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Introduction

The idea behind this book is to provide students with the most exhaustive Sentence Correction material currently available in the market. We have tried to incorporate in this book any concept that has even remotely been tested on the GMAT.

In keeping with its exhaustive nature, this book has 3 parts to it:

Part 1 - Grammar Review - Gives you a quick overview of the basic grammatical concepts that are likely to be tested on the GMAT.

Part 2 - Discusses the seven major error types that will be tested on the GMAT

Part 3 - Covers minor errors, confusing choices and all other one-off concepts that have ever been tested on the GMAT.

Once you go through this book, we promise you will not have to refer to any other book for sentence correction. For most of the concepts covered in this book, you will also find an OG reference (highlighted in yellow) that will provide you with the question number of similar questions present in the OGs 12 and 11. Hence, you can actually see how the concepts explained in this book are actually tested on the GMAT.

We will soon, also, be coming out with a comprehensive Sentence Correction question bank to go with this book.

Until then,

Good luck & study hard !

The Aristotle Team

***P.S.** We would love to know whether you found this book helpful and how we could make this book even better. Do mail us your feedback on feedback@aristotleprep.com*

PART 1

Grammar Review

Grammar Review

Before starting with actual Sentence Correction questions it is important to brush up our basic grammar fundamentals. A lot of students ask us whether it is actually important to know such detailed grammatical concepts.

Well, for one the concepts covered in this chapter will be anything but detailed; we'll actually just be scratching the surface of English grammar.

Second, and more important, you could choose to leave out these concepts in case you are targeting a score of around 600 but if your target is a 700+ score then you will need to have some basic idea of these concepts.

Remember, the idea behind this chapter is not to revisit Wren & Martin but just to get a basic comfort level with the different parts of speech and sentence.

So first up, let's take a look at the different parts of speech, which are basically the words that you use to make a sentence. There are 8 parts of speech in the English language:

1. Noun
2. Pronoun
3. Adjective
4. Verb
5. Adverb
6. Preposition
7. Conjunction
8. Interjection

1) Noun

Nouns are naming words. Everything we see or are able to talk about is represented by a word which names it - that word is called a 'noun'. These can be names for people, animals, places, objects, substances, qualities, actions, etc.

Examples:

i) Names for people, animals, places – Tom, Englishman, cabrother, cat, office, China

ii) Names for objects and substances – chair, computer, hammer, caoxygen, water, ice

vi) Names for qualities – kindness, beauty, bravery, faith

vii) Names for actions – rowing, cooking, reading, listening

Common & Proper Nouns

A common noun is the word used for a class of person, place or thing.

Examples: car, man, city, iron, liquid, company, etc.

A proper noun is the name of a particular or specific person, place or thing. A proper noun always starts with a capital letter.

Examples: Alfred, Asia, Aunt Becky, Nobel prize, Mercedes, Microsoft, etc.

Countable & Uncountable Nouns

A **countable noun** (or count noun) is a noun with both a singular and a plural form, and it names anything (or anyone) that you can count. You can make a countable noun plural and attach it to a plural verb in a sentence.

Countable nouns are the opposite of non-countable nouns and collective nouns.

In each of the following two sentences, the highlighted words are countable nouns:

i) John painted the **table** red and the **chairs** blue.

ii) The oak tree lost three **branches** in the **storm**.

A **non-countable noun** (or mass noun) is a noun that does not have a plural form and that refers to something that you could (or would) not usually count.

A non-countable noun always takes a singular verb in a sentence. Non-countable nouns are similar to collective nouns (but not the same), and are the opposite of countable nouns.

In each of the following sentences, the highlighted words are non-countable nouns:

i) Joseph Priestly discovered **oxygen**.

ii) We decided to sell the **furniture** rather than take it with us when we moved.

In the above examples, the words 'oxygen' and 'furniture' cannot normally be made plural and so take the singular verb "is" rather than the plural verb 'are'.

Examples of Non-countable nouns:

- *music, art, love, happiness, advice, information, news*
- *furniture, luggage, rice, sugar, butter, water*
- *electricity, gas, power, money, currency*

Sometimes, the same noun can be countable and uncountable, often with a change of meaning:

Countable		Uncountable
There are two hairs in my coffee!	hair	I don't have much hair.
There are two lights in our bedroom	light	Close the curtain. There's too much light!
Our house has seven rooms	room	Is there room for me to sit here?

Collective Nouns

A **collective noun** is a noun naming a group of things, animals, or persons. You could count the individual members of the group, but you usually think of the group as one unit.

You need to be able to recognize collective nouns in order to maintain subject-verb agreement. A collective noun is similar to a non-countable noun, and is roughly the opposite of a countable noun.

*In each of the following sentences, the **highlighted** word is a collective noun:*

*i) The **flock** of geese spends most of its time in the pasture. (The capcollective noun "flock" takes the singular verb "spends")*

*ii) The **jury** is dining on take-out chicken tonight.*

*iii) The **army** is handling the problem of terrorism.*

List of some common Collective nouns

Army	Array
Audience	Band
Bevy	Board
Bunch	Cast
Choir/Chorus	Class
Committee	Corporation
Council	Crowd
Department	Faculty
Family	Firm
Group	Jury
Majority	Minority
Party	Public
School	Senate
Society	Staff
Team	Troupe

Possessive Noun

When we want to show that something belongs to somebody or something, we usually add (**'s**) to a singular noun and an apostrophe to a plural noun.

For example:

- *the boy's ball (one boy)*
- *the boys' ball (two or more boys)*

Noun as an Adjective

As you know, a noun is a person, place or thing, and an adjective is a word that describes a noun. Sometimes we use a noun to describe another noun. In that case, the first noun acts as an adjective.

Examples

- *Race horse*
- *War story*
- *Tennis ball*

In some exceptional cases you can have several consecutive nouns acting as adjectives.

For example

- *Argentina football team coach*

In the above sentence 'Argentina', 'football', and 'team' are all nouns acting as adjectives modifying the final noun 'coach'. Even more interestingly 'football' is a noun that is made up from two nouns – 'foot' and 'ball'. This is how words develop in a language!

To Sum it up:

- **Noun** - the name of a person, place or thing
- **Common Noun** - refers to a general group
- **Proper Noun** - refers to a particular item in a group
- **Countable Nouns** - can be counted (bottle, calculators, etc.)
- **Uncountable Nouns** - cannot be counted (oxygen, milk, etc.)
- **Collective Noun** - group of items which are referred to in the singular (army, family, etc.)
- **Possessive Noun** - use apostrophe to show possession
- **Nouns as Adjectives** - race horse, cricket ball, etc.

2) Pronoun

A **pronoun** is a word that is used to replace a noun or another pronoun. You use pronouns like he, which, none, you, etc. to make your sentence less cumbersome and less repetitive.

For example,

Do you like the captain? I don't like the captain. I think the captain is too arrogant.

As you can see the above lines sound very childish and repetitive. With pronouns we can say:

Do you like the captain? I don't like him. I think he is too arrogant.

The first sentence sounds awkward and can even be confusing as to whether both the 'John's' are the same or different people.

The second sentence replaces the second noun 'John' with the pronoun 'he' and gets the meaning across clearly.

Singular & Plural Pronouns

There are several pronouns which seem to be plural but act as singular, taking singular verbs. The most common of these pronouns is anybody, anything, any, each, either, everyone, everybody, nobody, none, etc. These pronouns must be followed by a singular verb.

Example:

i) Not one of the bananas was (not 'were') ripe.

ii) Everyone has (not 'have') completed the test.

Relative Pronouns

A relative pronoun is used to link one phrase or clause to another phrase or clause. It is called a 'relative' pronoun because it relates to the word that it modifies and is not specific.

For example:

The person **who** phoned me last night is my teacher.

There are 5 relative pronouns - who, whom, whose, that, and which. The compounds whoever, whomever, and whichever are also relative pronouns.

In each of the following sentences, the **highlighted** word is a relative pronoun.

- i) You may invite **whomever** you like to the party.
- ii) The candidate **who** wins the greatest popular vote is not always elected.
- iii) The crate, **which** was left in the corridor, has now been moved into the storage closet.

To Sum it up:

- **Pronoun** – replaces a noun or another pronoun
- **All these are Singular** – everyone, each, none, anybody, etc.
- **Relative Pronouns** – who, whom, whose, that & which

3) Adjective

An **adjective** modifies a noun or a pronoun by describing, identifying, or quantifying words.

An adjective usually precedes the noun or the pronoun which it modifies.

*In the following examples, the **highlighted** words are adjectives:*

- i) The **truck-shaped** balloon floated over the treetops*
- ii) Mrs. Morrison papered her **kitchen** walls with **hideous** wall paper*
- iii) The **small** boat foundered on the **wine dark** sea.*

An adjective can be modified either by an adverb or by a phrase or clause functioning as an adverb. In the next sentence, the adverb 'intricately' modifies the adjective 'patterned'.

*My husband knits intricately **patterned** mittens.*

Some nouns, many pronouns, and many participle phrases can also act as adjectives. In the next sentence both the **highlighted** adjectives are past participles.

*Eleanor listened to the **muffled** sounds of the radio **hidden** under her pillow.*

Note: *In case you are not sure what participles are don't worry, we'll discuss those later in this book.*

Comparative & Superlative Adjectives

We use comparative adjectives when talking about or comparing **two** things (not three or more things).

For example

*Jack is **taller** than Peter*

A superlative adjective expresses the extreme or highest degree of a quality. We use a superlative adjective to describe the extreme quality of one thing in a group of things.

For example

*Jack is the **tallest** of all my students*

We can use superlative adjectives when talking about **three or more** things (not two things).

Usually you can get to the comparative form by adding '-er' at the end of the word and to the superlative form by adding '-est'.

To Sum it up:

- ***Adjectives*** – *tell us something about the noun*
- *They can be modified by adverbs*
- ***Comparative*** – *bigger*
- ***Superlative*** - *biggest*

4) Verb

The verb is perhaps the most important part of the sentence. The shortest sentence contains a verb. You can make a one-word sentence with a verb, for example:

"Run!"

You cannot make a one-word sentence with any other type of word.

Verbs are sometimes described as 'action words'. This is partly true. Many verbs give the idea of action, of 'doing' something. *For example, words like run, fight, do and work, all convey action.*

But some verbs do not give the idea of action; they give the idea of existence, of state, of 'being'. *For example, verbs like be, exist, seem, and belong all convey state.*

Thus, in simple terms we can say that verbs are words that tell us what a subject **does** or **is** i.e. they describe:

- **action** (*Jack plays football*), or
- **state** (*Jack seems angry*)

*In each of the following sentences, the verb or compound verb is **highlighted**:*

- i) Dracula **bites** his victims on the neck. (*The verb "bites" describes the action Dracula takes*)
- ii) In early October, Giselle **will plant** twenty tulip bulbs. (*Here the compound verb "will plant" describes an action that will take place in the future*)
- iii) My first teacher **was** Miss Crawford, but I **remember** the janitor Mr. Weatherbee more vividly. (*In this sentence, the verb "was" identifies a particular person and the verb "remember" describes a mental action*)

Helping & Main Verbs

Imagine that a stranger walks into your room and says:

- *I can*
- *People must*

- *The Earth will.*

Do you understand anything? Has this person communicated anything to you?

Probably not!

That's because these verbs are helping verbs and have no meaning on their own. They are necessary for the grammatical structure of the sentence, but they do not tell us very much alone.

We usually use helping verbs with main verbs. They 'help' the main verb. (The sentences in the above examples are therefore incomplete. They need at least a main verb to complete them) There are only about 15 helping verbs in the English language.

Now imagine that the same stranger walks into your room and says:

- *I teach.*
- *People eat.*
- *The Earth rotates.*

Do you understand something? Has this person communicated something to you?

Probably yes!

Not a lot, but something. That's because these verbs are main verbs and have meaning on their own. They tell us something. Of course, there are thousands of main verbs.

Transitive & Intransitive verbs

A transitive verb is one which must have an object to complete its meaning, and to receive the action expressed.

For example

John kicked the ball. (the object 'ball' is needed to complete the meaning of the sentence, hence 'kicked' is a transitive verb)

An intransitive verb is one which is complete in itself, or which is completed by other words without requiring an object.

For example

John talked. ('talked' is an intransitive verb because it does not need a direct object to convey its meaning)

Active & Passive Verbs

The Active voice is the normal voice that we speak in most of the time. In this voice the object receives the action of the verb performed by the subject.

Sounds complicated?

Look at this simple example:

Dogs eat bones.

Here the subject 'dogs' is performing an action 'eat' on the object 'bones'. Hence this sentence is in the Active voice.

As opposed to this, the Passive voice is less usual. In this voice the subject receives the action of the verb being performed by the object.

Let's modify the earlier example a little:

Bones are eaten by dogs.

Here the subject 'bones' has an action 'eaten' being performed on it by the object 'dogs'. Hence this sentence is in the Passive voice.

Usually the Active voice has the construction 'Who does What' (I read a book), while the Passive voice has the construction 'What was done by Whom' (The book was read by me).

