ENGLISH

SENTENCE STRUCTURE

Complete Chapter Notes with Examples, Tables, Diagrams and 50 Practice MCQs

Prepared for West Bengal Government Job Examinations

(WBCS, WBPSC Clerkship, WBP, Food SI, Miscellaneous Services, Railway, SSC and other competitive exams)

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No.	Topics Covered in this Chapter
1	Error Detection
2	Sentence Correction
3	Sentence Improvement
4	Fill in the Blanks
5	Sentence Rearrangement
6	Transformation of Sentences
7	50 Practice MCQs with Answer Key and Explanations

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How to Use These Notes

This chapter has been written like a textbook so that a student does not need any other book to prepare "Sentence Structure" for government job examinations. Every topic starts with a clear explanation, moves on to rules in the form of paragraphs, lists and tables, and ends with solved examples. At the very end of the chapter you will find 50 MCQs with an answer key and short explanations.

Suggested way of study

1. Read the introduction on the structure of an English sentence first. All six topics depend on it.
2. Study each topic in order. Do not skip the tables because most questions in the examination are based on them.
3. Revise the "Quick Revision" tables at the end of every topic one day before the examination.
4. Attempt the 50 MCQs in 40 minutes without looking at the answers. Then check the key and read the explanation of every wrong answer.
5. Keep a small notebook of the mistakes you made. Revise it every week.

Where these topics appear in examinations

Topic	Typical Question Type	Commonly Seen In
Error Detection	A sentence is divided into parts. Find the part that has an error.	WBCS Prelims, WBPSC Clerkship, SSC CGL, Railway, Bank
Sentence Correction	Replace the underlined or bold part so that the sentence becomes correct.	WBP Constable and SI, Food SI, SSC
Sentence Improvement	Choose the best replacement for the highlighted part. "No improvement" is also an option.	SSC CHSL, SSC CGL, Railway NTPC
Fill in the Blanks	One or two blanks. Choose the word or words that fit the meaning and grammar.	All competitive examinations
Sentence Rearrangement	Jumbled sentences or parts (P, Q, R, S) must be placed in a meaningful order.	WBCS, SSC, Bank, Railway
Transformation of Sentences	Change voice, narration, degree, or structure without changing the meaning.	WBP, Miscellaneous Services, SSC

Important
The exact pattern of a particular examination may change from year to year. Always read the latest official notification. The grammar rules in these notes, however, remain the same for every examination.

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Introduction: The Structure of an English Sentence

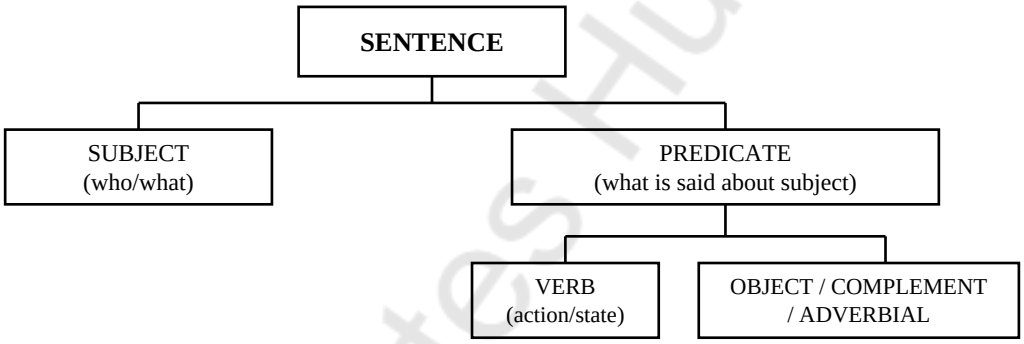
What is a sentence?

A sentence is a group of words that is arranged in a proper order and expresses a complete thought. Every sentence begins with a capital letter and ends with a full stop, a question mark, or an exclamation mark. A group of words that does not express a complete thought is called a phrase or a clause, not a sentence.

The two basic parts

Every sentence has two basic parts: the **subject** and the **predicate**. The subject tells us about whom or what the sentence is. The predicate tells us what is said about the subject. The main word of the predicate is the **verb**.

Figure: Anatomy of a Sentence



Example: *The young boy* (subject) *kicked* (verb) *the ball* (object) *in the park.* (adverbial of place)

Parts of speech

The words that make a sentence are divided into eight classes called parts of speech. Errors in sentences are usually errors in the use of one of these.

Part of Speech	Function	Examples
Noun	Names a person, place, thing, or idea	Ravi, Kolkata, table, honesty
Pronoun	Takes the place of a noun	he, she, it, they, who, which
Adjective	Describes a noun or pronoun	tall, beautiful, three, some
Verb	Shows an action, state, or happening	run, is, have, become
Adverb	Describes a verb, adjective, or another adverb	quickly, very, always, here
Preposition	Shows the relation of a noun or pronoun with another word	in, on, at, by, from, with
Conjunction	Joins words, phrases, or clauses	and, but, because, although
Interjection	Expresses sudden feeling	Oh! Alas! Hurrah!

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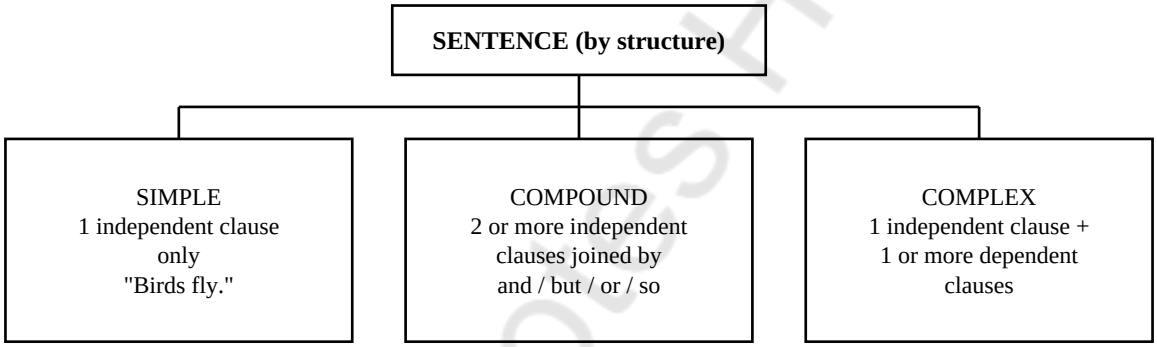
Phrases and clauses

- **Phrase:** a group of words without a subject and a finite verb. Example: *in the morning, to win the race, having finished his work.*
- **Clause:** a group of words that has its own subject and finite verb. Example: *when the bell rang*.
- **Independent (main) clause:** can stand alone as a sentence. Example: *She went home*.
- **Dependent (subordinate) clause:** cannot stand alone. It depends on a main clause. Example: *because she was tired.*

There are three kinds of subordinate clauses. A **noun clause** acts as a noun (*I know that he is honest*). An **adjective clause** describes a noun (*The boy who won the prize is my cousin*). An **adverb clause** acts as an adverb of time, place, reason, purpose, result, condition, concession, or comparison (*He stayed at home because it was raining*).

Kinds of sentences by structure

Figure: Sentences by Structure



Kind	Meaning	Example
Simple	One subject and one finite verb (one independent clause)	The sun rises in the east.
Compound	Two or more independent clauses joined by a coordinating conjunction (and, but, or, so, yet, for)	He was tired, but he kept working.
Complex	One independent clause and at least one dependent clause	He kept working although he was tired.

Kinds of sentences by function

Kind	Purpose	Example
Assertive (Declarative)	States a fact or opinion	The Ganga flows through West Bengal.
Interrogative	Asks a question	Where do you live?
Imperative	Gives a command, request, advice, or prohibition	Please close the door.
Optative	Expresses a wish or prayer	May you live long!
Exclamatory	Expresses sudden or strong feeling	What a beautiful sight it is!

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Basic sentence patterns

Pattern	Example
Subject + Verb (S + V)	Birds fly.
Subject + Verb + Object (S + V + O)	She reads a newspaper.
Subject + Verb + Complement (S + V + C)	The weather became cold.
Subject + Verb + Indirect Object + Direct Object (S + V + IO + DO)	He gave me a book.
Subject + Verb + Object + Complement (S + V + O + C)	They elected him captain.
Subject + Verb + Adverbial (S + V + A)	The train arrived late.

Why this matters
Almost every grammatical error in an examination sentence arises because one of these parts is missing, is in the wrong form, or does not agree with another part. Learn to identify the subject and the verb first. That single habit solves about half of all error-detection questions.

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Topic 1: Error Detection

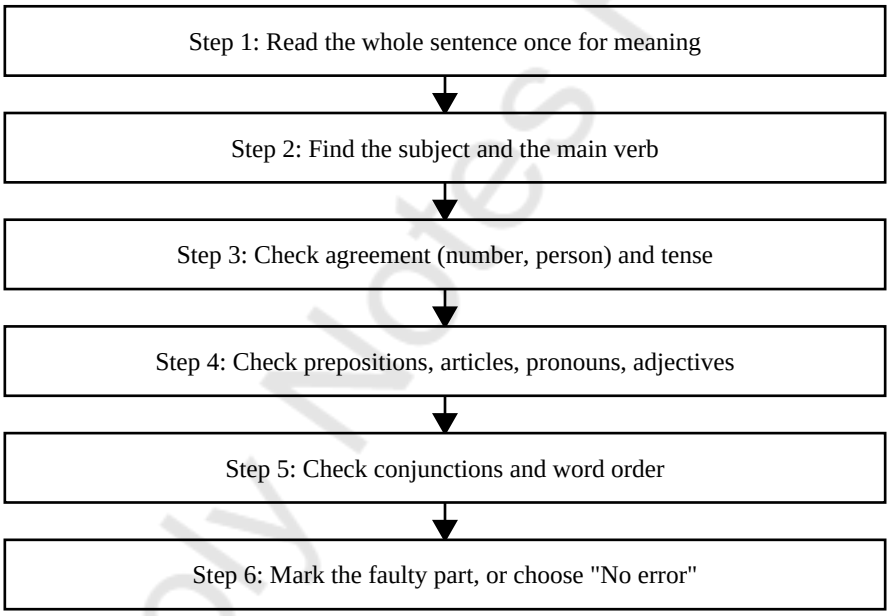
1.1 Meaning and exam pattern

Error detection (also called spotting the error) is a test of your knowledge of grammar and usage. A sentence is given in four parts, usually marked (A), (B), (C) and (D). One of the parts may contain a grammatical or usage error. You must find that part. If the sentence is correct, you select the option "No error". In some examinations "No error" is not given as an option, and then one part definitely has an error.

