Chapter 1
A few grammatical terms and what they mean

Sentence:
Sentence is a group of words, which makes a complete sense. A sentence has two parts. Subject and predicate.

Subject:
The person, thing or idea that performs the action in the verb (*do-er* of the verb) or shows the *being ness* in the verb (*be-er* of the verb) is the grammatical subject of the sentence.

E.g. *He* plays cricket. (*He* is the *do-er* of the verb, hence *He* is the subject)
He is a great cricketer. (*He* is the *be-er,* hence the subject)

E.g. *He* was awarded the Man of the Match by the ICB.

(*He* in a way shows the *being ness* of the verb 'was awarded', hence *He* is the *grammatical subject* of the sentence. This is the case in the passive voice; the grammatical subject may look like the beneficiary of the action performed by another agency and not appear to be the do-er or the be-er. The do-er or the be-er will then be the object of the preposition 'by' (the ICB). In the passive voice most sentences will make perfect sense without the 'by ...' phrase.

Predicate:
What is said about the subject is predicate.

E.g. Lovebirds *are parrots.*
Lovebirds *tend to sit close to their mates with their heads touching.*

The italicized part is the predicate in each case.

Phrase:
A group of words which makes sense but not complete sense.

E.g. *tend to sit close to their mates with their heads touching.*

Clause:
A group of words that makes sense and contains a predicate in itself, but is different from a sentence in that it still does not make complete sense.

E. g. *that tend to sit close to their mates with their heads touching.* ('tend to sit close to their mates with their heads touching' functions as a predicate though there is no subject.)

Parts of Speech:
The words in English are classified into eight groups depending on their function in a sentence.

(The key here is *function of a particular word in a sentence.* The same word can be of different parts of speech depending on its function in another sentence.)

The parts of speech are: Nouns, Pronouns, Verbs, Adjectives, Adverbs, Conjunctions, Prepositions and Interjections.

(Some authorities would not list ‘interjections’, but would list ‘determiners’, instead.). We will study determiners (*a, an, the, some,* etc.) under adjectives.

Chapter 2
Nouns

Grammar

A noun is a name. The moment we name something that exists or does not exist, that name becomes a noun. A noun is the name of a person, place, thing, or an idea.

A Proper Noun — names a specific person, place, or thing. A proper noun almost always begins with a capital letter.
E.g. Sachin, King Asoka, Far East, Delhi, India, God, Hindi, Hinduism, the Bharatiya Janata Party….

Common Nouns — name everything else. Common nouns usually are not capitalized.
E.g. man, city, nation, pen ….

Abstract Nouns — These are names of ideas and are theoretical and intangible.
E.g. information, anger, education, melancholy, softness, violence ….

Compound Nouns — These are combinations of different nouns.
E.g. girl friend, fish merchant, play ground …

Collective Nouns — These are nouns which can take a singular form but are composed of more than one individual person or items.
E.g. jury, team, class, committee, herd, flock

A Noun Phrase — A Noun phrase is frequently a noun accompanied by modifiers, is a group of related words acting as a noun.
E.g. the fee reduction proposal, the oil depletion allowance, the abnormal behaviour, hideously enlarged nose

A Noun Clause — A group of related words can act as a single noun-like entity within a sentence. A Noun clause contains a subject and verb and can do anything that a noun can do:

> *What he does to the street children* is a blessing.

Take a closer look at the following categories of nouns, as situations in competitive exams test your awareness of these.

Count Nouns — Simply, these can be counted
E.g. six *books,* a dozen *eggs,* many *players,* a few *mistakes,* some *coins*

Non-Count Nouns — Sometimes these are called Mass Nouns as it is not always possible to count them.
E.g. wood, cloth, ice, etc.

Usage Notes on Nouns

***'fewer mistakes'* or *'less mistakes'*?**
Which of the following sentences is correct?

She made *fewer* mistakes in her paper today
She made *less* mistakes in her paper today.

All count nouns will take *fewer*. All non-count nouns will take *less/lesser*.
Hence 'She made fewer mistakes in her paper today' is the correct sentence.

Count nouns are used with: *a, an, the; many, few/fewer, number; this, that, every, each, either, neither; these, those, some, any, enough, a number of.*

Non-count nouns are used with: *much, less/lesser, this, that, some, any, enough, amount of.*

***'some troubles'* or *'many troubles'*?**
We should note that some words can be either a count noun or a non-count noun depending on how they're being used in a sentence.

He got into *trouble*. (The noun *trouble* is used as an uncountable noun)
He had many *troubles*. (The noun *troubles* is here used as a countable noun)
Experience (non-count) is the best teacher.
We had many exciting *experiences* (countable) in college.

Whether these words are count or non-count will determine whether they can be used with articles (*a, an, the*) and determiners (*a few, some,* etc.) or not.

We would not write "He got into *the* troubles," but we could write about "*The* troubles of India".

Since 'some' as a determiner can precede both the countable and the uncountable nouns, both 'some troubles' and 'many troubles' are correct depending on the context.

***'foodstuff'* or *'foodstuffs'*?**
The categories of count and non-count nouns can be confusing at times. However, it doesn't take a genius to figure out if something is count or non-count if the context in which it is used is understood well.

Count nouns can be pluralized when appropriate. We can use expressions such as

many *pens*
few *pens*
a few *pens*

These nouns, both singular and plural, can be preceded by the appropriate definite and indefinite articles — *the* with both singular and plural, *a* or *an* with singular count-nouns.

Singular count nouns can be preceded by *this* and *that* and by *every, each, either,* and *neither.*

Plural count nouns can be preceded by *these* and *those* and by *some, any, enough,* and the zero article.

The phrase *number of* is accompanied by count nouns. Count nouns cannot be preceded by *much*.

The phrase *amount of* is also a sure sign that you are not dealing with a count noun.

Here is a list of Mass Nouns (non-count) for you to consider. Can you count any of these things? Do we use the plural form of any of these words in common speech and writing?

I. wood, cloth, ice, plastic, wool, steel…
II. water, milk, wine, beer, sugar, rice, meat, cheese, flour …
III. reading, boating, smoking, dancing, hockey, weather …
IV. Chinese, Spanish, English, luggage, equipment, furniture….

Generally, nouns under III and IV categories cannot be pluralized.

The non-count nouns of the second column (foodstuff) are pluralized when we use the word to express a 'type':

There are new *beers* being introduced every day. (types of beers)
The *waters* of the Atlantic are much warmer this time of year. (The Atlantic is presumed to be divided into different parts or seas.)
The Indians are famous for their *curries*.
The *rains* came early this year.
These *foodstuffs* are exceedingly rich in fat and can harm your heart.

All the above are good sentences. 'Foodstuff' belongs to the second type of mass nouns which depending on the context can take a plural form. Hence, both 'foodstuff' and 'foodstuffs' are correct depending on what you want to communicate.

***'Morning sunlight is healthful'* or *'The morning sunlight is healthful'*?**
We can use expressions such as

much *sunlight*
little *sunlight*
a little *sunlight*

It is appropriate to precede these nouns (II and III categories) with a definite or indefinite article.

the *sunshine*
an *experience*
a *beer*

But they frequently appear with zero article:

Smoking is bad for you.
Sugar is sweet.
Experience is the best teacher.
Sunlight is good for your skin.

These nouns can be preceded by *some, any, enough, this, that,* and *much*. You can now reason that with or without (zero) definite article 'sunlight …..' sentences have exactly the same meaning. Some of you would merely want the article because you are comfortable with the sound. However, both are correct.

Also, remember that because they are not countable, these nouns cannot be preceded by *these, those, every, each, either,* and *neither.*

***'… the friendship'* or *'… the friendships'*?**
Look at the list of these abstract nouns. Think about each category of abstract nouns. Can you count any of them? Can you create sentences in which some of these words can be used as plurals?

I. peace, warmth, hospitality, information, anger, education …
II. conduct, courage, leisure, knowledge, safety ….

III. speed, experience, time, friendship, trouble, work, culture …
IV. virtue, taste, evil, liberty, democracy, death, grief, piety …

Because they refer to ideas, concepts, it is difficult to see how abstract nouns can be pluralized. In fact, many of them cannot be.

The abstract nouns in I and II cannot be pluralized; the abstract nouns in III and IV can be.

The examples below discuss what happens to an abstract noun when it is pluralized.

The *griefs* of mankind are too much to bear.
She formed many *friendships* at college.
These are difficult *times*.

If you are sharp enough in your reading, you may have noticed that the words that precede these nouns (*the* griefs, *many* friendships, *these* times) indicate that what we say about the non-count nouns, above, can be said about abstract nouns.

The friendship that she formed with me is everlasting.
The friendships that she formed at college worked to her advantage.

Both are good sentences.

***'hair'* or *'hairs'*?**

If we conceive of the meaning of a noun as a continuum (range) from being specific to being general and abstract, we can see how it can move from being a count noun to a mass noun. Consider, for example, the noun *experiences*.

When I say, [
I had *many* pleasant *experiences* as a teacher.
I'm referring to specific, countable moments in my life as a teacher.

When I say,
This position requires *experience*.
I'm using the word in an abstract way; it is not something you can count; it's more like an idea, a general thing that people need to have in order to apply for this job.

If I write,
The *talks* will take place in Kohinoor Hall (these *talks* are countable events or lectures).

If I say,
I hate it when a meeting is nothing but *talk* (the word *talk* is now uncountable; I'm referring to the general, abstract idea of idle chatter).

Evils refers to specific sins — pride, envy, laziness, etc. are evils — whereas *evil* refers to a general notion of being bad or ungodly.

One more example: "I love the *works* of Beethoven" means that I like his symphonies, his string quartets, his concerti and sonatas, his choral pieces — all very countable things, works. "I hate *work*" means that I find the very idea of labour, in a general way, quite unappealing.

Notice that the plural form means something quite different from the singular form of this word; they're obviously related, but they're different. Apply this reasoning to *hair* and *hairs* you will see that both make perfect sense, but in different ways.

Almost all mass nouns can become count nouns when they are used in a classificatory sense:

They served some nice *beers*.
There were some real *beauties* in that class.
We had some serious *difficulties* in English.

But some things cannot be made countable or plural: we cannot have 'furnitures', 'informations', 'knowledges', 'softnesses', or 'chaoses'. When in doubt, consult a good dictionary.

Correct: He advised me several *times* on this project.
Correct: He gave me his *advice* on this project.
Incorrect: He gave me his *advices* on this project.
Incorrect: Please get me two *waters*. (two glasses of water)
Correct: I want an ice cream.
Correct: I want ice cream.

The first sentence refers to a specific ice cream but the second sentence means that the idea of eating ice cream appeals to me — any ice cream will do.

Study these examples for greater clarity about count and non-count nouns.

She had many *experiences*. Does she have enough *experience*?
The *lights* were bright. *Light* hurts my eyes.
Give me three *coffees*. I'd love some *coffee*.
We study *sugars* in organic chemistry. Put *sugar* in my coffee.
The *papers* were stacked on the table. We wrote on *paper*.

When a non-count noun is used to classify something, it can be treated as a count noun. And sometimes a noun will be either countable or non-countable and mean practically the same thing:

Correct: French *wine* is superb.
Correct: French *wines* are superb.
Correct: Your *hair* looks great.
Correct: Your *hair* looks great except for the several white *hairs*.

***'My family is always fighting'* or *'My family are always fighting'*?**

Collective Noun is the name of the same type of persons or things taken together and regarded as one entity. Collective Nouns referring to a living group (single-word nouns like *committee, jury, crew, family,* etc.) may be either singular or plural depending on their use in the sentence. Inanimate collective nouns (e.g. *furniture, luggage,* etc.) will take the singular verb only.

The crew *is* large (The workforce is large in number).
The crew *are* taken prisoners (The members of the crew are taken prisoners).

Both the above sentences are good. With collective nouns, when you think or imply *'members of ....'* use the plural verb. However, when the collective noun is of the form *'*a __ *of* ___*'* as in a 'a flock *of* sheep', living or non-living, always use the singular verb.

Correct: <u>A group of boys</u> *is* at the park.
Correct: <u>A bevy of beauties</u> *has* just entered the discotheque.

Both the above are good sentences.

Incorrect: <u>A group of boys</u> *are* at the park.
Incorrect: <u>A flock of sheep</u> *are* running helter-skelter.

Incorrect: <u>The crew</u> *is* taken prisoners.

The last sentence too is incorrect because the *crew* cannot be functioning as a unit because of the word 'prisoners'. What is meant is 'members of the crew *are* taken prisoners'. It is not necessary to use 'members of…..' all the time when you use such collective nouns. The plural verb is correct and sufficient to communicate that you are referring to the members and not to the collective unit as one entity.

More important, when the collective noun functions as 'members…' the singular verb will create an error. Or drastically change the meaning of the sentence. For example: 'The crew *is* large' means that the number of members is large. But, 'the crew *are* large' will mean 'the members of the crew are large (in size)', in other words the members of the crew are plump and corpulent. Study these sentences and try to see the reasoning for each one to be correct or incorrect.

Correct: My family *is* going for a vacation this summer.
Incorrect: My family *are* going for a vacation this summer.

Correct: My family *are* going to fight throughout the vacation.
Incorrect: My family *is* going to fight throughout the vacation.

Correct: My family *is* always fighting (against the others).
Correct: My family *are* always fighting (amongst themselves).

Study these sentences:

The staff *is* in a meeting.
The staff *are* in disagreement about the findings.
The luggage *has been* flown to a wrong destination.

Subject - Verb Agreement
Subjects are nouns/noun phrases/ noun clauses.

The basic rule is simple. It is: A singular subject takes a singular verb, while a plural subject takes a plural verb. The trick lies in identifying whether the subject is singular or plural.

First, identify the subject of the sentence. The question 'who?' put to the verb unfailingly gives you the subject of the sentence.
E.g. They *has/have* bought a new car. (Ask 'Who?' to the verb - Who *has/have*? Answer is 'They'. 'They' is the subject of the sentence. Now ascertain whether the subject is singular or plural. Make the verb agree in number. Singular verbs are: *is/was/has/takes*. Plural verbs are: *are/were/have/take*.)

As a general rule, use a plural verb with two or more subjects when they are connected by 'and'.

Correct: A car and a bike *are* my means of transportation.

But, not always,

Correct: Bread and jam *is* good for breakfast.
Correct: Rice and beans, my favourite dish, *reminds* me of my native Kannur.

When two subjects are only related by *either...or, neither.... nor, not(only) ... but(also), or* the verb will agree with the subject that is near to it.

Correct: Neither the manager nor his assistant *is* available.
Correct: Either she or I *am* getting the Best Student's Award.

Note: *Am* agrees with the subject close to it, *I.*

Correct: Neither the oceans nor the sea *is* dumping place for toxic waste.

[When you have a plural subject and a singular subject related by such (correlative) conjunctions, some authorities prefer that you put the plural subject close to the verb unless you have specific reason to use the singular subject close to the verb.]

When a singular subject is connected by *or* or *nor* to a plural subject, put the plural subject last and use a plural verb.

The book or the magazines *are* on the shelf.
Neither John nor the others *are* available.

Parenthetical Element between the subject and the verb

Sometimes the subject is separated from the verb by words such as *along with, as well as, besides, not,* etc. Ignore these words when determining whether to use a singular or plural verb.

The politician, *along with* the newsmen, *is* expected shortly.
Excitement, *as well as* nervousness, *is* the cause of her shaking.

Grammatically, these phrases/nouns following *as well as, in addition to, along with,* etc. are called 'parenthetical element'. Parenthetical elements are introduced using a preposition; what follows the preposition is not another subject, as may be the case with conjunctions. The verb agrees with the subject. The parenthetical element — separated from the subject using ( ), or commas, or hyphens — deemphasizes the information thus presented.

Incorrect: Amisha, as well as Sony, *were* present at the Silver Jubilee party.

As well as is preposition (used to bring in Sony). The subject is *Amisha* and hence the verb has to be singular.

Correct: Amisha, as well as Sony, *was* present at the Silver Jubilee party.
Correct: The boys, as well as the girls, *were* pleased by the teacher's remark. (The subject is 'The boys", which is plural.)

Study the construction of these sentences. Pay attention to the punctuation.

The boys, as well as the girls, *were* pleased by the teacher's remark.
Amisha (as well as Sony) *was* present at the Silver Jubilee party.
The father – along with his sons – *was* going for fishing.

Some singular subjects

The pronouns *each, everyone, everybody, anyone, anybody, someone, either, neither,* and *somebody* are always singular. Do not be misled by what follows 'of'.

Each of the girls *sings* well.
Every one of the cakes *is* gone.
Everyone in this batch *is* expecting a call from the IIMs.
Neither of them *is* available to speak right now.

Subject – Verb Agreement (a few more usage concerns)

With words that indicate portions — *per cent, fraction, part, majority, some, all, none, remainder,* etc. — you must look at what follows the 'of' to determine whether to use a singular or plural verb. If what follows *of* is singular, use a singular verb.

Fifty per cent of the population *is* against the government policy. (*Population* follows *of* and is singular hence the verb is the singular 'is')

But,

> Fifty per cent of the people *are* against the government policy. (The word 'people' that follows *of* is plural, hence the verb is plural 'are'.)

The words *here* and *there* are never subjects because they are not nouns. In sentences beginning with *here* or *there*, the true subject follows (comes after) the verb.

> There *are* four hurdles to jump.
> There *is* a high hurdle to jump.

Use a singular verb with sums of *money* or periods of *time.*

> Ten thousand rupees *is* a high price to pay.
> Five years *is* the maximum sentence for that offence.

If the pronoun *who, that,* or *which* appears as the subject in the middle of the sentence, you must decide whether to follow it with a singular or plural verb.

In order to decide, look at the noun immediately before the *who, that,* or *which*. If it is singular, use a singular verb. If it is plural, use a plural verb.

> She is the secretary who *writes* the letters.

The word in front of who is *secretary*, which is singular. Therefore, use the singular verb *writes*.

> He is one of the men who *do* the work.

The word in front of who is *men*, which is plural. Therefore, use the plural verb *do*.

Words such as *glasses (spectacles), pants, pliers,* and *scissors* are regarded as plural (and require plural verbs) unless they're preceded by the phrase 'pair of' (in which case the word 'pair' becomes the subject).

> My glasses *were* on the bed.
> A pair of cotton trousers *is* in the closet.

Some words end in 's' and appear to be plural but are really singular and require singular verbs.

> The *news* from Delhi *is* bad.
> *Politics is* the art of lying.

On the other hand, some words ending in 's' refer to a single thing but are nonetheless plural and require a plural verb.

> My <u>assets</u> *were* wiped out in the depression.
> The average worker's <u>earnings</u> *have* gone up dramatically.
> Our <u>thanks</u> *go* to the workers who supported the union.

But we have to look at the word 'economics' differently. It can take singular or plural verb depending on the situation

> Economics *was* one of the subjects at B.Com.
> The economics of the situation *demand* that we tighten our belts.

The expression 'more than one' (oddly enough) takes a singular verb:

> More than one student *has* tried this.

Sums and products of mathematical processes are expressed as singular and require singular verbs.

> Two and two *makes* four.
> Four times four divided by two *is* eight.

Some sentences can be tricky in that, the subjects in them can take both singular and plural verbs. Depending on the number of the verb, the meaning of the sentence changes.

Hence, in our eagerness for the correct form we should not be ruling out one or the other. But, we should consider the communication implied in them and choose the right verb.

As in:

My name and address *is* printed on the box.
His colleague and friend *deserves* equal credit.
(His *colleague and friend* is clearly the same person)

This sense of unity is not simply a stylistic flourish. Using a singular or plural verb changes the meaning of the sentence.

Keeping awake late in the night and working on the computer sometimes *gives* me a headache.

(The above sentence means that the combination of keeping awake late, and working on the computer can cause a headache.)

Keeping awake late in the night and working on the computer sometimes *give* me a headache.

(With a plural verb (give), the sentence implies that keeping awake late, and working on the computer, act separately; either can bring a headache.)

Subject Verb Agreement — 'None'
There is one indefinite pronoun, 'none', that can be either singular or plural. Use a plural verb unless something else in the sentence clearly determines its number.

Correct: None of you *claim* responsibility for this incident?

Incorrect: None of the students *has* done their homework.
Correct: None of the students *have* done their homework.

Incorrect: None of the luggage *have* reached us.
Correct: None of the luggage *has* reached us. ('luggage' determines the number.)

Revision Exercise

Do as directed in the brackets.

1. In the newspaper, an interesting article appeared. (Underline the subject of the sentence)
2. Across the road lived her boyfriend. (Underline the subject of the sentence)
3. Around every cloud is a silver lining. (Underline the subject of the sentence)
4. Neither he nor his brother are capable of such a crime. (Underline verb twice and subject once. If the verb does not agree with the subject, correct the verb.)
5. The teacher or student is going to appear on stage first. (Underline verb twice and subject once. If the verb does not agree with the subject, correct the verb.)
6. The mother duck, along with all her ducklings, swim so gracefully. (Underline verb twice and subject once. If the verb does not agree with the subject, correct the verb.)
7. Each of those games is exciting. (Underline verb twice and subject once. If the verb does not agree with the subject, correct the verb.)