The verb also has tense and mood connotations which will be discussed in the next two sections on specific error types.

To Sum it up:

- **Verbs** – action or state of being. They can be modified by adverbs
- **Helping Verbs** – Not enough on their own. Need the support of main verbs, eg. must, will, can, etc.
- **Main Verbs** – have meaning on their own
- **Transitive Verb** – requires an Object
- **Intransitive Verb** – does not require an Object
- **Active Voice** – Who does What
- **Passive Voice** - What was done by Whom

5) Adverb

An **adverb** can modify a verb, an adjective, another adverb, a phrase, or a clause. An adverb indicates manner, time, place, cause, or degree and answers questions such as "how," "when," "where," "how much".

While some adverbs can be identified by their characteristic "ly" suffix, most of them must be identified by untangling the grammatical relationships within the sentence or clause as a whole.

*In the following examples, each of the **highlighted** words is an adverb:*

*i) The seamstress **quickly** made the wedding dress. (In this sentence, the adverb "quickly" modifies the verb "made" and indicates in what manner (or how fast) the clothing was constructed)*

*ii) The midwives waited **patiently** through a long labor. (In this sentence, the adverb "patiently" modifies the verb "waited")*

Apart from modifying verbs, adverbs can also modify adjectives and other adverbs.

For example:

*i) The **boldly** spoken words would return to haunt the rebel. (In this sentence the adverb "boldly" modifies the adjective "spoken")*

*ii) We urged him to dial the number more **expeditiously**. (Here the adverb "more" modifies the adverb "expeditiously")*

*iii) **Unfortunately**, the bank closed at three **today**. (In this example, the adverb "unfortunately" modifies the entire sentence)*

To Sum it up:

- **Adverbs** – primarily modify verbs
- Can also modify adjectives, other adverbs, phrases & clauses
- Usually end with '**-ly**'. Eg. slowly, quickly, etc.

6) Preposition

A preposition links nouns, pronouns and phrases to other words in a sentence. The word or phrase that the preposition introduces is called the object of the preposition.

Some common prepositions are about, above, below, beneath, between, beyond, but, by, despite, down, during, etc.

A preposition usually indicates the temporal, spatial or logical relationship of its object to the rest of the sentence.

Examples:

- *The book is **on** the table.*
- *The book is **beneath** the table.*
- *The book is leaning **against** the table.*
- *The book is **beside** the table.*
- *She held the book **over** the table.*
- *She read the book **during** class.*

In each of the preceding sentences, a preposition locates the noun "book" in space or in time.

A prepositional phrase is made up of the preposition, its object and any associated adjectives or adverbs. A prepositional phrase can function as a noun, an adjective, or an adverb.

Examples:

- *At home*
- *In time*
- *From John*
- *With Terry*
- *By running*
- *Under the table*

Ground Rule for Preposition

There is one very simple rule with regards to prepositions and, unlike most rules, this rule has no exceptions:

A preposition is always followed by a "noun". It is never followed by a verb.

A preposition cannot be followed by a verb. If we want to follow a preposition by a verb, we must use the "-ing" form which is really a gerund or verb in noun form (more on Gerunds later).

To Sum it up:

- ***Prepositions*** – expresses a relation between parts of sentences
- *Must always be followed by a noun*
- *Eg.: 'about', 'above', 'below', 'beneath', 'between'*

7) Conjunction

You can use a **conjunction** to link words, phrases, and clauses.

Examples:

- *I ate the pizza **and** the pasta.*
- *Call the movers **when** you are ready.*

Co-ordinating Conjunctions

You use a co-ordinating conjunction (and, but, or, nor, for, so, yet) to join individual words, phrases, and independent clauses that are grammatically equal.

Examples

- *Lilacs **and** violets are usually purple. (In this example, the co-ordinating conjunction "and" links two nouns).*
- *This movie is particularly interesting to feminist film theorists **because** the screenplay was written by Mae West. (In this example, the co-ordinating conjunction "because" is used to link two independent clauses)*

Note: One can also use the conjunctions "but" and "for" as prepositions.

Subordinating Conjunctions

A subordinating conjunction introduces a dependent clause and indicates the nature of the relationship among the independent clause(s) and the dependent clause(s).

Note: *Dependent & Independent clauses will be covered later in this book.*

The most common subordinating conjunctions are after, although, as, because, before, how, if, once, since, than, that, though, till, until, when, where, whether, and while.

Examples:

- **After** she had learned to drive, Alice felt more independent. (The subordinating conjunction "after" introduces the dependent clause "After she had learned to drive")
- **If** the paperwork arrives on time, your cheque will be mailed on Tuesday. (the subordinating conjunction "if" introduces the dependent clause "If the paperwork arrives on time")

To Sum it up:

- **Conjunctions** – connect different parts of a sentence
- **Co-ordinating Conjunctions** – connect parts that are grammatically equal. Eg. and, for, nor, etc.
- **Sub-ordinating Conjunctions** – connect a dependent clause to a main clause. Eg.: although, because, since, etc.

8) Interjection

Hi! That's an interjection. :-)

Interjection is a big name for a little word.

Interjections are short exclamations like Oh!, Um or Ah! They have no real grammatical value but we use them quite often, usually more in speaking than in writing.

When interjections are inserted into a sentence, they have no grammatical connection to the sentence. An interjection is sometimes followed by an exclamation mark (!) when written.

Examples:

- *Ah!*
- *Alas!*
- *Hmm*
- *Ouch!*
- *Oh No!*

Note: Interjections will not be tested on the GMAT.

Those were the 8 parts of speech. Now let's look at parts of sentences and a few other terms that you need to know:

1) Subject, Object & Predicate

A lot of the explanations in English grammar start with the terms 'subject', 'object' and 'predicate' of a sentence, so it's very important that you be very clear as to what these three terms refer to.

Subject is the person or a thing who or which carries out the action of the verb. In other words the Subject is the noun to which the sentence's verb refers to.

For example,

The teacher is playing with the students.

In the above sentence the action or verb is 'playing'. This action is carried out by the teacher. So, the 'teacher' is the Subject of the sentence.

The **object** is the person or a thing upon whom or upon which the action of the verb is carried out.

In the example above the action 'playing' is being carried out on the students. Thus 'students' is the Object of the sentence.

The **predicate** in a sentence tells us what a person or a thing does or did or what happened to a person or to a thing?

The predicate must,

- i) agree in number with subject
- ii) have the correct tense and
- iii) be in the proper voice (active or passive).

Thus, in the above sentence the 'teacher' is the subject, the 'students' is the object, and 'is playing' is the predicate.

As you must have realized a predicate must have a verb and a verb all by itself can also be a predicate. But this does not mean that 'predicate' and 'verb' refer to the same thing as there are verbs that are not predicates, and there can be predicates that have much more in them than verbs.

Let's look at one last example to recap:

The dogs are destroying the furniture.

Subject – *the dogs*

Object – *furniture*

Predicate – *are destroying*

To Sum it up:

- **Subject** – *person or thing which carries out the verb*
- **Object** - *the person or a thing upon whom the action of the verb is carried out*
- **Predicate** - *tells about what a person or a thing does or did*

2) Phrases and Clauses

A **Phrase** is a group of words, which makes sense, but not complete sense. It's a group of related words without a Subject or a Verb or both.

Examples (the words in *italics* are Phrases):

- I am *reading a book*.
- John is an *actor of high caliber*.
- Kevin has a *black Siamese cat*.
- The fire *in the theater* was not very severe.

A **Clause** is a group of words that contains both a Subject and an Object, but may not be able to stand on its own. The most basic kind of sentence consists of a single clause; more complicated sentences may contain multiple clauses, including clauses contained within clauses.

Examples (the words in *italics* are Clauses):

- The dinner, *which he made for us*, was delicious.
- I can't believe *that the cat ran out of the door*.
- *The girl is nice*

Types of Clauses – Independent & Dependent

If a clause can make complete sense on its own, it's called an **Independent Clause**. It does not need to be joined to any other clause because it contains all the information necessary to make a complete sentence.

Examples:

- *The food is hot*
- *The street is wet.*
- *She reads very fast.*

Dependent Clauses cannot stand up on their own and depend on some other clause to make sense.

Examples

- *The student is going*
- *The boy in the room*

- *The book I am reading*

To Sum it up:

- *Phrases are groups of words that do not contain a Subject or a Verb or both*
- *Clauses are groups of words that contain both a Subject as well as a Verb*
- *Independent Clauses are complete sentences and can make sense on their own.*
- *Dependent Clauses are not complete sentences and need to be connected to other clauses to make sense.*
- *Phrases make up a Clause and Clauses make up a Sentence.*

3) Verbals - Gerunds, Participles & Infinitives

Verbals are words that express action in a general way, without limiting the action to any time, or asserting it of any subject.

They basically refer to words that are based on a verb but are not used as a verb; rather they are used as nouns or adjectives.

There are 3 types of Verbals – Gerunds, Participles & Infinitives

Gerunds

A gerund is a verbal that ends in *-ing* and functions as a noun. Since it functions as a noun, it occupies the same positions in a sentence that a noun ordinarily would such as subject, direct object, subject complement, and object of preposition.

Examples:

- **Traveling** might satisfy your desire for new experiences.
- In the above sentence 'traveling' is used as a noun and not as a verb. In case you have doubts try replacing 'traveling' with a noun such as 'Ipod' – the sentence still makes complete sentence.
- They do not appreciate my **singing**.
- My cat's favorite activity is **sleeping**.

(OG 12 – Q 119)

Participles

A participle is a verbal that is used as an adjective and most often ends in *-ing* or *-ed*. It has some features of verbs and some of adjectives, but it is most basically a type of **adjective**. Since it functions as an adjective, participle can only modify nouns or pronouns.

There are two types of participles: Present participles and Past participles.

Present participles usually describe what a thing does and **Past Participles** usually describe what was done to a thing.

Present participles typically end in '-ing' whereas Past participles end in -ed, -en, -d, -t, or -n, as in the words *asked, eaten, saved, dealt,* and *seen*.

Example

*She **is buying** a **talking** bird for her daughter.*

In this sentence 'is buying' is the verb but 'talking' is being used as an adjective to modify the noun 'parrot'. Hence 'talking' here is used as a present participle.

*A **broken** clock stood on the mantelpiece.*

In this sentence 'stood' is the verb in the past tense but 'broken' is being used as an adjective to modify the noun 'clock'. Hence 'broken' here is used as a past participle.

More examples:

- The **crying** baby had a wet diaper.
- **Shaken**, he walked away from the **wrecked** car.
- The **burning** log fell off the fire.
- **Smiling**, she hugged the **panting** dog.

Infinitive

An infinitive is a verbal consisting of the word 'to' plus a verb (in its simplest form) and functioning as a noun, adjective, or adverb.

An infinitive may also function as a subject, direct object, subject complement, adjective, or adverb in a sentence. 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.

Examples

- *To wait* seemed foolish when action was required. (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—a verbal consisting of to plus a verb—with a prepositional phrase beginning with to, which consists of to plus a noun or pronoun and any modifiers.

Examples

- **Infinitives:** *to fly, to draw, to become, to enter, to stand, to catch, to belong*
- **Prepositional Phrases:** *to him, to the committee, to my house, to the mountains, to us, to this address*

To Sum it up:

- **Verbals** – Words based on a verb but not used as one
- **Gerunds** – end with '-ing' and used as nouns
- **Participles** – act as adjectives
- **Present Participle** – ends with '-ing' and acts as an adjective
- **Past Participle** – ends with '-ed', '-en', '-d', etc.
- **Infinitives** – to+verb. Can function as noun, adjective or adverb

Punctuation

The GMAT does not usually test students on punctuations except for maybe the **colon** (:) and the **semi colon** (;).

Colon

There are only two main uses for the colon in everyday writing and both require an independent clause, also known as a complete sentence, before the colon.

The first use is when introducing a list, and the second is when introducing an explanation or an example.

Example

- *I need to pick up a few things from my office: folders, staplers and, board pins.*
- *After several days of deliberation, the Board made its decision: it was going to sell the company.*

Incorrect usage

- *My favorite places to shop are: the mall, the local shopping center, and the Internet.*

Semicolon

The semicolon is mainly used to connect two Independent Clauses (you saw these a little while back).

Independent clauses are series of words that could stand alone as complete sentences. When you have two otherwise complete sentences that you want to connect to form one long sentence, use a semicolon between them.

Example

This could be a solution; this could be another one.

If you put a comma where that semicolon is, you will have committed a "comma splice," (also called Run-ons) which is a very nasty grammar error. Sometimes, the second clause doesn't really look like a complete sentence, so you must watch closely.

Example

Twelve birds had originally arrived; only six remain.

Note: You don't use a semicolon to connect two complete sentences if there's a conjunction between the clauses (and, but, etc.). In that case, use a comma.

Example

This could be a solution, and this could be another one.

Adding that single word, the conjunction "and," means that you must change that semicolon into a comma.