Example
(A) He do not (B) know the answer (C) to this question. (D) No error
Answer: (A). The correct form is "He does not know". The subject "He" is third person singular, so the helping verb must be "does".

1.2 A step-by-step strategy

Figure: How to Attack an Error Detection Question



- Read the sentence in full before looking at the options. Many errors depend on a word at the other end of the sentence.
- Do not choose "No error" quickly. In most examinations about 10 to 20 percent of the sentences are correct, so this option is the right answer only sometimes.
- Look first at the verb. About half of all errors are in subject-verb agreement or in tense.
- If the error is not found in the verb, look at prepositions, articles, and pronouns, in that order.
- Do not be misled by a long phrase between the subject and the verb. Cross it out in your mind.

1.3 Subject-verb agreement

The verb must agree with its subject in number (singular or plural) and in person. This is the most tested area in error detection. The rules below should be learned thoroughly.

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No.	Rule	Incorrect	Correct
1	A singular subject takes a singular verb. A plural subject takes a plural verb.	The boys is playing.	The boys are playing.
2	Two subjects joined by "and" take a plural verb.	Ram and Shyam is friends.	Ram and Shyam are friends.
3	When two nouns joined by "and" mean one person or thing, the verb is singular.	Bread and butter are my breakfast.	Bread and butter is my breakfast.
4	Subjects joined by "or", "nor", "either...or", "neither...nor": the verb agrees with the nearer subject.	Neither he nor his friends was present.	Neither he nor his friends were present.
5	With "as well as", "along with", "together with", "with", "in addition to", "besides", "no less than": the verb agrees with the first subject.	The teacher along with the students are coming.	The teacher along with the students is coming.
6	Each, every, either, neither, one, everyone, everybody, anyone, someone, nobody, no one take a singular verb.	Each of the boys have a pen.	Each of the boys has a pen.
7	"Many a" is followed by a singular noun and a singular verb.	Many a man have failed.	Many a man has failed.
8	"A number of" takes a plural verb. "The number of" takes a singular verb.	A number of students is absent.	A number of students are absent.
9	A collective noun takes a singular verb when the group acts as one unit.	The committee are meeting today.	The committee is meeting today.
10	A collective noun takes a plural verb when the members are thought of separately.	The jury was divided in their opinions.	The jury were divided in their opinions.
11	Distance, time, money, weight, and measure as a whole amount take a singular verb.	Ten kilometres are a long distance.	Ten kilometres is a long distance.
12	"One of" is followed by a plural noun but a singular verb.	One of my friends are ill.	One of my friends is ill.
13	In "one of the ... who/that", the verb is plural because the antecedent is the plural noun.	He is one of those who is honest.	He is one of those who are honest.
14	"The + adjective" meaning a group of people takes a plural verb.	The poor is always helped.	The poor are always helped.
15	The title of a book, the name of a country or organization in plural form takes a singular verb.	The Arabian Nights are interesting.	The Arabian Nights is interesting.
16	In "There is/are" and "Here is/are", the verb agrees with the noun that follows.	There is many books on the table.	There are many books on the table.
17	A relative pronoun takes the number and person of its antecedent.	I, who is your friend, will help you.	I, who am your friend, will help you.
18	Fractions and percentages: the verb agrees with the noun after "of".	Half of the apples is rotten.	Half of the apples are rotten. Half of the milk is spoilt.

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Nouns that look plural but take a singular verb

News, mathematics, physics, economics, statistics (as a subject), politics, athletics, civics, ethics, innings, series, species, means (as a method), measles, mumps, rickets, billiards, summons, gallows, and the names of some diseases and games are singular in meaning. Example: *Mathematics is an interesting subject. The news was shocking.*

Nouns that are always plural

Scissors, trousers, pants, jeans, spectacles, glasses, pliers, tongs, clothes, goods, belongings, riches, thanks, cattle, police, people, gentry, vermin, and arms (weapons) take a plural verb. Example: *The police have arrested the thief. My spectacles are broken.* When "pair of" is used, the verb is singular: *A pair of scissors is on the table.*

1.4 Nouns: countable, uncountable, and plurals

Uncountable nouns have no plural form and cannot be used with "a" or "an". They take a singular verb. The most commonly tested uncountable nouns are listed below. To count them, use a unit such as "a piece of", "an item of", or "a bit of".

Uncountable Noun	Incorrect	Correct
advice	He gave me an advice. / many advices	He gave me a piece of advice. / some advice
information	I need some informations.	I need some information.
furniture	These furnitures are costly.	This furniture is costly.
luggage / baggage	My luggages are heavy.	My luggage is heavy.
scenery	The sceneries of Darjeeling are lovely.	The scenery of Darjeeling is lovely.
knowledge	He has many knowledges.	He has much knowledge.
equipment, machinery, traffic, progress, evidence, mail, hair, work	The works are completed. / Her hairs are black.	The work is completed. / Her hair is black.

Irregular and foreign plurals

Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
phenomenon	phenomena	datum	data
criterion	criteria	medium	media
crisis	crises	analysis	analyses
basis	bases	thesis	theses
formula	formulae / formulas	curriculum	curricula
child	children	man / woman	men / women
mouse	mice	louse	lice
sheep, deer, fish	same form	brother-in-law	brothers-in-law
passer-by	passers-by	mother-in-law	mothers-in-law

The possessive (genitive) case

- Singular nouns take apostrophe + s: *the boy's book.*

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- Plural nouns ending in s take only an apostrophe: *the boys' hostel*. Plural nouns not ending in s take apostrophe + s: *children's park, men's club*.
- For joint ownership, the last noun takes the sign: *Ram and Shyam's shop* (one shop). For separate ownership, both take it: *Ram's and Shyam's shops*.
- Do not use the possessive form for things without life in most cases: *the leg of the table*, not "the table's leg". Exceptions are time and distance: *a day's journey, a stone's throw*.
- Its (possessive) has no apostrophe. "It's" always means "it is" or "it has".

1.5 Tenses and the forms of verbs

Rule	Incorrect	Correct
Use the present perfect (or present perfect continuous) with "since" and "for". "Since" is used with a point of time, and "for" with a period.	I am waiting here since morning. / I have known him since ten years.	I have been waiting here since morning. / I have known him for ten years.
Do not use the present perfect with a definite past time (yesterday, last week, ago, in 2010). Use the simple past.	I have seen him yesterday.	I saw him yesterday.
Use the past perfect for the earlier of two past actions.	The train left before we reached the station.	The train had left before we reached the station.
Sequence of tenses: a past tense in the main clause is followed by a past tense in the subordinate clause. Universal truths are exceptions and stay in the present.	He said that the earth moved round the sun.	He said that the earth moves round the sun.
"No sooner ... than" and "Hardly/Scarcely ... when/before" are used with the past perfect in the first part and the simple past in the second.	No sooner did he arrive when it rained. / Hardly he had come than I left.	No sooner had he arrived than it rained. / Hardly had he come when I left.
Verbs of state (know, believe, like, love, hate, want, need, belong, understand, own, seem, see, hear) are not used in the continuous tense.	I am knowing him. / She is having a car.	I know him. / She has a car.
Use the simple present for a scheduled future event and in "if", "when", "as soon as", "before", "until" clauses of future time.	If it will rain, I will stay at home.	If it rains, I will stay at home.
After "It is time", "I wish", "as if/as though" (unreal), "would rather" (with a different subject) use the past tense.	It is time we go. / He talks as if he knows everything (unreal).	It is time we went. / He talks as if he knew everything.
After modal verbs (can, could, may, might, shall, should, will, would, must, ought to), "had better", "would rather", "let", "make", "help", "see", "hear" use the base form (bare infinitive).	He can swims. / You had better to go.	He can swim. / You had better go.

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Conditional sentences

Type	If-clause	Main clause	Example
Zero (general truth)	Simple present	Simple present	If you heat ice, it melts.
First (real possibility)	Simple present	will / can / may + base verb	If he works hard, he will pass.
Second (unreal present)	Simple past (use "were" for all persons)	would / could / might + base verb	If I were a bird, I would fly.
Third (unreal past)	Past perfect	would / could / might + have + V3	If she had studied, she would have passed.

Common trap
Never use "would have" in the if-clause. "If I would have known" is wrong. The correct form is "If I had known".

Gerund (verb + ing) or infinitive (to + verb)?

Followed by a gerund (V + ing)	Followed by an infinitive (to + V)
enjoy, avoid, mind, finish, suggest, practise, deny, admit, consider, postpone, delay, escape, miss, risk, stop (quit), give up, put off, keep on, look forward to, insist on, object to, be used to, prevent from, worth	want, hope, decide, plan, expect, refuse, promise, manage, afford, learn, offer, agree, fail, wish, need, seem, appear, tend, pretend, threaten, used to (past habit)
I enjoy reading. He avoided meeting me. I look forward to meeting you.	She wants to go. He decided to leave. They promised to help.

Note the difference: *used to* + base verb shows a past habit (*He used to smoke*), while *be/get used to* + gerund shows familiarity (*He is used to waking up early*).

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1.6 Articles

Rule	Example
Use "a" before a consonant sound and "an" before a vowel sound. The sound matters, not the spelling.	a university, a European, a one-rupee note, a unit; an hour, an honest man, an MLA, an umbrella
Use "the" before unique things, superlatives, ordinal numbers, rivers, seas, oceans, mountain ranges, groups of islands, newspapers, holy books, historical events, and musical instruments.	the sun, the best, the first, the Ganga, the Himalayas, the Statesman, the Gita, the Revolt of 1857, play the guitar
Do not use an article before proper nouns, languages, subjects, games, meals, and abstract or material nouns used in a general sense.	Kolkata, Bengali, Physics, cricket, have breakfast, honesty is the best policy, gold is costly
Do not use an article with "school, college, church, hospital, prison, bed, market, home" when the purpose of the place is meant.	He goes to school. She is in hospital. (but: He went to the school to meet the headmaster.)
Do not use an article before "by" with means of transport.	by bus, by train, by air
Repeat the article when two different persons are meant. Do not repeat it when one person has two roles.	A doctor and a lawyer came (two persons). A doctor and lawyer came (one person).
Use "a" after "such, quite, rather, what, many, half" in the order shown.	such a man, quite a good player, rather a long story, what a pity, many a student, half an hour
"A few" and "a little" have a positive sense (some). "Few" and "little" have a negative sense (hardly any). "The few" and "the little" mean all that there is.	I have a few friends here (some). I have few friends here (almost none).
Use "the" with comparatives in the pattern "the + comparative ... the + comparative".	The more you read, the more you learn.