8. The file, not the documents, were misplaced. (Underline verb twice and subject once. If the verb does not agree with the subject, correct the verb.)
9. Here is the three books you wanted. (Underline verb twice and subject once. If the verb does not agree with the subject, correct the verb.)
10. Five hundred rupees is/are all I am asking. (Strike out the inappropriate underlined word.)
11. Three-fourths/A of the pizzas/B have been eaten./C No error /D. (Spot the error. If there is an error, correct the sentence.)
12. The majority of the Parliament is/are Congressmen. (Strike out the inappropriate underlined word.)
13. Rohit /A is one of those students/B who is always ready./C No error /D. (Spot the error. If there is an error, correct the sentence.)
14. Every/A one of the dancers/B is very limber./C No error /D. (Spot the error. If there is an error, correct the sentence.)
15. The original document, as well as subsequent copies, was/were lost. (Strike out the inappropriate underlined word.)
16. Only forty per cent/A of the eligible voters/B is going to the polls./C No error /D. (Spot the error. If there is an error, correct the sentence.)
17. Almost all of the magazine is/are devoted to advertisements. (Strike out the inappropriate underlined word.)
18. Here is/are Manish and Mandar. (Strike out the inappropriate underlined word.)
19. Taxes on interest is/are still deferrable. (Strike out the inappropriate underlined word.)
20. Five rupees/A are all I have/B to my name./C No error /D. (Spot the error. If there is an error, correct the sentence.)

Chapter 3
Pronouns

Grammar

Generally (but not always) pronouns stand for (pro + noun) or refer to a noun (an individual or individuals or thing or things). What it refers to becomes the pronoun's **antecedent** whose identity is made clear earlier in the text.

Sheetal is a good girl. *She* does not hurt anyone.

But not always,

They say that eating beef is bad for you.

They is a pronoun referring to someone, but who are they? Cows? Whom do *they* represent? Sloppy use of pronouns is when the antecedent is not made clear.

However, not all pronouns will refer to an antecedent. When the meaning is clear the use is not sloppy or unfair.

Everyone here is appearing for CAT.

The pronoun *everyone* has no antecedent.

Kinds of Pronouns: Personal, Demonstrative; Indefinite; Relative; Reflexive; Intensive; Interrogative; Reciprocal. There are a few more. We will look at them too.

Personal Pronouns

I, You, He/She, It - (Singular) *We, You, They* (Plural) are personal pronouns. Depending on their function in a sentence they have **case,** as tabulated below. A noun 'cat' is also shown for comparison.

Cases of the Personal Pronouns

	Subjective Case	Possessive Case	Objective Case
Nouns			
Singular	cat	cat's	cat
Plural	cats	cats'	cats
Personal Pronouns			
Singular			
1st person	I	my, mine	me
2nd person	you	your, yours	you
3rd person	he, she, it	his, her/hers, its	him, her, it

Plural 1st person 2nd person 3rd person	 we you they	 our/ours your, yours their/theirs	 us you them
Relative and Interroga-tive Pronouns	Who Whoever Which/that/what	Whose	Whom Whomever Which/that/what
Indefinite Pronouns	Everybody	Everybody's	Everybody

Usage Notes on Pronouns

Unlike English nouns, which usually do not change form except for the addition of an 's' ending to create the plural or the apostrophe + s (Cat's) to create the possessive, personal pronouns (which stand for persons or things) change form according to their various uses in a sentence.

Thus *I* is used as the subject of a sentence (I am happy.), *me* is used as an object in various ways (He hit *me*, He gave *me* a book, Do this for *me*), and *my* is used as the possessive form (That's *my* car).

The same is true of the other personal pronouns: the singular *you* and *he/she/it* and the plural *you, they*, and *we*. These forms are called **cases.**

Personal pronouns can also be characterized or distinguished by person. First person refers to the speaker(s) or writer(s) ('I' for singular, 'we' for plural). Second person refers to the person or people being spoken or written to ('you' for both singular and plural). Third person refers to the person or people being spoken or written about ('he', 'she', and 'it' for singular, 'they' for plural).

The person of a pronoun is also demonstrated in the chart above — Cases of the Personal Pronouns. As you will see there, each person can change form, reflecting its use within a sentence. Thus, 'I' becomes 'me' when used as an object (She left *me*) and 'my' when used in its possessive role (That's *my* car); 'they' becomes 'them' in object form (I like *them*) and 'their' in possessive (That's just *their* way).

Subject and Object Pronouns

Object pronoun is used in two contexts:

1. As the object of a verb
2. As the object of a preposition.

As the object of the verb, which requires something else to complete its meaning. An example is:

He loves *her.*

(He *loves* what? — The verb needs an object to complete its meaning. If a pronoun is used, the object form is called for. The grammatical object is the answer to the question *what?* put to the verb.)

As the object of a preposition (which requires something else to complete its meaning — and prepositions will always require an object) an example is:

He is crazy after *her*.

He is crazy *after* what? — the preposition 'after' requires an object to complete the meaning of the sentence. If you use a pronoun, the object form is called for.

There are no other instances in English where an object pronoun is used.

Correct: Mandar is taller than Manish

Incorrect: He is taller than me.
Correct: He is taller than I.

In the first sentence you have two nouns — the object and the subject forms do not vary. In the second sentence you have two pronouns. The first one *He* is the subject, the second is neither the object of any verb, not is there a preposition in the sentence. The use of the object case cannot be justified. In fact, the second pronoun *I* is the subject of the abbreviated clause 'I am tall' that follows the conjunction *than*.

Which of these sentences is/are correct?

He would rather talk to her than I
He would rather talk to her than me.

Through these sentences what am I really trying to say? Am I trying to say, 'He would *rather talk to her than to me*' or am I saying that '*He would* rather talk to her t*han I would*'? As you can see, the meaning will change depending on the pronoun you choose. Both the above sentences are correct, only they mean different things.

***'It is I'* or *'It is me'*?**

What follows any form of the verb 'be' is called its complement. In other words, verbs -— *be, being, am, is, was, are, were, has, have, had* (forms of 'be') are followed by a complement and not an object. Hence, an object pronoun is a misuse after such verbs.

Correct: It is *I*
Incorrect: It is *me*.

You will get better clarity on this if you try to continue this sentence, like, 'It is *I* who came first'… or, 'It is me who came first…' etc. You will most probably see that it is ridiculous to continue '*me* who…'

More on Subject vs Object Pronouns

When a personal pronoun is connected by a conjunction to another noun or pronoun, its case does not change. We would write

I am taking a course in C++

If Priya is also taking that course, we would write

Priya and *I* are taking a course in C++

(Notice that Priya gets listed before 'I' does. This is one of the few ways in which English is a 'polite' language.)

The same is true when the object form is called for:

Professor Srinivas gave all his books to *me.*

If Priya also received some books, we'd write:

Professor Srinivas gave all his books to Priya and *me*.

When a pronoun and a noun are combined (which will happen with the plural first- and second-person pronouns), choose the case of the pronoun that would be appropriate **if the noun were not there.**

We students are demanding that the administration give us two hours for lunch.
The administration has managed to put *us students* in a bad situation.

With the second person, we don't really have a problem because the subject form is the same as the object form, 'you':

You students are demanding too much.
We expect *you students* to behave like adults.

The difference between *'my'* and *'mine'*

Among the possessive pronoun forms, there is also what is called the nominative possessive: *mine, yours, ours, theirs.*

This house is *yours.*
Theirs is really dirty.
Ours is beautiful
This new house is *mine*.

The difference between the two types of possessives (refer to the table) e.g. *my* and *mine* is that one (*my*) will always precede the noun (as in *my* book) and the other (*mine*) will always follow the noun (.. book is *mine*).

This is *my* pen.
This pen is *mine.*

Words like, *my, our* …, etc. also qualify the nouns. They serve two purposes. They are used instead of nouns and they qualify certain nouns. Therefore, besides being pronouns they are also termed as possessive adjectives or pronominal adjectives.

The difference between *Possessive adjective* and a *Possessive pronoun* can be easily understood in the above two sentences.

***'this'* and *'that'* grammatically**

this/that/these/those/such are called demonstrative pronouns. They can also function as determiners.

As pronouns, they identify or point to nouns.

That is incredible! (referring to something you just saw)
I will never forget *this*. (referring to a recent experience)
Such is my belief. (referring to an explanation just made)

When used as subjects, the demonstratives, in either singular or plural form, can be used to refer to objects as well as persons.

This is my father.
That is my book.

who/whoever/which/that

The relative pronouns (*who/whoever/which/that*) relate groups of words to nouns or other pronouns

The student *who studies hardest* usually does the best.

The word *who* 'connects or relates' the subject, student, to the verb (studies). That is why they are called relative pronouns.

Choosing correctly between *which* and *that* and between *who* and *whom* leads to what are probably the most Frequently Asked Questions about English grammar.

Generally, we use *which* to introduce clauses that are parenthetical in nature (i.e., *that* can be removed from the sentence without changing the essential meaning of the sentence). For that reason, a 'which' clause is often set off with a comma or a pair of commas. 'That' clauses, on the other hand, are usually deemed indispensable for the meaning of a sentence and are not set off with commas. The pronoun *which* refers to things; *who* (and its forms) refers to people; *that* usually refers to things, but it can also refer to people in a general kind of way. With this preamble let us look at the usage concerns about *who, that,* and *which*.

***'who', 'which',* or *'that'*?**

Who refers to people. *That* and *which* refer to groups or things.

Roy is the professor *who* teaches us quant.
She belongs to an organization *that* specializes in information systems.

That introduces essential clauses while *which* introduces nonessential clauses.

I do not like Hindi movies *that* are copies of English movies.

We would not know which Hindi movies are being discussed without the clause (copies of English movies). It would be gross injustice to say that the speaker does not like Hindi movies. He dislikes only the copies. '*That'* clauses are hence *essential clauses*.

To understand the use of *which,* clearly read the above sentence with *which* and work out the meaning.

I do not like Hindi movies, *which* are copies of English movies.

That the speaker does not like Hindi movies at all is what the sentence suggests. It is as if the reason for his dislike is that they are copies of English movies. Besides, '*which'* clause can also be separated from the other clause by a comma. The comma is not possible with the '*that'* clause.

If *that* has already been used in the sentence, use *which* to introduce the essential clause that follows.

Correct: That is a decision *which* you must live with for the rest of your life.
Incorrect: That is a decision *that* you must live with for the rest of your life.

If the essential clause starts with *this, that, these,* or *those,* use *which* to connect.

Correct: Those ideas *which* were discussed on Tuesday will be put in the minutes of the meeting.
Incorrect: Those ideas *that* were discussed on Tuesday will be put in the minutes of the meeting.

However, if you have an option which begins, 'The ideas discussed on Tuesday…..' choose it for your answer.

'whoever'* and *'whomever'

The expanded form of the relative pronouns — *whoever, whomever, whichever, whatever* — are known as indefinite relative pronouns. Read these examples to understand why they are called indefinite.

Correct: The IIMs select *whomever* they like.
Correct: The teacher seemed to say *whatever* came to mind.
Correct: *Whoever* crosses this line first will win the race.

To choose correctly among the forms of *who*, re-phrase the sentence so you choose between *he* and *him*. If you want *him*, write *whom*; if you want *he*, write *who*.

Whom did you meet at the Seminar? (Did you meet *him* at the Seminar?)
Give the prize to *whomever* you please. (Give the prize to *him*.)

But a peculiar problem arises when the rephrasing can be done in both ways.

The IIMs issue calls to *whomever/whoever* has cleared the CAT.

First of all, use the *ever* suffix when *who* or *whom* can fit into two clauses in the sentence. Rephrasing it with *he/him*, you get

The IIMs issue calls to *him*. *He* has cleared the CAT.

Because we can substitute 'him' and 'he' in both the clauses, we must use the 'ever' suffix. Now, to determine whether to use *whoever* or *whomever,* follow this rule: *him + he = whoever; him + him = whomever*

Therefore,

Correct: The IIMs issue calls to *whoever* has cleared the CAT.

We will hire *whoever/whomever* you recommend.

Rephrasing you get,

We will hire *him*. You recommend *him*.
Correct: We will hire *whomever* you recommend.

***'every one'* or *'everyone'*?**

The indefinite pronouns *(everybody/anybody/somebody/all/each/every/some/none/one)* do not substitute for specific nouns but function themselves as nouns. Barring *all, some* and *none* all these pronouns will take a singular verb.

Correct: Everyone *is* eagerly awaiting the CAT.

Though 'everyone' feels plural a plural verb creates an error with 'every'. (Everybody *is* present.). Think of it as 'every single one'.

When you use 'everyone' it means 'everybody'. When you use 'every one…' it is followed by *of*. '*Every one of* the boys… '.

The indefinite pronoun *none* can be either singular or plural, depending on its context. None is nearly always plural except when something else in the sentence makes us regard it as a singular, as in 'None of the food is fresh.' (See subject-verb agreement 'none' Chapter 2)

Some can be singular or plural depending on whether it refers to something countable or non-countable.

Correct: *Some students* were not present
Correct: *Some* of the *milk* has been spilt.

With *some* what follows the *of* will decide whether the verb is singular or plural.

***'anyone'* or *'any one'*?**

The usage issue related to 'Anyone' and 'any one' is different from that of 'everyone' and every one of…' though they have a lot in common. First, *any* can take either a singular or plural verb depending on how it is construed:

Correct: *Any* of these boys *is* good enough for the leader's post.
Correct: *Are any* of these boys good enough for the leader's post? (here the meaning is 'are *some* of these boys')

Anyone like 'everyone' is always singular. *Anyone* and *anybody* are singular terms and always take a singular verb.

The one word *anyone* means any individual. Or anybody.

Anyone may enter the class (means any person can enter the class)
Any one may enter the class (means any one person only may enter the class)

When followed by *of*, as it should be after separating *any* and *one* see the difference in meaning. Now, study these sentences for better clarity.

Correct: Any one of the girls (not *anyone*) could have reported the matter.
Correct: Have any of the girls (some) reported the matter?
Correct: Any one of the classes (CL, IMS, CF…) is enough.
Correct: Are any seats available?

'myself'

The self-pronoun *(myself, yourself, herself, ourselves, themselves)* have two names: Emphatic (intensive) Pronouns and Reflexive Pronouns. Though the form is the same it gets different names because the functions are different.

The emphatic or intensive pronouns is used to add emphasis to the noun.

I *myself* don't know the answer
He has completed the work *himself*.

Reflexive Pronouns are used to indicate that the **subject also receives the action of the verb**. In other words the action in the verb reflects to the subject.

Correct: *Students* who cheat in this exam are only fooling *themselves*.
Correct: You can congratulate *yourself*.
Correct: She encouraged *herself* to do well.

What this means is that whenever there is a reflexive pronoun in a sentence there must be a person to whom that pronoun can 'reflect'. In other words, if the reflexive pronoun has nothing to reflect to that sentence will be incorrect.

Incorrect: Please hand that book to *myself* (there is no "I" in that sentence for the "myself" to reflect to).

Incorrect: Manish and *myself* are responsible for this decision.
Correct: Manish and *I* are responsible for this decision.

Incorrect: These decisions will be made by *myself*.
Correct: These decisions will be made by *me*.

When pronouns are combined, the reflexive will take either the first person

Manish, Srinivas, and I have deceived *ourselves* into believing in my uncle.

or, when there is no first person, the second person:

You and Manish have deceived *yourselves*.

The difference between *'which'* and *'what'*

The interrogative pronouns *(who/which/what)* introduce questions.

> *What* is that?
> *Who* will help me?
> Which do you prefer?

Which is generally used with more specific reference than *what*. If we're taking a quiz and I ask "*Which* questions give you the most trouble?", I am referring to specific questions on that quiz. If I ask "*What* questions give you most trouble"? I could be asking what kind of questions on that quiz (or what kind of question, generically, in general) gives you trouble.

'each other'* and *'one another'

The reciprocal pronouns are *each other* and *one another.* They are convenient forms for combining ideas.

> My mother and I give *each other* a hard time.

If more than two people are involved (let's say a family of six members), we would say that they gave *one another* a hard time.

This rule (if it is one) should be applied cautiously. It's quite possible for a whole lot of students in a book club to exchange books between individuals, making 'each other' just as appropriate as 'one another'.

Reciprocal pronouns can also take possessive forms:

> They borrowed *each other's* ideas.
> The students in Career Launcher often use *one another's* books.

On the uses of *one*

As a pronoun, *one* can function in an impersonal, objective manner, standing for the writer or for all people who are like the writer or for the average person or for all people who belong to a class.

> If *one* fails, *one* must try harder next time.

When the pronoun one is used in the numerical sense, a different pronoun can be used in a subsequent reference.

> *One* [student] pulled out *her* kerchief and offered it to him.

However, it is generally regarded as a bad idea to mix the impersonal or generic pronoun *one* with another pronoun, especially in the same sentence.

> Incorrect: If *one* fails, then *he/you* must simply try harder.

One's Reflexive and Possessive Forms

> Correct: *One* must be conscientious about *one's* dental hygiene.
> Correct: *One* must learn from *one's* mistakes.
> Incorrect: *One* must be clear about *his or her* career goal.

Oneself is used in formal writing and speech as the proper reflexive form of one:

> If *one* slipped on this icy walk, *one* could hurt *oneself* badly.

The phrases *one in* and *more than one* always take a singular verb:

> *One in* four professors *recommends* this textbook.
> There *is more than one* reason for this.

More than one boy has lost his heart to this girl.

Obviously, the *one* in the phrase *more than one* controls the number of the verb. (Did someone tell you that English is sometimes illogical? There *is* more than one reason to agree.)

Note: The indefinite 'one' is another source of trouble and is frequently the cause of disagreeable scenes. Such a sentence as 'One loves *one's* friends' is considered by some persons to be stilted, and such persons insist that '*One* loves his friends' is permissible. **It is not permissible,** however, because 'one' is indefinite and 'his' is definite and the combination is rhetorically impossible.

A few more usage issues

Pronouns never need apostrophes to show the possessive, though all other nouns need them. (*mine, yours, his, hers, its, ours, theirs*). The confusion is mainly with *it's* and *its*. *It's* is a contraction of 'it is' or 'it has'.

Correct: *It's* a holiday tomorrow. (It is a holiday …..)
Correct: The thermometer reached *its* highest reading. (possessive)

Agreement in number of the pronouns

The inconsistency in the number (singular/plural) of pronoun use arises mostly when students use the possessive form.

Incorrect: Not one of the neighbours offered *their* support.
Correct: None of the neighbours offered their support. OR
Correct: Not one of the neighbours offered support.
Incorrect: In the beginning *everyone* has problems setting up *their* personal computer.
Correct: In the beginning everyone has problems setting up *his/her* personal computer.

Revision Exercise

Choose the correct pronoun. Strike off the wrong word.

1. It was she/her at the window.
2. Payal and she/her have quit CL.
3. They asked he/him and I/me to join the academic team.
4. That call was for I/me, not he/him.
5. An invitation was sent for he/him and she/her.
6. I am as willing as he/him to work hard.
7. Rohit is more nervous than she/her.
8. It will be we/us who decide on this matter.
9. If you were I/me, would you accept the job?
10. One must have faith in himself/herself/ oneself.
11. She is the woman who/whom we employed last year.
12. Of who/whom were you speaking?
13. Who/whom do you think will do the work best?
14. I will vote for whoever/whomever you suggest.
15. Give the information to whoever/whomever requests it.
16. Tonight we shall find out whoever/whomever won.
17. We intend to notify whoever/whomever ranks highest on the list.

18. These are a few good politicians who/whom I feel, you should acknowledge.
19. The prize will be given to whoever/whomever writes the best essay.
20. Give the recipe for the vegetarian chilli to whoever/whomever calls for it.
21. Books have been discovered that/which address the horrors of Auschwitz.
22. That book about Auschwitz, that/which was discovered in the basement of the library, will be published next year.
23. That is a book that/which I have not yet read.
24. The law that/which banned logging sandalwood began at the grassroots level.
25. The law to ban logging sandalwood, that/which began at the grassroots level, has gained the attention of lawmakers at the national level.

Chapter 4
Verbs

Grammar

Verb shows *mental or physical action* (of the subject):

He *leads* a quiet life.
She *runs* fast.

Verb shows *being* (of the subject): She *is* fast
Verb shows (subject) *being acted upon*: The book *was written* in the19th century.

When the action of the verb passes over from the subject to the object, it is called a **transitive** verb.
E.g. She *sings* a song. (The action of the subject 'sings' passes over to the object 'a song'.

When it does not happen the verb is **intransitive.**
E.g. The child *weeps.*

When the action of the subject passes over to itself the verb becomes **reflexive.**
E.g. We *enjoyed* ourselves.

Some verbs may not require an object, but remain incomplete in meaning without something else to complete their meaning. What completes their meaning is called a **complement.** Such verbs are called **Linking** (or **Copulative**) Verbs.
E.g. She *appears* honest.

There are certain words like *be, have, shall, will,* etc. which occur with other verbs. These are called auxiliary verbs.

The functions of the verb are to indicate *the Tense, the Mood,* and *the Voice* (active and passive).

Usage Notes on Verbs

Verbs carry the idea of 'being' or 'action' in the sentence.

She *is* a teacher.
The students *passed* all their tests.

Verbs are classified in many ways depending on their function in the context of the sentence.

Transitive verbs require an object while *intransitive* verbs do not.

She *gave* ----- cannot be complete unless we are told *she gave* what? She gave *money* completes the sentence and the sense of the verb. *Money* is the *object* of the verb *gave.*

She cried is complete and does not require an object. *Cried* is intransitive.

That horrid music gave me *a headache.*

Verbs are also classified as either *finite* or *non-finite.* A finite verb makes an assertion or expresses a state of being and can stand by itself as the main verb of a sentence.

The truck *demolished* the restaurant.

The leaves *were* yellow and sickly.

Non-finite verbs (think 'unfinished') cannot, by themselves, be main verbs:

The *broken* window . . .
The *wheezing* gentleman . . .