To Sum it up:

- *Use colon to either introduce a list or to introduce an explanation*
- *Use semicolons to connect two independent clauses*
- *Never use a semicolon and a conjunction together*

PART 2

GMAT Error Types

Sentence Correction – Error Types

In the last section we've covered the basic grammatical concepts that make up the different parts of a sentence. Now let's look at actual Sentence Correction questions as they appear on the GMAT.

The Sentence Correction section tests your knowledge of English grammar by asking you to choose from five options that one option which best conveys the correct meaning of the sentence. Among other things you will be tested on grammar usage, sentence style, and idiom usage.

As discussed earlier, the GMAT is a structured test which means that the GMAT will only test you on certain types of questions and only on certain specific concepts within those questions. In Sentence Correction this translates into 7 major error types that will be tested again and again.

These errors are:

- Subject Verb Agreement
- Tense
- Pronoun
- Modification
- Comparison
- Parellel Construction
- Idioms

How to Approach a Sentence Correction Question

The most important thing to remember in Sentence Correction is that you don't have to know every rule of grammar to answer the questions. So don't even think of referring to the Wren & Martin (I'm sure some of you are). Remember the idea is not to become Shakespeare. In fact it is very

likely that most experts of English would also struggle on the GMAT because of the time constraints.

Timing is one of the key components of the test; the idea is not just to get the answer correctly but also to do so within the stipulated time. As discussed in the Introduction section, in SC you should roughly take 1 minute to answer every question, so if you were to actually read all the 5 options completely this itself would take you more than a minute. Additionally, by the time you reach the last option you would have probably forgotten what you had read in the second option. As a result you will end up going back and forth and waste precious time.

Remember this - *At any time in a Sentence Correction question if you are reading all 5 options completely you are wasting your time. If any teacher or coaching class tells you otherwise RUN. This strategy will get you in a lot of trouble.*

So what do we suggest?

Our point is that you should be able to arrive at the answer by reading just a few specific words across the five options; at times (and we'll see such questions later) you'll be able to arrive at the answer by reading just the first 3-4 words of each option.

This is the best (perhaps the only) way of approaching Sentence Correction questions. Most students struggle because they don't see it this way.

Here is Aristotle's Golden Rule for Sentence Correction

'You ALWAYS read vertically; you NEVER read horizontally'

What does this mean?

Consider the following sentence:

Roger Federer is regarded to be the best tennis player on the planet.

Can you spot any errors in this sentence? If you can, then immediately eliminate all the options that contain that error. But what do you do if you can't spot the error?

Given below is the same question along with five options. I want you to look at the first word of every option (only the first word) and group the options on this basis.

Roger Federer is regarded to be the best tennis player on the planet.

- A) to be the best tennis player on the planet*
- B) as the best tennis player on the planet*
- C) as being the best tennis player on the planet*
- D) to be the best tennis player in the planet*
- E) as the best tennis player in the planet*

So two options start with 'to' and three options start with 'as'. Now both of these cannot be correct so depending on which one of these is correct you can eliminate either 2 or 3 options without reading another word in those options. This will save you time and will enable you to finish the question in less than a minute.

By the way, in case you are curious, the answer to the above question is B;

- 'regarded as' is the correct idiom and not 'regarded to' so eliminate A & D.*
- 'as being' is incorrect in B (we'll discuss 'being' a little later)*
- the correct construction is 'on the planet' or 'in the world' not 'in the planet'. So E is out.*

Remember it's not always necessary that you will be able to group the options using the first words; sometimes you can do this using the last words, sometimes you can do this using the error itself (assuming you have already spotted the error). The point is you are always reading vertically and eliminating rather than reading horizontally and wasting your time/getting confused.

Aristotle Sentence Correction Approach

Step 1 – Read the sentence once and try to identify the error

Step 2 – If you can identify the error eliminate all the options containing that error

Step 3 – If you can't identify the error group the options using the first or the last words

Step 4 – Eliminate until one option remains

Now that we have discussed the general approach to a Sentence Correction problem, let's look at each error that you will be tested on.

Subject-Verb Agreement

Subject-Verb agreement sounds fairly complex but actually refers to a very simple concept related to singular and plural verbs. All it says is that a singular verb must have a singular subject and a plural verb must have a plural subject. That's it!

Subject-Verb Agreement Rule

A singular verb must take a singular subject and a plural verb must take a plural subject.

A subject is whatever is doing the action of the verb. (For details refer to the earlier section of this document) A very simple example of this concept could be the sentence:

The students has taken the test.

The singular verb 'has' does not agree with the plural subject 'students'. So the correct sentence should read:

The students have taken the test (plural subject & plural verb)

OR

The student has taken the test (singular subject & singular verb)

Now let's look at a more GMAT-like question:

Recent studies indicate that the ability of a soldier to remain calm under attack by enemies, internal or external, determine whether the soldier will be the victor or the vanquished.

A) *determine whether the soldier will be the victor or the vanquished.*

B) *determines whether the soldier will be the victor and the*

vanquished.

C) *determine whether the soldier should be the victor and the vanquished.*

D) *determines whether the soldier will be the victor or the vanquished.*

E) *determine if the soldier will be the victor or the vanquished.*

Follow the Aristotle Way and look at the first words of every option. So should it be 'determine' or 'determines'? Since it is the singular 'ability' and not the plural 'enemies' that determines, the correct option should be the singular 'determines' (and no, adding an 's' to a word does not make it plural; this actually makes it singular in most cases)

Analyzing the options,

- *A, C & D are out because of the plural 'determine'*
- *Between B & D the correct choice has to be D because the 'and' in B distorts the meaning of the sentence. How can the soldier be both the victor as well as the loser?*

Sounds simple enough, right?

How will Subject-Verb Agreement be tested on the GMAT?

1) Placing the subject and the verb far away from each other (as in the above example)

There are primarily 3 ways of separating the subject from the verb:

i) By using Appositives

Appositives are nouns, pronouns, or noun phrases that are placed next to nouns to further describe them. If you see large parts of a sentence separated by a comma, it might be a good idea to ignore the part between commas and read the rest of the sentence as a whole.

For example

Nuclear fusion, one of the most effective ways of separating carbon and oxygen atoms, are being used with deadly intent by some countries.

Seeing the plural 'are' next to the plural 'atoms', you could get tricked into thinking that the sentence is correct the way it is written. To avoid such confusion, omit the part between commas and the error will immediately become obvious to you – how can nuclear fusion be 'are'?

Thus the correct sentence will read,

Nuclear fusion, one of the most effective ways of separating carbon and oxygen atoms, is being used with deadly intent by some countries.

ii) By using Relative Clauses

M F Husain, who is one of India's most famous painters renowned for his paintings of horses, are living in exile.

This is obviously incorrect since the subject is 'M F Husain', which is singular, but the verb is 'are', which is plural. The idea is to confuse you by ending the relative clause with the plural 'horses'.

The correct sentence will read,

M F Husain, who is one of India's most famous painters renowned for his paintings of horses, is living in exile.

iii) By using a Prepositional Phrase

The animals in the zoo is hungry.

The subject is the plural 'animals' so the verb must be the plural 'are' and not the singular 'is'.

The correct sentence will read,

The animals in the zoo are hungry.

2) Confusing you with Additives

Look at the following two sentences:

A) John, as well as his friend, is coming for dinner

B) John, as well as his friend, are coming for dinner

Which one do you think is correct?

If your answer is B you are wrong even though both John and his friend 'are' coming for dinner. Remember that in English only 'and' can make plural subjects. All other phrases (such as 'as well as' above) can only make singular subjects. These phrases are called 'additives'.

Here is a list of some common additives:

- *in addition to*
- *along with*
- *as well as*
- *together with*
- *including*
- *along with*

So to sum up:

*John and his friend **are** coming for dinner.*

BUT

John as well as his friend is coming for dinner.

How about this sentence:

Strawberries and cream is/are a high calorie snack.

In this case even though 'and' is being used as the connector the correct verb will be 'is'. This is an exception to the above rule - If two words connected by *and* are thought of as a single unit, they're considered a singular subject.

A hint is to look at the word that follows the verb. If this word is singular the verb most probably will be singular. For example, in the above sentence the singular word *snack* follows *is* and this reinforces the conclusion that *strawberries and cream* is a singular subject.

(OG 12 - Q 5)

3) Either or / Neither nor

A) *Neither John nor his friends are/is sleeping in the lobby.*

B) *Neither John's friends nor John are/is sleeping in the lobby.*

Which of these do you go with?

The rule is simple - **Make the verb agree with the subject that is closest to it.**

So in A the correct verb should be 'are' (agrees with nearer subject 'friends') and in B the correct verb should be 'is' (agrees with the singular 'John'). The same rule applies to 'either...or', simply 'or' and similar constructions.

4) Collective Nouns

Remember Collective nouns are always singular. So, a flock of sheep 'is' grazing and not 'are' grazing (flock is a collective noun).

For more examples of collective nouns check the previous section on Grammar review.

5) Each & Every

Each of the students is/are in the class.

If you've marked 'are' you are wrong because 'each' is singular; so the correct verb should be 'is'.

Here is a list of some other commonly confused singular subjects:

- *Each/Every*
- *Anyone/Everyone/Someone*
- *Anybody/Everybody/Somebody*
- *Anything/Everything/Something*
- *Whoever/Whatever*
- *Either/Neither (unless accompanied with 'or' in which case refer to previously discussed rule)*

- *Nobody/Nothing/No one*

6) The number / A number

'The number' is singular

*The number of students standing outside the office **is** increasing.*

'A number' is plural

*A number of students **are** standing outside the office.*

7) Words that are sometimes singular and sometimes plural

Majority 'is' but majority of something 'are':

- *A majority is always right.*
- *A majority of students are right.*

8) One of the X who/that Y...

Consider this sentence:

This is one of the cars that belong/belongs to him.

Which one do we go with, the singular belongs or the plural belong?
The answer is the plural 'belong'.

In general remember the following structure for such questions:

One of the 'Noun' (will always be plural) + that/who + Plural Verb

Examples:

- *He is one of the students who study here*
- *Any of the members who disagree may leave the committee*
- *This is one of the questions that are incorrect*

However, please do not confuse this construction with the one below:

One of the chairs is broken (not 'are broken')

The structure for such questions is:

One of the 'Noun' (will always be plural)+Singular Verb (usually 'is')

It is only when the plural noun is followed by 'that/who' that the singular verb changes into plural.

Helpful Tips about Subject Verb agreement questions:

- *If the sentence is very long omit the part between commas*
- *Collective nouns are always singular*
- *Whenever you see the words each, every, and, as well as, or, etc. in a sentence always check for subject-verb agreement*
- *If you are still confused go with singular*

Tense

Tense is a method that we use in English to refer to time - past, present and future. It is basically a form of a verb used to indicate the time and, sometimes, the continuation or completeness of an action in relation to the time of speaking.

Common sense dictates that there can only be three time periods – the past, the present and the future.

Hence we have three types of tenses:

- The Past Tense
- The Present Tense
- The Future Tense

Note: *If you are a grammar whiz you might contradict us by saying there are actually only 2 and not 3 tenses. We agree! There are no future tenses in English. The word 'will' is called a modal auxiliary verb and future tenses are sometimes called "modal tenses". However for practical purposes (and to avoid getting too technical) we'll consider 'Future' tense to be an actual tense form.*

So the grammar whiz may please excuse us. (On second thoughts a grammar whiz shouldn't need to be going through this book anyway).

There are 4 variations of each of these three tenses:

1. **The Simple Tense** - The simple tenses are used to show permanent characteristics of people and events or what happens regularly, habitually or in a single completed action.

2. **The Continuous Tense** - Verbs in Continuous Tenses always express "actions" that are in progress during the time framework indicated: present, past, future, or any of the perfect timeframes.

Note: *The Continuous tense is sometimes referred to as the Progressive tense. The two are exactly the same.*

3. **The Perfect Tense** - The perfect tenses are used when an action or situation in the present is linked to a moment in the past. It is often used to show things that have happened up to now but aren't finished yet or to emphasize that something happened but is not true anymore. When they end determines which of them you use (past or present perfect).
4. **The Perfect Continuous Tense** - Used to denote an ongoing action either starting and ending in the past or starting in the past and continuing into the present.

So altogether we have the following 12 tenses

1. Simple Present
2. Present Continuous
3. Present Perfect
4. Present Perfect Continuous
5. Simple Past
6. Past Continuous
7. Past Perfect
8. Past Perfect Continuous
9. Simple Future
10. Future Continuous
11. Future Perfect
12. Future Perfect Continuous

Out of these the GMAT will mostly test you on either the simple or the perfect tenses. Please remember the GMAT does not like the use of continuous tenses (verbs with an '-ing' at the end), so avoid these as much as you can, unless the sentence emphasizes the ongoing nature of an action.