1.7 Prepositions

A preposition shows the relation of a noun or pronoun to another word. Wrong use of prepositions is the second most common error type. The best way to master them is to memorize the fixed combinations given below.

Adjectives with prepositions

With "of"	With "to"	With "with"	With "in", "at", "for", "from", "on"
afraid of, proud of, jealous of, fond of, capable of, incapable of, ashamed of, aware of, conscious of, guilty of, innocent of, tired of, full of, certain of, confident of, short of, devoid of	superior to, inferior to, senior to, junior to, prior to, preferable to, similar to, equal to, accustomed to, addicted to, devoted to, married to, indifferent to, blind to, deaf to, kind to, polite to, rude to	angry with (a person), pleased with, satisfied with, familiar with, popular with, fed up with, busy with, acquainted with, contented with, bored with	interested in, weak in, rich in, poor in, successful in; good at, bad at, clever at, quick at, surprised at, angry at (a thing); responsible for, famous for, eager for, sorry for; free from, different from, absent from, safe from; keen on, dependent on

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Verbs with prepositions

Verb	Preposition and Use	Example
agree	with (person), to (proposal), on (subject)	I agree with you. He agreed to my proposal.
apologize	to (person) for (fault)	He apologized to her for his mistake.
accuse / charge	accuse of; charge with	He was accused of theft. He was charged with murder.
blame	blame (person) for (fault)	They blamed him for the failure.
compare	with (to find differences or similarities), to (to liken)	Compare this copy with that one. The poet compared life to a dream.
congratulate	on / upon	I congratulate you on your success.
complain	to (person) about / of (thing)	He complained to the manager about the delay.
die	of (disease, grief), from (injury, accident)	He died of cholera. He died from a wound.
differ	from (things), with (opinions)	Tea differs from coffee. I differ with you.
depend / rely	on / upon	You can rely on him.
insist	on	She insisted on going.
look	at (see), for (search), after (care for), into (investigate), up to (respect)	She looks after her parents.
prevent / prohibit / stop	from + gerund	Rain prevented us from going.
succeed	in (achieve), to (follow)	He succeeded in the test.
suffer	from	He suffers from fever.
wait	for (a person or thing), on (serve)	I am waiting for the bus.
laugh / smile / shout	at	Do not laugh at the poor.
listen / reply / belong / object	to	Listen to the teacher. He objected to the plan.

Verbs that take NO preposition

The following verbs take a direct object and are never followed by a preposition: **discuss, resemble, enter, marry, reach, attend, approach, await, mention, order, obey, request, answer, contact**. Incorrect: *He discussed about the problem. She resembles to her mother. We reached at Howrah.* Correct: *He discussed the problem. She resembles her mother. We reached Howrah.*

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Prepositions of time and place

Preposition	Use	Example
at	a clock time, a point of time, night, noon, festival; a point in place	at 5 o'clock, at night, at the bus stop
on	days and dates; a surface	on Monday, on 15 August, on the table
in	months, years, seasons, centuries, morning, evening, afternoon; an enclosed area, towns and countries	in June, in 2026, in the morning, in the room
by	a deadline (not later than)	Finish the work by Friday.
till / until	up to a time (continuous action)	Wait here till 5 o'clock.
during / within	during = throughout a period; within = inside a limit of time	He slept during the journey. Come back within an hour.
between / among	between two; among three or more	Divide the sweets among the three children.
beside / besides	beside = next to; besides = in addition to	He sat beside me. Besides English, he knows French.
in / into	in = position; into = movement towards the inside	He is in the room. He came into the room.

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1.8 Pronouns

Rule	Incorrect	Correct
After a preposition use the object case (me, him, her, us, them, whom).	Between you and I, it is a secret.	Between you and me, it is a secret.
After "let" use the object case.	Let you and I go.	Let you and me go.
After "than" and "as", use the case that suits the omitted verb.	He is taller than me. (if "than I am")	He is taller than I (am). She likes you more than me (= more than she likes me).
Use reflexive pronouns correctly: myself, himself, themselves, ourselves. "Hisself" and "theirselves" do not exist.	He hurt hisself.	He hurt himself.
"Each other" is used for two persons and "one another" for more than two.	The three brothers love each other.	The three brothers love one another.
"Either/neither" are for two; "any/none" are for more than two.	Neither of the three boys came.	None of the three boys came.
Possessive pronouns (yours, hers, ours, theirs, its) never take an apostrophe.	This book is your's.	This book is yours.
Do not use a double possessive with "of me".	He is a friend of me.	He is a friend of mine.
"One" should be followed by "one's" and not "his".	One must do his duty.	One must do one's duty.
Use "who" for persons, "which" for things and animals. Use "that" after superlatives, "all", "only", "same", "none", "nothing", "anything", and when persons and things are together.	He is the best player which I know.	He is the best player that I know.
"Whom" is the object form, "who" is the subject form.	Who did you meet? (formal exams: Whom)	Whom did you meet?
Order of pronouns: for good or neutral matters use 2nd, 3rd, 1st person (You, he and I). For blame or guilt use 1st, 2nd, 3rd (I, you and he).	I, you and he will go to the picnic.	You, he and I will go to the picnic. / I, you and he are responsible for the loss.
Demonstratives must agree with the noun in number.	These kind of books are useful.	This kind of book is useful. / These kinds of books are useful.

Pronoun-antecedent agreement
A pronoun must agree with the noun it stands for in number, gender, and person. Example: *Every student must bring his or her identity card* (in modern usage "their" is also accepted). Check "Each of the girls ... her", "All the boys ... their".

1.9 Adjectives

Degrees of comparison

- Use the comparative degree for two things and the superlative degree for three or more.
- Do not use double comparatives or double superlatives. Incorrect: *more better, most unkindest, more easier*. Correct: *better, unkindest, easier*.

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- Latin comparatives (senior, junior, superior, inferior, prior, anterior, posterior, prefer, preferable) are followed by "to" and not "than". Incorrect: *He is senior than me*. Correct: *He is senior to me*.
- When a thing is compared with others of the same class, use "any other". Incorrect: *Kanchenjunga is higher than any mountain in India*. Correct: *Kanchenjunga is higher than any other mountain in India*.
- Compare similar things only. Incorrect: *The climate of Darjeeling is cooler than Kolkata*. Correct: *The climate of Darjeeling is cooler than that of Kolkata*.
- "One of the" must be followed by a superlative and a plural noun: *She is one of the best teachers in the school*.
- Some adjectives are absolute and cannot be compared: unique, perfect, complete, universal, ideal, entire, chief, round, square, empty, full, extreme, infinite, supreme, excellent. Incorrect: *more perfect, very unique*.

Often confused adjectives

Word	Use	Example
older / elder	"Older" is for age in general and can be followed by "than". "Elder" is for family members and is not followed by "than".	He is older than me. He is my elder brother.
farther / further	"Farther" is distance. "Further" means additional or more.	The village is farther away. We need further information.
later / latter	"Later" is about time. "Latter" is the second of two things.	Come later. Of the two, I prefer the latter.
latest / last	"Latest" is the most recent. "Last" is the final one.	the latest news; the last bus
nearest / next	"Nearest" is distance. "Next" is order.	the nearest hospital; the next chapter
less / fewer	"Less" is for uncountable nouns. "Fewer" is for countable nouns.	less water; fewer books
much / many	"Much" is for uncountable nouns. "Many" is for countable nouns.	much time; many people
some / any	"Some" is used in positive sentences and offers. "Any" is used in negatives and questions.	I have some money. I do not have any money.

The usual order of adjectives before a noun is: opinion, size, age, shape, colour, origin, material, purpose, then the noun. Example: *a beautiful small old round red Indian wooden table*. Numbers in compound adjectives are singular: *a five-year plan*, *a ten-rupee note*, *a three-hour journey* (not "five-years plan"). Words such as dozen, hundred, thousand, and million do not take "s" after a number: *two hundred*, *three dozen*, but they take "s" when they are used in a general sense: *hundreds of people*.

1.10 Adverbs

- An adverb of frequency such as "always", "never", "often" usually comes before the main verb and after the verb "to be": *He never lies. He is always late.*
- "Only" must be placed just before the word it modifies. *I saw only him* and *I only saw him* have different meanings.
- Avoid double negatives. Incorrect: *I do not know nothing. He cannot hardly walk.* Correct: *I do not know anything. He can hardly walk.*
- "Hardly", "scarcely", "barely", "seldom", "rarely" already have a negative sense. Use "ever" with them and not "never": *He seldom ever comes.*

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- "Very" is used with adjectives and adverbs in the positive degree. "Much" is used with comparatives and past participles. Incorrect: *very better*. Correct: *much better*.
- "Too" has a negative sense of excess. Do not use it in place of "very". Incorrect: *I am too glad to see you*. Correct: *I am very glad to see you*.
- "Ago" is used with the simple past (*He left two hours ago*). "Before" is used with the past perfect (*He had left two hours before I came*).

Adjective / Adverb pair	Meaning difference	Example
hard / hardly	hard = with effort; hardly = almost not	He works hard. He hardly works.
late / lately	late = not on time; lately = recently	He came late. I have not seen him lately.
near / nearly	near = close; nearly = almost	He lives near. He nearly fell.
high / highly	high = at a great height; highly = very much	The kite flew high. She is highly educated.
most / mostly	most = to the greatest degree; mostly = usually	He is the most honest man. Mostly he is at home.
free / freely	free = without cost; freely = without restriction	Entry is free. He spoke freely.

1.11 Conjunctions

Conjunctions join words, phrases, and clauses. The following pairs, called correlative conjunctions, must always be used together, and the words that follow them must have the same grammatical form (parallel structure).

Pair	Use and Example
either ... or	Either you or he is responsible.
neither ... nor	Neither he nor I was present. (Not "neither ... or")
both ... and	He is both honest and hardworking. (Not "both ... as well as")
not only ... but also	She is not only intelligent but also hardworking.
whether ... or	I do not know whether he will come or not.
so ... as (negative), as ... as (positive)	He is as tall as his father. He is not so tall as his father.
such ... as / such ... that	Such students as work hard will succeed. It was such a hot day that we stayed inside.
no sooner ... than	No sooner had he left than it began to rain.
hardly / scarcely ... when / before	Hardly had he come when she left.
rather ... than	I would rather walk than take a rickshaw.