Another, more useful term for non-finite verb is *verbal*. Various verbal forms are: *infinitives, gerunds,* and *participles*.

Gerunds

A verb + *ing* (*swimming*) is called a gerund when it functions like a *noun*.

Swimming (gerund) like any other noun, is the name of an exercise/sport. A gerund can do all that a noun does.

Walking might suit your need for exercise. (subject of the sentence)
They praised my *singing*. (Object of *praise*)
His favourite activity is *sleeping*. (Complement of *is*)
The police arrested him for *speeding*. (Object of the preposition *for*)

Notice that in all the above sentences you can substitute the gerunds with nouns.
E.g. The police arrested him for *theft.*

Incorrect: My mom is worried about *me travelling* alone to Delhi.

Try to substitute the gerund (travelling) with a noun, e.g. 'me thanks'. It is not possible. 'my thanks' makes better sense. Hence, it is not possible to precede a gerund (noun) with the object form of the pronoun, you need a possessive form.

Correct: My mom is worried about *my travelling* alone to Delhi.
Correct: You might get in trouble for *faking* an illness to avoid work.

(The gerund *faking* functions as the object of the preposition *for.*)

Study these sentences:

Telling her the reason was a mistake.
CL recommends *sending* your applications early.
He converted the call by *scoring* well in GD and PI.
Her most important achievement was *winning* the gold medal
Fighting for a losing cause made them depressed.

Participles

A verb + *ing* (*swimming*) is called a participle when it functions like *an adjective. 'Swimming'* functions like an adjective in a sentence like, 'The *swimming* dog tried to reach the *glowing* toy.' A participle can do all that an adjective does.

In order to prevent confusion, a participial phrase must be placed as close to the noun it modifies as possible, and the noun must be clearly stated.

Incorrect: Looking out of the window, her eyes were blinded by the light.
Correct: *Looking out of the window, she* was blinded by the light.

In the first sentence there is no clear indication of who or what is performing the action expressed in the participle *looking.* Certainly, *her eyes* can't be logically understood to function in this way (*her eyes* can't

be looking out of the window, but *she* was). This situation is an example of a *dangling modifier* (which is explained again in a later chapter). The modifier (the participial phrase) is not modifying any specific noun in the sentence and is left 'dangling'. Since a person must be doing the *looking* for the sentence to make sense, a noun or pronoun that refers to a person must be in the place immediately after the participial phrase, as in the second sentence.

Punctuation of participial phrases: Study these sentences which are correctly punctuated. Notice the use of the commas in each case.

Correct: Arriving at the store, I found that it was closed.
Correct: The boy, watching an old movie, drifted in and out of sleep.
Correct: The guy wearing the chicken costume is my cousin. (Note that if the participial phrase is essential to the meaning of the sentence, no commas should be used.)

There are two types of participles: *present participles* and *past participles.*

Present participles end in *-ing. – Swimming*

Past participles end in *-ed, -en, -d, -t* or *-n,* as in the words corner*ed*, shak*en,* deal*t,* etc.

Cornered by the lawyer's questions, the convict spoke the truth.
Shaken, he walked away from the scene of crime.

Study these sentences: (pay attention to the way they are punctuated – the presence or the absence of the comma)

The *overloaded* vehicle stopped midway.
Facing college standards, the students realized that they hadn't worked hard enough in high school.
Starting out as an army officer Karan's father was frequently transferred.
Applicants must investigate various colleges *learning* as much as possible about them before *applying* for admission.
The convict, *cornered* by the lawyer's questions, revealed all the information.

Infinitives
to + verb is called an infinitive. E.g. *to seek.*

The term verbal indicates that an infinitive, like the other two kinds of verbals, is based on a verb and therefore expresses action or a state of being. Although an infinitive is easy to locate because of the to + verb form, deciding what function it has in a sentence can sometimes be confusing. (However, the infinitive may function as a subject, direct object, subject complement, adjective, or adverb in a sentence.) Study these sentences and notice the function of the infinitives.

To wait seemed foolish. (subject)
Everyone wanted *to go.* (direct object)
His ambition is *to fly.* (subject complement)
He lacked the strength *to resist.* (adjective)
We must study *to learn.* (adverb)

Be sure not to confuse an infinitive with a *prepositional phrase* beginning with *to,* which consists of *to* plus a noun or pronoun and any modifiers,
e.g. *to him, to the committee, to my house, to the mountains, to us, to this address,* etc.

Split infinitives:
Split infinitives are when additional words are included between *to* and the 'verb' in an infinitive (e.g. *to quickly go*). This is not accepted by some authorities. Hence, choose an option without the split infinitive if it is available. However, it may be necessary to split the infinitive in a sentence like this:

Correct: He was able *to* more than *double* his salary in one year.
Incorrect: I like *to* on a nice day *walk* in the woods.
Correct: On a nice day, I like *to walk* in the woods.

Gerunds and Participles
The use of gerund or participle can change the meaning of sentences

Correct: He was not impressed with *their competing.* (The competing did not impress him. It is used as a gerund hence *their*.)
Correct: He was not impressed with *them competing.* (They did not impress him as they competed.) Do not immediately spot an error because you see *them competing. Competing* is used as a participle to convey *as they competed.*)

Gerunds and Infinitives
Gerund: *swimming*
Infinitive: *to swim*

Their functions overlap. You know that gerunds function as nouns. Infinitives function as nouns too along with many other functions. The overlap should not confuse you. Deciding which to use can be confusing in many situations.

Some verbs take *only gerunds* and some others *only infinitives,* and still some others *both.* The confusion can be endless on a grammatical plane, but in the context of the sentence you are working with, it may not be so daunting a task to understand the reasoning. I can try to help.

Study these sentences and try to understand why the incorrect sentences do not make sense.

Correct: I *hope to go* on a vacation soon.
Incorrect: I *hope going* on a vacation soon.

Correct: She *promised to go* on a diet.
Incorrect: She *promised going* on a diet.

Correct: They always *avoid drinking* before driving.
Incorrect: They always *avoid to drink* before driving.

Correct: I *recall asking* her that question.
Incorrect: I *recall to ask* her that question.

Study these sentences and try to work out the difference in meaning.

Correct: She has *continued to work* at the store.
Correct: She has *continued working* at the store. (meaning is different)

Correct: They *like to go* to the movies.
Correct: They *like going* to the movies. (meaning is different)

The difference in meaning is that *to go* indicates a potential event ('potential, hypothetical, or future events') while *going* indicates an actual event.
E.g. *I like to swim* can be uttered by a person who does not know swimming at all (potential event). But *I*

like swimming can be said only by a person who knows swimming (actual event). You have to reason with this a little more to understand it fully. I only promised *to help.*

Forget and remember

These two verbs change meaning depending on whether a gerund or infinitive is used as the object.

She forgot to do her homework. (She didn't do her homework.)
She forgot doing her homework. (Se did it, but she didn't remember.)

She remembers to do her homework. (She regularly remembers.)
She remembers doing her homework. (She did it, and remembers now.)

Certain verbs (*feel, hear, see, smell,* etc.) take an object followed by either a gerund or a simple verb (infinitive form minus the word *to*). With many of the verbs that follow the object, the use of the gerund indicates continuous action while the use of the simple verb indicates a one-time action. Still, sometimes the simple verb can indicate continuous action if one-time action wouldn't make sense in the context.

Study these examples. Try to figure out the difference in meaning.

Correct: We heard him *quarrelling* with the neighbour. (continuous action)
Correct: We heard him *quarrel* with the neighbour. (one-time action)
Correct: We heard the victim *shouting* for help. (continuous action)
Correct: We heard the victim *shout* for help. (one-time action)

Linking Verbs

A linking verb connects a subject and its complement. Sometimes called *copulas*, linking verbs are often forms of the verb *to be* (*is, was, has, have, will be*) and sometimes verbs related to the senses *(look, sound, smell, feel, taste)* and sometimes verbs that somehow reflect a state of being *(appear, seem, become, grow, turn, prove, remain).*

He *remains* calm.
Those professors *are* brilliant.
This room *smells* bad.
I *feel* great.
She has *grown* prettier.

Since what follows the linking verb is either a *noun* complement or *an adjective* complement, avoid using the linking verb in the continuous form. Sometimes it becomes ridiculous in meaning. At times it changes the meaning drastically.

Correct: She *is* pretty.
Correct: She *looks* pretty.
Incorrect: She is *looking* pretty.

Passive and Active Voices

Verbs are also said to be either *active voice*

The panel *approved* the fee reduction.

or *passive voice*

The fee reduction was approved by the panel.

In the active voice, the subject and verb relationship is straightforward: the subject is a *be-er* or a *do-er,* and the verb moves the sentence along.

In the passive voice, the subject of the sentence is neither a *do-er* or a *be-er,* but *is acted upon* by some other agent or by something unnamed. (The fee reduction *was approved.*)

There seems to be some intolerance against, or at least some uncertainty about the passive voice. The software I am keying this article in is able to pick out a passive voice from miles away, and constantly asks me to consider revising it. It is not always necessary to revise the passive voice. Passive is, at times, wordy and unnecessary. The passive looks like the language of the politicians ('the high command was informed….' Who informed the high command?), and the active like the voice of the professional (You will report directly to the CEO). In the active voice your text will have more life. Passive verb constructions tend to lie about and do nothing!

The overabundance of the passive in our language created by business interests, politicians who do not want to accept or attribute any responsibility, educators hiding behind a façade, and bombastic writers probably have created this mind block against the passive.

To be brief, use the active voice to make your language livelier. But, the passive voice has its place in the language. It is its misuse that you have to guard against.

At a political press briefing we might hear that "The PM was advised that certain members of Lok Sabha were being audited" rather than "The Head of the Income Tax Department advised the PM that his agency was auditing certain members of Lok Sabha" because the passive construction avoids responsibility for advising and for auditing.

Do not mix active and passive in the same sentence.

Incorrect: The executive committee approved the new policy, and the calendar for next year's meetings was revised.

Correct: The executive committee approved the new policy and revised the calendar for next year's meeting.

The passive is particularly useful (even suggested) in two situations:

1. When it is more important to draw our attention to the person or thing acted upon:
   The professor *was killed* in the early hours on Thursday.

2. When the actor in the situation is not important:
   The eclipse *can be observed* between 2 and 3 p.m.

This is especially so in technical writing where the process is more important than the actor. Instead of writing "I poured 20 cc of acid into the beaker," we would write "Twenty cc of acid is/was poured into the beaker."

We use the passive voice to good effect in a paragraph in which we wish to shift emphasis from what was the object in a first sentence to what becomes the subject in subsequent sentences.

> The executive committee approved an entirely new policy for dealing with academic suspension and withdrawal. The policy had been written by a subcommittee on student behaviour. If students withdraw from course work before suspension can take effect, the policy states, a mark of 'IW' ...

The paragraph is clearly about this new policy, so it is appropriate that policy move from being the object in the first sentence to being the subject of the second sentence. The passive voice allows for this transition.

It is, however, important to know the verb forms in the passive.

Tense	Subject	Auxiliary		Past Participle
		Singular	Plural	
Present	The book/books	is	are	distributed
Present perfect	The book/books	has been	have been	distributed
Past	The book/books	was	were	distributed
Past perfect	The book/books	had been	had been	distributed
Future	The book/books	will be	will be	distributed
Future perfect	The book/books	will have been	will have been	distributed
Present progressive	The book/books	is being	are being	distributed
Past progressive	The book/books	was being	were being	distributed

Indicative, Imperative, and Subjunctive Moods

Verbs indicate three moods: *Indicative, Imperative* and *Subjunctive.*

Most of the language is in the indicative mood.

I *am* tired.
She *will help* me out.

Imperative mood is when a request or a command is expressed.

Give me some rest.
Help me!

(The understood subject in the imperative is 'you')

The subjunctive mood is when the verb shows something contrary to fact.

If Gandhiji *were alive*... (Implied: ...but he's not.)
I wish I *were* a millionaire.

The subjunctive mood is used to express a wish; to express a condition that does not exist (is contrary to fact); to describe a speculation or condition contrary to fact; and to express a demand, requirement, request, or suggestion. (*if, as if, as though, wish,* etc. in combination with the *were,* or past perfect forms of the verb are used to construct the subjunctive)

Study the following sentences as examples of what is stated above.

She *wishes* her husband were alive.
If he were a little taller, he could have joined the basketball team.
We *would have passed if we had studied harder.*

He acted *as if* he were innocent.
We requested that Manish *be called* and *take* all our lectures.

The present tense of the *subjunctive* uses only the base form of the verb.

Manish suggested that they *request* Amitabh
She suggested that we *be* on time tomorrow.

Phrasal Verbs (Idioms)

Sometimes (more often than not) verbs are followed by a preposition or adverb and create a meaning that is totally different form the meaning of the constituent words (e.g. *to look after* means to take care of). These two-part verbs, also called phrasal verbs. (Remember they are different from verbs with helpers – phrasal verbs are idioms).

Phrasal verbs are an area of test in most competitive examinations. The way to master the idioms (remember, English is said to be a highly idiomatic language) is to read well and to master them in the contexts. You must have a good dictionary at hand.

The problem with phrasal verbs is that their meaning is often, at first, obscure, and they often mean several different things. *To make out,* for instance, can mean *to perceive* or *to see* something; it can also mean *to engage in light sexual play. 'To make out'*, we are told, has ten different meanings (Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary).

Verbs combine with different prepositions and other words, sometimes with dizzying effect: *stand* combines with *out, up, in, off, by, fast, pat, down, against, for* and connote different meanings. Use a dictionary to research. Your mastery of the phrasal verbs or idioms tells me how much English you really know!

In a *phrasal verb,* the word added to the verb is called its *particle.*

The tests include usage issues related to your awareness of meaning of phrasal verbs and their correct use, e.g. some *particles* can be separated from the verb so that a noun and pronoun can be inserted, and some particles can't be separated from the verb. In addition, some phrases are intransitive, meaning they cannot take a direct object. These are briefly illustrated below. It is not possible, within the framework of this book, to list or to examine phrasal verbs in detail. That must become your homework.

add up (to add) – Separable

Correct: She *added up* the total in her notebook.
Correct: She *added* it *up* in her notebook.

get around (to evade) – Inseparable

Correct: She always *gets around* the rules.
Incorrect: She always *gets* the rules *around*.

catch on (to understand) – Intransitive (cannot take direct object)

Correct: After I explained the maths problem, she began to *catch on.*

Incorrect: She began to *catch on the maths problem.* (*catch on* cannot take a direct object in this meaning.)

Correct: She began to *catch on <u>to</u> the maths problem.* (the word *to* makes the maths problem an indirect object, which is acceptable in this meaning.)

Unfortunately, there is usually no indicator whether an idiomatic phrase is separable, inseparable, or intransitive. In most cases the phrases must simply be memorized.

Some other usage issues

There are certain verbs in English which designate the action to cause another to happen.

The verb 'tell' belongs to this class. That is why, sometimes, a sentence for error spotting is given as *He told to sit*.... This is not acceptable. (*He told us to sit* - is acceptable) These verbs (called causative verbs) are followed by an object (noun or pronoun and then by an infinitive, or the base form of the verb.

Here is a brief list of causative verbs: *help, allow, have, let, require, motivate, get, make, convince, hire, assist, encourage, permit, employ, force, allow* ... there are more.

Correct: She *allows* her daughter *to stay* out late.
Correct: She *let* her daughter *skip* the final exam.

Still some other verbs take two objects (at least seems to) The name given to these is *factitive verbs.* You have to understand these special constructions.

Correct: The survey *named* IIM(A) the best B-School in India. (where IIM(A) is the direct object and 'the best B-School..' is the second complement).
Correct: Satya *appointed* Amitabh the Regional Manager.

Tenses

Tenses have a *form* (present simple, etc.) and a *time of action(or being).* This is what you have to understand about the Tenses in English. Acquire some clarity on these by studying the chart below.

The form of the tense is in the top blue band. On the left hand are the various *time* implied by this *form.* On the right are example sentences.

Simple Present	
Present Action or Condition	I *understand* what you are saying.
General Truths	The sun *rises* in the east.
Non-action; Habitual Action	She *likes* swimming. She *washes* her hair everyday.
Future Time	The show *starts* at 6 p.m. tomorrow.

Present Continuous	
Activity in Progress	He *is driving.*
Verbs of Perception	She *is feeling* lonely.

Simple Past	
Completed Action	I *took* the test yesterday.
Completed Condition	The club was *inaugurated* last year.

Past Continuous	
Past Action that took place over a period of time	It *was raining* for seven days.
Past Action interrupted by another	It *was raining* when they arrived.

Future	
With *will/won't* — Activity or event that will or won't exist or happen in the future	I *will get up* early tomorrow. I *won't get up* early.
With *going to* — future in relation to circumstances in the present	I'm hungry. I am *going to* get something to eat.

Present Perfect	
With verbs of state that begin in the past and lead up to and include the present	He *has lived* in Mumbai for many years.
To express habitual or continued action	He *has worn* glasses all his life.
With events occurring at an undefined or unspecified time in the past — with ever, never, before	*Have* you ever *been* to Mumbai before?

Present Perfect Continuous	
To express duration of an action that began in the past, has continued into the present, and may continue into the future.	It *has been raining* for two hours, and the trains haven't stopped yet.

Past Perfect	
To describe a past event or condition completed before another event in the past.	When I arrived home, she *had* already *slept.*
In reported speech	Raj said that he *had informed* everyone.

Future perfect	
To express action that will be completed by or before a specified time in the future	By next month we *will have appeared* for the CAT. She *will not have finished* her work until tomorrow.

Past Perfect Continuous	
To express duration of an action that began before a specified moment in the past, has continued in the past.	He *had been living* in Mumbai for many years before the riots uprooted him.

Though there are as many as thirty tenses in English, the verb itself has merely two tense forms: *speaks* (present) and *spoke* (past). All others are made by using *auxiliaries.* Understanding the six basic tenses allows you to recreate much of the reality of time. These six are:

Simple Present: They *walk*
Present Perfect: They *have walked*

Simple Past: They *walked*
Past Perfect: They *had walked*

Future: They *will walk*
Future Perfect: They *will have walked*

Problems in sequencing tenses usually occur with the perfect tenses.

The present perfect consists of a 'has' or 'have' before the third form (participle) of the verb: e.g. *has/have + walked/cut/spoken.*

The present perfect designates action which *began in the past* (usually *immediate past* but under extraordinary circumstances remote past too) but which *continues into the present* or *the effect of which still continues into the present.*

I *taught* for ten years. (simple past)
– I am retired now.

I *have taught* for ten years. (present perfect)
– the fact that I taught for 10 years is well expressed by the simple past. The present perfect then tells that the effect of my action in the past continues into the present somehow. Hence the sentence, 'I *have taught* for ten years' is a response to a situation that discusses in the present my experience of the last ten years. In all probability I am still teaching is the implication. One more example:

It *rained* last night (simple past).
– expresses the fact that it rained.

It *has rained* last night (present perfect)
– is a response to its effect in the present. For example, if my question to you is 'why are the roads flooded?' (now), or, 'why are the trains running late?'(now) , you may respond with 'It *has rained* heavily last night', etc. the event in the past finds its 'perfection' in the present.

Consider these sentences for clarity.

He *finished* his dinner. He can watch TV.
If he *has finished* his dinner he can watch TV

The past perfect tense designates action in the past just as simple past does, but the action of the past perfect is action completed in the past before another action.

He *finished* his dinner and later watched TV. (past)
He watched TV when he *had finished* his dinner. (past perfect)

In sentences expressing condition and result, the past perfect tense is used in the part that states the condition.

If he *had studied* harder he would have passed the examination.

Remember that there can only be one 'would have' clause in a sentence.

The future perfect tense designates action that will have been completed at a specified time in the future.

Saturday I *will finish* my housework. (simple future)
By Saturday noon, I *will have finished* my housework. (future perfect)

Verb Tense Consistency

Events unfold in real time and we remember them in their sequence. The same sequence and the same temporal relationships that these events have, have to be maintained when we express them in words too. Erroneous or unnecessary shifts in tense cause confusion.

Once you have a fair idea about the *form* and the *time* involved in each tense (study the table) it becomes easy to spot the errors or the unnecessary shifts in tense in the sentences that are in the question paper.

Do not shift from one tense to another if the time frame for each action or state is the same.

Incorrect: The air *contains* several pollutants that *emanated* from industrial emissions.

Contains is present tense, referring to a current state; *emanated* is past, but should be present (*emanate*) because the pollutants still emanate from the emissions.

Correct: The air *contains* several pollutants that *emanate* from industrial emissions.
Incorrect: About sunset, the sky *darkened*, winds *strengthened*, and a low rumble *indicates* the pre-monsoon showers.

Darkened and *strengthened* are past tense verbs; *indicates* is present but should be past (*indicated*) to maintain consistency within the time frame.

Correct: About sunset, the sky *darkened,* winds *strengthened,* and a low rumble *indicated* the pre-monsoon showers.
Incorrect: Yesterday we *had walked* to school but later *rode* the bus home.

had walked is past perfect and *rode* is past simple. Both these events need to maintain consistency in tense. The time frame in this context is of *yesterday.* Hence, both verbs need to be in the simple past to be consistent within this time frame.

Correct: Yesterday we *walked* to school but later *rode* the bus home.

Change the tense to indicate a change in time frame from one action or state to another.

Correct: Even before the election *took* place, he *had started* behaving like a minister.
Correct: The students *are studying* extra hours because they *know* that this year's test *will be* very difficult.