In this chapter we will primarily be concentrating on those aspects of tenses that are frequently tested on the GMAT. For a more detailed explanation of tenses in general, please download the FREE tense tutorial from our website – www.aristotleprep.com

THE SIMPLE TENSES

1) The Simple Present Tense

The simple present tense is used to discuss permanent situations and the frequency of events

- *I like to read books*
- *The earth is round*
- *The bus leaves at 10 pm*

2) The Simple Past Tense

The simple past tense is used to talk about actions that happened at a specific time in the past. You form the simple past of a verb by adding '-ed' at the end of a regular verb (irregular verb forms are different and will have to be learned)

- *I saw a play yesterday*
- *She washed her car*
- *Did you complete your assignment?*

3) The Simple Future Tense

Simple Future has two different forms in English: "will" and "be going to." Although the two forms can sometimes be used interchangeably, they often express two very different meanings.

Use 'will' to express a voluntary action or a promise,

- *I will send you the report when I get it.*
- *I will translate the email, so that Jerry can read it.*

- *I won't tell anyone your secret*

Use 'be going to' to express a plan,

- *He is going to spend his holidays in Jamaica*
- *Who are you going to invite to the dinner?*

THE PERFECT TENSES

1) The Present Perfect Tense

Use the Present Perfect to denote an action that happened at an unspecified time before now. You can also use the Present Perfect to describe your experience or to talk about change that has happened over a period of time.

FORM - [has/have + past participle]

- *You have seen that play many times.*
- *Have you seen that play yet?*
- *You have changed since the last time I saw you.*

2) The Past Perfect Tense

If a sentence involves two actions taking place in the past with one action taking place before the other, then use the past perfect tense to refer to the earlier action and simple past tense to refer to the latter action.

FORM - [had + past participle]

- *You had studied French before you moved to London.*
- *She only understood the movie because she had read the book.*

- *You did well on the test because you had studied very hard*

(OG 12 – Q 90, 139)

3) The Present Perfect Continuous Tense

This is used to denote an action that started in the past and continues into the present.

FORM - [has/have + been + present participle]

- *John has been waiting here for two hours*
- *They have been talking for the last hour*
- *Recently, I have been feeling really tired.*

4) The Past Perfect Continuous Tense

Use the Past Perfect Continuous Tense to show that something started in the past and continued up until another time in the past.

FORM - [had + been + present participle]

- *They **had been talking** for over an hour before Tony arrived.*
- *She **had been working** at that company for three years when it went out of business.*
- *How long **had** you **been waiting** to get on the bus?*

How will Tenses be tested on the GMAT?

1. Different actions taking place at different time periods

The professor predicts that as students become more and more dependent on coaching classes in the coming years, coaching institutes have been mushrooming across the country.

- A) *coaching institutes have been mushrooming*
- B) *coaching institutes will mushroom*
- C) *coaching institutes are mushrooming*
- D) *coaching institutes should mushroom*
- E) *coaching institutes will be mushrooming*

The first part of this sentence - as students become - is in the future tense because when will the students become dependent? Obviously in the future. To match this, the second part also needs to be in the future tense.

Hence Options A & C immediately go out.

Option D incorrectly uses 'should' to imply that the professor wants these coaching institutes to mushroom.

Between Options B & E, E incorrectly uses the continuous tense 'will be mushrooming' even when the action is not really continuing over a period of time.

Thus the correct answer should be the simple future tense 'will' i.e. **B**.

2. Choose between simple and perfect tenses

Before John won the lottery, he was a poor locksmith.

- A) *won the lottery, he was a poor locksmith.*
- B) *had won the lottery, he was a poor locksmith.*
- C) *won the lottery, he had been a poor locksmith.*
- D) *won the lottery, he were a poor locksmith.*
- E) *wins the lottery, he was a poor locksmith.*

This sentence talks about two things in the past,

1 - won the lottery

2 - was a poor locksmith

Since John was a poor locksmith before he won the lottery so the two things are taking place at different time periods. Hence the thing that took place earlier (was a poor locksmith) will take the past perfect tense 'had' and the thing that happened later (won) will take the simple past tense 'won'.

Thus the correct answer is **C**.

3. Choose between simple and continuous tenses

Supercell, a continuously rotating updraft deep within a thunderstorm, is not visible in all thunderstorms because they require very high wind velocity and moisture.

- A) *because they require*
- B) *because they will require*
- C) *because it will require*
- D) *because it requires*
- E) *because of requiring*

In this sentence the options A & B get eliminated because the plural 'they' cannot refer to the singular 'Supercell'.

Option C unnecessary adds the future tense will.

Between Options D & E avoid the continuous tense 'requiring' in E because it does not specifically refer to an ongoing action and go with the simple present tense in **D, the correct answer**.

4) Use of 'has had' and 'had had'

While students often get confused as to when to use these constructions, both of these are nothing but the present perfect and past perfect forms of the verb 'to have'.

- *Has/Have had - Present perfect of 'to have'*
- *Had had - Past perfect of 'to have'*

Consider the following sentence as an example:

John travels to many different countries.

The verb in the above sentence is 'travels' which is in the simple present tense. Now if we were to convert this sentence into the Present perfect tense, we need to add 'has/have' followed by the past participle form of the verb (in most cases just add the words '-ed' to the verb, like 'traveled' in the above sentence).

The final sentence would read something like this:

John has traveled to many different countries.

Similarly to convert this same sentence into the Past perfect tense (two actions happening in the past - the earlier action takes the past perfect and the latter action takes the simple past tense), we need to add 'had' followed by the past participle form of the verb.

The final sentence would read something like this:

John had traveled to many different countries before he decided to settle down in New Zealand

Sounds fairly simple, but the problem starts when the verb in question happens to be 'to have/has' instead of say 'travels' in the above example.

For example, consider the following sentence:

Tim has several passenger cars

The verb in the above sentence is 'has' and it is in the simple present tense. Now to convert this into the present perfect tense apply the rule as discussed above - 'has' followed by the past participle of 'has' which is 'had'. The final sentence reads:

Tim has had several passenger cars

Similarly the past perfect tense will read - 'had' followed by the past participle of 'has', so you get:

Tim had had several passenger cars before he decided to buy a sports car

So two things happening in the past - Tim had several passenger cars first, which takes the past perfect tense with the extra 'had' and he 'decided' (simple past tense) to buy a sports car later.

5) The If.....Then construction

Such a construction usually refers to a conditional statement where the taking place of something depends on the taking place of something else.

For example,

If it rains today, (then) I will carry an umbrella.

Note: As you can see, 'then' is usually not written in the sentence; instead its meaning is implied.

Such sentences will always have two clauses – the 'If' clause and the 'Then' clause. The tense of the 'Then' clause depends on the tense of the 'If' clause.

This gives rise to the following three possibilities:

'IF' CLAUSE	'THEN' CLAUSE
<u>PRESENT TENSE</u> If you exercise	<u>WILL + Base Verb</u> you will become healthy
<u>PAST TENSE</u> If you exercised	<u>WOULD/COULD + Base Verb</u> you would become healthy
<u>PAST TENSE</u> If you had exercised	<u>WOULD/COULD + Have + Past Participle</u> you would have become healthy

Pronouns

A pronoun is anything that replaces a noun in a sentence such as he, she, it, they, their, etc. There are two things you need to check for whenever you see an underlined pronoun in a sentence:

1) Whether the pronoun refers back to a specific noun

John and Jack went jogging and he fell down.

Who fell down, John or Jack? This is a classic case of Pronoun reference error. The correct sentence should read:

John and Jack went jogging and John (or Jack) fell down.

2) Whether the pronoun agrees in number with the noun it replaces

You cannot replace a singular noun with a plural pronoun and vice versa.

The players say that he can't come for practice.

The plural noun 'players' cannot be replaced with the singular pronoun 'he'. The correct sentence should read:

The players say that they can't come for practice.

Note: In some questions you might think it is very clear what the pronoun is referring to. Still if there is an option that replaces this pronoun with a noun, go with that option.

For example:

The residents association informed the municipality that it was getting the park cleaned.

In this sentence, to you it might be very clear that the pronoun 'it' is referring to the 'residents association' and so there is no error but to me 'it' could very well be referring to the 'municipality'.

So the suggestion is to AVOID pronouns in the correct answer choice. Sometimes you will have no option but to go with a pronoun (maybe all

the options contain pronouns); in such cases go with the option that makes the pronoun least ambiguous.

How will Pronouns be tested on the GMAT?

1) A pronoun refers to more than one noun

Sometimes a sentence is so structured that a pronoun can refer to more than one noun, and as a result the reader is confused about the author's intentions.

Incorrect: *John encouraged Jerry to start a pest control business because **he** felt that the residents of the city would be willing to pay for the same.*

Who does 'he' refer to, John or Jerry?

Correct: *John encouraged Jerry to start a pest control business because **John** felt that the residents of the city would be willing to pay for the same.*

2) A pronoun has no antecedent

In the above scenario a pronoun refers to more than one noun whereas in this case a pronoun is mentioned in a sentence without a corresponding noun mentioned anywhere.

Incorrect: *Despite the board of governors supporting the measure, **they** keep voting against it.*

The problem in this case is 'they'. It obviously cannot refer to the 'board' because 'board' is singular and more importantly when the board is supporting the measure why will it keep voting against it?

Correct: *Despite the board of governors supporting the measure, **the shareholders** keep voting against it.*

3) A pronoun has an indefinite antecedent

Consider this sentence

Incorrect: *These days **they** have started charging you for cabin baggage in the airlines.*

Why this sentence can confuse people is because this is exactly how we speak in our day to day life so one might be fooled into thinking that this sentence has no error. However on closer scrutiny you immediately notice that the plural 'they' is used very vaguely in this sentence.

Correct: *Cabin baggage is charged for by many of the airlines these days.*

4) The use of 'That' and 'Which'

On GMAT Sentence Correction questions, you will frequently be asked to choose between 'that' and 'which'. For knowledge's sake remember that both of these belong to a small group of words known as relative pronouns, so called because they are used to relate parts of a sentence to one another.

Consider these 2 sentences:

- *The fifth car, which is black in colour, belongs to Jack.*
- *The fifth car that is black in colour belongs to Jack.*

Are both of these sentences referring to the same car? Not necessarily.

The first sentence is definitely referring to the fifth car and we are provided with the additional information that it is black in colour but even without this information we can easily identify the car because it has to be car number five.

The second sentence just takes you to the fifth black car; now this car could be the fifth car (in case the first four cars are also black) or it could be the tenth car or the twentieth car, in fact it can be at any number as long as it satisfies the criterion of being the fifth black car.

Thus remember that on the GMAT 'which' is only explanatory and is not needed to identify the subject of the sentence; in fact you can easily remove the phrase starting with 'which' and yet the meaning of the sentence would remain unchanged whereas 'that' is necessary to identify the subject of the sentence and cannot be done away with.

To make it even easier, remember the following 2 rules for 'which' to be correct on the GMAT:

1. *It should always come after a comma*
2. *It must refer to the noun that comes immediately before the comma.*

In case either of these conditions is not satisfied there's a pronoun error in the sentence and needs to be corrected.

For example let's modify the above example a little:

The fifth car in the row, which is black in color, belongs to Jack.

Now even though 'which' is coming after a comma the noun immediately before the comma is 'row' but 'which' is referring to the 'black car' and not to the 'black row'. Hence there is a pronoun error in the sentence since 'which' has an incorrect referent.

The only exception to the above rule is when 'which' is preceded by a preposition such as 'in which', 'of which', 'from which', etc. in which case you do not need a comma before 'which'.

For example consider this sentence:

The group of which I am a member has been dissolved

In this sentence even though there is no comma the use of 'which' is correct since it follows the preposition 'of'.

(OG 12 – Q 10, 70, 104)

5) The use of 'Who' and 'Whom'

The difference between *who* and *whom* is exactly the same as the difference between I and me, he and him, she and her, etc.

Who, like I, he, and she, is a subject - it is the person performing the action of the verb. *Whom*, like me, him, and her, is an object - it is the person to/about/for whom the action is being done.

Consider the following two examples:

1. *Who is going for the movie?*

2. *Whom is this movie about?*

In sentence 1 'who' is the subject performing the action 'going' on the object 'movie'.

In sentence 2 'movie' is the subject and 'whom' is referring to the object of the sentence.

Editor's Tip: Remember that if the answer to *Who/Whom* is I, he, she, etc. then the correct word is 'Who' and if the answer is me, him, her, etc. then the the correct word is 'Whom'.

For example, in Sentence 1 discussed above the answer to the question is 'he is going for the movie' and not 'him is going for the movie.' Hence the correct word is 'Who'.

Similarly, in Sentence 2 the answer to the question is 'the movie is about him' and not 'the movie is about he'. Hence the correct word is 'Whom'

Whom is also the correct choice after a preposition: *with whom, one of whom, etc.* and not *with who, one of who, etc.*

(OG 11 – Q 89)

6) 'Do it' v/s 'do so'

Consider the following question:

Although it is conceivable that man may someday be able to fly, there is no clear evidence at the moment of his ability to do it.