Rule	Incorrect	Correct
Do not use "but" with "although/though". "Yet" can be used with "though".	Although he is poor, but he is honest.	Although he is poor, he is honest.
"Unless" has a negative meaning. Do not use "not" with it.	Unless you do not work hard, you will fail.	Unless you work hard, you will fail.
"Lest" is followed by "should". It has a negative meaning, so "not" is not used.	Work hard lest you may fail.	Work hard lest you should fail.

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Rule	Incorrect	Correct
Use "like" before a noun or pronoun, "as" before a clause.	Do like I tell you.	Do as I tell you. He behaves like a child.
Use "that" and not "because" after "the reason is".	The reason is because he was ill.	The reason is that he was ill.
Use "if" for conditions and "whether" for alternatives and doubt.	I do not know if he will come or not.	I do not know whether he will come or not.
Do not use two conjunctions with the same purpose.	Because he was ill, so he did not come.	Because he was ill, he did not come.
Parallel structure: connected items must have the same form.	She likes singing, dancing and to paint.	She likes singing, dancing and painting.

1.12 Commonly confused verbs

Verb 1	Verb 2	Explanation
rise, rose, risen (no object)	raise, raised, raised (needs an object)	The sun rises. He raised his hand.
lie, lay, lain (rest)	lay, laid, laid (put down)	I lie on the bed. She laid the book on the table.
lie, lied, lied (tell a falsehood)	lie, lay, lain	He lied to the police.
borrow (take)	lend (give)	I borrowed a pen from him. He lent me a pen.
bring (towards the speaker)	take (away from the speaker)	Bring the book here. Take this letter to him.
hang, hung, hung (things)	hang, hanged, hanged (execute)	She hung the picture. The murderer was hanged.
say (words)	tell (a person)	He said that he was busy. He told me that he was busy.
speak (language, a talk)	talk (conversation)	He speaks Hindi. They talked for an hour.
learn (receive)	teach (give)	I learn English. He teaches me English.
wear (clothes)	put on (action of dressing)	She is wearing a red sari. She put on her shoes.

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1.13 Quick revision: the 20 most tested errors

No.	Incorrect Sentence	Correct Sentence
1	He is senior than me.	He is senior to me.
2	The news are good.	The news is good.
3	I am living here since 2010.	I have been living here since 2010.
4	She prefers tea than coffee.	She prefers tea to coffee.
5	One of my friend is a doctor.	One of my friends is a doctor.
6	He discussed about the matter.	He discussed the matter.
7	Each of the boys have a book.	Each of the boys has a book.
8	Neither of them are present.	Neither of them is present.
9	He is good in English.	He is good at English.
10	If I would have known, I would have helped.	If I had known, I would have helped.
11	I did not see him yesterday also.	I did not see him yesterday either.
12	Hardly he had come when it rained.	Hardly had he come when it rained.
13	She is more intelligent than any girl in the class.	She is more intelligent than any other girl in the class.
14	He said me that he was ill.	He told me that he was ill.
15	The scenery of Sikkim are beautiful.	The scenery of Sikkim is beautiful.
16	He gave me an advice.	He gave me a piece of advice.
17	Unless you do not study, you will fail.	Unless you study, you will fail.
18	He is one of those who works hard.	He is one of those who work hard.
19	I and my friend went to the market.	My friend and I went to the market.
20	Two-third of the work is done.	Two-thirds of the work is done.

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Topic 2: Sentence Correction

2.1 Meaning and exam pattern

In sentence correction, a complete sentence is given with a part (or the whole) of it underlined or in bold. That part may be grammatically wrong, clumsy, or unclear. You must choose the replacement that makes the entire sentence correct, clear and idiomatic. If the given sentence is already correct, you choose the option "No correction required". Sentence correction tests everything you studied in error detection, and in addition it tests sentence construction: modifiers, parallelism, pronoun reference, and punctuation.

Difference between Error Detection and Sentence Correction
In error detection you only find the faulty part. In sentence correction you must also supply the right form. Therefore, you must know why an expression is wrong and what the correct form is.

2.2 Method

1. Read the sentence and identify the subject, the verb, and the tense.
2. Look at the bold part. Ask: is it grammatically wrong, is it unclear, or is it wordy?
3. Mentally replace the bold part with each option and read the whole sentence again.
4. Eliminate options that introduce a new error, change the meaning, or add unnecessary words.
5. If two options seem correct, choose the shorter and clearer one.
6. Choose "No correction required" only after you have tested every other option.

2.3 Misplaced modifiers

A modifier is a word or phrase that describes another word. It must be placed as close as possible to the word it describes. If it is placed wrongly, the sentence may give a funny or wrong meaning.

Incorrect	Problem	Correct
I saw a dog on the way to school with a broken leg.	It seems that "I" or the school had a broken leg.	On the way to school, I saw a dog with a broken leg.
He only died last week.	"Only" is placed far from the word it modifies.	He died only last week.
The teacher gave a prize to the boy who stood first in a golden cup.	The boy did not stand in a cup.	The teacher gave the boy who stood first a prize in a golden cup.
She served sandwiches to the guests on paper plates.	Guests on paper plates?	She served sandwiches on paper plates to the guests.

2.4 Dangling modifiers

A participial phrase at the beginning of a sentence (for example, "Walking along the road," or "Having finished the work,") must describe the subject of the main clause. If the subject of the main clause is a different noun, the modifier is said to be dangling.

Incorrect	Correct
Walking along the road, a snake bit Ravi.	Walking along the road, Ravi was bitten by a snake.
Having finished the work, the bell rang.	Having finished the work, the students left when the bell rang.

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Incorrect	Correct
Being a rainy day, we stayed at home.	As it was a rainy day, we stayed at home.
Reading the newspaper, the tea became cold.	While I was reading the newspaper, the tea became cold.

Rule
The doer of the action in the opening phrase must be the subject of the main clause.

2.5 Parallel structure

Items in a list, comparison, or pair of correlative conjunctions must have the same grammatical form.

Incorrect	Correct
She likes swimming, to dance and singing.	She likes swimming, dancing and singing.
He is rich but not happiness.	He is rich but not happy.
The manager is not only intelligent but also has hard work.	The manager is not only intelligent but also hardworking.
I came, I saw, and was conquering.	I came, I saw, and I conquered.
To read books is better than watching films.	Reading books is better than watching films. / To read books is better than to watch films.

2.6 Faulty comparison

- Compare the same kind of things. Use "that of" or "those of" to avoid repeating the noun. *The population of India is larger than that of Pakistan.*
- Use "any other" with the comparative when the thing compared belongs to the same group. *Mount Everest is higher than any other peak.*
- Do not use "more" with adjectives that already end in "-er", and do not use "most" with adjectives ending in "-est".
- In "as ... as", the second "as" cannot be omitted. *He is as tall as, if not taller than, his brother* is correct.

2.7 Pronoun reference and agreement

Incorrect	Problem	Correct
Ravi told Ajay that he had won the prize.	Unclear: who won?	Ravi told Ajay, "You have won the prize." / Ravi told Ajay that Ajay had won the prize.
Each student must bring their own pen.	In strict grammar "each" is singular.	Each student must bring his or her own pen.
The company announced their new policy.	Collective noun used as a unit is singular.	The company announced its new policy.
If a person works hard, they will succeed.	Strict exam grammar prefers consistency.	If a person works hard, he or she will succeed.

2.8 Redundancy and wordiness

A correct sentence should not repeat the same idea. Words that give no new information must be removed.

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Wordy	Concise
The reason is because he is lazy.	The reason is that he is lazy.
He returned back to his village.	He returned to his village.
Please repeat that again.	Please repeat that.
The final outcome of the match was a draw.	The outcome of the match was a draw.
She is a very unique person.	She is a unique person.

2.9 Voice, tense, and mood consistency

- Do not shift tense without a reason. Incorrect: *He opened the door and walks in.* Correct: *He opened the door and walked in.*
- Do not mix active and passive voice in the same sentence. Incorrect: *The manager wrote the report and it was sent to the office.* Correct: *The manager wrote the report and sent it to the office.*
- Use the subjunctive "were" in unreal conditions and wishes. *If I were the Prime Minister, I would ... / I wish I were a bird.*
- After verbs of suggestion, demand, insistence and recommendation, use "should + base verb" or the base verb. *He insisted that she go. The doctor suggested that he should rest.*

2.10 Punctuation

Mark	Main Uses	Example
Full stop (.)	Ends a statement; used in abbreviations	She is a teacher.
Comma (,)	Separates items in a list; sets off introductory phrases, non-essential clauses, direct address; before a coordinating conjunction joining two main clauses	Ravi, who is my friend, came with books, pens, and papers.
Semicolon (;)	Joins two closely related main clauses without a conjunction; separates long list items	He was tired; he went to bed.
Colon (:)	Introduces a list, explanation or quotation	You need three things: a pen, a pad, and a ruler.
Apostrophe (')	Shows possession and contractions (not plurals)	the girl's bag; it's raining
Question mark (?)	Ends a direct question only	Where are you going? / He asked where I was going.
Exclamation mark (!)	Strong feeling	What a wonderful day!
Quotation marks (" ")	Exact words of a speaker	He said, "I am ready."
Hyphen (-)	Joins parts of compound words	well-known author, mother-in-law

A comma splice is an error in which two main clauses are joined only by a comma. *It was raining, we stayed at home* is wrong. Correct it with a full stop, a semicolon, or a conjunction: *It was raining, so we stayed at home.*

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2.11 Solved examples

No.	Sentence (the bold part is the part to be replaced)	Correct Replacement	Reason
1	The climate of Darjeeling is cooler than **Kolkata**.	that of Kolkata	Climate must be compared with climate.
2	She **do not** know the answer.	does not	Third person singular needs "does".
3	If I **would have** known, I would have told you.	had known	Third conditional uses the past perfect in the if-clause.
4	The man **which** helped me is my uncle.	who	"Who" is used for persons.
5	He is **too** happy to see you here.	very	"Too" shows excess and needs "to + verb" to express a negative result.
6	The committee **have** passed the resolution.	has	The committee acts as one unit.