It is not possible to say that the use of a particular tense/form is wrong in isolation. The errors in tense have to be found only in the context of the events mentioned in the sentence. For example, *She was listening attentively,* or *She has been listening attentively* are not different from each other in isolation, but only in relation to another event that has to be mentioned. In competitive examinations sentences, where you have to deal with an error in tense, will always have two events at least. In relation to one the other may not be consistent in the given time frame.

Incorrect: It was we who *arrived* before *they had left.*
Correct: It was we who *had arrived* before *they left.*

Helping and Modal Auxiliary Verbs

Usage Notes on Auxiliary Verbs
Auxiliary Verbs: *will, shall, may, might, can, could, must, ought to, should, would, used to, need.*

Function: They express shades of time or mood.
Example: As of next June, I *will have been teaching* for ten years.
Auxiliary verb: *will have been*
Main verb: *teaching*

Shall, Will,* and *Should
Shall and *will* are used to indicate the future.

When you use *shall* with the first person *I* and *we,* it indicates simple future. When you use *will* with the first person *I* and *we,* it indicates a coloured future – coloured by determination, promise, etc.

Shall we meet tomorrow? – is a simple query.
We *will* finish this project by tonight – is a promise and commitment.

It is just the reverse for the second and third persons.

Using *shall* in second and third persons (*he, she, it, they,* etc.) would indicate some kind of promise about the subject, as in "This *shall be revealed* to you in good time."

The distinction between the two is often obscured by the contraction *'ll*, which is the same for both *shall* and *will.*

Note: *Shall* is often used in formal situations (legal documents, minutes to meetings, etc.) to express obligation, even with third-person and second-person constructions:

> The board of directors *shall be responsible* for payment to stockholders. (Obligation)
> The college president *shall report* financial shortfalls to the executive director each semester. (Obligation)

Should is usually replaced, nowadays, by *would*. It is still used, however, to mean 'ought to' as in

> You really *shouldn't do* that.
> If you had known it would rain, you *should have brought* your umbrella.

Do, Does* and *Did

In the simple present tense, *do* will function as an auxiliary to express the negative and to ask questions. (*Does,* however, is substituted for third person, singular subjects in the present tense. The past tense *did* works with all persons, singular and plural.)

> I *don't* study at night.
> She *doesn't* work here anymore.
> *Do* you attend this school?
> *Does* he work here?

These verbs also work as 'short answers', with the main verb omitted.

> *Does* she *work* here? No, she *doesn't.*

With 'yes-no' questions, the form of *do* goes in front of the subject and the main verb comes after the subject:

> *Did* your grandmother *know* Gandhiji?
> *Do* wildflowers *grow* in your backyard?

Forms of *do* are useful in expressing similarity and differences in conjunction with *so* and *neither.*

> My wife hates spinach and so *does* my son.
> My wife *doesn't like* spinach; neither *do I*.

Do is also helpful because it means you don't have to repeat the verb:

> Bihari excelled in language studies; so *did* his brother.
> Rajesh studies as hard as his sister *does*.

Do is also used for emphasis. All the following sentences use *do* for the purpose of emphasizing something:

> He *does like* spinach. He really *does!*
> *Do come* in. (actually softens the command)
> He never *did understand* his father.
> She always *does manage to hurt* her mother's feelings.

Have, Has* and *Had

Forms of the verb *to have* are used to create tenses known as the present perfect and past perfect.

The perfect tenses indicate that something has happened in the past; the present perfect indicating that something happened and might be continuing to happen. See tenses for details.

I don't believe *he has done* his homework. He *has been lying* throughout.

The past perfect indicating that something happened prior to something else happening.

I didn't believe that he *had done* his homework. He *had been lying* throughout.

To have is used in combination with other modal verbs (*must, may,* etc.) to express probability and possibility in the past.

As an affirmative statement, *to have* can express how certain you are that something happened.

He *must have* left already.
The PM *might have* known about the gifts.
They *may have* voted already.

Negative statements express how certain you are that something did not happen:

The PM *might not have* known about the gifts.
I *may not have been* there at the time of the crime.

To have (sometimes combined with *to get/to be*) is used to express a logical inference:

It's been raining all week; the railway tracks *have to be flooded* by now.
He hit his head on the doorway. He *has got to be* over seven feet tall!

Have is often combined with an infinitive to form an auxiliary whose meaning is similar to 'must'.

I *have to have* a car like that!
She *has to cook* her own food in the hostel.
He *has to have been* the first student to try that.

Modal Auxiliaries
can, could, may, might, must, ought to, shall, should, will, and would, are called modal auxiliaries. They do not change form for different subjects.

I/you /he/she/we//they *can* write well.

These modals help communicate various meanings of necessity, advice, ability, expectation, permission, possibility, etc.,

Can* and *Could
The modal auxiliary *can* is used:
to express ability (in the sense of being able to do something or knowing how to do something):

She *can* speak French but she *can't* write it very well.

to express permission (in the sense of being allowed or permitted to do something):

Can I come in?

(Note that *can* is less formal than *may*. Also, some authorities will object to the use of *can* in this context. Hence, it is better to avoid in strictly formal contexts. See *'can and may'* below)

to express theoretical possibility:

Indian automobile makers *can* make better cars if they think there's profit in it.

The modal auxiliary *could* is used:
to express an ability in the past:

I *could* always beat you at tennis when we were kids.

to express past or future permission:

Could I borrow your bike?

to express present possibility:

We *could* always spend the afternoon just sitting around talking.

to express possibility or ability in contingent circumstances:

If he studied harder, he *could* pass this test.

In expressing ability, *can* and *could* frequently also imply willingness:

Can/Could you help me with my homework?

Can* and *May

Whether the auxiliary verb *can* can be used to express permission or not – "*Can* I leave the room now?" ["I don't know if you *can,* but you *may*."] – depends on the level of formality of the situation.

Merriam-Webster's Dictionary, tenth edition, says *can* can be used in virtually any situation to express or ask for permission. Most authorities, however, recommend a stricter adherence to the distinction, at least in formal situations.

May* and *Might

Two of the more troublesome modal auxiliaries are *may* and *might.* When used in the context of granting or seeking permission, *might* is the past tense of *may. Might* is considerably more tentative than *may.*

May I leave class early?
If I've finished all my work and I'm really quiet, *might* I leave early?

In the context of expressing possibility, *may* and *might* are interchangeable.

She *might* be my advisor next semester.
She *may* be my advisor next semester.

Avoid confusing the sense of possibility in *may* with the implication of *might – might* can refer to a hypothetical situation that was possible under certain circumstances, but has not occurred. For instance, let's say there's been a helicopter crash at the airport. In his initial report, before all the facts are gathered, a newscaster could say that the pilot "*may* have been injured." After we discover that the pilot is in fact all right, the newscaster can now say that the pilot "*might* have been injured" because it is a hypothetical situation that has not occurred.

Will* and *Would

In certain contexts, *will* and *would* are virtually interchangeable, but there are differences.

Will can be used to express willingness:

I*'ll* get you the book if you call to remind me.
We're going to the movies. *Will* you join us?

It can also express intention (especially, in the first person):

I*'ll* do my exercises later on.

and prediction:

The meeting *will* be over soon.
The monsoon *will* begin next week.

Would can also be used to express willingness:

Would you please step out of my way?

It can also express insistence (rather rare, and with a strong stress on the word *'would'*):

Now, you've ruined everything. You *would* act that way.

and characteristic activity:

After work, he *would* walk to his home for exercise.
She *would* cause all of us to be late, every time.

In a main clause, *would* can express a hypothetical meaning:

I *would* weigh a ton if I eat what I want.

Finally, *would* can express a sense of probability:

I hear a whistle. That *would* be the five o'clock train.

Used to

The auxiliary verb construction *used to* is used to express an action that took place in the past, perhaps customarily, but now that action no longer customarily takes place:

We *used to* take long vacation trips with the whole family.

Used to can also be used to convey the sense of being accustomed to or familiar with something:

The 'ladies only' compartment really stinks, but we're *used to* it by now.
I like these old sneakers; I'm *used to* them.

Used to is informal/colloquial usage; it has no place in formal/written language.

Revision Exercise

Choose the appropriate answer from the brackets.

1. Do you like _____ an evening at the beach?
   (to spend, spending, Both 'to spend' and 'spending' could be correct.)
2. Even though it was raining very hard, we would like _____ to the park.
   (to have gone, going, Both 'to have gone' and 'going' could be correct.)
3. We tried _____ the fire department, but the phone lines were down.
   (to call, calling, Both 'to call' and 'calling' are correct.)

Do as directed.

4. Screeching his tires/A and blasting his horn,/B Rahul took off/C in a cloud of dust and smoke./D No Error/E (Spot the error)
5. The overloaded car gathered speed slowly. (Underline the participle)
6. Espousing a conservative point of view the proposal for more spending on federal social programmes bothered him. (Rewrite the sentence with the correct placement and punctuation of the participial phrases – you may need to recast the sentence.)

In the sentences that follow (7 to 11), if there is an unnecessary shift in tense in the underlined verbs, correct the inconsistency and rewrite the sentence. There is more than one way to correct the sentence. Each suggested change in the answer is probably not the only correct way to remove the shift in tense.

7. The moderator asks for questions as soon as the speaker has finished.
8. Everyone hopes the plan would work.
9. Rahul wants to show his friends the photos he took at the seminar.
10. The boy insisted that he has paid for the candy bars.
11. The doctor suggested bed rest for the patient, who suffers from a bad cold.

In the following paragraph, check the underlined verbs for inconsistency in tense and correct them if necessary.

12. Last night I have gone to Eros to see 'The Day After'. It is very thought-provoking, and it is very depressing. I just wish it start a little earlier than 10 p.m. I find it hard to stay out until midnight and then got up for an 8:00 a.m. class.

In the following sentences (13 to 19) pay attention to the underlined phrasal verbs and identify if the verb is separable or inseparable from its particle. The meaning of the phrasal verb is given in brackets.

13. I ran across my old roommate at the pub.(run across: find by chance)
    Separable/Inseparable
14. It isn't easy to bring up children nowadays. (bring up: raise children)
    Separable/Inseparable
15. I often think back on my childhood with great pleasure (think back on: recall) Separable/Inseparable
16. We put away money for our retirement. (put away: save or store)
    Separable/Inseparable
17. The students went over the material before the exam. (go over: review)
    Separable/Inseparable
18. We are looking at segmenting the market to offer diverse products. (look at, consider)
    Separable/Inseparable
19. You left out the part about the chase. (leave out: omit) Separable/Inseparable

Complete the sentences (20 to 30) using the correct form of the verb that is given in brackets:

20. When I return to Mumbai next year, (I am) very happy.
21. Rahul (is going) to school every day.

22. Sapna (visits) her family right now.
23. I (have studied) Economics in 1994. (studied/was studying)
24. He (speaks) French since he was a child. (has spoken, has been speaking)
25. Raj (has visited) many places before he came here.
26. We (were seeing) terrible things back then.
27. Sometimes (I have still had) dreams like I did twenty years ago.
28. Japan (has never had) democracy until 1945. (had never had)
29. The father will call the family together (if he will think) there is disharmony.
30. When I was young, I never cooked because my parents (have) two servants.

Chapter 5
Modifiers — Adjectives and Adverbs

Adjectives

Adjectives modify a noun. The Articles — *a, an,* and *the* — are also adjectives.

> *beautiful* car
> *the tall* girl
> *a six-year-old* child

Adverbs modify:

- a verb
  He drove *carefully.*
- an adjective
  He drove a *very* fast car.
- another adverb
  He drove *quite* carefully.

(The underlined word is modified by the italicized word.)

In short, adjectives and adverbs modify other words in a sentence. At times a group of words will modify other parts of the sentence. In that case these groups of words, depending on their function, are called *adjectival phrase/clause* or *adverbial phrase/clause.* You have learnt them in the school grammar as various adverbial clauses of time, manner, consequence, etc. We will, for our convenience, call them **modifiers.** And modifiers modify something else in the sentence. Essentially, modifiers are adjectives and adverbs.

Usage Notes on Adjectives

Adjectives nearly always appear immediately before the noun they modify. Sometimes, several adjectives modify a noun.

> She spoke in a *warm, affectionate,* and *endearing* manner.

When adjectives modify indefinite pronouns *(everything, everyone, something, someone, anybody,* etc.) the adjective comes after the pronoun:

> Anyone *capable* of doing something *horrible* to someone *nice* should be punished.

Also, there are certain adjectives which when used in combination with certain other words are always ‘postpositive’, i.e. they come after the nouns they modify.

E.g. The president *elect*, heir *apparent,* etc.

Adjectives can express degrees of comparison or modification:

> Kareina is a *rich* woman, but Ash is *richer* than Kareina, and Karishma is *the richest* woman in town.

The degrees of comparison are known as the *positive* (the adjective itself), the *comparative,* and the *superlative.*

In comparative degree, comparison is always made between two things only. And you need at least three things to correctly use the superlative degree of comparison.

Notice that the word *than* frequently accompanies the comparative and the word *the* precedes the superlative.

***'luckier'* or *'more lucky'*? *'the luckiest'* or *'the most lucky'*?**

Adjective + er/ier (quicker/luckier) is used to indicate the comparative if the adjective has one or two syllables only.

More + adjective (more beautiful) is used for adjectives with two or more syllables. Don't be confused. Monosyllabic words, use *–er/ier* form, with words having two syllables both *–er/ier* and *more+adj* are correct, more than two syllables, you can only use the *more+adj* and *the most+adj* forms.

If you are in doubt about the number of syllables in a word, look it up in a dictionary and notice how it is broken, you can easily see the number of syllables. E.g. com.pli.men.ta.ry – that means the word complimentary has five syllables.

Examples will make these things more clear:

Positive	Comparative	Superlative (the +)	
cute	cuter	cutest	– one syllable
lucky	luckier/more lucky	luckiest/most lucky	– two syllables
beautiful	more beautiful	most beautiful	– more than two syllables

Correct: He is *stupider* than I thought. (also *more stupid*)
Correct: He is the *handsomest* man on earth. (also *the most handsome*)
Correct: This habit is *commoner* in India than in Pakistan. (also *more common*)

Certain adjectives have irregular forms in the comparative and superlative degrees:

Irregular Comparative and Superlative Forms

Adjective	Comparative	Superlative
good	better	best
little	less/lesser	least
much	more	most
many	more	most
some	more	most
far	further /farther	furthest /farthest

Be careful not to form comparatives or superlatives of adjectives, which already express an extreme sense of comparison — *unique*, for instance.

Incorrect: Surrounded by sea and cut off from the rest of mankind for several centuries, the people of Timbuktu have developed a very unique culture.

'Very unique' has no meaning. But notice how well hidden the error is in the sentence. You have to be cautious.

Be careful, also, not to use *more* along with a comparative adjective formed with *–er,* nor to use *most* along with a superlative adjective formed with *-est* (E.g. Do not write that something is *more heavier* or *the most heaviest*).

The *as — as* construction is used to create a comparison expressing equality:

He is *as foolish as* he is *large*.

Both adverbs and adjectives in their comparative and superlative forms can be accompanied by premodifiers, single words and phrases, which intensify the degree. (*much, very much,* etc.)

Correct: We were *a lot more* careful this time.
Correct: We like his work *so much better.*
Correct: The weather this week has been *somewhat better.*
Incorrect: The old man is much more smarter than the young man.
(much smarter)

If the intensifier *very* accompanies the superlative, a determiner is also required:

Correct: She is wearing *her very finest* outfit for the interview.
Correct: They're doing *the very best* they can.

***'more than'* or *'over'*?**
We usually use 'more than' in countable numerical expressions meaning 'in excess of' or 'over'. — "*more than* 4,000 traffic deaths in one year," *"over* 4,000 traffic deaths", both would be acceptable.

Collective Adjectives
When the definite article, *the,* is combined with an adjective describing a class or group of people, the resulting phrase can act as a noun: *the poor, the rich, the oppressed, the homeless, the lonely, the unlettered, the unwashed, the gathered, the dear departed.*

The difference between a Collective Noun (which is usually regarded as singular but which can be plural in certain contexts) and a collective adjective is that the collective adjective is always plural and requires a plural verb.

The rural poor *have been* ignored by the media.
The rich of Mumbai *are* responsible.
The elderly *are* beginning to demand their rights.

Adjectival Opposites (Vocabulary)
The opposite or the negative aspect of an adjective can be formed in a number of ways. One way, of course, is to find an adjective to mean the opposite — an antonym. The opposite of *beautiful* is *ugly,* the opposite of *tall* is *short.* A thesaurus can help you find an appropriate opposite.

Another way to form the opposite of an adjective is with a number of prefixes. The opposite of *fortunate* is *unfortunate,* the opposite of *prudent* is *imprudent,* the opposite of *considerate* is *inconsiderate,* the opposite of *honorable* is *dishonorable,* the opposite of *alcoholic* is *nonalcoholic,* the opposite of *being properly filed* is *misfiled.*

If you are not sure of the spelling of adjectives modified in this way by prefixes (or which is the appropriate prefix), you will have to consult a dictionary, as the rules for the selection of a prefix are complex and too shifty to be trusted. The meaning itself can be tricky; for instance, *flammable* and *inflammable* mean the same thing.

'I feel good'* or *'I feel well'?

We frequently have to choose between the adjective *good* and the adverb *well.*

With most verbs, there is no contest: when modifying a verb, use the adverb.

He sings *well.*
He knows *only too well* who the murderer is.

However, when using a linking verb or a verb that has to do with the five human senses, use the adjective.

How are you? I'm feeling *good*, thank you.
After a bath, the baby smells so *good.*
Even after the careful paint job, this room doesn't look *good.*

However, use *well* after linking verbs relating to health. In fact, to say that 'you are good or that you feel good' usually implies not only that you're OK physically but also that your morale is high.

"How are you?" "I am *well,* thank you."
– refers to health.

"How are you?" "I am *good,* thank you."
– refers to physical as well as mental well-being.

***'bad'* or *'badly'*?**

Applying the same rule that applies to *good* and *well* you must use the adjective form after verbs that have to do with human feelings. *You felt bad.* If you said *'you felt badly',* it would mean that something was wrong with your faculties for feeling.

Some other concerns

Since we know that participles (*verb+ing, verb+ed,* etc.) are also adjectives we have to be clear about their use.

For example, a *frightening student* and a *frightened student* are entirely different things.

Whether this book is a *confusing* one or a *confused* one will speak a lot about either of us.

Adverbs can't modify nouns; always use an adjective to modify a noun.

Incorrect: He is a quietly man.
Incorrect: I have a happily dog.

On the other hand, it's sometimes easy to make the mistake of using an adjective to modify a verb, as the incorrect sentences below show.

Incorrect: He is breathing *normal* again.
Correct: He is breathing *normally* again.

Incorrect: She writes *slow*.
Correct: She writes *slowly*.

An adjective usually comes before the noun it qualifies. However, it can come after the verb, when the verb used is one of the forms of the verb *to be* (*is, was, has,* etc.) or when the verb used is a sense verb or a verb of appearance *(feel, taste, smell, sound, look, appear, seem,* etc.).

E.g. Priya was extremely *happy*.
The room smells *fresh.*
Her words appeared *honest*.

In all these above sentences you will notice that the adjective modifies the subject. *Happy* applies to *Priya*, *fresh* applies to the *room*, and *honest* to *words* – an adjective can modify only nouns. In *'She writes slowly',* slowly (adv.) modifies *writes* (v.) and not she. You can read more on this under adverbs.

***'hard'* or *'hardly'*?**
Most adjectives add an *ly* and become adverbs. But not all. *Hard* and *hardly* are two different words. The similarity is only superficial. (*Hardly* is an adverb which means *certainly not* … that news is *hardly* surprising … *hardly* is normally used with a positive you can *hardly* find a red one – Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary)

Incorrect: You *cannot hardly identify* what is good for you
Correct: You *can hardly identify* what is good for you.

Scarcely and *barely* are other similar words. They are already negative adverbs. To add another negative term is redundant, because in English only one negative is ever used at a time

***'sure'* or *'surely'*?**
Sure is an adjective, and *surely* is an adverb.

The use of *sure* and *surely* can at times be a little confusing. But, if you have mastered the adjective you would *surely* be able to understand the correct usage.

Correct: He is *sure* to be here at 9 a.m. (adjective modifying *he*)
Correct: He will *surely* be ready at 9 a.m. (adverb modifying *ready*)
Correct: *Surely,* man has harmed the environment in no small measure.
(adverb modifying *harmed*)

***'near'* or *'nearly'*?**
The problem with *near* is that it can function as a verb, adverb, adjective, or preposition. *Nearly* is used as an adverb to mean 'in a close manner' or 'almost but not quite'.

Correct: The moment of truth *neared.* (verb meaning approached)
Correct: We will meet in the *near* future. (adjective modifying future)
Correct: He moved *near.* (adverb modifying moved)
Correct: He stays *near* my house. (preposition)
Correct: He *nearly* missed the train. (adverb)

Adverbs

Adverbs modify, a verb, an adjective, or another adverb. Since they modify several things in several ways they are categorized into different types. Since we are not so bothered about the details of grammar, we look at them as words that modify something else in the sentence.

Adverbs tell us *when, where, why,* or *under what conditions* something happens or happened.

Adverbs frequently end in -*ly*; however, an -*ly* ending is not a guarantee that a word is an adverb. The words *lovely, lonely, motherly, friendly, neighbourly,* for instance, are adjectives. *'Often'* though not ending in *–ly* is an adverb. *'Fast'* functions as both adverb and adjective.

That *lovely woman* lives in a *friendly* neighborhood.