- A) of his ability to do it
- B) of his doing that
- C) to do so
- D) that he can do so
- E) of his ability to do that

While Option A & E might look correct to some of you, the pronouns 'it' and 'that' are considered ambiguous by the GMAT since it is not clear what these pronouns refer to. In such questions the best option is to replace these pronouns with 'so'.

This brings us to options C & D but C distorts the meaning by suggesting that evidence is doing something.

The correct answer, therefore, is D.

Editor's Tip: *When stuck between 'do it' and 'do so', go with 'do so'.*

6) 'One' v/s 'You'

Usually when giving advice to others or while making general statements we tend to use the pronouns 'one' and 'you'. Care must be taken never to mix up these two pronouns.

Incorrect: If one does not study, you should not be surprised when you do badly in the test.

Correct: If one does not study, one should not be surprised when one does badly test.

Correct: If one does not study, he or she should not be surprised at having done badly in the test.

Modification

Modifiers describe and provide more accurate definitional meaning for another element in a sentence.

For example

John is a good student

In this sentence 'good' is said to be modifying 'student' i.e. it is telling us what type of a student John is.

1. Adjectives modify Nouns

- *I am a good boy. (Adjective 'good' modifies the noun 'boy')*
- *The drink is on the long bottle. (Adjective 'long' modifies the noun 'bottle')*

2. Adverbs modify Verbs

- *He walked slowly. (Adverb 'slowly' modifies verb 'walked')*
- *Jake accepted the new task unwillingly. (Adverb 'unwillingly' modifies verb 'accepted')*
- *Michael slept soundly. (Adverb 'soundly' modifies verb 'slept')*

3. Adverbs modify Adjectives

- *They were really happy. (Adverb 'really' modifies adjective 'happy')*
- *My father is completely fearless. (Adverb 'completely' modifies adjective 'fearless')*
- *I know he is very careful. (Adverb 'very' modifies adjective 'careful')*

(OG 12 – Q 40)

4. Adverbs modify other Adverbs

- *He is almost always hungry. (Adverb 'almost' modifies adverb 'always')*
- *John plays tennis very well. (Adverb 'very' modifies adverb 'well')*
- *You never can work too carefully. (Adverb 'too' modifies adverb 'carefully')*

5. Adverbs modify clauses

- *Perhaps you are correct, but not at first glance. (Adverb 'perhaps' modifies clause 'you are correct')*
- *Surely he will be on time, but I hope not. (Adverb 'surely' modifies clause 'he will be on time')*

6. Adverbs modify sentences

- *Suddenly, she went home. (Adverb 'suddenly' modifies the entire sentence)*
- *Finally, he will be on time. (Adverb 'finally' modifies the entire sentence)*
- *Today, we can take a vacation. (Adverb 'today' modifies the entire sentence)*

Rule for Modification

The modifier should be placed as close as possible to what it modifies.

If the above rule is not followed the entire meaning of the sentence can change.

For example

- *Only John can eat the pizza*

- *John can only eat the pizza*
- *John can eat the pizza only*

'Only' is the modifier in the above sentences. Depending on what 'only' modifies (John or eat or pizza) the entire meaning of the sentence changes.

How will Modifications be tested on the GMAT?

The GMAT generally deals with modifying phrases. Usually set off by a comma, modifying phrases provide more information about the subject or object in the main clause of the sentence without naming it directly. In order for a modifying phrase to be used correctly, it must be as close as possible to the object or person that it modifies

1) Misplaced Modifiers

In an effort to do well in the exam, 10 hours of study were put in everyday by John.

The phrase '**In an effort to do well on the exam**' is called a modifying phrase because it is modifying a subject (which is not contained within the phrase). The person who is making the effort is the subject of the sentence i.e. John.

As per the modification rule mentioned above, the modifier must be as close as possible to what it modifies but in the above sentence the modifying phrase is followed by '10 hours'.

Hence this is a case of a misplaced modifier and the correct sentence should have the subject i.e. John, immediately after the comma.

In an effort to do well in the exam, John put in 10 hours of study every day.

It is usually quite easy to identify misplaced modifiers – whenever a sentence begins with a modifying phrase (especially one that starts with an '-ing' word) followed by a comma, the noun or pronoun following the comma should be what the phrase is referring to.

However, do not assume that a modifying phrase can come only at the beginning of a sentence; it can come in the middle or even at the end.

Modifying phrase in the middle,

John, a laptop mechanic, came to my house yesterday. (modifying phrase 'a laptop mechanic' is modifying the subject 'John')

Modifying phrase at the end,

Jack is travelling to Japan, the land of the rising sun. (modifying phrase 'the land of the rising sun' is modifying 'Japan')

Here are two common forms of Misplaced Modifiers on the GMAT

- i) Participial Phrase** – A phrase that starts with a present or a past participle (may or may not be preceded by a preposition). Whenever a sentence starts with a participial phrase there will almost always be a misplaced modifier lurking around the corner.

Examples

Incorrect: *Educated at Eton and then at Oxford, it was surprising that George could not get into a decent business school.*

(Sentence starts with the past participle 'educated'. The one who was educated i.e. George should come after the comma and not 'it'.

Correct: *Educated at Eton and then at Oxford, George surprisingly could not get into a decent business school.*

Incorrect: *Coming out of the house, John's laptop was stolen.*

Even though this sentence may sound correct, it is actually incorrect because the subject is John's laptop and not John. So, the modifying phrase 'Coming out of the office' is incorrectly modifying John's laptop in the original sentence making it appear as though John's laptop was coming out of the house.

Correct: *Coming out of the house, John was robbed of his laptop.*

(OG 12 – Q 25)

ii) Use of Adjectives or Adjectival Phrase

Examples,

Incorrect: *Tall and handsome, a striking figure was cut by John.*

Correct: *Tall and handsome, John cut a striking figure.*

An adjectival phrase is a group of words that acts as an adjective by modifying a noun

Incorrect: A conglomerate known for its strong sense of ethics, one of India's most respected conglomerates is the Tata group.

Correct: A conglomerate known for its strong sense of ethics, the Tata group is one of India's most respected conglomerates.

2) Dangling Modifiers & Introducing new words

Usually it is suggested that you do not add additional words to the original sentence but sometimes you will have to add in new words to make the meaning clear, especially on Modification questions.

For example

Using a stethoscope, heartbeats can be detected

Sounds ok but, using the knowledge of Modification that you have acquired in this chapter, you know that this cannot be correct since what follows the comma should be the person who is using the stethoscope. Since no such person is mentioned in the original sentence, the modifying phrase 'Using a stethoscope' is called a dangling modifier.

To correct this error, you will have to add in a new word to the sentence to make it correct, such as,

Using a stethoscope, a doctor can detect heartbeats

Editor's Tip – *Whenever a sentence starts with an '-ing' word (technically called a participial phrase), it will almost always be a modification question with whatever noun that is doing the action of the '-ing' word coming immediately after the comma.*

For example

- *Rivaling the Taj Mahal in beauty,..... (whatever is rivaling the Taj should come after the comma)*
- *Running the first mile quickly,..... (whoever is running the first mile quickly should come after the comma)*
- *Looking fitter than ever,(whoever is looking fitter than ever should come after the comma)*

Parallel Structure

Errors of Parallel Structure are the easiest of errors to spot and to correct. Whenever you come across a sentence that contains a list or series of items or actions separated by commas, you should immediately know that you have come across a Parallel Structure question.

For example

Jerry can't seem to decide if he should go walking, jogging or for a sprint.

In this sentence 'walking' and 'jogging' are not parallel with 'for a sprint'. The correct sentence will read,

Jerry can't seem to decide if he should go walking, jogging or sprinting.

OR

Jerry can't seem to decide if he should go for a walk, for a jog or for a sprint.

Now let's modify this second option a little,

- *Jerry can't seem to decide if he should go for a walk, a jog or a sprint.*
- *Jerry can't seem to decide if he should go for a walk, a jog or for a sprint.*

Option A is correct since it is implied that 'for' applies to the other two options as well but Option B is incorrect because it implies that 'for' is needed only for the first and the last options and that 'for' is not needed for the second option.

1. Parallel Structure with Nouns

- She bought a *skirt* and a *blouse*.

2. Parallel Structure with Adjectives

- The children are *energetic* and *noisy*.

3. Parallel Structure with Adverbs

- He walked *slowly* and *confidently* to the witness stand.

4. Parallel Structure with Verbs

When you have more than one verb in a sentence, be sure to make the verbs parallel by not shifting tenses unnecessarily. Also, don't shift from an active to a passive verb.

- Kate *prepared* the speech on the plane and *delivered* it at the conference. (*parallel: both verbs are active and in the simple past tense*)
- Kate *prepared* the speech on the plane, and it *was delivered* by her at the conference. (*faulty parallelism: active and passive verb*)

5. Parallel Structure with Infinitives

- *Correct* - Mary likes **to hike**, **to swim**, and **to ride** a bicycle.
- *Correct* - Mary likes to **hike**, **swim**, and **ride** a bicycle.
- *Incorrect* - Mary likes **to hike**, **to swim**, and **ride** a bicycle.

6. Parallel Structure with Gerunds

- *Correct* - John likes **hiking**, **swimming**, and **bicycling**.
- *Incorrect* - John likes **hiking**, **swimming**, and **to ride** a bicycle.

(OG 12 - Q 119)

7. Parallel Structure with Clauses

- **Incorrect** - 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.
- **Correct** - 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.
- **Correct** - 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.

8. Parallel structure with correlative conjunctions

Correlative conjunctions, in simple English, are pairs of words that always go together. If you have one in a sentence the other has to be there else the sentence is considered incorrect.

Examples

- *Not only.....but also*
- *No sooner....than*
- *Either ... or*
- *Neither ... nor*
- *Both ... and*

Important - Correlative conjunctions always join grammatically equal elements (e.g., noun & noun, adjective & adjective, phrase & phrase, clause & clause, etc.). They also lend equal weight to the joined elements i.e. one joined element is always equal to but never subordinate to the other.

- **Correct:** The workers disputed not only the magazine article but also the company's official statement. (parallel: phrase with phrase)
- **Incorrect:** The workers disputed not only the magazine article but also they disputed the company's official statement. (faulty parallelism: phrase with clause)
- **Correct:** Either I like the job or I don't like it. (parallel: clause matched with clause)

- **Correct:** Either *I like the job* or *I don't.* (parallel: clause matched with clause)
- **Incorrect:** Either *I like the job* or *not.* (faulty parallelism: clause matched with adverb)
- **Correct:** I have neither *the patience to complete it* nor *the desire to complete it.* (parallel: noun phrase with noun phrase)
- **Incorrect:** I have neither *the patience to complete it* nor *do I desire to complete it.* (faulty parallelism: phrase matched with clause)

What to make parallel

It is important that you show a lot of common sense while deciding which parts of a sentence to make parallel. Consider the following sentence:

The fare from London to New York is \$880 including airfare from London, spending two days in the Utah resort and taking a trip to Disneyland.

If you look at this sentence with a myopic vision (i.e. without understanding its meaning) you might think it gets the parallel construction correct – **including, spending and taking all end with – ing.**

However if you read the sentence again you'll realize that 'including' is common to all three aspects so what actually has to be made parallel are the nouns airfare, two days and trip to Disneyland

So the correct sentence should read,

The fare from London to New York is \$880 including airfare from London, two days in the Utah resort and a trip to Disneyland.

How about this one then,

Incorrect: *After the typhoon, the citizens of the county were left without food, power and huge bills for reconstructing their houses.*

When a preposition such as 'without' is used in front of only the first member of a series, it's taken to refer to all the members of the series. In the context of this sentence, this means that the citizens were left without food, without power, and without huge bills for reconstructing their houses. The last part obviously doesn't make sense and can be corrected by rewriting the sentence.

Correct: *After the typhoon, the citizens of the county were left without food, without power, and with huge bills for reconstructing their houses.*

Correct: *After the typhoon, the citizens of the county were left without food and power and with huge bills for reconstructing their houses.*

Comparisons

Comparison questions are a special category of Parallel Structure questions that involve two or more items being compared with each other.

Compared Items must be Logically similar

In simple language compare apples with apples and oranges with oranges.

The students in my class are smarter than other classes.

This sentence is incorrect because it compares 'students' with 'classes'. The correct sentence should read,

The students in my class are smarter than the students in other classes

OR

The students in my class are smarter than those in other classes

Compared Items must be Grammatically similar

This is the same as with Parallel Construction questions – compare nouns with nouns, verbs with verbs, and so on. Do NOT compare a noun with a verb or an adjective with an adverb, etc.

I enjoy reading novels more than to watch movies. (compares 'reading' with 'to watch movies' so not parallel.)

The correct sentence should read,

I enjoy reading novels more than watching movies.

How will Comparisons be tested on the GMAT

1) Unclear Comparisons

Incorrect: *John loves Tina more than Katy.*

This sentence can be interpreted in two ways – either John loves Tina more than he loves Katy or John loves Tina more than Katy loves Tina. The problem can be corrected by adding some more words to the sentence.