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Topic 3: Sentence Improvement

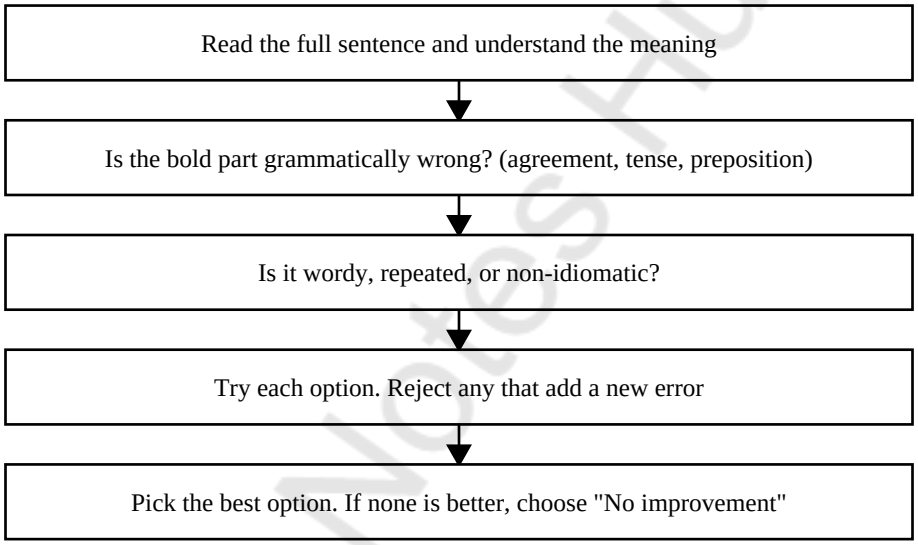
3.1 Meaning and exam pattern

In sentence improvement, a part of the sentence is printed in bold or italics. Four options are given. The first option usually says "No improvement" (or it appears as option D) and the others give alternative expressions. You must choose the one that improves the sentence by making it grammatically correct, idiomatic, and clear. If the original part is already best, you choose "No improvement".

The pattern is the same as sentence correction, but the stress in sentence improvement is on **idioms, phrases, choice of words, and removal of unnecessary words**.

3.2 A decision chart

Figure: Solving a Sentence Improvement Question



Practical tips
About one in four questions has "No improvement" as the answer. Do not hesitate to choose it when the original is correct.
Never choose an option only because it looks more formal or difficult.
Check that the improved part joins smoothly with the rest of the sentence that is not in bold.

3.3 Common patterns with examples

(a) Wrong tense or verb form

Original	Improved
Rahul is working in this office since 2015.	Rahul has been working in this office since 2015.
I am knowing him for a long time.	I have known him for a long time.
If it will rain tomorrow, I shall stay at home.	If it rains tomorrow, I shall stay at home.
He wishes that he was a doctor.	He wishes that he were a doctor.

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(b) Wrong preposition or gerund

Original	Improved
He insisted to go there alone.	He insisted on going there alone.
I am looking forward to meet you.	I am looking forward to meeting you.
She is suffering with malaria.	She is suffering from malaria.
He is not capable to do this work.	He is not capable of doing this work.

(c) Wrong agreement

Original	Improved
Each of the girls have won a prize.	Each of the girls has won a prize.
The furniture in the rooms are old.	The furniture in the rooms is old.
Neither Ram nor his brothers is invited.	Neither Ram nor his brothers are invited.

(d) Wrong comparison

Original	Improved
Seema is more intelligent than any girl in the class.	Seema is more intelligent than any other girl in the class.
This book is more better than that one.	This book is better than that one.
He is junior than me.	He is junior to me.

(e) Wrong word choice

Original	Improved
He said me that he would come.	He told me that he would come.
She did not hardly recognise me.	She hardly recognised me.
The teacher learned us grammar.	The teacher taught us grammar.
I borrowed him some money.	I lent him some money.

3.4 Wrong and right expressions (idioms and usage)

Wrong Expression	Right Expression	Wrong Expression	Right Expression
cope up with	cope with	discuss about	discuss
return back	return	revert back	revert
more preferable	preferable	inspite of	in spite of
different than	different from	irregardless	regardless
equally as good	equally good / as good	off of	off
the reason is because	the reason is that	more better	better
reply back	reply	enter into the room	enter the room
combine together	combine	to be fond for	to be fond of
married with	married to	one of the best player	one of the best players

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Redundant pairs: remove the second word

Past history, future plans, free gift, new innovation, close proximity, end result, final outcome, join together, unite together, mutual cooperation, advance planning, emergency situation, return back, repeat again, revert back, sum total, true fact, basic fundamentals. Each of these expressions says the same thing twice and should be shortened (for example, "history", "plans", "gift", "innovation", "proximity").

3.5 Useful idioms and phrases

Questions in this topic often depend on a fixed phrase. Learn the following list.

Phrase	Meaning	Phrase	Meaning
at a loss	confused	by and large	generally
in the long run	finally, after a long time	on the whole	in general
at stake	at risk	in vain	without result
to put up with	to tolerate	to look down upon	to despise
to take after	to resemble	to bring up	to raise (a child)
to call off	to cancel	to give up	to quit
to turn down	to reject	to carry out	to perform
a blessing in disguise	a hidden good	a piece of cake	very easy
once in a blue moon	very rarely	to burn the midnight oil	to study late
to beat about the bush	to avoid the main point	to cry over spilt milk	to regret what cannot be changed

3.6 Quick revision

- Look at the verb, the preposition, and the comparison first.
- Remove double words that give the same meaning.
- Test each option inside the full sentence.
- Choose "No improvement" if the original is already correct.

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Topic 4: Fill in the Blanks

4.1 Meaning and exam pattern

In this type of question, a sentence has one or two blanks. Four options are given. You must choose the word or pair of words that fits the blank both in meaning and in grammar. Questions are of two broad kinds:

- **Grammar-based:** the answer depends on a rule (preposition, article, tense, agreement, conjunction). Example: *He is fond ___ music.* (of)
- **Vocabulary-based:** the answer depends on the meaning of words, synonyms, antonyms, collocations, or idioms. Example: *His ___ nature made him popular among all.* (friendly)

4.2 Strategy

1. Read the complete sentence and decide what kind of word is needed (noun, verb, adjective, adverb, preposition, conjunction).
2. Look for clue words that show the direction of the sentence (see the table in 4.3).
3. For double blanks, first eliminate pairs in which even one word is clearly wrong.
4. Test the remaining options by reading the whole sentence aloud in your mind.
5. Check collocation: does the word naturally go with its neighbours? (for example, "make a decision", not "do a decision").
6. Look at the sentence after filling the blank. It should be grammatically correct, logical, and neutral in tone.

4.3 Signal words (clue words)

Type of Clue	Signal Words	What it Tells You
Contrast	but, however, although, though, yet, whereas, while, nevertheless, despite, in spite of, on the contrary, unlike	The two parts of the sentence have opposite ideas. If one part is positive, the blank is negative.
Addition / similarity	and, moreover, furthermore, besides, also, in addition, likewise, similarly	Both parts have the same direction of meaning.
Cause	because, since, as, due to, owing to, for	The blank gives a reason or is a result of a reason.
Result	so, therefore, hence, thus, consequently, as a result	The blank gives a result that logically follows.
Condition	if, unless, provided that, as long as, in case	A condition and its outcome are given.
Purpose	to, in order to, so that, lest	The blank shows the aim of an action.
Time	when, while, before, after, until, as soon as, since	The blank shows sequence of events.

Example
Although he was rich, he lived a ___ life. (A) lavish (B) simple (C) wasteful (D) careless
Answer: (B) simple. "Although" shows contrast. Rich and simple are contrasted. "Lavish" would repeat the idea of richness instead of contrasting it.

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4.4 Grammar-based blanks

Prepositions

Use the tables in Topic 1 (section 1.7). Typical examples:

Sentence	Answer
He is addicted ___ gambling.	to
The teacher congratulated him ___ his success.	on
She has been waiting ___ morning.	since
The meeting was put off ___ next week.	till / until
The money was divided ___ the three brothers.	among
He died ___ cancer.	of

Articles

Check whether the noun is specific (the), is one of many (a/an), or is used generally (no article). *She is* ___ *honest girl* (an). ___ *Ganga is a holy river* (The).

Tenses and verb forms

Sentence	Answer	Reason
If I ___ you, I would accept the offer.	were	Second conditional (unreal present)
I would rather ___ at home than go out.	stay	"Would rather" + base verb
He has lived here ___ 2010.	since	Point of time
By the time we reached, the film ___.	had started	Earlier past action
Hardly had we started ___ it began to rain.	when	"Hardly ... when"
Neither of the two answers ___ correct.	is	"Neither of" takes a singular verb
The sun ___ in the east.	rises	Universal truth: simple present

Conjunctions and connectors

Sentence	Answer
He worked hard, ___ he failed.	yet / but
Take an umbrella ___ it rains.	in case / lest it should
___ he is poor, he is honest.	Though / Although
Work hard ___ you will fail.	or / otherwise
She is ___ intelligent ___ hardworking.	both ... and / not only ... but also

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4.5 Vocabulary-based blanks

Words that are often confused

Word Pair	Meaning and Example
accept / except	accept = receive; except = excluding. I accept your offer. Everyone except Ravi came.
affect / effect	affect (verb) = influence; effect (noun) = result. Smoking affects health. It has a bad effect.
advice / advise	advice (noun); advise (verb). He gave me good advice. I advise you to rest.
principal / principle	principal = head of an institution or main; principle = rule. The principal spoke about moral principles.
stationary / stationery	stationary = not moving; stationery = writing materials. The car was stationary.
complement / compliment	complement = completes; compliment = praise. She received a compliment.
council / counsel	council = a group of advisers; counsel = advice. Take legal counsel.
emigrate / immigrate	emigrate = leave a country; immigrate = enter a country to settle.
formally / formerly	formally = in a formal way; formerly = in the past.
lose / loose	lose = misplace; loose = not tight. Do not lose the loose coin.
personal / personnel	personal = private; personnel = staff.
quiet / quite	quiet = silent; quite = fairly. The room was quite quiet.
later / latter	later = after some time; latter = the second of two.
ensure / insure / assure	ensure = make certain; insure = take insurance; assure = promise or give confidence.
born / borne	born = given birth to; borne = carried or tolerated. He was born in 1990. She has borne the pain.
licence / license	licence (noun, British); license (verb). He has a driving licence.
practice / practise	practice (noun); practise (verb, British). Practise daily; practice makes perfect.
beside / besides	beside = next to; besides = in addition.

