.

Example 1: The dog is playing with his ball.	In this case, the subject of the sentence is 'dog' and the verb used is singular in nature, 'is playing'.
Example 2: The dogs are playing with their ball.	In this case, the subject of the sentence is 'dogs' and the verb used is plural in nature, 'are playing'.

Subject-Verb Agreement Rules

Let's explore a series of subject-verb agreement rules required to ace questions based on Sentence Correction.

Rule # 1

- When two subjects are joined by 'and', the verb is plural.
- Example: My friend and his mother are in town.

Rule # 2

- When two singular nouns joined by 'and' refer to the same person or thing, the verb is singular.
- Example: The captain and coach of the team has been sacked.
- The coach and the captain is the same person, so, an article is used only with the first subject therefore the verb will be singular here.

Point to Remember

- **In case these were two different individuals, two articles need to be used.**
- **The captain and the coach of the team have been sacked.**

Rule # 3

- Indefinite pronouns (everyone, each one, someone, somebody, no one, nobody, anyone, anybody etc.) are always singular.
- Example: Everyone is selfish.
- We do not use 'are' in this sentence.
- This rule does not apply to: few, many, several, both, all, some.

Rule # 4

- When the percentage or a part of something is mentioned with plural meaning the plural verb is used.
- Example: 40 out of every 100 children are malnourished.

Rule # 5

- When the subjects are joined by 'either or' or 'neither nor' are of different persons, the verb will agree with the noun nearest to it.
- Example:
 - o Neither you nor your dogs know how to behave.
 - o Either you or I am at fault.
- In these sentences' verb is used according to the nearest noun to it.

Point to Remember

- **Always remember that, when either and neither are used as pronouns, they are treated as singular and always take the singular verb.**
- **For example:**
 - o **Either of the books is fine for MAT preparation.**
 - o **Neither of the employees find the work laborious.**
- **In these sentences either and neither is used as pronoun and they always take the singular verb.**

Rule # 6

- If connectives/appositives like along with, together with, as well as, accompanied by etc. are used to combine two subjects, the verb agrees with the subject mentioned first.
- Mr. Ram, accompanied by his wife Sita and his brother, was banished to the forest.

Rule # 7

- 'A number of (some countable noun)' is always plural.
- 'The number of (some countable noun)' is always singular.
- Example:
 - o A number of students are going on the trip.
 - o The number of questions in this chapter is 25.

Rule # 8

- The singular verb form is usually used for units of measurement or time.
- Example: Five gallons of oil was required to get the engine running.

Rule # 9

- When any of 'few, many, several, both, all, some' is used with a countable noun, the verb is plural.
- Example:
 - o Some men are needed for the battle.
 - o Several students were late for the class.

Rule # 10

- When any of 'few, many, several, both, all, some' is used with an uncountable noun, the verb is singular.
- Example: Some data was stolen.
- Here data is an uncountable noun thus the verb is singular.

Practice Questions

Directions: Some parts of the sentence have errors and some are correct. Find out which part has an error and mark that part as your answer. If there are no errors, mark 'No error' as your answer.

1. Critics allege that the government is trying (A) to leverage last year's disaster and use the (B) funds they collected to reconstruction (C) of an ecologically inappropriate infrastructure policy. (D) No Error (E)

- 1) A
- 2) B
- 3) C
- 4) D
- 5) E

Correct Option: 3

Explanation:

- Since 'reconstruction' is a noun; funds would be collected 'for' it and not 'to' it. For example - Funds were collected for the flood crisis.
- The correct statement is - *"Critics allege that the government is trying to leverage last year's disaster and use the funds they collected for reconstruction of an ecologically inappropriate*

infrastructure policy."

2. Some of these dams are witnessed record low (A) levels on account of continued drawing of water (B) from dead storage through the long hydrological drought stretching from (C) October-November 2018 until the arrival of the 2019 south-west monsoon. (D) No Error (E)

- 1) A
- 2) B
- 3) C
- 4) D
- 5) E

Correct Option: 1

Explanation:

- The sentence is in present continuous form as we can see from phrases 'dams are' and 'continued drawing of water'. So, "witnessing" will be used instead of "witnessed" since the action is still taking place.
- For example - Recently, we have been witnessing an increase in the number of cases related to obesity.
- The correct statement is - *"Some of these dams are witnessing record low levels on account of continued drawing of water from dead storage through the long hydrological drought stretching from October-November 2018 until the arrival of the 2019 south-west monsoon."*

3. They also requested to be told how (A) Epstein was being monitored and what (B) the surveillance cameras may(C) have recording in or near Epstein's cell (D). No Error (E)