Correct: *John loves Tina more than he does Katy*

Correct: *John loves Tina more than Katy does*

2) Illogical Comparisons

Incorrect: *The books at this shop are much more interesting than any other shop.*

This sentence quite absurdly compares books with other shops which obviously does not make any sense.

Correct: *The books at this shop are much more interesting than the books at any other shop.*

Correct: *The books at this shop are much more interesting than those at any other shop.*

3) The use of Comparative and Superlative forms

When comparing two things use the comparative form and when comparing more than two things use the superlative form.

Incorrect: *Among all my students, John is **more** intelligent.*

Correct: *Among all my students, John is **most** intelligent.*

Incorrect: *Between the two of them, his idea is the **best***

Correct: *Between the two of them, his idea is **better***

4) The use of 'Like' and 'As'

A common problem faced by most students is when to use 'Like' and when to use 'As'.

The rule is - Since 'Like' is a preposition and 'As' is a conjunction, use 'like' only to compare nouns and 'as' for all other comparisons (eg. while comparing clauses)

Examples:

1. *John & Jacob, as/like their father Mark, are excellent players of cricket.*

In this sentence John & Jacob are nouns that are being compared with another noun Mark. Hence the correct word here is 'like'.

2. *Just as/like reading is good for the mind, running is good for the body.*

In this sentence two clauses 'reading is good for the mind' and 'running is good for the body' are being compared; so the correct word is 'as'.

(OG 12 – Q 65, 82)
(OG 11 – Q 122)

Editors Tip – Whenever you spot a 'Like', 'Unlike' or a 'than' in a sentence, check for Comparison error.

Idioms & Style

Idioms are probably the trickiest aspect of Sentence Correction questions, primarily because we use a lot of them incorrectly in our day to day English usage.

For example,

- A) John has forbidden his daughter from going out in the night.*
- B) The GMAT comprises of AWA, Quant, and Verbal sections.*
- C) The President of the United States is considered to be the most powerful person in the world.*
- D) I believe John's version as the truth.*

As some of you must have already spotted, all of the above sentences are incorrect.

- A – the correct idiom is 'forbidden to' & not 'forbidden from'
- B – comprises does not take an 'of'
- C – considered does not take 'to be'
- D – the correct idiom is 'believe to be' & not 'believe as'

So the correct sentences would read,

- A) John has forbidden his daughter to go out in the night.*
- B) The GMAT comprises AWA, Quant, and Verbal sections.*

C) *The President of the United States is considered the most powerful person in the world.*

D) *I believe John's version to be the truth.*

An idiom is the commonly and universally accepted usage of a group of words which could actually have different meanings when used individually. There is no reason why a particular idiom is correct or incorrect.

While there are more than 15000 idioms in the English language, the GMAT favors only a fraction of these.

We have provided below a list of these Idioms along with their correct and frequently incorrect usages (wherever applicable). Go through this list and just memorize the ones that your ear doesn't recognize.

1. a means to - something done to achieve something else

Correct: For some people, laptops are just a means to an end.

Incorrect: For some people, laptops are just a means for an end.

Incorrect: For some people, laptops are just the means to an end.

2. an instance of - an example of

Correct: This is a real life instance of plagiarism

3. ability to

Correct: Cats have the ability to see in the dark

Incorrect: Cats have the ability of seeing in the dark

(OG 12 - Q 51)

4. access to

Correct: The editor has access to the entire manuscript.

Incorrect: The editor has access of the entire manuscript.

Incorrect: The editor has access for the entire manuscript.

5. accused of

Correct: John has been accused of theft

Incorrect: John has been accused to have committed theft

Incorrect: John has been accused with theft

6. act as - to serve in some special capacity, possibly temporarily

Correct: Modern mobile phones can act as cameras.

Incorrect: Modern mobile phones can act like cameras

7. act like - behave in a certain way (will almost always refer to animate things)

Correct: "Please stop acting like a kid", said the producer to the actor.

Incorrect: "Please stop acting as a kid", said the producer to the actor.

8. agree with – to hold the same opinion or judgment. You normally agree with a person or an idea,

Correct: Your analysis agrees with mine

OR, it could also mean to look good or go well in combination with something else,

Correct: This dress does not agree with these shoes.

9. agree to – to consent to something or to approve something. You normally agree to inanimate things such as a plan or a proposal.

Correct: I agree to your proposal of a buyout.

Correct: Russia and turkey have agreed to speed up the launch of energy deals.

10. agree on/upon – to agree to the choice of someone or something (usually used with date or time)

Correct: Let's try to agree upon a date for the vacation

Correct: John & Tina agree upon the need to hire a trainer

11. aid in - to help someone in some kind of trouble

Correct: The motorists needed aid in finding their way out.

Incorrect: The motorists needed aid to find their way out.

(OG 12 – Q 109)

12. allow for - to give consideration to circumstances or contingencies

Correct: We allowed room for improvement when we wrote this book.

Correct: Allowing for his inexperience, the Chairman forgave him for his mistake.

13. among X and Y – to evaluate more than 2 options

Correct: John can't decide among a laptop, a mobile phone and a media player.

Incorrect: John can't decide between a laptop, a mobile phone and a media player.

14. appear to be

Correct: This dish appears to be undercooked

(OG 12 – Q 73)

15. appeal to - to please or to attract someone

Correct: Soap operas don't appeal to me.

Correct: The idea of taking a vacation appeals to me a lot.

16. approve/disapprove of - to take a favorable/unfavorable view of someone/something.

Correct: The chairman approves of the new marketing plan

Correct: I disapprove of the use of cheating to pass a test.

17. as a result of – because of

Correct - The match has been postponed as a result of rain

18. as an adolescent/teenager/child

Correct: As an adolescent, John suffered from tonsillitis.

Incorrect: While in adolescence, John suffered from tonsillitis.

19. as good as - almost or nearly

Correct: The landlord owes me an apology - he as good as called me a thief.

Correct: According to the producer, the movie is as good as complete.

20. as great as – used for comparison

Correct: Is the novel as great as is being reported in the media?

21. as many/much as – used to put emphasis on something

Correct: Jerry made as many as 15 mistakes in the test.

(OG 11 – Q 30)

22. as many/much X as Y

Correct: I have got as many books as you do.

(OG 12 – Q 76)
(OG 11 – Q 37, 76)

23. ask for - to try to obtain by requesting

Correct: - The child asked for a glass of water

OR, to behave in a provocative manner

Correct: He is asking for trouble

24. associate with - to be friendly with someone

Correct: Jacob likes to associate with honest people.

Incorrect: Jacob likes to associate among honest people.

25. associate X with Y - to link someone/something to some other thing or person

Correct: John always associates coke with pizza

Incorrect: John always associates coke to pizza

26. attend to - to take care of the needs of someone or something

Correct: Tim is attending to his sick mother

27. attribute X to Y - to believe that someone or something is the source of something.

Correct: We attribute our success to good fortune.

Incorrect: We attribute our success from good fortune.

(OG 12 – Q 79)

28. based on

Correct: This movie is based on a true story

29. be afraid of

Correct: Tim is afraid of the dark.

Incorrect: Tim is afraid from the dark.

30. believe to be

Correct: I believe John's version to be the truth

Incorrect: I believe John's version as the truth

(OG 12 – Q 45)

31. better served by X than by Y

Correct: No city seems better served by motorway beltways than Madrid

32. better than

Correct: My car is better than yours

Incorrect: My car is better from yours

33. between X and Y – used to choose between two things only

Correct: He had to choose between yoga and dance.

Incorrect: He had to choose between yoga or dance.

(OG 12 – Q 44, 96)

(OG 11 – Q 107)

34. both X and Y

Correct: Both John and Jack are coming for dinner.

35. capable of

Correct: Jerry is capable of great feats of strength.

Incorrect: Jerry is capable for great feats of strength.

36. care about - to hold someone or something dear

Correct: John cares a lot about his family.

37. care for – can be used interchangeably with 'care about'

Correct: John cares a lot for his family.

38. centres on - to focus on someone or something in particular

Correct: The conversation centered on Mozart's contribution to music

39. choose as - select

Correct: We choose him as our representative

Incorrect: We choose him to be our representative

40. choose X for Y

Correct: I chose an interesting gift for their anniversary.

41. claim that – used while proclaiming something

Correct: Walter claims that he can run backwards.

42. claim to – used to take control of assets or will

Correct: The eldest son laid claim to the father's property.

43. claim to be – used while claiming to be some other person

Correct: The man claimed to be John's long lost son.

Incorrect: He is claimed as the best batsman of all times.

44. compare to – mostly used to praise someone by pointing similarities with someone else

Correct: In Argentina, Maradona is often compared to God.

(OG 12 – Q 44)

45. compare with – used for actual comparison (as we know it)

Correct: John is comparing a BMW with a Mercedes.

46. composed of – made up of

Correct: The team is composed of people from every department.

Incorrect: The team is composed from people of every department.

47. conceive of X as - to think of someone or something as being someone or something else

Correct: I can't conceive of you as a scientist.

Incorrect: I can't conceive of you to be a scientist

(OG 12 – Q 106)

48. concerned with – involved with or connected to

Correct: This topic is concerned with the use of DNA sequencing

49. concerned about – worried about

Correct: I am concerned about my brother's health

Incorrect: I am concerned for my brother's health

50. conform to - to agree with or behave within guidelines or regulations

Correct: Does my dress conform to your regulations?

Incorrect: Does my dress conform with your regulations?

51. confirm with

Correct: John is confirming the plan with Jack

52. connection between X and Y

Correct: There is no connection between Tim and Larry

53. consequence of - be the result of

Correct: Rising temperatures are a consequence of global warming

54. consider X Y – think of as

Correct: I consider myself a close friend of the rockstar.

Incorrect: I consider myself to be a close friend of the rockstar

Incorrect: I consider myself as a close friend of the rockstar

(OG 12 – Q 117)

55. contend that – claim or state

Correct: John contends that his friend is innocent.

56. contend with – compete with someone for something

Correct: Jack is contending with Jerry for the award

57. continue with – carry on with an action

Correct : Tim has been asked to continue with his training

58. contrast X with Y – compare two dissimilar things which complement each other

Correct: Jenna is contrasting her casual jeans with a formal top.

59. correlate with - to match or equate with something.

Correct: The facts don't correlate with her story.

Incorrect: The facts don't correlate to her story.

60. cost(s) associated with

Correct: The costs associated with setting up a factory are prohibitive.

(OG 11 – Q 41)

61. count on – depend on

Correct: We can count on John to complete the project.

62. credited with – credit person with accomplishment (use this when person comes first)

Correct: Newton is credited with the discovery of gravity

Incorrect: Newton is credited as discovering gravity

Incorrect: Newton is credited to having discovered gravity

Incorrect: Newton is credited for discovering the laws of gravity

(OG 11 – Q 31)

63. credited to - credit accomplishment to person

Correct: The team credits its success to good fortune

Incorrect: The team credits its success with good fortune

64. credit for – (think in terms of) a credit note

Correct: Telenet gave Tim a credit of \$100 because of an interruption in service.

65. dated at – to denote a time period

Correct: The document has been dated at 100 years old.

Incorrect: The document has been dated at being 100 years old.

Incorrect: The document has been dated as being 100 years old.

(OG 12 – Q 78, 140)

66. date from - to have an existence that extends from a particular time

Correct: These CDs date from the early 70s.

67. debate about/on/over – Discuss in detail

Correct: The MPs debate about the bill tomorrow

Correct: The MPs debate over the bill tomorrow

Correct: The MPs debate on the bill tomorrow

Incorrect: The MPs debate for the bill tomorrow

68. decide on – select

Correct: Tina decided on the chocolate flavored ice cream.

69. declared (takes nothing)

Correct: The monarch declared all fundamental rights unconstitutional.

Incorrect: The monarch declared all fundamental rights as unconstitutional.

Incorrect: The monarch declared all fundamental rights to be unconstitutional.

70. defined as

Correct: Evaporation is defined as the process in which water changes into vapour.

Incorrect: Evaporation is defined in the process in which water changes into vapour.

71. delighted to – be glad

Correct: I'm delighted to make your acquaintance.

Incorrect: I'm delighted at making your acquaintance.

72. demand that – insist upon something

Correct: John demands that he be given a raise.

Incorrect: John demands that he should be given a raise.

73. dependent on

Correct : The team's success is dependent on him

74. depicted as - to show someone as something

Correct: The director depicted the actor as a mutant.

Incorrect: The director depicted the actor to be a mutant.

75. determined by

Correct: Language structure is partly determined by social structure

Incorrect: Language structure is partly determined from social structure

(OG 11 – Q 138)

76. differ/different from

Correct: Myopia differs from hypermetropia

Correct: I am very different from my twin sister.

Incorrect: Her hobbies are different than mine

77. disagree with (person/idea) – same as agree with

Correct: I disagree with you on this subject

78. disclose to - reveal

Correct: Please disclose the details to me at once.

79. discourage from

Correct: I discouraged them from filing a complaint

Incorrect: I discouraged them to file a complaint

80. dispute whether/over

Correct: There is a dispute over the new name of the city

81. distinguish X from Y

Correct: Criminals cannot distinguish right from wrong.