Common collocations

Use "make" with	Use "do" with	Use "take" with	Use "have" with
a decision, a mistake, an effort, progress, a speech, money, noise, a promise, an excuse, a plan, a choice	homework, work, the dishes, business, a favour, good, harm, your best, research, an exercise	a photo, a bath, a chance, a break, a decision (also), a seat, medicine, an exam, a risk, care	a bath, a look, a talk, a rest, lunch, a headache, a good time, a dream, fun, an idea

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Phrasal verbs

Phrasal Verb	Meaning	Phrasal Verb	Meaning
bring up	raise (a child) / mention	look after	take care of
break down	stop working / collapse	look into	investigate
call off	cancel	make up	invent / compensate
carry on	continue	pass away	die
carry out	perform	put off	postpone
come across	meet or find by chance	put up with	tolerate
get along (with)	be on good terms	run out of	have none left
give up	quit	set up	establish
go through	examine / experience	take after	resemble
hold on	wait	turn down	reject
keep up	maintain	turn up	arrive / appear
look forward to	await eagerly	take off	leave the ground / remove

Double blanks

When there are two blanks, the two words are linked in meaning. They may be (a) similar in meaning, (b) opposite in meaning, or (c) cause and effect. Decide which relationship the clue words suggest, and then choose the pair accordingly.

Example
Despite his ___ background, he became a ___ leader. (A) humble, respected (B) rich, poor (C) lazy, successful (D) proud, humble
Answer: (A). "Despite" shows contrast, and "humble" (low status) contrasts with "respected" (high status). In (B), "rich" and "poor" are opposites but "poor leader" does not fit "became".

4.6 Quick revision

- Identify the part of speech needed. Check clue words. Test options in the full sentence.
- For prepositions, recall the fixed phrase. For verbs, check tense and agreement.
- For vocabulary, look for the contrast, cause, or similarity.
- Do not choose a word only because it is familiar. Check that it has the right meaning.

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Topic 5: Sentence Rearrangement

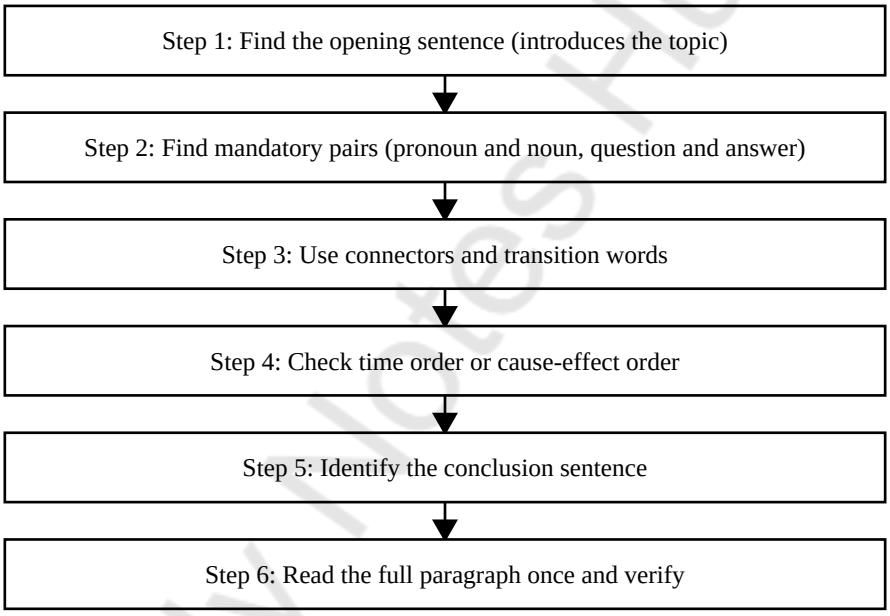
5.1 Meaning and exam pattern

In sentence rearrangement (also called para jumbles or jumbled sentences), a set of sentences or parts of a sentence is given in a wrong order and is labelled P, Q, R, S (and sometimes 1 to 6). You must put them in the correct order to form a meaningful and logical paragraph or sentence. There are two main varieties:

- **Sentence parts:** parts P, Q, R, S are to be arranged into one correct sentence.
- **Paragraph jumbles:** the first sentence (S1) and the last sentence (S6) are given. The middle sentences P, Q, R, S must be arranged. In some questions no sentence is fixed.

5.2 A strategy that works

Figure: Solving a Sentence Rearrangement Question



Step 1: Find the opening sentence

- It introduces the main idea. It names the person, place, or subject fully (for example, "Rabindranath Tagore was born in Kolkata").
- It does not begin with a pronoun (he, she, it, they, this, that) that has no earlier noun to refer to.
- It does not begin with a connector like "but", "however", "therefore", "also", "moreover", "thus".
- It is usually a general statement and not a detailed example.

Step 2: Find mandatory pairs

- A noun introduced in one sentence is referred to by a pronoun in the next. "Ram is a doctor." comes before "He works in a hospital."
- "This", "that", "these", "those", "such" refer to something already mentioned.
- A question is followed by its answer. A general statement is followed by an example.
- The words "first, second, finally" or "initially, then, later" show order.

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Step 3: Connectors and transition words

Purpose	Connectors	Position in Paragraph
Addition	moreover, furthermore, also, in addition, besides, further	Middle
Contrast	but, however, yet, on the other hand, nevertheless, still	After a positive or opposite statement
Cause and result	because, since, therefore, thus, hence, so, as a result, consequently	Therefore, thus, hence usually come after the cause
Example	for example, for instance, such as	After a general statement
Sequence	first, then, next, after that, later, finally	In order
Conclusion	in conclusion, to sum up, finally, thus, therefore	Last

Step 4: Order of ideas

Paragraphs are usually arranged in one of these orders: chronological (time order), general to specific, problem to solution, cause to effect, or question to answer. For a biography, the order is: birth, education, career, achievements, death. For a story, the order follows the events as they happened.

5.3 Solved examples

Example 1 (sentence parts)

Arrange: P: when we Q: had already left R: reached the station S: The train

Solution: "The train" is the subject, so it comes first (S). The verb phrase "had already left" follows (Q). "When we" introduces the time clause (P) and "reached the station" completes it (R). Correct order: **S Q P R** - The train had already left when we reached the station.

Example 2 (paragraph, S1 given)

Label	Sentence
S1	Rahul woke up late on Monday morning.
P	He missed the school bus.
Q	Looking at the clock, he realised it was already 8 o'clock.
R	So he ran to school as fast as he could.
S	He jumped out of bed in a panic.

Solution: After waking up late, Rahul looks at the clock (Q), then jumps out of bed in a panic (S). Because he was late, he missed the bus (P). "So" in R shows result of missing the bus. Order: **Q S P R**.

Example 3 (biography)

Label	Sentence
P	Gandhiji returned to India in 1915.
Q	He was born in Porbandar in 1869.
R	He went to South Africa as a lawyer in 1893.
S	Later he became the leader of India's freedom struggle.

Solution: Birth (Q), then going abroad (R), returning (P), and then leadership (S). Order: **Q R P S**.

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Example 4 (contrast connector)

Label	Sentence
P	But he refused to give up.
Q	Thomas Edison failed many times while inventing the electric bulb.
R	Finally, after thousands of attempts, he succeeded.
S	Many people laughed at him.

Solution: Q gives the full name and context, so it opens the paragraph. S says that people laughed. "But" in P contrasts with S (people laughed, but he refused to give up). R, with "Finally", is the conclusion. Order: **Q S P R**.

5.4 Common traps

- Do not place a sentence that begins with "But" or "Therefore" first.
- Do not separate a pronoun from its noun by more than one sentence unless the paragraph is about one person.
- Check the last sentence. It should sound like a conclusion or a final result.
- If two options look right, read both versions as a paragraph and choose the smoother one.

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Topic 6: Transformation of Sentences

6.1 Meaning and exam pattern

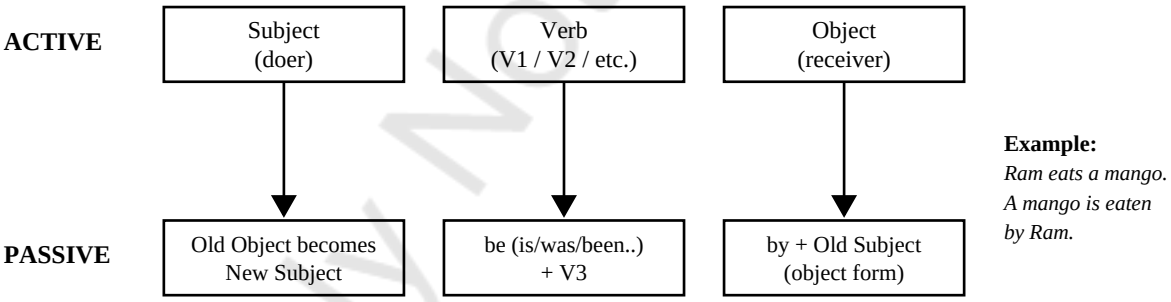
Transformation means changing a sentence from one form to another **without changing its meaning**. The question gives a sentence and asks you to change its voice, narration, degree, structure, or kind. The main types are given below.

No.	Type of Transformation	Example of Change
1	Active voice and passive voice	Ram wrote a letter. - A letter was written by Ram.
2	Direct speech and indirect speech	He said, "I am busy." - He said that he was busy.
3	Degrees of comparison	Gold is more precious than iron. - Iron is less precious than gold.
4	Simple, compound, and complex sentences	Being ill, he stayed at home. - As he was ill, he stayed at home.
5	Affirmative, negative, interrogative, exclamatory, and assertive sentences	He is a fool. - What a fool he is!
6	Use of too ... to, enough ... to, so ... that	He is too weak to walk. - He is so weak that he cannot walk.

6.2 Active and passive voice

In the active voice the subject does the action. In the passive voice the subject receives the action. A sentence can be changed to the passive voice only if it has a transitive verb (a verb that takes an object).

Figure: Active Voice to Passive Voice



Basic steps

1. Identify the subject, the verb, and the object of the active sentence.
2. Make the object the new subject.
3. Change the verb into "a form of be + past participle (V3)". The form of "be" must agree with the new subject and show the same tense as the original verb.
4. Add "by" + the old subject (changed to the object case). The agent is often omitted when it is not important.

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Tense table

Tense	Active Voice	Passive Voice
Simple Present	She writes a letter.	A letter is written by her.
Present Continuous	She is writing a letter.	A letter is being written by her.
Present Perfect	She has written a letter.	A letter has been written by her.
Simple Past	She wrote a letter.	A letter was written by her.
Past Continuous	She was writing a letter.	A letter was being written by her.
Past Perfect	She had written a letter.	A letter had been written by her.
Simple Future	She will write a letter.	A letter will be written by her.
Future Perfect	She will have written a letter.	A letter will have been written by her.
Modal verbs	She can write a letter.	A letter can be written by her.
Present Perfect Continuous, Past Perfect Continuous, Future Continuous	Passive is not normally used.	(Rarely used in practice.)