Adverbs can modify adjectives, but an adjective cannot modify an adverb.

Correct: The students showed a *really wonderful* attitude
Correct: The students showed a *remarkably casual* attitude
Incorrect: He is real casual.

Like adjectives, adverbs can have comparative and superlative forms to show degree.

Walk *faster* if you want to keep up with me.
The *fastest* reader will get a prize.

Like with adjectives, *more* and *most, less* and *least* are used to show degree with adverbs:

With sneakers on, she could move *more quickly* among the patients.
The flowers were *the most beautifully* arranged creations I've ever seen.
She worked *less confidently* after her accident.
That was *the least skilfully* done performance I've seen in years.

Usage Notes on Adverbs

Placement of Adverbs

Adverbs (especially adverbs of manner) have the flexibility to occur anywhere in the sentence. The placement may not constitute an error in construction.

Correct: *Solemnly* the priest blessed the child.
Correct: The priest *solemnly* blessed the child
Correct: The priest blessed the child *solemnly*.

Likewise, the adverbs of frequency appear at various points in a sentence:

Correct: I *never* watch the weather forecast. (before the verb)
Correct: I have *often* told you earlier (in between)
Correct: I *often* used to go to the beach (before *used to*)

The same is true about adverbs of time too.

Correct: She *finally* made it to JBIMS. (before the verb)
Correct: She has *recently* called me up with doubts. (in between)

Questions to test your awareness of the correct placement of the adverbs do appear in competitive examinations.

Misplacement of adverbs

As far as possible keep the modifier and the modified together for clarity in communication.

Incorrect: The panel was unable to discuss the matter *completely* owing to lack of time. (*completely* modifies discuss, but is placed next to words that it cannot modify.)
Correct: The panel was unable to *completely* discuss the matter owing to lack of time.

Incorrect: Students who seek the advice of their mentors *often* can improve their performance. (*often* can modify either *seek* or *improve*. Its wrong placement has created a meaningless sentence. This error is called a **squint modifier**)

Correct: Students who *often seek* the advice of their mentors can improve their performance.
Correct: Students who seek the advice of their mentors can *often improve* their performance.

Incorrect: They reported that Veerappan, a dreaded dacoit, had been arrested *on the six o'clock news.* – is a bad sentence.
Correct: They reported *on the six o'clock news,* that Veerappan, a dreaded dacoit, had been arrested. – is a clear and unambiguous sentence.
Correct: *On the six o'clock news,* they reported that Veerappan, a dreaded dacoit, had been arrested. – is another good sentence.

Misplacement can also occur with very simple modifiers, such as *only* and *barely*:

Incorrect: She *only* grew to be four feet tall.
Revised: She grew to be *only* four feet tall.

'late'* and *'lately'

A handful of adverbs have two forms, one that ends in *-ly* and one that doesn't. In certain cases, the two forms have different meanings:

Correct: He arrived *late.*
Correct: *Lately,* he couldn't seem to be on time for anything. (*lately* means recently)

***'… and yet again'* is this correct?**

Some adverbs act as connectors within a sentence. Words like, *however, nevertheless, therefore* fall in this category. Sentences in the test are sometimes based on their use.

If he has nothing new to say day after day, *then* I am not attending his lectures.
I have told him times without number that I will not tolerate his pranks, and *yet again* he has gone and done it.

At the extreme edge of this category, we have the purely conjunctive device known as the conjunctive adverb (often called the adverbial conjunction):

He is a good speaker; *nevertheless,* he is the most nervous person in the GD.
I love these B-Schools; *however*, I don't think I can afford their tuition.

Notice the punctuation in the above two sentences. This is the only correct way you can punctuate the sentences when you use *however, nevertheless, therefore,* etc.

***'hungry enough'* or *'enough hungry'*?**

The adverbs *enough* and *not enough* usually take a postmodifier position, i.e. they come after the word that they modify.

Is the music loud *enough*.
This vessel is large *enough* to hold 20 litres.

In a roomful of elderly people, you must remember to speak *loudly enough.*

When *enough* comes before a noun it is an adjective.

Correct: Did she give us *enough* time?

The adverb *enough* is often followed by an infinitive:

She didn't work hard *enough* to win.

The adverb *too* comes before adjectives and other adverbs:

She ran *too fast.*
She works *too quickly.*

If *too* comes after the adverb it is usually set off with a comma:

Yasmin works hard. She works quickly, *too*.

The adverb *too* is often followed by an infinitive:

She runs *too slowly to enter* this race.

Another common construction with the adverb *too* is *too* followed by a prepositional phrase:

This milk is *too hot* for a baby to drink.

A viewpoint adverb generally comes after a noun and is related to an adjective that precedes that noun:

Correct: A person successful in CAT is often an achiever *academically*.
Correct: Investing all our money in IT was probably not a sound idea *financially*.
Incorrect: *Financially speaking,* investing all our money in IT was a bad idea.

Although negative constructions like the words 'not' and 'never' are technically not part of the verb; they are, indeed, adverbs. A so-called negative adverb, however, creates a negative meaning in a sentence without the use of the usual *no/not/neither/nor/never* constructions (See also '*hard'* or *'hardly'*)

He *seldom* visits.
She *hardly* eats anything since the accident.
After her long and tedious lectures, *rarely* was anyone awake.

Articles, Determiners and Quantifiers

Articles, determiners, and quantifiers precede and modify nouns:

E.g. *the* teacher, *a* college, *a* bit of honey, *that* person, *those* people, *whatever* purpose, *either* way, *your* choice

These words 'mark' the following noun as specific or general, how much or how many, etc.

This is the list of determiners: the articles (*an, a, the*); possessive pronouns, (*his, your, their, whose,* etc.); numbers (*one, two,* etc.); indefinite pronouns (*few, more, each, every, either, all, both, some, any,* etc.); and demonstrative pronouns (*this, that, these, those, such*).

Usage Notes on Articles, Determiners and Quantifiers

Study the correct use of quantifiers (determiners) for count noun *trees* and non-count noun *reading*.

The following quantifiers will work with count nouns:

many trees
a few trees
few trees
several trees
a couple of trees
none of the trees

The following quantifiers will work with non-count nouns:

much reading
a little reading
little reading
a bit of reading
a good deal of reading
a great deal of reading
no reading

The following quantifiers will work with both count and non-count nouns:

all of the trees/reading
some trees/reading
most of the trees/reading
enough trees/reading
a lot of trees/reading (many trees and much reading are preferred over a lot of..)
lots of trees/reading(many trees and much reading are preferred over lots of..)
plenty of trees/reading(many trees and much reading are preferred over plenty of..)
a lack of trees/reading

'little', 'a little',* and *'quite a little'

There is an important difference between 'a little' and 'little' (used with non-count words) and between 'a few' and 'few' (used with count words).

If I say that 'Ashish has *a little experience* in management' that means that although Ashish is no great expert, he does have *some experience,* perhaps enough for our purposes.

If I say that 'Ashish has *little experience* in management' that means he doesn't have enough experience.

If I say 'Ashish owns *a few books* on literature' that means that he has some books — not many books, but probably enough for our purposes.

If I say that 'Ashish owns *few books* on literature', that means he doesn't have enough for our purposes and we'd better go to the library.

Now, if I say 'Ashish has *quite a little* experience in management' or 'Ashish has *quite a few* books on management', what do I mean? I mean 'Ashish has *considerable* experience in management', and 'Ashish has *rather a large number of* books' on management. *Quite a little* means *rather a large amount* (We have *quite a little* time at our disposal) and, *quite a few* means *rather a large number* (She has made *quite a few* friends in college).

much

much is used to frame questions. But when it is a quantifier it is followed by *of* as *much of*...

Much of the work is over..

most of…

Most of is used in two forms: *most of the* (must include the definite article) when a specific noun follows it:

Most of <u>the</u> instructors in this institute are MBAs.
Most of <u>the</u> water has evaporated.

With a general plural noun, however (when you are not referring to a specific noun), the *'of the'* is dropped:

Most B-Schools have their own admission policy.
Most students apply to several B-Schools.

'many a student'* or *'many students'

Correct: *Many a student <u>has</u>* asked this question earlier.
Correct: *Many students <u>have</u>* asked this question earlier.

There is no difference in meaning between the above two constructions. But remember to use a singular verb when you use *many a* followed by a singular noun.

quite, rather, such

double, twice, four/five times
one-third, three-quarters
both, half, all
quite, rather, such.

All the above come along with another determiner and before it, e.g. *all the* money

Study these sentences:

Correct: This bus accommodates *three* times the passengers as that van.
Correct: My wife is making *double my/twice my* salary.
Correct: This time we added *five times* the amount of water.

Notice the absence of *of* in the above sentences and the presence of *of* below.

Amol finished in *one-fourth [of] the time* Manish took.
Two-fifths of the students reported that *half the class* was satisfied.

a, an, the

These words are invariably followed by a noun (or something else acting as a noun).

Even after you learn all the principles behind the use of these articles, you will find an abundance of situations where deciding the correct article or deciding whether to use one or not will prove dicey.

Correct: Narrow highways are dangerous. (Zero article)
Correct: *The* narrow highways are dangerous.

The is used with specific nouns. *The* is required when the noun it accompanies refers to something that is one of a kind:

The moon circles *the* earth. (Avoid: *Moon* circles *earth*)

The is required when the noun it accompanies refers to something in the abstract:

Incorrect: Use of mobile phones is prohibited

Correct: *The use* of mobile phones is prohibited.

We use *a* before singular count-nouns that begin with consonants (*a* cow, *a* field, *a* flower); we use *an* before singular count-nouns that begin with vowels or vowel-like sounds (*an* apple, *an* urban blight, *an* open door).

***'A unicorn'*?**

Words that begin with an *h* sound (as in *h*ello) often require *a* (as in *a* horse, *a* history book, *a* hotel), but if an h-word begins with an actual vowel sound, use *an* (as in *an* hour, *an* honour).

We would say *a useful device* and *a university student* because the *u* of those words actually sounds like *'yoo'* (as opposed, say, to the *u* of an *ugly incident*). The same is true of a European and a Euro (because of that consonantal *'Yoo'* sound). We would say *a once-in-a-lifetime experience* or *a one-time* hero because the words *once* and *one* begin with a *'w' (was)* sound.

Merriam-Webster's Dictionary says that we can use *an* before an h- word that begins with *an unstressed* syllable. Thus, we might say *an historical* moment, but we would say *a history* book.

First and subsequent reference

When we first refer to something (noun) we often use *a/an.* Once it is identified, we use *the* in subsequent references:

> "A *newspaper* has an obligation to seek out and tell the truth….. (In a subsequent reference to this newspaper, however, we will use the definite article) … There are situations, however, when *the newspaper* must determine whether the public's safety is jeopardized by knowing the truth."

Another example:

> "I'd like *a glass of water,* please," Sheila said.
> "I put *the glass of water* on the counter already," he replied.

If there is a word (modifier) between the article and the noun *'a'* is retained.

> "I'd like *a big glass of juice,* please," Sheila said.
> "I put *a big glass of juice* on the counter already," he replied.

Generic reference

We can refer to something in a generic way by using any of the three articles. We can do the same thing by omitting the article altogether.

> *A dog* makes a great pet. (All dogs)
> *An Alsatian* is a restless animal. (Any member of the class Alsatian)
> *The golden retriever* is a marvellous pet. (All golden retrievers)
> *Irish setters* are highly intelligent. (All of that class)

Proper nouns: We use the definite article with certain kinds of proper nouns:

> *the* Arabian Sea – Geographical places
> *the* Doshis, the Birlas, the Indian freedom fighters – Pluralized names
> *the* IIM, the Sheraton, the Chinese – Public institutions/facilities/groups
> *The* Times of India, the Mid-Day – Newspapers:

Zero article

Several kinds of nouns never use articles.

Chinese, English – names of languages
badminton, cricket – names of sports
economics, religion – academic subjects

Common count nouns are used without articles in certain special situations:

idiomatic expressions using 'be' and 'go'.

We'll go by bus. (But 'We'll take the bus'.)
He must be in school.

with seasons

In spring ..

with institutions

He's in school/college/jail/class.

with meals

Breakfast was heavy.
He's preparing dinner.

with diseases

He's dying of pneumonia.
She has cancer.

with time of day

We travelled mostly by night.
We'll be there around midnight.

Dangling modifiers

This is a very common error we find in the newspapers, academic essays, opinion articles, etc. Consider this example, penned by a well-respected writer and published by the *New York Times*:

> After wading through a long, quasi-academic examination of the statistical links between intelligence, character, race and poverty, the reader's reward is a hoary lecture on the evils of the welfare state. (*The American Heritage*® Book of English Usage)

We will see what is wrong with this sentence presently. Let us first try to understand what *dangling modifiers* are.

The errors in modifiers generally occur when we begin a sentence with a modifying word, or phrase. We must then make sure that the next thing that comes along can, in fact, be modified by that modifier. When a modifier improperly modifies something, it is called a 'dangling modifier'.

Incorrect: Changing the oil every 3,000 miles, *the car* was kept in excellent condition.
Correct: Changing the oil every 3,000 miles, *we* kept the car in excellent condition.

In the first sentence, 'changing oil every 3000 miles' is followed by *'the car was…'*. It looks as if *the car* was changing the oil every 3000 miles, which is ridiculous. Hence, an agency that can be modified by the phrase should come immediately next. In this case the agency who has performed this action is not even present in the sentence. This is a classic case of *dangling modifier,* the modifier has nothing in the sentence to modify!

The second sentence is correct because the 'changing oil every 3000 miles' is followed by *'we kept….'* The agent of the action in the modifying phrase is spelt out and modified by the phrase. In short: When we begin a sentence with a modifying word, or phrase, we must make sure that the next thing that comes along can, in fact, be modified by that modifier.

Correct: *After wading through* a long, quasi-academic examination of the statistical links between intelligence, character, race and poverty, *the reader* is rewarded with a hoary lecture on the evils of the welfare state.

Incorrect: *After wading through* a long, quasi-academic examination of the statistical links between intelligence, character, race and poverty, *the reader's reward* is a hoary lecture on the evils of the welfare state. (*the reader's reward* cannot be *wading through* ….)

Most frequently dangling modifiers occur at the beginning of the sentences. Any form of the verb at the beginning of the sentence calls for extra care to ensure that the agency *doing*/or *being affected* by this verb is next in the sentence.

Incorrect: Lying on a stretcher, *they* carried him out.
Correct: Lying on a stretcher, *he* was carried out.

Incorrect: Relieved of your lectures, *your research work* must be progressing very well.
Correct: Relieved of your lectures, *you* must be making good progress on your research work.

More often than not, you may require to make major changes to the structure of the sentence to get rid of the 'dangling modifier', especially when the modified is not present in the sentence. In the above sentence 'your research' is not the agency that is 'relieved of your lectures', hence, the sentence has to be recast bringing 'you' into the sentence.

Incorrect: To avoid disappointment after the exam, it is necessary to work very hard before it.
Correct: To avoid disappointment after the exam, one must work very hard before it.

Incorrect: Without knowing his name, it was difficult to introduce him.
Correct: It was difficult to introduce him as I did not know his name.

Note: Words like *concerning, considering, failing,* and *granting,* etc. are participles which can function as prepositions too. You can use them to begin a sentence without the fear of them dangling in the sentence. The common use of *speaking, judging by,* etc. to begin a sentence falls in this category. When you see such a sentence do not compulsorily spot an error.

Correct: Concerning your remarks, there was little debate among the committee members.
Correct: Considering his reputation for honesty, his arrest came as a shock.
Correct: Speaking of exceptional performances, did you see her CAT scorecard?

Reference Error

This is the technical name given to a type of errors which happens when we want to say something about someone/something, and end up saying a totally different or meaningless thing.

Ambiguous: I called my friend *from college.*

If we hear such a sentence we usually understand one of the two things that the sentence may be conveying: *I called my friend when I was in college* OR *I called my friend when he/she was in college.* If the sentence can mean two different things, it has no meaning! Even in these cases, like in the case of dangling modifiers, it becomes necessary to recast the sentence to remove the ambiguity.

Reference error occurs when there are two nouns before a prepositional phrase. Such errors are galore in our daily use of the language. *'from college'* is a prepositional phrase. There are two nouns before this phrase: *I* and *my friend.* When there are two nouns before a prepositional phrase an ambiguity is likely to arise.

Revision Exercise

The following sentences may have an error or ambiguity arising from the incorrect use of a modifier. Eliminate the error or ambiguity and rewrite the sentences.

1. Looking through the telescope, Venus was clearly visible to us in the night sky.
2. Flying out of the window, he grabbed the papers.
3. Dhas arrived while I was waiting outside with the keys.
4. While walking on the grass, a snake bit him
5. I tried calling to tell you about the Career Launcher Seminar half a dozen times.
6. Although extremely spicy, Dhas managed to finish the soup.
7. While walking across the street, they surrounded her and robbed her of her purse.
8. She has brought some cake she baked in her lunch box.
9. I am real glad to be of help to you.
10. The baby smells very sweetly.
11. I feel bad about what happened
12. He hugged me firmly when we met.
13. Life in the city is exciting, but life in the countryside is best.
14. Drive more slow as work is in progress.
15. You don't look as though you feel well today.
16. Speak a little slower or you will not be understood.
17. The Home Minister acknowledged the role played by the men who subdued the gunman when he spoke at a press conference on Saturday night.
18. To improve company morale, three things were recommended by the consultant.
19. In reviewing the company's policy, three areas of improvement were identified by the committee.
20. Baked, boiled, or fried, you can make potatoes a part of almost any meal.

Chapter 6
Prepositions

Grammar

Prepositions connect or join nouns or pronouns to the rest of the sentence.

They answer *time (after, during, before, since, on, until)*, *manner (with, like, for, of)* or *where (above, between, in, on, around, through, under, over)*.

Function of a preposition
In itself a word like 'in' or 'after' is rather meaningless. In sentences, we find prepositions almost always in combination with other words. We call them prepositional phrases. Since prepositions combine with other words and create what are called prepositional phrases, there can be infinite variety of prepositional phrases. But their structure can be classified and understood. If you look at these combinations more carefully you will see that there is 'some method in this madness'.

We can understand their structure by looking at a prepositional phrase like 'in the classroom': in + the + classroom, i.e. *preposition + determiner + noun.* If I change it to 'in the large hall', the formula seems to be: *preposition + determiner + adjective + noun.*

Though prepositional phrases can be made up of a million different words, they tend to have the same structure: a preposition followed by a *determiner* and an *adjective* or two, followed by a *pronoun* or *noun* (called the object of the preposition).

This phrase often takes on a modifying role telling us the time, manner, place about a noun or a pronoun.

Common Prepositions:

> *about, above, across, after, against, around, at, before, behind, below, beneath, beside, besides, between, beyond, by, down, during, except, for, from, in, inside, into, like, near, of, off, on, out, outside, over, since, through, throughout, till, to, toward, under, until, up, upon, with, without, according to, because of, by way of, in addition to, in front of, in place of, in regard to, in spite of, instead of, on account of, out of*

Usage Notes on Prepositions

Prepositions do create troubles for students for whom English is a second language (all of us).

We say *we are <u>at</u> the hospital* to visit a friend *who is <u>in</u> the hospital.* We lie *<u>in</u> bed* but *<u>on</u> the couch.* We watch a film *<u>at</u> the theater* but *<u>on</u> television.*

In the hospital and *at the hospital* have different meanings. This difference in meaning is brought about by the preposition used. The difference in meaning cannot be explained through grammatical or logical reasoning – it is a matter of usage. And your awareness of the difference in meaning is a result of your instinctive mastery of this form which is instinctive and achieved through your previous experience with the language. This, then, is the learning: mastery of the prepositions and their usage has to come through reading and use.

To address all the potential difficulties with prepositions in idiomatic usage would require volumes, and the only way we can begin to master the intricacies of preposition usage is through reading well and by paying close attention to speech, and to the written word. A good dictionary is also a must.

at, on, in – Prepositions of Time
We use *at* to designate specific times.

The train is due *at* 12:15 p.m.
We use *on* to designate days and dates.
My brother is coming *on* Monday.
The results will be declared *on* the Fourth of July.

We use *in* for nonspecific times during a day, a month, a season, or a year.

She likes to jog *in* the morning.
It's too cold *in* winter to run outside.
He started the job *in* 1971.
He's going to quit *in* August.

at, on, in – Prepositions of Place
We use *at* for specific addresses.

Prof. G.K. lives *at* 652 Dr Ambedkar Road.

We use *on* to designate names of streets, avenues, etc.

Her house is *on* Dr. Ambedkar Road.

And we use *in* for the names of land-areas (towns, districts, states, countries, and continents).

She lives *in* Bandra.
Bandra is *in* Mumbai.
Mumbai is *in* Maharashtra.

at, on, in – Prepositions of Location
in – (the) bed, the bedroom, the car, (the) class, the library, school
at – class, home, the library, the office, school, work
on – the bed, the ceiling, the floor, the horse, the plane, the train

No Preposition
downstairs, downtown, inside, outside, upstairs, uptown

With the words *home, downtown, uptown, inside, outside, downstairs, upstairs,* we use no preposition.

He went upstairs.
He went home.
They both went outside.

Prepositions of Movement: *to*
We use *to* in order to express movement toward a place.

They *go to* work together.
She's *going to* the library this morning.

Toward and *towards* are also helpful prepositions to express movement. *Toward* and *towards* are simply variant spellings of the same word.

We're moving *toward* the light.
This is a big step *towards* the project's completion.