Correct: Psoriatic arthritis can be difficult to distinguish from rheumatoid arthritis

82. distinguish/distinction between X and Y

Correct: Criminals cannot distinguish between right and wrong.

(OG 12 – Q 96)

83. doubt that

Correct: I doubt that his venture will succeed

Incorrect: I doubt whether his venture will succeed

84. draw attention to

Correct: Could I draw your attention to this slide?

85. drawn to – attracted to

Correct: Jerry was drawn to the sports car

Incorrect: Jerry was drawn at the sports car

86. drawn upon – used up

Correct: By the end of the contest the boxer had drawn upon all the energy he had.

87. dream about

Correct: All the time I dream about football.

Incorrect: All the time I dream of football

88. dwindle away – become less or smaller

Correct: Her will power is starting to dwindle away.

89. either X or Y

Correct: I will have either ice cream or pastry

(OG 12 – Q 109)

90. elect as

Correct: Freddie was elected as the president of our club.

Incorrect: Freddie was elected to be the president of our club.

Incorrect: Freddie was elected to act as the president of our club.

91. elect to

Correct: Tom was elected to the office by the party members.

Incorrect: Tom was elected for the office by the party members

92. emerge as

Correct: The weakest candidate emerged as the winner

Incorrect: The weakest candidate emerged to be the winner

93. enable X to Y

Correct: This donation will enable the college to buy a new projector

94. encourage X to Y

Correct: We encouraged Mary to develop her singing talents

95. encourage in

Correct: We encouraged Mary in her singing career

96. enough to

Correct: The boy was not tall enough to reach the window.

Incorrect: The boy was short enough not to reach the window.

97. escape from – run away from

Correct: The thief has escaped from the prison.

98. escape notice – to go unnoticed

Correct: I think my earlier request escaped your notice.

99. essential to

Correct: Oxygen is essential to life.

Incorrect: Oxygen is essential for life.

100. estimated to be

Correct: The sculpture was estimated to be worth much more than the base price.

Incorrect: The sculpture was estimated to be worth much more than the base price.

(OG 12 – Q 27)

101. estimated at – used to denote the place where the estimation was done

Correct: The worth of the sculpture was estimated at Madrid.

102. except for

Correct: This house is beautiful and perfect except for one thing - the price

103. expect to

Correct: The ruler was expected to protect his people.

Incorrect: The ruler is expected that he should protect his people.

104. expect X of Y - to anticipate that someone will do something

Correct: I expected better of John.

105. expect from - to be waiting for something from someone

Correct: I am expecting a parcel from my brother.

106. expend on – spend on

Correct: Don't expend too much effort on this document.

(OG 12 – Q 46)

107. explain away - to explain something so that it is no longer a problem

Correct: You can't just explain away all your mistakes

108. expose to

Correct: Do not expose the film to direct sunlight.

109. fail on - to give someone an unsatisfactory grade on an assignment or test (somebody will fail you on something)

Correct: The teacher failed half the class on the test

110. fail in - to have not earned passing or satisfactory grades in some school subject (you will fail in something)

Correct: I hope I do not fail in the test.

111. fascinated by

Correct: John is fascinated by his boss

Incorrect: John is fascinated with his boss

112. flee from - run away

Correct: The dogs fled from their cruel master.

113. flee to

Correct: The dogs fled to their kennel

114.focus on

Correct: Tom is trying to focus on the problem at hand.

115.forbid X to do Y

Correct: John forbid his driver to enter the house

Incorrect: John forbid his driver from entering the house

116.from X to Y

Correct: I am travelling from New York to London

(OG 12 – Q 49)

117.grow from

Correct: A plant grows from a seed

118.grow into

Correct: The child grew into a tall, handsome teenager

119.grow out of

Correct: A big problem has grown out of a tiny misunderstanding

120.identical with

Correct: My problem is identical with yours.

Incorrect: My problem is identical to yours.

121.in contrast to/with X, Y is.... – On the GMAT both 'contrast to' and 'contrast with' are considered correct

In 'Contrast to', 'contrast' is used as a noun; this is mainly used to show the dissimilarity between two things.

Correct: John's working style is a contrast to Jacob's.

In 'Contrast with', 'contrast' is used as a verb and hence denotes the actual act of contrasting two things

Correct: John is contrasting his working style with that of Jacob.

122.in danger of -ing/danger to

Correct: John is in danger of contracting malaria

Correct: Rampant cutting of trees is a danger to the ecology

(OG 11 - Q 27)

123.in order to

Correct: She began taking classes in order to learn French.

Incorrect: She began taking classes in order that she could learn French.

124.independent from

Correct: The children have been independent from their parents since childhood

125.independent of

Correct: His reasoning was flawed, and appeared to be independent of any logic.

126.indicate that

Correct: Studies indicate that women actually live longer than men.

127.indicate to

Correct: Fred indicated his assent to me

128.indifferent towards

Correct: Can you make yourself indifferent towards someone you love?

129.inherit from

Correct: Jeanne has inherited her complexion from her mother.

130.insist that

Correct: The members insisted that the speaker be removed from his post.

131.invest in

Correct: John has invested 6 weeks in preparing for the test.

132.invest with

Correct: The agreement invests the vice-chairman with the authority to act on the chairman's behalf in certain conditions.

133.isolated from

Correct: We isolated the chemicals from the source of the leak

134.just as X , so Y – used to point out similarities

Correct: Just as Katy is a champion swimmer, so is Angie.

(OG 11 - Q 99)

135.know to do X

Correct: Even as a young boy he was known to explore different ways of doing things.

Incorrect: Even as a young boy, he was known as wanting to explore different ways of doing things.

136.lead away

Correct: The police led the criminal away from the other accused.

137.lead to

Correct: A life of sin will inevitably lead to suffering.

138.less X than Y

Correct: My problem is less serious than yours

(OG 12 – Q 123)

139.likely to be

Correct: The CEO is likely to be arrested today

140.localized in

Correct: Are International charities becoming more localized in the economic crisis?

141.manage with

Correct: The college has been asked to manage with the funds that it has

142.mandate that

Correct: The rules of war mandate that no prisoner be tortured for information.

143.means to an end – something done to achieve something else

Correct: Exercise might be boring but it is simply the means to an end.

(OG 12 – Q 72)

144. mistake X for Y

Correct: John mistook a Ferrari for a Lamborghini

Incorrect: John mistook a Ferrari as a Lamborghini

Incorrect: John mistook a Ferrari to be a Lamborghini

145. modeled after

Correct: The Indian constitution is modeled after the British constitution

146. more...than

Correct: I am more clever than my brother

(OG 12 – Q 4, 99)

(OG 11 – Q 123)

147. much as

Correct: Much as Lola needed the car, she had to refuse.

148. native of – use for humans

Correct: John is a native of the US

149. native to – use for plants or animal species

Correct: The Royal Bengal Tiger is native to the Sunderbans

150. necessary to

Correct: The CEO deemed it necessary to ask the employee to resign.

151. neither X nor Y

Correct: We could neither walk nor drive to the venue.

Incorrect: We could neither walk or drive to the venue

152. no less... than

Correct: My achievement is no less than his achievement

153. not only X but also Y

Correct: Not only is he very intelligent, but also very humble.

(OG 12 - Q 35, 64)

154. not so much X as Y

Correct: I am not so much sad as perplexed

155. not X but rather Y

Correct: I would have not tea but rather coffee

(OG 12 - Q 92)

156. noted that

Correct: The scientists noted that the aspect ratio remained unchanged.

157. opinion on

Correct: John has very strong opinions on censorship.

158. originate in

Correct: All his troubles originate in his mind.

159.originate from

Correct: Some of our customs originate from past beliefs

160.permit X to Y

Correct: John permitted his son to drive to college.

161.permit (someone) through

Correct: Can you permit me through the door please?

162.permit up

Correct: She would not permit me up the ladder

163.persuade X to Y

Correct: I persuaded Tim to complete my assignment

164.prefer X to Y

Correct: Jack prefers tea to coffee

Incorrect: Jack prefers tea over coffee

165.preoccupied with

Correct: The country's mind is preoccupied with soccer

166.prized above

Correct: He prized his only child above everything else in the world

167. prized as

Correct: Designer corals have been prized as jewelry for nearly 5000 years

168. prized for

Correct: Gold Jewellery Has Been Prized for Thousands of Years

169. prohibit X from Y

Correct: The landlord has prohibited John from coming late in the night.

170. potential to

Correct: The coach thinks Jack has the potential to play at the national level

171. promise to

Correct: Is this shirt promised to anyone?

172. range from X to Y

Correct: The students' marks range from good to average.

173. range over

Correct: These trees range over a very large territory

174. rates for

Correct: John enquired the rates for apples

Correct: The rate of increase of population has gone down

175. refer to

Correct: My friend referred me to a specialist.

Correct: Evaporation refers to a scientific term.

(OG 12 – Q 132)

(OG 11 – Q 64)

176. regard as

Correct: I have always regarded you as my brother.

177. reluctant to

Correct: The child was reluctant to attend the Maths class.

Incorrect: The child was reluctant about attending the Maths class.

178. require of

Correct: John wants to know what is required of him in this job.

179. require that X

Correct: The job requires that John supervise the entire operations of the assembly line.

180. require X to

Correct: The job requires John to supervise the entire operations of the assembly line.

181. require to

Correct: John was required to supervise the entire operations of the assembly line.

182. resemble in

Correct: This resembles chocolate ice cream in flavor, but not in consistency.

183. responsible for

Correct: The CEO is responsible for meeting the assigned targets

184. responsibility to

Correct: It is the CEO's responsibility to meet the assigned targets

185. restrictions on

Correct: The US has imposed restrictions on the licensing of firearms

186. result from

Correct: It will be interesting to see what results from the police's efforts.

187. result in

Correct: I hope that this will result in the police finding your car.

188. sacrifice X for Y

Correct: Would you sacrifice your job for a chance to go to Europe?

189. sacrifice to

Correct: I sacrificed a lot of money to visit Europe

190.seek out

Correct: Jenny sought out a helper for her mother.

191.seek from

Correct: The prisoner seeks pardon from the victim

192.seek after

Correct: The police continue to seek after the thief who stole John's car.

193.seem like

Correct: The boss seemed like a nice person when I met him

194.seem to

Correct: The accused seemed to be hiding something.

Incorrect: The accused seemed like hiding something

(OG 12 – Q 35, 72)

195.sequence of

Correct: John narrated the entire sequence of events to the agents

196.similar to

Correct: My house is similar to yours.

197.so X as to Y – used to denote cause and effect. Cannot be used to replace 'in order to'

Correct: John's grades are so poor as to lead to his expulsion from the school.

Incorrect: Jack works out every day in order to build his stamina.

(OG 12 – Q 39)

198.so X that Y

Correct: Jerry is so soft-spoken that one can barely hear him speak

(OG 12 – Q 37, 39, 51, 124)

199.so much as – can mean 'but rather'

Correct: I'm not looking at him so much as I am studying his jacket.

Or, can also mean 'even'

Correct: There was not so much as a speck of dust in the house.

200.speak from

Correct: The chairman claimed that he was speaking from experience

201.speak up

Correct: Sheena wants to speak up for the rights of the homeless.

202.speak with

Correct: I will speak with John about this problem

203.speak for

Correct: The company's astounding profits speak for themselves

204.subscribe to

Correct: I do not subscribe to the view that John is guilty

205. such X as Y and Z

Correct: This group includes such cars as BMW and Audi.

206. targeted at

Correct: The new ad for lawnmowers is targeted at gardeners

(OG 12 – Q 40)

207. the more/greater X the more/greater Y

Correct: The more the prices rise, the more the demand increases.

208. the same to X as to Y

Correct: This color looks the same to me as it would to anyone else.

(OG 12 – Q 32)

209. think of X as Y

Correct: John thinks of Jack as his best friend

210. to think of X as Y

Correct: I think of him as my best friend.

211. train to

Correct: He was trained to become an athlete ever since he was a child.

Incorrect: He was trained as an athlete ever since he was a child.

212. try to

Correct: John said he would try to come on time.

Incorrect: John said he would try and come on time

(OG 12 – Q 24, 62)

213. used X as Y

Correct: For centuries, people have been using herbs as remedies for the different diseases

214. unlike X, Y

Correct: Unlike John, Tom wrote a good essay.

Incorrect: Unlike John, Tom's essay was good.

Correct: Unlike John's essay, Tom's essay was good.

(OG 12 – Q 20, 97)

(OG 11 – Q 10, 66, 68)

215. view X as Y

Correct: The management views the problem as an opportunity

Incorrect: The management views the problem to be an opportunity

(OG 11 – Q 125)

216. whether to

Correct: John is unable to decide whether to go to Harvard or Stanford. (wouldn't you want to be in his shoes ☺)

217. with the aim of '(verb)ing'

Correct: Jerry is training for six hours everyday with the aim of winning the marathon.