Pronoun changes

Subject form	I	We	He	She	They	You	Who
Object form	me	us	him	her	them	you	whom

Special cases

Case	Active	Passive
Imperative sentence (command)	Close the door.	Let the door be closed. / You are ordered to close the door.
Request	Please help me.	You are requested to help me.
Interrogative (with auxiliary verb)	Did Ram break the glass?	Was the glass broken by Ram?
Interrogative (with Wh- word)	Who wrote this letter?	By whom was this letter written?
Two objects	She gave me a book.	I was given a book by her. / A book was given to me by her.
Verb followed by a preposition	They laughed at him.	He was laughed at by them.
Sentence with "let"	Let him go.	Let him be allowed to go.
Intransitive verb	Birds fly.	Not possible (no object).
Verbs "know, like, please, surprise, interest" often use another preposition	The news surprised me.	I was surprised at the news.
Negative sentence	She does not eat apples.	Apples are not eaten by her.

Remember
"By + agent" is dropped when the doer is unknown, obvious, or unimportant: *The thief was arrested.* In the passive, the main verb is always in the third form (V3).

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6.3 Direct and indirect speech (narration)

Direct speech gives the exact words of the speaker inside quotation marks. Indirect speech reports the meaning without quotation marks and with changes in tense, pronoun, and time or place words.

Three kinds of changes

- **Change of the reporting verb and conjunction** according to the type of sentence.
- **Change of person (pronouns)** following the rule of SON: the first person (I, we, my) in the reported speech changes according to the **S**ubject of the reporting verb; the second person (you, your) changes according to the **O**bject of the reporting verb; the third person (he, she, they) does **N**ot change.
- **Change of tense and of time or place words.**

Rules for changing the tense (when the reporting verb is in the past)

Direct Speech	Indirect Speech
Simple Present (He said, "I write.")	Simple Past (He said that he wrote.)
Present Continuous (am/is/are writing)	Past Continuous (was/were writing)
Present Perfect (has/have written)	Past Perfect (had written)
Present Perfect Continuous	Past Perfect Continuous
Simple Past (wrote)	Past Perfect (had written)
Past Continuous (was writing)	Past Perfect Continuous (had been writing)
Past Perfect (had written)	No change (had written)
will, shall	would, should
can, may	could, might
must	had to (obligation) or must (no change for a general truth)
Universal truth or habitual fact	No change in tense

If the reporting verb is in the present or future tense (He says, "I am busy." / He will say, "I am busy."), the tense of the reported speech does not change.

Changes in time and place words

Direct	Indirect	Direct	Indirect
now	then	here	there
today	that day	this	that
tomorrow	the next day / the following day	these	those
yesterday	the previous day / the day before	come	go
last night	the previous night	ago	before
next week	the following week	thus	so

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Changing different kinds of sentences

Kind	Reporting Verb and Conjunction	Direct	Indirect
Assertive (statement)	said / told, with "that"	He said, "I am tired."	He said that he was tired.
Interrogative (Wh-question)	asked, enquired; no "that"; use the Wh- word; statement word order	He said to me, "Where do you live?"	He asked me where I lived.
Interrogative (yes/no question)	asked, with "if" or "whether"	She said to him, "Are you ready?"	She asked him if he was ready.
Imperative (command)	ordered, commanded, told; request: requested; advice: advised; with "to"	The teacher said to him, "Sit down."	The teacher ordered him to sit down.
Imperative (negative)	"not to" or "forbade"	He said to me, "Do not go there."	He told me not to go there.
Exclamatory	exclaimed with joy / sorrow / surprise; with "that"	She said, "Hurrah! We have won."	She exclaimed with joy that they had won.
Optative (wish)	prayed / wished, with "that" and "might"	He said, "May you live long."	He prayed that I might live long.
Assertive with "Let"	suggested / proposed	He said, "Let us go for a walk."	He suggested that they should go for a walk.

Extra points
Remove the question mark in indirect speech. A reported question is a statement, so use normal word order (subject before verb). Incorrect: *He asked me where did I live.* Correct: *He asked me where I lived.*
Use "told" when the listener is named (*He told me*) and "said" when it is not (*He said that*). "Said to" can be changed to "told" in statements.
Greetings and exclamations are reported with the verb "wished", "greeted" or "exclaimed". Example: *He said to me, "Good morning." - He wished me good morning.*

Example with all changes: *The boy said to his teacher, "I did not finish my homework yesterday because I was ill."* becomes *The boy told his teacher that he had not finished his homework the previous day because he had been ill.*

6.4 Degrees of comparison

The same comparison can be expressed in the positive, the comparative, and the superlative degree. Learn the following three patterns.

Pattern	Superlative	Comparative	Positive
A. Greatest of all	Mount Everest is the highest peak in the world.	Mount Everest is higher than any other peak in the world.	No other peak in the world is as high as Mount Everest.
B. One of the greatest	Delhi is one of the largest cities in India.	Delhi is larger than most other cities in India.	Very few cities in India are as large as Delhi.
C. Inferior	Silver is not the most precious metal.	Silver is less precious than gold.	Silver is not as precious as gold.

- The positive degree is written with "as ... as" in the affirmative and "so/as ... as" in the negative.
- The comparative degree uses "than". With Latin adjectives (senior, junior, superior, inferior), use "to".

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- The superlative degree uses "the" and a plural noun in "one of the" patterns.

6.5 Simple, compound, and complex sentences

Simple to compound

Method	Simple	Compound
Change a participle or phrase into a main clause joined by "and"	Seeing the tiger, the boy ran away.	The boy saw the tiger and ran away.
Use "but" for a concession	In spite of being poor, he is honest.	He is poor but he is honest.
Use "or / otherwise" for a condition	Work hard to pass.	Work hard or you will not pass.
Use "so" for a result or cause	Being tired, he went to bed.	He was tired, so he went to bed.

Simple to complex

Simple	Complex	Type of subordinate clause
Being ill, he did not go to school.	As he was ill, he did not go to school.	Adverb clause of reason
In spite of his illness, he came.	Although he was ill, he came.	Adverb clause of concession
Without working hard, you cannot succeed.	Unless you work hard, you cannot succeed. / If you do not work hard, you cannot succeed.	Adverb clause of condition
He told me his name.	He told me what his name was.	Noun clause
I know the cause of his failure.	I know why he failed.	Noun clause
The man with a red cap is my uncle.	The man who wears a red cap is my uncle.	Adjective clause
He came here to meet me.	He came here so that he might meet me.	Adverb clause of purpose
On his arrival, the meeting began.	When he arrived, the meeting began.	Adverb clause of time

Summary of conversion rules

Change	Rule
Simple to compound	Express one idea as an independent clause and join with and, but, or, so, yet, for.
Simple to complex	Convert the phrase to a dependent clause with its own subject and finite verb. Use a suitable subordinator (as, although, if, because, when, who, that).
Compound to complex	Convert one independent clause into a dependent clause. Example: He is poor but he is honest - Though he is poor, he is honest.
Complex to simple	Reduce the dependent clause to a phrase (participle, infinitive, preposition + noun). Example: When the sun set, we left - At sunset, we left.

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6.6 Affirmative, negative, interrogative, and exclamatory

Change	Original	Transformed
Affirmative to negative	He is the best player.	No other player is better than he. / He is not worse than any other player.
Affirmative to negative	I doubt his honesty.	I do not believe in his honesty.
Affirmative to negative	Everyone loved him.	There was no one who did not love him.
Assertive to interrogative	Nobody can deny this fact.	Who can deny this fact?
Assertive to interrogative	It is of no use to cry over spilt milk.	What is the use of crying over spilt milk?
Assertive to exclamatory	It is a very beautiful scene.	What a beautiful scene it is!
Assertive to exclamatory	The weather is very pleasant.	How pleasant the weather is!
Imperative to assertive	Always speak the truth.	You should always speak the truth.
Negative to affirmative	He did not come on time.	He was late.
Negative to affirmative	He is not honest.	He is dishonest.

Too ... to, enough ... to, so ... that

Pattern	Example	Transformed
too + adjective + to + verb	He is too weak to walk.	He is so weak that he cannot walk.
adjective + enough + to + verb	She is clever enough to solve it.	She is so clever that she can solve it.
so + adjective + that	It was so hot that we could not go out.	It was too hot for us to go out.
as soon as / no sooner ... than	As soon as he came, I left.	No sooner had he come than I left.
not only ... but also	He is honest and he is intelligent.	He is not only honest but also intelligent.
Though ... yet / Although	Although he is poor, he is happy.	In spite of being poor, he is happy.

6.7 Quick revision

- Passive: be + V3. Match the form of be with the tense of the original verb.
- Reported speech: shift the tense back by one step, change pronouns, and change time and place words.
- Question in indirect speech: ask, enquire, use "if" or "whether", and use the statement word order.
- Degree: learn the three patterns (A, B, C). Keep the meaning the same.
- Simple to complex: convert the phrase to a clause with a suitable linking word.

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Practice Test: 50 MCQs

Time: 40 minutes. Total questions: 50. Every question has one correct answer. Do not look at the answer key before you finish. The answer key with short explanations is given after the test.

Part A: Error Detection

In each question, find the part that has an error. If there is no error, choose (E).

1. (A) Each of the boys (B) in the class (C) have completed (D) his homework.
(E) No error

2. (A) The news of the earthquake (B) were broadcast (C) on all channels (D) last night.
(E) No error

3. (A) He is senior than me (B) by three years (C) in service (D) and experience.
(E) No error

4. (A) Hardly had he reached the station (B) when the train (C) left (D) the platform.
(E) No error

5. (A) I have been (B) living in Kolkata (C) for the last (D) ten year.
(E) No error

6. (A) Neither the teacher (B) nor the students (C) was present (D) in the hall.
(E) No error

7. (A) My brother (B) is very good (C) in mathematics (D) and physics.
(E) No error

8. (A) She is one of the (B) best teachers (C) in our school (D) who has won an award.
(E) No error

9. (A) The Principal along with (B) his colleagues are coming (C) to the function (D) tomorrow.
(E) No error

10. (A) She prefers tea (B) than coffee (C) in the (D) morning.
(E) No error

Part B: Sentence Correction

Choose the best replacement for the bold part.

11. Walking along the road, **a snake bit Ravi**.

(A) a snake was biting Ravi
(B) a snake has bitten Ravi
(C) Ravi was bitten by a snake
(D) No correction required

12. The reason for his failure **is because** he did not work hard.

(A) is due
(B) is that
(C) was because of
(D) No correction required

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13. He **does not know nothing** about the matter.