'for' and 'since' – Prepositions of Time:
We use *for* when we measure time (seconds, minutes, hours, days, months, years).

He held his breath *for* seven minutes.
She's lived there *for* seven years.
The Indians and Pakistanis have been quarreling *for* five decades.

We use *since* with a specific date or time.

He has worked here *since* 1970.
She has been sitting in the waiting room *since* 2:30 p.m.

Idioms with prepositions
(Prepositions with Nouns, Adjectives, and Verbs.)

Prepositions are sometimes so firmly wedded to other words that they have practically become one word. This occurs in three categories: nouns, adjectives, and verbs.

Noun + Preposition:
approval of; awareness of; belief in; concern for; confusion about; desire for; fondness for; grasp of; hatred of; hope for; interest in; love of; need for; participation in; reason for; respect for; success in; understanding of …

Adjective + Preposition:
afraid of; angry at; aware of; capable of; careless about; familiar with; fond of; happy about; interested in; jealous of; made of; married to; proud of; similar to; sorry for; sure of; tired of; worried about …

Verb + Preposition:
apologize for; ask about; ask for; belong to; bring up; care for; find out; give up; grow up; look for; look forward to; look up; make up; pay for; prepare for; study for; talk about; think about; trust in; work for; worry about …

A combination of verb and preposition is called a phrasal verb. The word that is joined to the verb is then called a particle. We learned this under verbs too.

Phrasal verbs consist of a verb and another word or phrase, usually a preposition. Phrasal verbs can be both intransitive (The children were *sitting around,* doing nothing. The witness finally *broke down* on the stand.) and transitive in meaning (Our boss *called off the meeting.* She *looked up her old boyfriend).*

The problem with phrasal verbs is that their meaning is often, at first, obscure, and they often mean several different things.

If one of your uninvited friends unexpectedly *turns up* (appear) at a party or your neighbour *turns up* his stereo, those are phrasal verbs and differ in meaning.

Further, the verb and the word or phrase it connects to are not always adjacent: *"Fill this out,"* we would say, but then we would also say, *"Fill out* this form." The separability of the particle from the verb has been dealt with in the chapter on Verbs.

Unnecessary Prepositions

In everyday speech, we fall into some bad habits, using prepositions where they are not necessary. It would be a good idea to eliminate these words altogether, but we must be especially careful not to use them in formal contexts.

She met ~~up with~~ the new professor in the library.
The book fell off ~~of~~ my bag.
He threw the letter out ~~of~~ the window. (*of* may be retained in informal contexts.)
She wouldn't let him inside ~~of~~ the house. [or use 'in']
Where did they go ~~to~~?
Where is your college ~~at~~?

Prepositions in Parallel Form

When two words or phrases are used in parallel (there is a separate chapter on *parallelism*) and require the same preposition to be idiomatically correct, the preposition does not have to be used twice.

You can wear that outfit in summer and ~~in~~ winter.
The peahen was both attracted ~~by~~ and distracted by the peacock's dance.

However, when the idiomatic use of phrases calls for different prepositions, we must be careful not to omit one of them.

The children were interested *in* and disgusted *by* the movie.
It was clear that this student could both contribute *to* and learn *from* every lecture he attended.
He was fascinated *by* and enamoured *of* his charming classmate.

Common Phrasal Verbs

blow up: explode	The terrorists tried to blow up the bridge.
bring up: mention a topic	My friend brought up that little matter of my ATKT again.
bring up: raise children	It isn't easy to bring up children nowadays.
call off: cancel	They called off this afternoon's meeting.
do over: repeat a job	Do this homework over.
fill out: complete a form	Fill out this application form and mail it in.
fill up: fill to capacity	She filled up the grocery cart with food.
give away: give something to someone else for free	The discotheque was giving away free beer.
give back: return an object	My friend borrowed my book. He may not give it back
hand in: submit something (assignment)	The students handed in their papers and left the room.

hang up: put something on hook or receiver	She hung up the phone before she hung up her clothes.
hold up: delay	I hate to hold up the meeting, but I have to go to the bathroom.
hold up: rob	Three gunmen held up the Bank this afternoon.
look over: examine, check	The panel looked over the CV carefully before questioning the candidate.
look up: search in a list	You've misspelled this word again. You'd better look it up.
make up: invent a story or lie	She knew she was in trouble, so she made up a story about going to the movies with her friends.
make out: hear, understand	He was so far away, we really couldn't make out what he was saying.
pick out: choose	There were three men in the line-up. She picked out the guy she thought had stolen her purse.
pick up: lift something off something else	The crane picked up the entire load. Watch them pick it up.
point out: call attention to	As we drove through Mumbai, she pointed out the major historical sites.
put away: save or store	We put away money for our retirement. She put away the boxes.
put off: postpone	We asked the boss to put off the meeting until tomorrow. Please put it off for another day.
put on: wear	I put on a sweater. I put it on quickly.
put out: extinguish	The firefighters put out the house fire before it could spread. They put it out quickly.
read over: read	I read over the homework, but couldn't make any sense of it.

set up: to arrange, begin	My wife set up the living room exactly the way she wanted it. She set it up.
take down: make a written note	These are your instructions. Write them down before you forget.
take off: remove clothing	It was so hot that I had to take off my shirt.
talk over: discuss	We have serious problems here. Let's talk them over like adults.
throw away: discard	That's a lot of money! Don't just throw it away.
try on: put clothing on to see if it fits	She tried on fifteen dresses before she found one she liked.
try out: test	I tried out four cars before I could find one that pleased me.
turn down: lower volume	Your stereo is driving me crazy! Please turn it down.
turn down: reject	He applied for a promotion twice this year, but he was turned down both times.
turn up: raise the volume	Grandpa couldn't hear, so he turned up his hearing aid.
turn off: switch off electricity	We turned off the lights before anyone could see us.
turn off: repulse	It was a disgusting movie. It really turned me off.
turn on: switch on the electricity	Turn on the CD player so we can dance.
use up: exhaust, use completely	The gang members used up all the money and went out to rob some more banks.

With the following phrasal verbs, the lexical part of the verb (the part of the phrasal verb that carries the 'verb-meaning') cannot be separated from the prepositions (or other parts) that accompany it: "Who will *look after* my estate when I'm gone?"

call on: visit	The old teacher continued to call on his students at their homes.
get over: recover from sickness or disappointment	He got over the u, but I don't know if he will ever get over his broken heart.
go over: review	The students went over the material before the exam. They should have gone over it twice.
go through: use up; consume	The state went through most of its coal reserves in one year. Did he go through all his money already?
look after: take care of	My sister promised to look after my garden while I was gone.
look into: investigate	The police will look into the possibilities of embezzlement.
run across: find by chance	I ran across my old roommate at the college reunion.
run into: meet	Payal ran into her ex-fiancé in the restaurant
take after: resemble	My son seems to take after his mother.
wait on : serve	It was strange to see my friend wait on tables.

Three-Word Phrasal Verbs

With the following phrasal verbs, you will find three parts:

break in on: interrupt (a conversation)	I was talking to Mom on the phone when the operator broke in on our call.
catch up with: keep abreast	After our month-long trip, it was time to catch up with the the news around town.
check up on: examine, investigate	His sons promised him to check up on the condition of the farm house from time to time.
come up with: to contribute	After keeping quiet for almost fifteen minutes he came up with a couple of ideas to be discussed in the GD.

cut down on: curtail (expenses)	We tried to cut down on the money we were spending on entertainment.
drop out of: leave school	I hope none of our students drop out of the course this year.
get along with: have a good relationship with	I found it very hard to get along with my brother when we were young.
get away with: escape blame	He cheated on the exam and then tried to get away with it.
get rid of: eliminate	The citizens tried to get rid of their corrupt MP in the recent election.
get through with: finish	When will you ever get through with that programme?
keep up with: maintain pace with	I find it hard to keep up with the engineers in the maths class.
look forward to: anticipate with pleasure	I always look forward to the beginning of a new semester.
look down on: despise	It's typical of a jingoistic country that the citizens look down on their geographical neighbours.
look in on: visit	We were going to look in on our old friend, but he wasn't home.
look out for: be careful, anticipate	Good instructors will look out for early signs of failure in their students.
look up to: respect	First-graders really look up to their teachers.
make sure of: verify	Make sure of the student's identity before you let him into the classroom.
put up with: tolerate	The teacher had to put up with a great deal of nonsense from the new students.
run out of: exhaust supply	The runners ran out of energy before the end of the race.

take care of: be responsible for	My oldest sister took care of us younger children after Mom died.
talk back to: answer impolitely	The star player talked back to the coach and was thrown off the team.
walk out on: abandon	Her husband walked out on her and their three children.

The following phrasal verbs are not followed by an object:

break down: stop functioning	That old Jeep had a tendency to break down just when I needed it the most.
catch on: become popular	Popular songs seem to catch on in Mumbai first and then spread to the other parts of the country.
come back: return to a place	Father promised that we would never come back to this horrible place.
come in: enter	They tried to come in through the back door, but it was locked.
come to: regain consciousness	He was hit on the head very hard, but after several minutes, he started to come to again.
come over: to visit	The children promised to come over, but they never do.
drop by: visit without appointment	We used to just drop by, but they were never home, so we stopped doing that.
get by: survive	Uncle Raj didn't have much money, but he always seemed to get by without borrowing money from anyone.
get up: arise	She tried to get up, but the couch was too low, and she couldn't make it on her own.
go on: continue	He would finish one Dickens' novel and then just go on to the next.
go on : happen	The police heard all the noise and stopped to see what was going on.
grow up: get older	He grew up to be a lot like his father.

keep away: remain at a distance	The judge warned the fan to keep away from the actor's home.
keep on:continue with the same	He tried to keep on singing long after his voice was ruined.
pass out: lose consciousness, faint	He had drunk too much; he passed out on the footpath outside the bar.
show off: demonstrate haughtily	Whenever he got up to answer a question, we knew he was going to show off.
show up: arrive	Day after day, Amol showed up for class at least twenty minutes late.
wake up: arouse from sleep	In my childhood in the village I woke up when the rooster crowed.

Revision Exercise

Correct the following sentences. Pay attention to the use of the prepositions only.

1. This is the sort of English up with which I cannot put.
2. I don't know up where she will end.
3. It's the most curious book across which I have ever run.
4. That depends on what you believe in.

Correct the following sentences by adding, removing, or changing the prepositions.

5. India became free 15th Aug. 1947.
6. India is independent more than 50 years.
7. India is free 1947.
8. Where did you get this from?
9. If we split it evenly between the three of us, no one will be unhappy.
10. You can't just walk in the class without permission.
11. Cut the pizza up into six pieces.
12. That is something I cannot agree with.
13. Where did he go to?
14. Where did you get this at?
15. I will go later on.
16. Cut it up into small pieces.
17. We will arrive the fourth of next month.
18. Divide the money between the two of you.
19. Divide the money among the three of you.
20. Tanya was waiting in the room.
21. Tanya entered into the room.
22. She dived in the pool.

Chapter 7
Conjunctions

Grammar

A conjunction is a joiner. It connects parts of a sentence. Conjunctions are categorized as *Coordinating conjunctions, Subordinating conjunctions,* and *Correlative conjunctions* depending on the function they perform in a sentence. Among the coordinating conjunctions, the most common are *and, but,* and *or.*

Usage Notes on Conjunction

Coordinating Conjunctions
Coordinating Conjunctions are: *and, but, or, yet, for, nor, so*

Note that all coordinating conjunctions have fewer than four letters. Note also that the words *then* and *now* are not coordinating conjunctions, so what we learn about coordinating conjunctions' roles in a sentence and punctuation does not apply to these two words.

When a coordinating conjunction is used to connect two clauses which are two different but related ideas, it is often (but not always) accompanied by a comma:

> Ashish wants to study at IIM Ahmedabad, *but* he has had trouble meeting the academic requirements.
> Ashish has a great potential to be a leader *but* he hasn't been careful with his academics.

The second sentence has no comma while the first one has. You may think that it is quite confusing to decide whether a comma is required or not. (The comma, as a punctuation mark is not very easy to master!)But there is a very easy way out — that is, the comma is always right! For example, the second sentence with a comma would also be right.

That is, the comma is always correct when used to separate two independent clauses connected by a coordinating conjunction.

A comma is also correct (and required) when *and* is used to attach the last item of a serial list, although many people (especially journalists) omit that final comma:

> Correct: Ashish spent his summer studying English, Basic Maths, and Reading Comprehension.
> Incorrect: Ashish spent his summer studying English, Basic Maths and Reading Comprehension

We will look at this comma, which is called the *serial comma* or the *Oxford comma,* under punctuation again.

When a coordinating conjunction is used to connect all the elements in a series, a comma is not used:

> Engineers *and* Commerce Graduates *and* Management Graduates *and* Arts Graduates comprise the student community at IIM Ahmedabad.

A comma is also used with *but* when expressing a contrast:

> This is a useful rule, *but* difficult to remember.

Remember that what we have said above applies to clauses, but when we merely join two sentence elements a comma is not used.

In most of their other roles as joiners (other than joining independent clauses, that is), coordinating conjunctions can join two sentence elements without the help of a comma.

Gandhiji *and* Nehru were contemporaries.
Gandhiji is respected for his adherence to nonviolence *and* truth.
It is hard to say whether DI *or* Maths is more time-consuming.

Beginning a Sentence with *'And'* or *'But'*

Several times I had been asked by students if one could begin a sentence or paragraph with *and* or *but*. These students are sometimes armed with a sentence extracted from some book (beginning with *And*), and sometimes with school grammar notes which said "do not begin sentences with a conjunction". "Do not begin a sentence with a conjunction" is disproved by half the language. Sentences that begin with ... *though, although, since,* etc (also *because*) are in abundance and all these beginnings are conjunctions.

This is what R.W. Burchfield has to say about this use of *and:*

"There is a persistent belief that it is improper to begin a sentence with *And,* but this prohibition has been cheerfully ignored by standard authors from Anglo-Saxon times onwards. An initial *And* is a useful aid to writers as the narrative continues."

The same is true with the conjunction *but.*

And and *but* are used at the beginning of sentences as transitional devices. A transitional device is a word that facilitates the smooth flow of one sentence into another. Such uses of *and* and *but* are perfectly legal. Hence, not all sentences beginning with *and* or *but* are wrong. Some of them are good sentences.

"A sentence beginning with *and* or *but* will tend to draw attention to itself and its transitional function. Users should examine such sentences with two questions in mind: (1) Would the sentence and paragraph function just as well without the initial conjunction? (2) Should the sentence in question be connected to the previous sentence? If the initial conjunction still seems appropriate, use it."

Some of the uses of *and, but* and *or* are explored below. The examples below by no means exhaust the possible meanings of these conjunctions.

And

To suggest that one idea is chronologically sequential to another:

Tanya sent in her application *and* waited eagerly for a response.

To suggest that one idea is the result of another:

The students heard the professor's footsteps *and* promptly stopped talking.

To suggest that one idea is in contrast to another (frequently replaced by *but* in this usage):

Anita is academically brilliant *and* Sunita is creative in her thinking.

To suggest an element of surprise (sometimes replaced by *yet* in this usage):

Mumbai is a rich city *and* suffers from many symptoms of urban blight.

To suggest that one clause is dependent upon another, conditionally:

Use your credit cards frequently *and* you'll soon find yourself deep in debt.

To suggest a kind of 'comment' on the first clause:

Ashish became addicted to alcohol — *and* that surprised no one who knew him.

But

To suggest a contrast that is unexpected in the light of the first clause:

Vijay lost a fortune in the stock market, *but* he still seems able to live quite comfortably.

To suggest in an affirmative sense what the first part of the sentence implied in a negative way (sometimes replaced by *on the contrary*):

Vijay never invested foolishly, *but* used the services of a wise investment counsellor.

To connect two ideas with the meaning of 'with the exception of':

Everybody *but* Srikanth is trying out for the team.

Or

To suggest that only one option can be achieved:

You can study hard for this exam *or* you can fail.

To interpret/refine what is said before (usually the first clause):

NCM College is the premier all-women's college in the country, *or* so it seems to most NCM College alumnae.

To suggest a restatement or 'correction' of the first part of the sentence:

There are no snakes in these forests, *or* so our guide tells us.

Nor

The conjunction nor is not used as often as the other conjunctions. Its most common use is in the correlative pair, *neither...nor:*

He is *neither* sane *nor* brilliant.
That is *neither* what I said *nor* what I meant.

It can be used with other negative expressions:

That is not what I meant to say, *nor* should you interpret my statement as an admission of guilt.

Yet

The word yet functions sometimes as an adverb and has several meanings: in addition ("yet another cause of trouble" or "a simple *yet* noble woman"), even ("*yet* more expensive"), still ("he is *yet* a novice"), eventually ("they may *yet* win"), and so soon as now ("he's not here *yet*").

It also functions as a coordinating conjunction meaning something like 'nevertheless' or 'but'. The word *yet* seems to carry an element of distinctiveness that the conjunction *but* cannot fully communicate.

Kapil plays basketball well, *yet* his favourite sport is badminton.
The visitors complained loudly about the heat, *yet* they continued to play cricket every day.
The visitors complained loudly *yet* continued to play golf every day.

(Notice the use of the *comma* in the first two sentences and its disappearance in the third.)

Yet is sometimes combined with other conjunctions, *but* or *and.* It would not be unusual to see *and yet* in sentences like the ones above. This usage is correct.

For

The word *for* is generally used as a preposition, but its use as a coordinating conjunction is also common.

> Satyam thought he had a good chance to get the job, *for* his father was on the company's board of trustees.

As far as possible do not begin a sentence with *for*. *For* has serious sequential implications hence, you will have to look carefully at the sentences beginning with *for.* In this respect, it is different form the use of *because* and *since* at the beginning of sentences.

So

Be careful of the conjunction *so*. Sometimes, it can connect two independent clauses along with a comma, but sometimes it can't. For instance, in this sentence,

> Kareena is not the only actor in her family, so are her brother, sister, and her Uncle Kapoor.

where the word *so* means 'as well' or 'in addition'. However, a semicolon between the two independent clauses would be smoother.

In the following sentence, where *so* is acting like 'therefore', the conjunction and the comma are adequate:

> Ashish has always been nervous in large gatherings, *so* it is no surprise that he avoids crowds.

Than

Than is not a coordinating conjunction.

Than is a conjunction used to make comparisons. The use of *than* as a preposition is best avoided in competitive examinations. (Merriam Webster's Dictionary provides explanation for this use.)

> Incorrect: He's taller and somewhat *more handsome than me.*
> Correct: He's taller and somewhat more handsome than I [am handsome]

Than as a conjunction is used to join two clauses as in the above correct sentence. If we accept its use a preposition first sentence also becomes right.

[Read what Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary has to say 'than – preposition: in comparison with *you are older than me* usage. After about 200 years of innocent if occasional use, the preposition *than* was called into question by 18th century grammarians. Some 200 years of elaborate and sometimes tortuous reasoning have led to these present-day inconsistent conclusions: [*than whom* is standard but clumsy Beelzebub… than whom, Satan except, none higher sat — John Milton T. S. Eliot, than whom nobody could have been more insularly English — Anthony Burgess; *than me* may be acceptable in speech 'a man no mightier than thyself or me' — Shakespeare why should a man be better than me because he's richer than me — William Faulkner, in a talk to students; *than* followed by a third-person objective pronoun *(her, him, them)* is usually frowned upon. Surveyed opinion tends to agree with these conclusions. Our evidence shows that the conjunction is more common than the preposition, that *than whom* is chiefly limited to writing, and that *me* is more common after the preposition than the third-person objective pronouns. You have the same choice Shakespeare had: you can use *than* either as a conjunction or as a preposition.]

Then

Then is not a coordinating conjunction.

Many students think that *then* is used in the same way as *but* or *and.*

> Incorrect: He lectured for two hours, *then* he turned his attention to the homework.

You will understand the difference between a conjunction and a *conjunctive adverb* (see below) when you try to move it around within the clause — *then* he turned his attention … he *then* turned his attention, he turned his attention to the homework *then.* The word *then* can move around in the sentence.

Use *and* in place of *then* and try to move it around. You will see that the conjunction cannot move around. "He lectured for two hours, *and* he turned his attention to the homework." The word and is stuck exactly there *and* cannot move like *then,* which is more like an adverbial conjunction or conjunctive adverb than a coordinating conjunction.

Grammar on this: Our original sentence in this paragraph — "He lectured for two hours, *then* he turned his attention to the homework."— is a **comma splice,** a faulty sentence construction in which a comma tries to hold together two independent clauses all by itself: the comma needs a coordinating conjunction to help out, and the word *then* simply doesn't work that way.

Correlative Conjunctions

Here is a brief list of common correlative conjunctions.

> *both . . . and; not only . . . but also; not . . . but; either . . . or; neither . . . nor; whether . . . or; as . . . as* .

The correlative conjunctions always travel in pairs, joining sentence parts that are to be treated as grammatically equal.

> She topped the class *not only* in academics *but also* in enthusiasm.
> *Whether* she makes it to the top B-Schools *or* loses is immaterial because she will anyhow succeed in life.

Correlative conjunctions sometimes create problems in parallel form. (See Parallelism)

Subordinating Conjunctions

Common Subordinating Conjunctions

> *After, although, as, as if, as long as, as though, because, before,*
> *even if, even though, if, if only, in order that, now that, once,*
> *rather than, since, so that, than, that, though, till, unless, until,*
> *when, whenever, where, whereas, wherever, while…*

When there are two ideas constructed with two clauses the subordinating conjunction makes one idea subordinate to the other. The sentence will then have a main clause and a Subordinate Clause (Dependent Clause) introduced by one of the subordinating conjunctions. Subordinate clause will then depend on the rest of the sentence for its meaning and significance.