- 1) A
- 2) B
- 3) C
- 4) D
- 5) E

Correct Option: 4

Explanation:

- Recorded (verb) will be used with 'have' as the sentence is in the past tense and the recording has already taken place.
- For example - The raw footage has been recorded.
- The correct statement is *"They also requested to be told how Epstein was being monitored and what the surveillance cameras may have recorded in or near Epstein's cell."*

4. Guatemala President-elect Alejandro Giammattei (A) says his countries will not be able to hold (B) its side of an immigration agreement with the United States (C) by serving as a "safe third country". (D) No Error (E)

- 1) A
- 2) B
- 3) C
- 4) D
- 5) E

Correct Option: 2

Explanation:

- "Hold up" will be used instead of "hold".
- The idiom 'to hold up' meaning 'to withstand challenge' will be used as the president is saying that he will not be able to keep his side of the agreement.
- For example - I wonder how long this cloth will hold up.
- The correct statement is *"Guatemala President-elect Alejandro Giammattei says his countries will not be able to hold its side of an immigration agreement with the United States by serving as a "safe third country".*

5. It looks like (A) the Supreme Court had score a goal (B) for women against at least one expression (C) of centuries-old patriarchy and dogma. (D) No error. (E)

- 1) A
- 2) B
- 3) C
- 4) D
- 5) E

Correct Option: 2

Explanation:

- In the 2nd part of the sentence, 'the Supreme Court had score a goal' is grammatically wrong because the sentence is given in the present tense.
- So, instead of had the correct word would be 'will'.
- The correct sentence is *"It looks like the Supreme Court will score a goal for women against at least one expression of centuries-old patriarchy and dogma."*

Directions: In the question given below, a sentence is divided into three parts, viz, I, II and III. For each of these parts, a corrected sentence is also given. You have to determine which part/s require a correction and mark that as the answer.

6. The cat looked desperate to getting inside / the house and would accept no / other option than the comfort of my sofa.

- I. The cat looked desperate to get inside

- II. the house and would be accept no
III. other option then the comfort of my sofa.

- 1) Both I and III
- 2) Both II and III
- 3) Both I and II
- 4) Only I
- 5) Only III

Correct Option: 4

Explanation:

- The sentence uses the preposition 'to' before the verb, suggesting a 'to-infinitive'. It always takes the simple present tense form of the verb with 'to', viz, 'to get'.
- None of the other parts require a correction.

7. Social justice being multifaceted, / dealt with various aspects of human life and society, focusing on the preservation of the rights / of the handicapped, marginalized, and depressed people.

- I. Social justice be multifaceted,
- II. deals with various aspects of human life and society, focusing on the preservation of the rights
- III. of a handicapped, marginalized, and depressed people.

- 1) Only I
- 2) Only III
- 3) Only II
- 4) Both I and III
- 5) Both I and II

Correct Option: 3

Explanation:

- 'Dealt' is wrong since it is the past participle of the verb 'deal'. Since the structure of the sentence is in present, the verb should be 'deals'.

8. Many historians believe that/ most of the scientific advances believe to have been made in Europe/ had been achieved centuries ago in India.

- I. Many historians believe that
- II. most of the scientific advances believed to have been made in Europe
- III. had been achieved centuries ago in India

- 1) Only III

- 2) Only I
- 3) Only II
- 4) Both I and II
- 5) Both III and II

Correct Option: 3

Explanation:

- The error lies in the II part of the sentence. Since the structure of the second part of the sentence is in past tense, the word 'believe' should be replaced with its past tense 'believed'.

Directions: Choose the sentence from the given options that is grammatically correct. Note here that the context of the sentence should remain the same.

9. i. The state's new policy on tourism is suppose to give the investors a big advantage.
 ii. The state's new policy on tourism is supposed to give the investors a big advantage.
 iii. The state's new policy to tourism is suppose to give the investors a big advantage.
 iv. The state's new policy on tourism is to suppose to give the investors a big advantage.
 v. The state's new policy of tourism is suppose to give the investors a big advantage.

Correct Option: 2

Explanation:

- In the given sentences, the correct verb form is 'is supposed to'. This is only reflected in option 2.
10. i. She let the student whom caused the accident off the hook.
 ii. She let the student who cause the accident off the hook.
 iii. She let the student who has cause the accident off the hook.
 iv. She let the student who caused the accident of the hook.
 v. She let the student who caused the accident off the hook.

Correct Option: 5

Explanation:

- Let someone off the hook means to not hold someone responsible for something. Only 5 is grammatically correct.