(A) does not know anything
(B) did not know nothing
(C) do not know anything
(D) No correction required

14. She likes **singing, dancing and to paint**.

(A) singing, to dance and painting
(B) to sing, dancing and painting
(C) singing, dancing and painting
(D) No correction required

15. The climate of Darjeeling is cooler than **Kolkata**.

(A) those of Kolkata
(B) that of Kolkata
(C) Kolkata's one
(D) No correction required

16. I saw a dog on the way to school with a broken leg.

(A) On the way to school, I saw a dog with a broken leg.
(B) With a broken leg, I saw a dog on the way to school.
(C) I with a broken leg saw a dog on the way to school.
(D) No correction required

17. If I **would have** known the answer, I would have told you.

(A) would had known
(B) had known
(C) have known
(D) No correction required

18. The **childrens'** park is closed today.

(A) childrens
(B) children'
(C) No correction required
(D) children's

Part C: Sentence Improvement

Choose the best replacement for the bold part.

19. He **insisted to go** there alone.

(A) insisted to going
(B) insisted for go
(C) insisted on going
(D) No improvement

20. I am looking forward **to meet** you.

(A) to meeting
(B) for meeting
(C) to have met
(D) No improvement

21. He **returned back** from Delhi yesterday.

(A) did return back
(B) returned
(C) was returning back
(D) No improvement

22. Rahul **is working** in this office since 2015.

(A) was working
(B) works
(C) has been working
(D) No improvement

23. It is difficult to **cope up with** the pressure of the job.

(A) cope with
(B) cope on
(C) coping up with
(D) No improvement

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24. Seema is **more intelligent than any girl** in the class.

(A) most intelligent than any girl
(B) the more intelligent than any girl
(C) No improvement
(D) more intelligent than any other girl

25. He **said me** that he would come.

(A) say me
(B) told to me
(C) told me
(D) No improvement

26. She **did not hardly** recognise me.

(A) had not hardly recognised
(B) hardly recognised
(C) did not scarcely recognise
(D) No improvement

Part D: Fill in the Blanks

Choose the correct word or words to fill the blanks.

27. He is fond _____ music.

(A) for
(B) with
(C) of
(D) in

28. She has been waiting _____ morning.

(A) for
(B) since
(C) from
(D) at

29. If I _____ you, I would accept the offer.

(A) were
(B) am
(C) was
(D) be

30. The teacher congratulated him _____ his success.

(A) for
(B) at
(C) with
(D) on

31. Neither of the two answers _____ correct.

(A) are
(B) is
(C) were
(D) have been

32. The meeting was _____ because of heavy rain.

(A) called on
(B) called up
(C) called at
(D) called off

33. Despite his _____ background, he became a _____ leader.

(A) humble, respected
(B) rich, poor
(C) lazy, successful
(D) proud, humble

34. I would rather _____ at home than go out.

(A) to stay
(B) staying
(C) stay
(D) stayed

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35. Hardly had we started _____ it began to rain.

(A) than (B) then

(C) but (D) when

36. She is _____ honest girl.

(A) a (B) an

(C) the (D) no article

Part E: Sentence Rearrangement

Choose the correct order.

37. S1: Rahul woke up late on Monday morning.

P: He missed the school bus.

Q: Looking at the clock, he realised it was already 8 o'clock.

R: So he ran to school as fast as he could.

S: He jumped out of bed in a panic.

Choose the correct order of P, Q, R, S.

(A) PQRS (B) SQPR

(C) QPSR (D) QSPR

38. S1: Raju was very fond of cricket.

P: Therefore, he joined a coaching academy.

Q: His parents noticed his interest in the game.

R: Within two years, he was selected for the state team.

S: He practised there for several hours every day.

Choose the correct order of P, Q, R, S.

(A) QPSR (B) PQSR

(C) QSPR (D) SPQR

39. P: Gandhiji returned to India in 1915.

Q: He was born in Porbandar in 1869.

R: He went to South Africa as a lawyer in 1893.

S: Later he became the leader of India's freedom struggle.

Choose the correct order.

(A) PQRS (B) QRPS

(C) RQPS (D) QPRS

40. Arrange the parts to form a sentence.

P: is the largest

Q: state by area

R: in India

S: Rajasthan

(A) SQPR (B) PQRS

(C) SPQR (D) RSPQ

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41. Arrange the parts to form a sentence.

P: when we
Q: had already left
R: reached the station
S: The train

(A) PQRS
(B) RSPQ
(C) SPQR
(D) SQPR

42. P: But he refused to give up.
Q: Thomas Edison failed many times while inventing the electric bulb.
R: Finally, after thousands of attempts, he succeeded.
S: Many people laughed at him.
Choose the correct order.

(A) QSPR
(B) QPSR
(C) SQPR
(D) PQRS

Part F: Transformation of Sentences

Choose the correct transformation.

43. Change into the passive voice: *The teacher is teaching the lesson.*

(A) The lesson was being taught by the teacher.
(B) The lesson has been taught by the teacher.
(C) The lesson is taught by the teacher.
(D) The lesson is being taught by the teacher.

44. Change into indirect speech: *He said, "I am happy."*

(A) He said that I am happy.
(B) He said that he is happy.
(C) He said that he was happy.
(D) He said that he had been happy.

45. Change into indirect speech: *He said to me, "Where do you live?"*

(A) He asked me where I lived.
(B) He asked me where did I live.
(C) He asked me that where I lived.
(D) He told me where I lived.

46. Change into a complex sentence: *Being tired, he went to bed early.*

(A) He was tired and he went to bed early.
(B) Though he was tired, he went to bed early.
(C) If he was tired, he went to bed early.
(D) As he was tired, he went to bed early.

47. Change into the positive degree: *Gold is more precious than any other metal.*

(A) Gold is as precious as any other metal.
(B) No other metal is more precious than gold.
(C) No other metal is as precious as gold.
(D) Few metals are as precious as gold.

48. Rewrite using "so ... that": *He is too weak to walk.*

(A) He is so weak that he can walk.
(B) He is so weak that he cannot walk.
(C) He is weak enough to walk.
(D) He is very weak that he cannot walk.

49. Change into an interrogative sentence: *Nobody can deny this fact.*

(A) Can nobody deny this fact?
(B) Who cannot deny this fact?
(C) Does anybody not deny this fact?
(D) Who can deny this fact?

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50. Change into an exclamatory sentence: *It is a very beautiful scene.*

(A) What a beautiful scene it is!
(B) How a beautiful scene it is!
(C) What beautiful a scene it is!
(D) How beautiful a scene is it!

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Answer Key with Explanations

Quick key

Q	Ans	Q	Ans	Q	Ans	Q	Ans	Q	Ans
1	(C)	11	(C)	21	(B)	31	(B)	41	(D)
2	(B)	12	(B)	22	(C)	32	(D)	42	(A)
3	(A)	13	(A)	23	(A)	33	(A)	43	(D)
4	(E)	14	(C)	24	(D)	34	(C)	44	(C)
5	(D)	15	(B)	25	(C)	35	(D)	45	(A)
6	(C)	16	(A)	26	(B)	36	(B)	46	(D)
7	(C)	17	(B)	27	(C)	37	(D)	47	(C)
8	(D)	18	(D)	28	(B)	38	(A)	48	(B)
9	(B)	19	(C)	29	(A)	39	(B)	49	(D)
10	(B)	20	(A)	30	(D)	40	(C)	50	(A)

Detailed explanations

Q	Ans	Explanation
1	(C)	Each takes a singular verb: "has completed".
2	(B)	"News" is singular. Use "was broadcast".
3	(A)	Senior is a Latin comparative and takes "to": "senior to me".
4	(E)	The sentence is correct: Hardly had + V3 ... when + simple past.
5	(D)	"Ten" needs a plural noun: "ten years".
6	(C)	The verb agrees with the nearer subject "students": "were present".
7	(C)	The correct preposition is "good at".
8	(D)	In "one of the ... who", the verb is plural: "who have won".
9	(B)	Along with does not make the subject plural. Use "is coming".
10	(B)	"Prefer" is followed by "to": "prefers tea to coffee".
11	(C)	Dangling modifier. The doer of "walking" must be the subject: Ravi.
12	(B)	"The reason is that ..." is correct. "Reason is because" is redundant.
13	(A)	Double negative. Use "anything" with "does not".
14	(C)	Parallel structure: all items must be gerunds.
15	(B)	Climate must be compared with climate: "that of Kolkata".
16	(A)	Misplaced modifier. "With a broken leg" must be next to "a dog".
17	(B)	Third conditional: past perfect in the if-clause.
18	(D)	The plural "children" does not end in s, so the possessive is "children's".
19	(C)	"Insist" takes "on" followed by a gerund.
20	(A)	In "look forward to", "to" is a preposition and takes a gerund.
21	(B)	"Returned" already means "came back". "Back" is redundant.

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Q	Ans	Explanation
22	(C)	With "since" use the present perfect continuous.
23	(A)	The correct phrasal verb is "cope with".
24	(D)	Use "any other" when a person is compared with others of the same group.
25	(C)	"Told" takes a direct personal object. "Said" does not.
26	(B)	"Hardly" is already negative. Double negative is wrong.
27	(C)	"Fond of" is the correct combination.
28	(B)	"Since" is used with a point of time.
29	(A)	Unreal condition in the present: subjunctive "were".
30	(D)	"Congratulate on" is the correct phrase.
31	(B)	"Neither of" takes a singular verb.
32	(D)	"Called off" means cancelled.
33	(A)	"Despite" shows contrast: humble background and respected leader.
34	(C)	"Would rather" is followed by the base form.
35	(D)	"Hardly ... when" is the correct pair.
36	(B)	"Honest" begins with a vowel sound (silent h), so "an".
37	(D)	He sees the time (Q), jumps up (S), misses the bus (P), so he runs (R).
38	(A)	Parents notice (Q), so he joins (P), practises there (S), and is selected (R).
39	(B)	Chronological order: birth, South Africa, return, leadership.
40	(C)	Rajasthan is the largest state by area in India.
41	(D)	The train had already left when we reached the station.
42	(A)	Q introduces Edison, S people laughed, P "But" contrasts with S, R is the conclusion.
43	(D)	Present continuous passive: is/are being + V3.
44	(C)	Simple present changes to simple past; "I" changes to "he".
45	(A)	Wh- question: use "asked", keep the Wh- word, and use statement order.
46	(D)	The phrase shows reason, so it becomes an adverb clause with "as". Option A is compound.
47	(C)	Positive pattern: No other + noun + is as + adjective + as ...
48	(B)	"Too ... to" has a negative sense: so ... that ... cannot.
49	(D)	A negative assertion becomes a positive rhetorical question.
50	(A)	With "a + adjective + noun" use "What a ... it is!".

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