> *Because* he loved her, he refused to die without meeting her.
> Examples will be classified under headings, *though* these are not quite mutually exclusive.

Notice that some of the subordinating conjunctions in the list above — *after, before, since,* etc — are also prepositions, but as subordinators, they are used to introduce a subordinate clause.

Like* and *As

The usage issues relate to these two small words can sometimes tie you knots. They are not as simple as some people tend to explain them away as 'Look! *Like* is a preposition and *as* is a conjunction, etc..'

However, from the competitive exam's point of view let us first go by that thinking viz.:

Strictly speaking, the word *like* is a preposition, not a conjunction.

It can, therefore, be used to introduce a prepositional phrase

Correct: My brother is tall *like* my father

but it should not be used to introduce a clause

Incorrect: My brother can't play cricket *like* he did before the accident
Incorrect: It looks *like* cricket is quickly overtaking hockey as India's national sport.
Correct: My brother can't play cricket *as* he did before the accident.
Correct: It looks *as if* cricket is quickly overtaking hockey as India's national sport.

In both the correct sentences above *as* introduces a clause and in the first sentence 'My brother is tall *like* my father' *like* introduces a prepositional phrase.

To introduce a clause, it's a good idea to use *as, as though,* or *as if, instead.* Study these sentences.

As I told you earlier, the lecture has been postponed. (Not *Like I told you…*)
It looks *as if* it's going to rain this afternoon. (Not *It looks like it's going to…*)
Sapna kept looking out of the window *as though* she had someone waiting for her. (Not *Sapna … like she had someone…*)

In formal, academic text, it's a good idea to reserve the use of *like* for situations in which similarities are being pointed out:

This B-School is *like* a two-year rigorous imprisonment.

However, when you are listing things that have similarities, *such as* is probably more suitable:

The college has several highly regarded neighbours, *such as* the Express Towers, The Oberoi Towers, the NCPA, and the British Council Library. (Not *Like the Express ….*)

Now we will see what some authorities have to say on this issue:

Definitions and examples of use for *'like'* as a conjunction from Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary.

Definitions and examples:

- As if
  … middle-aged men who looked *like* they might be out for their one night of the year — Norman Mailer
- in the same way that : as
  … they raven down scenery *like* children do sweetmeats — John Keats
- in the way or manner that:
  … the violin sounds *like* an old masterpiece should.
  … did it *like* you told me.
- such as
  …. a bag like a doctor carries; when your car has trouble — *like* when it won't start —

Usage:
Like has been used as a conjunction since the 14th century. In the 14th, 15th, and 16th centuries it was used in serious literature, but not often; in the 17th and 18th centuries it grew more frequent but less literary. It became markedly more frequent in literary use again in the 19th century. By mid-century it was coming under critical fire, but not from grammarians, oddly enough, who were wrangling over whether it could be

called a preposition or not. There is no doubt that, after 600 years of use, conjunctive *like* is firmly established. It has been used by many prestigious literary figures of the past, though perhaps not in their most elevated works; in modern use, it may be found in literature, journalism, and scholarly writing. While the present objection to it is perhaps more heated than rational, someone writing in a formal prose style may well prefer to use *as, as if, such as,* or an entirely different construction instead.

All the above is quoted from Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary.

That

When *that* is used as a subordinating conjunction it has direct relation to the verb in the main clause. In fact, the omission of *that* in such sentences does not impair the sentence in any way.

> Lavanya knew [that] she was about to be fired.
> She definitely felt [that] her fellow employees hadn't supported her.
>
> Remember, [that] we didn't have these problems before she started working here.

(Notice the comma in the last sentence. If you use *that,* the comma will disappear)

As a general rule, if the sentence feels just as good without the *that,* if no ambiguity results from its omission, if the sentence is more efficient or elegant without it, then we can safely omit the *that.*

Theodore Bernstein, however, lists three conditions in which we should maintain the conjunction *that:*

When a time element intervenes between the verb and the clause:

> 'The boss said yesterday *that* production in this department was down fifty per cent." (Notice the position of 'yesterday'.)

When the verb of the clause is long delayed:

> "Our annual report revealed *that* some losses sustained by this department in the third quarter of last year were worse than previously thought." (Notice the distance between the subject 'losses' and its verb, 'were'.)

When a second *that* can clear up who said or did what:

> "The CEO said *that* Isabel's department was slacking off and <u>*that*</u> production dropped precipitously in the fourth quarter." (Did the CEO say that production dropped or was the drop a result of what he said about Isabel's department? The second *that* makes the sentence clear.)
>
> (*Dos, Don'ts & Maybes of English Usage* by Theodore Bernstein.
> Gramercy Books.)

Beginning a Sentence with *'because'*

There is absolutely nothing wrong with beginning a sentence with *because.*

> *Because* the service sector has grown tremendously, the government would very much like to see it taxed in some manner.

Conjunctive Adverbs

Words like *however, moreover, nevertheless, consequently,* are conjunctive adverbs. They show specific relationships between ideas. These words also make transition from one idea to another smooth.

Usage Notes

Recognize the conjunctive adverbs and do not worry about their function in a sentence/paragraph. They are handy devices as *transition words/phrases.*

Function	Conjunctive adverbs
addition	again, also, and, and then, besides, equally important, finally, first, further, furthermore, in addition, in the first place, last, moreover, next, second, still, too
comparison	also, in the same way, likewise, similarly
concession	granted, naturally, of course
contrast	although, and yet, at the same time, but at the same time, despite that, even so, even though, for all that, however, in contrast, in spite of, instead, nevertheless, notwithstanding, on the contrary, on the other hand, otherwise, regardless, still, though, yet
emphasis	certainly, indeed, in fact, of course
example	or
illustration	after all, as an illustration, even, for example, for instance, in conclusion, indeed, in fact, in other words, in short, it is true, of course, namely, specifically, that is, to illustrate, thus, truly
summary	all in all, altogether, as has been said, finally, in brief, in conclusion, in other words, in particular, in short, in simpler terms, in summary, on the whole, that is, therefore, to put it differently, to summarize
time sequence	after a while, afterward, again, also, and then, as long as, at last, at length, at that time, before, besides, earlier, eventually, finally, formerly, further, furthermore, in addition, in the first place, in the past, last, lately, meanwhile, moreover, next, now, presently, second, shortly, simultaneously, since, so far, soon, still, subsequently, then, thereafter, too, until, until now, when

The list includes conjunctions, adverbs, prepositions, and other words. The purpose behind listing them all here is just one: when you write your essays/ SOPs for B-Schools, consciously use these transition words/phrases between sentences and paragraphs. You will see that what you write reads much better.

Revision Exercise

Underline the conjunctions in these sentences.

1. Cox and Kings is open today so we're going to buy our tickets to Australia.
2. As he read the letter he laughed.
3. So he told me but I didn't believe him.
4. She did not reply, nor did she make any gesture.
5. We ran from the building when we noticed the time.
6. Either accept our conditions or leave.
7. We rested until the storm was over and we felt better.

Spot the error in these sentences.

8. A. Diderot presented
   B. a bouquet which was
   C. neither well
   D. or ill received.

9. A. Like the Persian noble of old,
   B. I ask, 'that I may neither
   C. command or obey'.
   D. No Error

10. A. She would hear nothing
    B. of a declaration of war,
    C. or give any judgement on.
    D. No Error

11. A. It appears, then, that neither the mixed and incomplete empiricism
    B. considered in the third chapter, still less the pure empiricism
    C. considered in the second chapter, affords us…
    D. No Error

12. A. Scarcely was the nice new drain
    B. finished than several of the
    C. children sickened with diphtheria.
    D. No Error

13. A. *Which* differs from
    B. *that* and *who* in being used both as an adjective
    C. as well as a noun.
    D. No Error.

Rewrite the following sentences in your notebook after removing, if any, error or ambiguity.

14. M. Shipoff in one and the same breath denounces innovations, yet bases the whole electoral system on the greatest innovation in Russian history. — *Times*
15. It would be equally absurd to attend to all the other parts of an engine and to neglect the principal source of its energy — the firebox — as it is ridiculous to pay particular attention to the cleanliness of the body and to neglect the mouth and teeth. — Advertisement.
16. The conception of God in their minds was not that of a Father, but as a dealer out of rewards and punishments. — *Daily Telegraph.*
17. Dr. Dillon, than whom no Englishman has a profounder and more accurate acquaintance with the seamy side — as, indeed, of all aspects of Russian life — assumes... — *Times.*
18. Sir, — In view of the controversy which has arisen concerning the 12 in. Mark VIII guns in the Navy, and especially to the suggestion which might give rise to some doubt as to the efficiency of the wire system of construction... — *Times.*

Chapter 8
Style

The usage issues that we will explore in this chapter are not related to principles of grammar. These are concerns in writing. There are several errors that cannot be examined grammatically and classified as grammatical errors. These deviations from style also form a part of test in competitive examinations. Parallelism, Redundancy, Wordiness, and the confusion between similar words are some of these.

Parallel Structure

When a sentence has several ideas in it, the pattern of words used to express these ideas must be the same. The consistency in the structure is required to show that these ideas have the same level of importance in the sentence. Parallelism can be at the phrase level, sentence level, or the essay level. Examples will make it clear:

He likes *hiking, swimming,* and *cycling.*
(consistently *–ing* form)

He likes *to hike, to swim,* and *to ride* a bicycle.
(consistently infinitive, i.e *to +verb*)

He likes *to hike, swim,* and *ride* a bicycle.
(*to* is used either once or with each verb)

Inconsistent: He likes *hiking, swimming,* and *to ride* a bicycle.

Inconsistent: The production manager was asked to write his report *quickly, accurately,* and *in a detailed manner.*

Parallel: The production manager was asked to write his report *quickly, accurately,* and *thoroughly*.

Inconsistent: The teacher said that he was a poor student because he waited until the last minute to study for the exam, completed his lab problems in a careless manner, and his motivation was low.

Parallel: The teacher said that he was a poor student because he *waited* until the last minute to study for the exam, *completed* his lab problems in a careless manner, and *lacked* motivation.

Parallelism has to be maintained with clauses too.

Inconsistent: The coach told the players that they should get a lot of sleep, that they should not eat too much, and to do some warm-up exercises before the game.

Parallel: The coach told the players *that they should get* a lot of sleep, *that they should not eat* too much, and *that they should do* some warm-up exercises before the game.

or

Parallel: The coach told the players that they should *get* a lot of sleep, *not eat* too much, and *do* some warm-up exercises before the game.

One way of checking whether the sentence is parallel is to quickly identify the main idea in the sentence. Once this is identified any deviation from the parallel form in the related ideas in the sentence will be easy to spot.

For example:

Main Idea	Related Ideas
The coach told the players that they should	1. *get a* lot of sleep
	2. *not eat* too much
(*Conjunction*) and	3. *do* some warm up exercises before the game.

Inconsistent: The salesman expected that he would present his product at the meeting, that there would be time for him to show his slide presentation, and that questions would be asked by prospective buyers.

Main Idea	Related Ideas
The salesman expected	*that he would present* his product at the meeting,
	that there would be time for him to show his slide presentation,
and	*that questions would be asked* by prospective buyers.

In the above sentence, it becomes easier to notice that the third idea is passive and not parallel with the other two, when the structure of the sentence is identified as Main Idea and Related Ideas.

Parallel: The salesman expected *that he would present* his product at the meeting, *that there would be time* for him to show his slide presentation, and *that prospective buyers would ask* him questions.

Expressions related by correlative conjunctions (see conjunctions) sometimes create errors in parallelism. These errors can be corrected by rearranging the sentence.

Inconsistent: Either you must grant his request or incur his ill will.
Parallel: You must *either grant* his request *or incur* his ill will.

Most memorable writing has, as one of its recognizable features, the ample use of parallel grammatical structures. Consider these selections from famous political documents:

> We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness. (The Declaration of Independence.)
>
> It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us — that from these honoured dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of

devotion; that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain; that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom; and that government of the people, by the people, for the people shall not perish from the earth. (The Gettysburg Address)

Redundancy

Redundancy is a common error in writing. Redundancy is saying the same thing twice, as in the phrases *repeat again* and *cooperate together.*

The correct sentence in the CAT will not have any redundancy, especially in questions where you are asked to pick out the best sentence from the options.

Redundant: Before setting off on your camping trip, be sure you have the important essentials: food, water, and shelter.
Revised: Before setting off on your camping trip, be sure you have the essentials: food, water, and shelter.

Redundant: The dog ran away on Thursday but came back again on Saturday.
Revised: The dog ran away on Thursday but came back on Saturday.

But if this dog had run away earlier on Monday and had come back on Wednesday, before running off again on Thursday and *coming back again* on Saturday, wouldn't the sentence be right? Not quite. Still, *'came back'* would just as well communicate what you are trying to say. Perhaps *'again came back'* appears to improve things. It becomes, very difficult, however, to do away with certain type of redundancy. The purpose of the other sentence is to make you aware that though there are usages which are always without fail redundant, there are certain usages which have to be reasoned within the context to see whether they are redundant at all.

Sometimes grammatical stylists use the term **semantic pleonasm** to describe redundancy:

Examples of redundant phrases. You can easily revise them to make them precise.

triangular (round, square) in shape
auto-biography of my life
the future to come
that final conclusion
ascend up
essential necessity
free gift
good success
lesbian woman
nonreading illiterates
CAT exam
VAT tax
ATM Machine.
close proximity
empty rhetoric
equally as
inside of
mental telepathy
rarely ever/seldom ever
reason is because

reason why

These are only a few of the redundant phrases that plague our daily use of the language (newspapers, etc.). I have been asked to *'hurry up fast'*, to *'revert back* within 10 days', to *return back',* etc., etc. We have become so accustomed to such redundant phrases, that our reasoning is blunted. A *'free gift'* no more bothers us! Just be cautious in the examination.

Wordiness

We have all been at one time or the other been victims of a professor who would go on and on about something, and at the end of it all realized that he had said nothing! Wordiness is a sign of stupidity. Concision is a sign of intelligence.

Wordy:
It is essential to acknowledge that one of the drawbacks to the increased utilization of part-time employees is that people who are still engaged full-time by the company are less likely to be committed to the recognition and identification of problems in the production area.

Concise:
Using more part-time employees often makes full-time employees less willing to report production problems.

In our efforts to curb wordiness, we should not lose sight of the magnificence that repetition is capable of, especially in parallel construction. Consider the following passage from a speech by Winston Churchill voicing defiance during one of the most difficult times of World War II. It could certainly be made shorter with fewer repetitions, but it would hardly be more inspiring:

We shall not flag or fail. We shall go on to the end. We shall fight in France, we shall fight on the seas and oceans, we shall fight with growing confidence and growing strength in the air, we shall defend our island, whatever the cost may be, we shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight in the fields and in the streets, we shall fight in the hills; we shall never surrender.

The following expressions, however, may be improved to get rid of wordiness:

Wordy	Concise
the question as to whether	whether (the question whether)
there is no doubt but that	no doubt (doubtless)
used for fuel purposes	used for fuel
he is a man who	he
in a hasty manner	hastily
this is a subject which	this subject
owing to the fact that	since (because)
in spite of the fact that	though (although)
call your attention to the fact that	remind you (notify you)

I was unaware of the fact that	I was unaware that (did not know)
the fact that he had not succeeded	his failure
the fact that I had arrived	my arrival
exactly the same	the same
completely unanimous	unanimous
circle around	circle
12 midnight	midnight
12 noon	noon
3 a.m. in the morning	3 a.m.
absolutely spectacular	spectacular
in the field of economics	in economics
in the event that	if
new innovations	innovations
one and the same	the same
surrounded on all sides	surrounded
usual custom	custom

Confusable Words

Questions in competitive examinations sometimes wittingly place a wrong word in the sentence. Since the wrong word has similar spelling, or has similar pronunciation or has similar meaning to the correct word, we tend to miss this error.

The list of confusable words in English is endless. *Compliment – complement; its – it's; further – farther* are examples. You have to be careful not to miss this error in the exam.

Example: Her naive and ingenious mother expressed amazement that her daughter could create such an ingenuous demonstration for the science fair.

The words *ingenious* and *ingenuous* are disastrously interchanged in the above sentence.

Commonly Misused Words

Some of the commonly misused words and expressions are explained below:

All right

The one-word spelling *alright* appeared some 75 years after *all right* itself had reappeared from a 400-year-long absence. Since the early 20th century some critics have insisted *alright* is wrong, but it has its defenders and its users. It is less frequent than *all right* but remains in common use especially in journalistic and business publications. It is quite common in fictional dialogue, and is used occasionally in other writing. – Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary.

Avoid the *alright* variation.

As good* or *better than

Incorrect: My opinion is *as good or better* than his.
Correct: My opinion is *as good as his, or better* (if not better).

As to whether
Whether is sufficient.

Character
Often simply redundant, used from a mere habit of wordiness.

Incorrect: Acts of a hostile character
Correct: Hostile acts

Compare
Avoid *compare and contrast.* It is silly. *Compare* is good enough.

compare to: is to point out or imply resemblances, between objects regarded as essentially of different order.
Life is *compared to* a drama.

compare with: is mainly to point out differences, between objects regarded as essentially of the same order.

The performance of the BJP is *compared with* that of the Congress.

Consider
Consider is not followed by *as*

Incorrect: I *consider* him *as* my friend.
Correct: I consider him my friend.

Correct: The professor *considered* Vajpayee first *as* a poet and second *as* administrator
Here, *consider* has a different meaning – 'examined' or 'discussed.'

Due to
One finds (in the press, etc.) instances of more incorrect use of *due to* than correct, <u>incorrectly</u> substituted for *through, because of,* or *owing to.*

Incorrect: He lost the first game, *due to* carelessness.
Correct: His loss was *due to* carelessness.

Correct: This invention is *due to* Edison.

To check if the use of *due to* is correct: Substitute *due to* with *attributable to* in the sentence. If the sentence makes sense with *attributable to* the use of *due to* is correct. Otherwise rephrase.

Less/ Lesser/ fewer
Less should not be misused for *fewer*. *Less* refers to quantity, *fewer* to number.

'His troubles are *less* than mine' means 'His troubles are *not so great* as mine.'
'His troubles are *fewer* than mine' means 'His troubles are *not so numerous* as mine.'

It is, however, correct to say, 'The signers of the petition were *less than a hundred,* 'where the round number, a hundred, is something like a collective noun, and *less* is thought of as meaning a *less quantity or amount.*

These are the correct comparative forms:

Few – fewer – fewest
Little – less/lesser - least

Nature
Often simply redundant, used like *character.*

Redundant: Acts of a hostile nature
Revised: Hostile acts

Often vaguely used in such expressions as 'a lover of nature;' 'poems about nature.' Unless more specific statements follow, the reader cannot tell whether the poems have to do with natural scenery, rural life, the sunset, the untracked wilderness, or the habits of squirrels.

Nearby
Not accepted as good English, though the analogy of *close by* and *hard by* seems to justify it. Use *near,* or *near at hand.*

Not to be used as an adjective – *nearby house* – use neighbouring.

One hundred one
Use *one hundred and one.*

Retain the *and* in this and similar expressions.

Whom
Refer to the chapter on Pronouns.

Often incorrectly used for *who* before *he said* or similar expressions, when it is really the subject of a following verb.

Incorrect: His brother, whom he said would send him the money.
Correct: His brother, who he said would send him the money

Incorrect: The man whom he thought was his friend
Correct: The man who (that) he thought was his friend (*whom* he thought his friend)

Would
(Also see the chapter on Verbs.)

A conditional statement in the first person requires *should,* not *would.*

Incorrect: I *would* not have succeeded without your help.
Correct: I *should* not have succeeded without his help.

The equivalent of *shall* in indirect quotation after a verb in the past tense is *should,* not *would.*

Correct: He predicted that before long we *should* have a great surprise.

Revision Exercise

Rewrite the sentences after rectifying the faulty parallelism.

1. Formerly, science was taught by the textbook method, while now the laboratory method is employed.
2. The French, the Italians, Spanish, and Portuguese
3. In spring, summer, or in winter
4. It was both a long ceremony and very tedious.
5. A time not for words, but action
6. My objections are, first, the injustice of the measure; second, that it is unconstitutional.
7. My income is smaller than my wife.

Remove wordiness, redundancy, or colloquialism and rewrite.

8. All things considered, Indian economy is in better shape now than ever before.
9. As far as I'm concerned, there is no need for further protection of Indian industries.
10. This is because there are fewer sick industries at the present time.
11. The service industry has grown because of the fact that the government has given tax holidays.
12. Due to the fact that their habitats are being restored, forest creatures are also re-establishing their population bases.
13. This policy has a tendency to isolate some communities.
14. The point I am trying to make is that sometimes public policy doesn't accomplish what it sets out to achieve.
15. Something in the nature of a repeal may soon take place.

Chapter 9
Punctuation

I have seen test questions based on punctuation in certain exams – like the one used to be conducted by SIBM. The CAT too has at times included aspects of punctuation in their questions. You had a correctly punctuated option as the scoring one against incorrectly punctuated ones. It is, however, useful to have some clarity about the rules of punctuation, though not from the examination point of view alone. Besides, a handbook on usage cannot afford to leave this out.

We will examine only a few punctuation marks. It is better to mention what is left out. I have left out the rules related to the use of the question mark, the exclamation mark, the quotation marks, the brackets, and the hyphen. The others are examined from a practical point of view. Finer details are not mentioned.

Commas

Use commas to separate *each item* (including the one after *and*) in a series of three or more.

Correct: The will required that her money be equally divided among her husband, daughter, son, and nephew.

Omitting the comma after son would change the meaning of the sentence and indicate that the *son and nephew* would have to share one third of the money. Omit this comma (called the Oxford or Serial comma) only when you are sure of the meaning you want to communicate.

When two adjectives qualify a noun, e.g. *intelligent, talented lady,* use a comma to separate them only when it is possible to insert *and* in between the adjectives *(intelligent and talented)*. If you cannot insert *and* do not use the comma.

Correct: She is an intelligent, talented lady. (intelligent *and* talented)
Correct: She is an intelligent young lady. (not intelligent *and* young)

Use a comma when an *ly* adjective is used with other adjectives.

Correct: She is a friendly, young lady.

To test if an *ly* word is an adjective, see if it can be used alone with the noun. If it can, *(friendly lady)* use the comma.

Incorrect: I get headaches in brightly, lit rooms.

brightly is not an adjective because it cannot be used alone with rooms.

Correct: I get headaches in brightly lit rooms.

Notice the use of commas (or their absence) in date:

16th July 2004
June 16, 2004
Wednesday, June 16, 2004
16 June 2004

In sentences use a comma to separate the day of the month from the year and after the year.

Correct: I met my wife on September 25, 1988, in Ruparel College.
Correct: I met my wife on September 25, 1988 in Ruparel College.

If any part of the date is omitted, leave out the comma.

Correct: We met in September 1988 in Ruparel College.

Use a comma to separate the city from the state and after the state.

Correct: I lived in Mumbai, Maharashtra, for 20 years.
Correct: I lived in Mumbai, Maharashtra for 20 years.

Use commas to surround degrees or titles used with names.

Sreenivas, B. Tech., spoke to Shilpa, MBA.

Use commas to set off expressions that interrupt the flow of the sentence.

Correct: I am, as you have probably noticed, very nervous about this.

When starting a sentence with a dependent clause, use a comma after it. Conversely, do not use a comma when the sentence starts with the main clause followed by a dependent clause.

Correct: If you are not sure about this, let me know now.
Correct: Let me know now if you are not sure about this.

Use a comma after phrases of more than three words that begin a sentence.

Correct: To apply for this job, you must have previous experience.
Correct: On 14th many couples will give each other gifts.

(A comma after the date is optional – the phrase at the beginning is of only two words *On 14th.*)

If something or someone is sufficiently identified, the description following it is considered nonessential and should be surrounded by commas. (description introduced using *who* or *which*)

Chandra, who is the director of *Philab*, is quitting. (Chandra is named so the description is not essential)
The boy who comes from Vasai Road got calls from all the six IIMs.

We would not know which boy is being referred to otherwise; therefore, no commas are used.

Using a comma is optional to separate two sentences joined by a coordinating conjunction — *and, or, but, for, nor.* (See the chapter on conjunctions.)

Use the comma to separate two sentences if it will help avoid confusion.

Correct: I chose the colours red and green, and blue was his first choice.

Use a comma to introduce or interrupt direct speech.

He actually said, “I do not care.”
“Why,” I asked, “do you always forget to do it?”

Use a comma when beginning sentences with introductory words such as *well, now, or yes.*

Yes, I do need that report.

Colons

Use the colon after a complete sentence to introduce a list of items when introductory words such as *namely, for example,* or *that is* do not appear. Skip two spaces after a colon.

You may be required to bring many items: tables, chairs, and computers..
I want the following items: A table, chair, and computer.
I want a secretary who can do the following: 1) type, 2) take shorthand, and 3) answer telephones.

But, I want a secretary who can 1) type, 2) take shorthand, and 3) answer telephones.

No colon precedes the numbers in the last example because *I want a secretary who can* is not a complete sentence.

Use the colon to introduce a list in tabular form whether it is preceded by a complete sentence or not.

I want a secretary who can:
a) type
b) take shorthand
c) answer telephones

I want a secretary who can do the following:
a) type
b) take shorthand
c) answer telephones

Use the colon to introduce a direct quotation.

It is stated in the Constitution: "Any Indian national above 18 is entitled to vote".

Capitalization

Capitalize the first word of a sentence. Capitalize a proper noun.

Capitalize the first word of a quoted sentence.

He said, "Treat her as you would your own daughter."
"Look out!" she screamed. "You almost ran into my child."

It is often requested that you capitalize a person's title when it precedes the name.

Chairperson Banga OR chairperson Banga

Do not capitalize when the title is acting as a description following the name.

Mr. Banga, the chairperson of the company, will address us at noon.

Capitalize when the person's title follows the name on the address or signature line.

Sincerely,
Mr. Banga, Chairperson

Capitalize the titles of high-ranking government officials when used with or without their names.

The President will address the Lok Sabha. All MPs are expected to attend.
President Kalam will discuss the security.

Capitalize directions only when they refer to specific regions.

We have had Presidents from the South.
The southwest monsoon starts in June.

Do not capitalize names of seasons.

I love summer colours and rain flowers.

Capitalize titles of publications except for *a, an, the, but, as, if, and, or, nor,* and other little words when used internally. Capitalize short verb forms like *Is, Are,* and *Be.*

The Day of the Jackal
Who Moved My Cheese?

Capitalize words derived from proper nouns.

Correct: I must take English and maths.
English is capitalized because it comes from the proper noun England but maths does not come from any proper noun).

Correct: I must take French and Mathematics.
(Mathematics is a specific course).

Semicolon

Use the semicolon in place of a period to separate two sentences where the conjunction has been left out.

Correct: Call me tomorrow; I will explain everything then.
Correct: I have paid my dues; therefore, I expect all the privileges listed in the Student Rule Book.

Do not use a semicolon in front of words such as *therefore* and *however* if they do not connect two complete sentences or are used as interrupters.

Correct: I would, therefore, like a response.
Correct: I would be happy, however, to speak in the Seminar.

Use the semicolon to avoid confusion where commas already exist.

This conference has people that have come from Mumbai, Maharashtra; Bangalore, Karnataka; and Chennai, TN.

Period

Use a period after a sentence. Use a period after an indirect question.

He asked where his suitcase was.

If the last word in the sentence ends in a period, do not follow it with another period.

I know that M.D. She is my sister-in-law.
Please shop, cook, etc. I will do the floor.

Ellipses

'Ellipsis' is singular and 'ellipses' is plural

The omission of one or more words that are obviously understood but that must be supplied to make a construction grammatically complete is called an ellipsis; marks … or *** or — is used to indicate an ellipsis.

If words are omitted at the end of a quoted sentence, use ellipses marks followed by the necessary ending punctuation mark.

She said, "Can you tell me what happened to...?"

The grammar book states, "The omission of one or more words that are obviously understood … is called an ellipsis."

The original sentence read:

The omission of one or more words that are obviously understood but that must be supplied to make a construction grammatically complete is called an ellipsis

Apostrophes

Use the apostrophe with contractions. The apostrophe is always placed at the spot where the letter has been removed.

Examples:

Don't	(do *not*)
Hasn't	(has *not*)

Use the apostrophe to show possession. Place the apostrophe before the *s* to show possession by one person.

the boy's room

To show possession by more than one person, make the noun plural first. Then immediately use the apostrophe.

boys' room.

Birla's car	(car belongs to one Birla)
Birlas' car	(car belongs the Birla family)

To show singular possession with proper nouns ending in *s* or an *s* sound, you have the option of dropping the *s* that would normally follow the apostrophe.

Use the apostrophe and *s* after the second name only if two people possess the same item.

Anil and Sunita's home is under construction.
Anil's and Sunil's job contracts will be renewed next year. (separate ownership)
Anil and Sunita's applications for loans have been approved by the banks. (joint ownership of more than one application)

Apostrophe used with pronouns will indicate contractions. None of the pronouns show the possessive using the apostrophe.

No apostrophe in *yours, hers, theirs, mine, his, its*

It's nice	(It is nice)
Its greatness	(the greatness belongs to it)

Avoid apostrophes to show the plurals of numbers and contractions.

Correct: She consulted three MBAs.
Correct: I had lived here in the 70s.

Writing Numbers

The numbers one through ten should be spelled out; use figures for numbers greater than ten.

Correct: I want five copies.
Correct: I want 15 copies.

With a group of related numbers where one number is above 10 in a sentence, write them all in figures. Use words if all related numbers are 10 or below.

Correct: I asked for 5 copies, not 50.
Correct: My two dogs fought with their one cat.

Incorrect: I asked for five copies, not 50.

If the numbers are unrelated, then you may use both figures and words.

Correct: I asked for 50 pencils for my five students.

Always spell out simple fractions and use hyphens with them.

Correct: One-half of the cakes have been eaten.
Correct: a two-thirds majority in the parliament.

Represent large numbers in the simplest way possible.

The simplest way to express large numbers is the best. And be consistent in the form you use.

10 lakh rupees
Rs. 10 lakh
ten lakh rupees

NOT

Rs. 10,00,000

Correct: You can earn anywhere from Rs. 100,000 to Rs. 5,000,000.
Incorrect: You can earn anywhere from Rs. 100,000 to Rs. 50 lakh.

Write decimals in figures. Put a zero (0) in front of a decimal unless the decimal itself begins with a zero.

Interest rates increased by 0.75%
Last quarter GDP increased by .09%

Hyphenate all compound numbers from twenty-one through ninety-nine.

Forty-three people were injured in the train wreck.

Do not hyphenate one hundred, two hundred, etc.

Revision Exercise

Correct any punctuation or capitalization errors in the following sentences.
Some sentences need no correction.

1. “How,” I asked “Can you always be so forgetful?”
2. The girl, who is standing there, is his fiancée.
3. I did not receive the order; therefore, I will not pay my bill.
4. Finish your job, it is imperative that you do.
5. You may; of course, call us anytime you wish.
6. You signed the contract, consequently you must provide us with the raw materials.
7. “Stop it!” I said, “Don’t ever do that again.”
8. Because of his embezzling the company went bankrupt.
9. A proposal that would reduce IIM fees has just passed.
10. Nature lovers will appreciate seeing: whales, sea lions, and pelicans.

Place apostrophes wherever needed.

11. The girls vitality and humour were infectious.
12. New clients accounts showed an 11 per cent increase in sales.
13. These M.D.'s credentials are excellent.
14. Several M.D. agreed that one bacterial strain caused many of the symptoms.

Rectify the error, if any, in the use of semicolons and colons:

15. You asked for forgiveness, he granted it to you.
16. We ask; therefore, that you keep this matter confidential.
17. The order was requested six weeks ago, therefore I expected the shipment to arrive by now.
18. I need a few items at the store; tissues, a bottle opener, and some milk.
19. I needed only three cards to win: namely; the ten of hearts, the jack of diamonds, and the king of hearts.
20. The Indian flag has three colours, namely, orange, white, and green.

Answers

Chapter 2

1. In the newspaper, an interesting article appeared.
2. Across the road lived her boyfriend.
3. Around every cloud is a silver lining.
4. Neither he nor his brother are (change to *is*) capable of such a crime.
5. The teacher or student is going to appear on stage first. (No change required)
6. The mother duck, along with all her ducklings, swim (change to *swims*) so gracefully.
7. Each of those games is exciting. (No change required).
8. The file, not the documents, were (change to *was*) misplaced.
9. Here is (change to *are*)the three books you wanted.
10. Five hundred rupees is/~~are~~ all I am asking.
11. Answer D. (Refer *Subject-Verb Agreement – a few more concerns*)
12. The majority of the Parliament is/~~are~~ Congressmen. (The majority of the Parliament… what follows the *of* is singular. Hence singular verb)
13. Answer C. ('who' refers to what is immediately before it 'students', hence 'are')
14. Answer D.
15. The original document, as well as subsequent copies, was/~~were~~ lost.
16. Answer C. (what follows the 'of' is plural) '... *are* going to the polls."
17. Almost all of the magazine is/~~are~~ devoted to advertisements.
18. Here ~~is~~/are Manish and Mandar.
19. Taxes on interest ~~is~~/are still deferrable.
20. Answer B. (five rupees is singular, hence *is*)

Chapter 3

1. It was she/~~her~~ at the window.
2. Payal and she/~~her~~ have quit CL.
3. They asked ~~he~~/him and ~~I~~/me to join the academic team.
4. That call was for ~~I~~/me, not ~~he~~/him.
5. An invitation was sent for ~~he~~/him and ~~she~~/her.
6. I am as willing as he/~~him~~ to work hard.
7. Rohit is more nervous than she/~~her~~.
8. It will be we/~~us~~ who decide on this matter.
9. If you were I/~~me~~, would you accept the job?
10. One must have faith in ~~himself~~/~~herself~~/oneself.
11. She is the woman ~~who~~/whom we employed last year.
12. Of ~~who~~/whom were you speaking?
13. Who/~~whom~~ do you think will do the work best?
14. I will vote for ~~whoever~~/whomever you suggest.
15. Give the information to whoever/~~whomever~~ requests it.
16. Tonight we shall find out whoever/~~whomever~~ won.

17. We intend to notify whoever/~~whomever~~ ranks highest on the list.
18. These are a few good politicians ~~who~~/whom I feel, you should acknowledge.
19. The prize will be given to whoever/~~whomever~~ writes the best essay.
20. Give the recipe for the vegetarian chilli to whoever/~~whomever~~ calls for it.
21. Books have been discovered that/~~which~~ address the horrors of Auschwitz.
22. That book about Auschwitz, ~~that~~/which was discovered in the basement of the library, will be published next year.
23. That is a book ~~that~~/which I have not yet read.
24. The law that/~~which~~ banned logging sandalwood began at the grassroots level.
25. The law to ban logging sandalwood, ~~that~~/which began at the grassroots level, has gained the attention of lawmakers at the national level.

Chapter 4

1. Both "to spend" and "spending" could be correct
2. to have gone
3. Both "to call" and "calling" are correct.
4. Answer E. (the participial phrases in A and B correctly modify Rahul.)
5. The overloaded car gathered speed slowly.
6. The opening participial phrase is misplaced because it is intended to modify *him,* not the proposal. A possible revision would be: Espousing a conservative point of view, *he* was bothered by the proposal for more spending on federal social programs.
7. No change required. (*asks* as habitual action; *will ask* is also possible)
8. Change *hopes* to *hoped* OR change *would work* to *will work*.
9. No change required.
10. Change *has* to *had* OR change *insisted* to *insists.*
11. Change *suffers* to *was suffering*.
12. Last night I went to Eros to see 'The Day After'. It was very thought provoking, and it was very depressing. I just wish it had started a little earlier than 10 p.m. I find it hard to stay out until midnight and then get up for an 8:00 a.m. class.
13. Inseparable (Separation will create an error.)
14. Separable (*to bring children up* is also right.)
15. Inseparable
16. Separable (We *put money away*... is also right.)
17. Inseparable (*Go over* cannot be separated. Separation will create an error in usage.)
18. Inseparable
19. Separable (You *left* that part about the chase *out* is also right.)
20. When I return to Mumbai next year, I will be very happy.
21. Rahul goes to school every day.
22. Sapna is visiting her family right now.
23. I studied/was studying Economics in 1994.
24. He has spoken/has been speaking French since he was a child.
25. Raj had visited many places before he came here.
26. We saw terrible things back then.
27. Sometimes I still have dreams like I did twenty years ago
28. Japan had never had democracy until 1945

29. The father will call the family together if he thinks there is disharmony.
30. When I was young, I never cooked because my parents had two servants.

Chapter 5

1. Looking through the telescope, we could see Venus clearly in the night sky.
2. Flying out the window, the papers were grabbed by him. OR
He grabbed the papers as they flew out the window.
3. Dhas arrived with the keys as I was waiting outside. OR
While I was waiting outside with the keys, Dhas arrived. OR
While I was waiting outside, Dhas arrived with the keys.

(The ambiguity in the original is removed in all these sentences. First and third sentences are preferred.)
4. While walking on the grass he was bitten by a snake.
5. I tried calling half a dozen times to tell you about the Career Launcher Seminar. OR
I called half a dozen times to tell you about the Career Launcher Seminar.

(The ambiguity in 'tried calling' is eliminated in the second sentence. Choose this over the second sentence if both are given as options)
6. Dhas manged to finish the soup although it was extremely spicy.
7. While walking across the street, she was surrounded by them and was robbed of her purse. OR
She was surrounded by the and was robbed of her purse while walking across the street.
8. In her lunch box, she has some cake (that) she baked.
9. I really/very glad to be of help to you.
10. The baby smells very sweet.
11. No change required.
12. No change required.
13. Life in the city is exciting, but life in the countryside is better.
14. Drive more slowly as work is in progress.
15. No change required.
16. Speak a little more slowly or you will not be understood.
17. When he spoke at a press conference on Saturday night, the Home Minister acknowledged the role played by the men who subdued the gunman.
18. To improve company morale, the consultant recommended three things.
19. In reviewing the company's policy, the board identified three areas of improvement.
20. Baked, boiled, or fried, potatoes make a welcome addition to almost any meal.

Chapter 6

1. This is the sort of English that I cannot put up with. OR
I cannot put up with this sort of English
2. I don't know where she will end up.
3. It's the most curious book I have ever run across.
4. No change required.
5. India became free on 15th Aug. 1947.
6. India is independent for more than 50 years.
7. India is free since 1947.

8. Where did you get this?
9. If we split it evenly among the three of us, no one will be unhappy.
10. You can't just walk into the class without permission.
11. Cut the pizza into six pieces.
12. No change required.
13. Where did he go?
14. Where did you get this?
15. I will go later.
16. Cut it into small pieces.
17. We will arrive on the fourth of next month.
18. No change required.
19. No change required.
20. No change required.
21. Tanya entered the room.
22. She dived into the pool.

Chapter 7

1. Cox and Kings is open today so we're going to buy our tickets to Australia. (*so* is an adverb)
2. As he read the letter he laughed. (There is no conjunction *As* is an adverb: He laughed as he read the letter)
3. So he told me but I didn't believe him.
4. She did not reply, nor did she make any gesture.
5. We ran from the building when we noticed the time. (*when* is an adverb)
6. Either accept our conditions or leave.
7. We rested until the storm was over and we felt better. (until is an adverb)
8. Option D: *nor* ill received
9. Option C. … command *nor* obey …
10. Option C. … nor give any judgment on…
11. Option C. ... considered in the third chapter, still less nor the pure empiricism ..
12. Option B .. finished ~~than~~ when several of the..
13. Option C … and a noun. (both … and)
14. i. M. Shipoff denounces innovations, yet bases the whole electoral system on the greatest innovation in Russian history.
ii. M. Shipoff in one and the same breath denounces innovations, and bases the whole electoral system on the greatest innovation in Russian history.

15. It would be ~~equally~~ absurd to attend to all the other parts of an engine and to neglect the principal source of its energy—the firebox—as it is ridiculous to pay particular attention to the cleanliness of the body and to neglect the mouth and teeth
16. The conception of God in their minds was not ~~that~~ of a Father, but ~~as~~ of a dealer out of rewards and punishments.
17. i. Dr. Dillon, than whom no Englishman has a profounder and more accurate acquaintance with the seamy side—as, indeed, ~~of~~ all aspects of Russian life— assumes...—Times.
ii. Dr. Dillon, than whom no Englishman has a profounder and more accurate acquaintance with the seamy side—as, indeed, ~~of~~ with all aspects of Russian life—assumes...—Times.

18. Sir,—In view of the controversy which has arisen concerning the 12 in. Mark VIII guns in the Navy, and especially ~~to~~ the suggestion which might give rise to some doubt as to the efficiency of the wire system of construction...—Times.

Chapter 8

1. Formerly, science was taught by the textbook method; now it is taught by the laboratory method.
2. The French, the Italians, the Spanish, and the Portuguese
3. In spring, summer, or winter (In spring, in summer, or in winter)
4. The ceremony was both long and tedious.
5. A time not for words, but for action
6. My objections are, first, that the measure is unjust; second, that it is unconstitutional.
7. My income is smaller than my wife's.
8. Indian Economy in better shape now than ever before.
9. Further protection of Indian industries is not needed.
10. This is because there are fewer sick industries now.
11. The service industry has grown because the government has given tax holidays.
12. Because their habitats are being restored, forest creatures are also re-establishing their population bases.
13. This policy tends to isolate some communities.
14. Sometimes public policy doesn't accomplish what it sets out to achieve.
15. Something like a repeal may soon take place.

Chapter 9

1. "How," I asked, "can you always be so forgetful?"
2. The girl who is standing there is his fiancée.
3. Correct.
4. Finish your job; it is imperative that you do.
5. You may, of course, call us anytime you wish.
6. You signed the contract; consequently you must provide us with the raw materials.
7. "Stop it!" I said. "Don't ever do that again."
8. Because of his embezzling, the company went bankrupt.
9. Correct.
10. Nature lovers will appreciate seeing whales, sea lions, and pelicans.
11. The girl's (girls') vitality and humor were infectious.
12. New clients' accounts showed an 11 percent increase in sales.
13. These M.D.s' credentials are excellent. (These M.D.s – plural)
14. Several M.D.s (Or M.D.'s) agreed that one bacterial strain caused many of the symptoms.
15. You asked for forgiveness; he granted it to you.
16. We ask, therefore, that you keep this matter confidential.
17. The order was requested six weeks ago; therefore I expected the shipment to arrive by now.
18. I need a few items at the store: tissues, a bottle opener, and some milk.
19. I needed only three cards to win, namely, the ten of hearts, the jack of diamonds, and the king of hearts. (or win; namely,)

20. Correct. or colours;