218. worried about

Correct: I am worried about my parents

219.X enough to Y

Correct: The temperature outside is high enough to cause a heat stroke.

220.X instead of Y

Correct: I will have tea instead of coffee

221.X is attributed to Y

Correct: The CEO has attributed the loss to the economic recession earlier in the year

222.X is to Y what W is to Z

Correct: You are to your parents what I am to mine.

(OG 12 – Q58)

Style

Style primarily involves the following two variables – Wordiness and Redundancy

Wordiness

Remember the GMAT likes to keep things simple so all else being equal, a shorter answer is always preferred to a longer one on the GMAT. So if you are totally confused between two options go with the shorter one; statistics suggest that you will be correct more often than not.

For example consider these two sentences:

1) John **as well as** Jack reached the office late **on account of** traffic.

2) John **and** Jack reached the office late **because** of traffic.

The second sentence sounds much better because it replaces 'as well as' with 'and' and 'on account of' with 'because'. The point is that if you can convey the same meaning with one word why use three?

Redundancy

Redundancy basically means saying the exact same thing twice in a sentence. (*By the way did you spot the redundancy in this sentence – 'exact same'?*)

Examples:

1. John's marks have **increased up**. (*can't increase down can they?*)

2. The **yearly** growth rate is 10% **per annum** (*yearly & per annum?*)

3. I have para-glided **previously in the past** (*previously & in the past?*)

Here please keep in mind that 'Style' is more subjective than some of the other errors that we have seen in this chapter in the sense that whether a sentence is correct or not will depend on the other options that are

available to you. So while 'and' is preferred to 'as well as', in case none of the options have an 'and' one can easily go with 'as well as'.

The good news is that you will rarely be tested only on style; the sentence will usually also contain some other error which will make it easier for you to eliminate the incorrect option.

(OG 11 – Q 12)
(OG 12 – Q 7)

Summing Up

Sentence Correction – Do's and Don't's

- 1. Always go for the shorter option*
- 2. Avoid Passive Voice*
- 3. Avoid redundancy*
- 4. Avoid 'Being'*
- 5. Avoid words ending with '-ing'*
- 6. Always read the correct option back into the sentence*

PART 3

Miscellaneous Errors

Apart from these seven errors, there are certain other errors that are also tested on the GMAT from time to time. Let's look at few such errors:

1) The 'Subjunctive' Mood

For knowledge's sake remember that there are three primary moods in English grammar - Indicative mood, Imperative mood and Subjunctive mood.

The GMAT will, in all probability, only test you on the use of the Subjunctive mood so we'll restrict our scope to the same.

The subjunctive mood is primarily used in the following two situations:

Situation 1: *To indicate a hypothetical situation, a wish, or a circumstance contrary-to-fact.*

Situation 2: *To make a suggestion, demand, desire, etc.*

The following rules apply to each of the above two situations respectively:

Situation 1 - When contemplating hypothetical or contrary-to-fact situations, always use 'were' and 'would'. *Please note that even if the subject is singular you will still use 'were' and not 'was'.*

Examples:

- 1. If I were rich I would buy a BMW.*
- 2. If petrol were cheaper I would use my car everyday.*
- 3. If I were you, I would contest the elections.*

Situation 2 - Verbs like order, suggest, demand, etc. must be followed by 'that' and the infinitive form of the verb being ordered or suggested, without the 'to'.

Examples:

1. *The teacher recommended that Jerry be expelled from the class.*
2. *The manager demanded that John show up for work on time.*

So how do you figure out whether a question is testing you on the use of the Subjunctive mood? Here are a couple of tips:

1. Check for words such as 'if', 'wish', etc. Though these can also be used in the other moods, they are most commonly tested on the subjunctive mood.
2. Ask yourself if the sentence is talking about an uncertainty, a wish, a suggestion, a demand, etc. If it is then you are dealing with the subjunctive mood.

To Sum it Up

1. *If a sentence talks about hypothetical or contrary-to-fact situations use 'were' (not 'was') and 'would'*
2. *With verbs such as 'demand', 'suggest', 'insist', etc. what follows should be 'that' and the infinitive form of the verb being ordered.*

(OG 12 – Q 54)**(OG 11 – Q 82, 83, 92)****2) Number words**

Which one is better?

- *Give me less French fries*
- *Give me fewer French fries*

The second sentence is correct since it is possible to count French fries.

Countable – many, number, fewer, quantity, little, etc.

Uncountable – much, amount, less, etc.

(OG 12 – Q 80)

3) Where & When

On the GMAT 'where' will always refer to a specific location and 'when' will always refer to a specific time period; else their use is wrong.

Correct: The town where I was born is known for its fishermen.

Correct: It was a historic event when, in 1947, India achieved independence.

Incorrect: When the price goes up the demand falls down.

Incorrect: The company where I work has gone bankrupt.

(OG 12 – Q 12, 104)

4) Each Other v/s One another

'Each other' is used for two things; 'one another' for more than two.

- *The two men are pointing out each other's mistakes.*
- *The students are pointing out one another's mistakes.*

5) Whether v/s If

'If' is used to introduce a conditional idea or an idea that has just one possibility whereas 'Whether' is used to introduce alternative possibilities, usually with 'or not' implied or explicitly stated in the sentence.

Consider the following example:

If you study hard you will surely do well on the GMAT.

In the above sentence 'if' is introducing a single condition (if you study hard) that can lead to the desired goal; we can't replace it with 'whether' because that would totally distort the meaning of the sentence.

Now look at this one:

I can't decide whether to study or to go out with my friends.

Here 'whether' is introducing two alternatives and we cannot be replace it with 'if'.

To make it clearer here is a sentence in which we've used both 'If' and 'Whether' together:

You need to decide whether you will be able to control your temper if he asks you to get out of his office.

To Sum it Up:

1. 'If' is used to introduce 1 condition whereas 'Whether' is used to introduce several possibilities.
2. If you are still confused on a question, go with 'Whether' since it's preferred on the GMAT.

(OG 12 – Q 34, 75)
(OG 11 – Q 94, 108)

6) 'Everyday' v/s 'Every day'

Is this sentence correct?

I go to the church once everyday.

It might sound correct to you but it's actually incorrect. The correct sentence will read:

I go to the church once every day.

So what's the difference between 'everyday' and 'every day'?

'Everyday' is an adjective meaning 'ordinary' or 'commonplace'. An adjective, in case you've forgotten, is a word that modifies a noun. Eg. 'everyday occurrence', 'everyday people', etc.

'Every day' is an adverbial phrase that tells us how often something takes place. An adverb is a word or phrase that modifies a verb (most of the time).

To Sum it Up

1. Use 'Everyday' if you are implying 'ordinary' or 'commonplace'.
2. Use 'Every day' if you are implying that 'something happens every day'.

7) Prepositions or Conjunctions?

We saw what are prepositions and conjunctions in the chapter on Grammar Review but sometimes the same word can act both as a preposition and also as a conjunction. In that case how do you identify whether you are dealing with a preposition or a conjunction?

Remember that even though inherently both prepositions as well as conjunctions are connectors, prepositions are used to connect a noun element to a sentence whereas conjunctions have the ability to connect two verbs together which means they can actually connect two sentences to each other.

Examples of Prepositions - on, over, to, from, about, for, against, with, between, but, etc.

Examples of Conjunctions - and, nor, but, or, then, for, since, etc.

As you might have noticed words such as 'for' and 'but' can act as both Preposition as well as Conjunction; then how do you figure out when it's being used as what?

Try this rule - divide the sentence into two parts (1 part before the preposition/conjunction and the other part after that). Now if the two parts make sense on their own then they are two different sentences and

we can only use conjunctions to join two sentences so the word in questions is a Conjunction, else it is a Preposition.

Consider the following examples:

1. *I have been living in New York since last year.*
2. *I have been living in New York since I passed my exams.*

Now in the sentences above, the word in question is 'since'.

If you break up sentence 1 across 'since', the two parts are 'I have been living in New York' and 'last year'. Now while the first part 'I have been living in New York' makes sense the second part 'last year' makes no sense. Thus 'since' is acting as a preposition here connecting the noun 'last year' to the rest of the sentence.

Now doing the same thing with sentence 2 we get 'I have been living in New York' and 'I passed my exams', both of which make perfect sense on their own. Thus 'since' is acting as a conjunction here joining two sentences.

To Sum it Up

1. *Prepositions are used to connect a noun to a sentence.*
2. *Conjunctions are used to connect two verbs or sentences.*
3. *The same word can be used as both conjunction as well as preposition, depending on the context.*

8) Ending Sentences with a Preposition

Consider the following two sentences:

1. *Don't tell me stories that I am already aware of.*
2. *Don't tell me stories of which I am already aware.*

Which one would you go with on a SC question?

Most people would say Sentence 2 because Sentence 1 ends with 'of', a preposition, but actually sentence 1 sounds much better and would, in fact, be preferred on the GMAT.

Here's another couple of sentences; which one do you like more?

1. *Among all the applicants, I haven't yet decided with whom I would like to meet.*
2. *Among all the applicants, I haven't yet decided who to meet with.*

Obviously Sentence 2 (even though it ends with the preposition 'with') because it's shorter and conveys the meaning of the sentence in a much more direct manner than Sentence 1.

In a nutshell, remember that just because a sentence ends with a preposition does not mean that it is incorrect.

9) Like v/s Such As

Is this sentence correct?

I want to eat something sweet like a chocolate or a pastry.

Even though we speak like this in our everyday conversations (*BTW is it 'everyday' conversations or 'every day' conversations?*), what this sentence is implying is that I **don't** want to eat a chocolate or a pastry but something similar to a chocolate or a pastry.

Here's the rule - On the GMAT 'like' means 'similar to' and 'such as' means 'for example'

So the correct sentence will read:

I want to eat something sweet such as a chocolate or a pastry.

Important: Even if 'such' and 'as' are separated in a sentence, the sentence is still correct.

For example:

I want to eat some such sweet as a chocolate or a pastry.

In the above sentence even though 'such' and 'as' are separated by the

word 'sweet' the sentence is absolutely correct and 'chocolate' and 'pastry' are examples of sweets that I want to eat.

To Sum it Up:

1. On the GMAT, use 'like' to imply 'similar to'.
2. Use 'such as' to imply 'for example'
3. If confused, go with 'such as'.

10) Compare to v/s Compare with

How do you define the term 'Comparison'?

It basically refers to pointing out the similarities as well as differences between any two things.

In this sense '**Compare with**' actually refers to 'Comparison' as defined above whereas '**Compare to**' is only used to state that one thing is similar to the other (usually to emphasize that particular thing or person).

Hence,

'**Compare to**' is used to point out the similarity between two unrelated things. More than a comparison, it's actually just a statement stating that one thing is similar to another to emphasize that particular thing.

For example:

John compared his wife's face to the moon.

In the above sentence John is not actually pointing out the similarities and differences between his wife's face and the moon, but is rather emphasizing his wife's beauty by comparing her to the moon.

'**Compare with**' is used to actually compare two things by pointing out the similarities as well as differences between them.

For example:

Jerry is comparing a Toyota with a Honda.

In the above sentence Jerry is actually comparing the similarities & differences between the two brands so as to be able to decide which one is better.

To Sum it Up:

1. Use 'Compare to' to show how two things are similar and to emphasize one of them.
2. Use 'Compare with' to actually compare the similarities & differences between two things.
3. Usually if the two things are similar go with 'compare with' and if they are dissimilar go with 'compare to'.

11) Due to v/s Because of

Is this sentence correct?

The physical test was postponed due to the bad weather.

Even though this might sound correct to you it's actually incorrect; the correct sentence will read:

The physical test was postponed because of the bad weather.

Rule - On the GMAT 'due to' will NEVER be used to replace 'because of'; it can only replace 'caused by'.

Now, in the above sentence, if you were to replace 'because of' with 'caused by' the sentence would read:

The physical test was postponed caused by the bad weather.

This obviously does not make any sense, hence we cannot use 'due to' in this sentence.

However the following sentence makes sense:

The postponement of the physical test was caused by the bad weather.

In the above sentence since 'caused by' makes sense we can replace it with 'due to':

The postponement of the physical test was due to the bad weather.

To Sum it Up:

1. *On the GMAT, 'due to' cannot be used to replace 'because of'*
2. *'Due to' can only be used to replace 'caused by'*

(OG 12 - Q 6)

12) Less v/s Fewer

If you want to be *less confused* and make *fewer mistakes* then go through this post.

Rule - 'Less' is used with uncountable nouns. Eg - less water, less happiness, less money, etc.

'Fewer' is used with countable nouns. Eg. - fewer rupees, fewer people, fewer companies, etc.

Sounds simple enough. So which of the next two sentences is correct?

1. *My class has fewer intelligent students.*
2. *My class has less intelligent students.*

You are probably thinking that since people can be counted, Sentence 1 should be correct BUT in fact both the sentences are correct and are actually saying two different things:

In Sentence 1 'fewer' is modifying 'intelligent students' and is basically saying that I have fewer number of intelligent students in my class (say 3 out of 10 students)

In Sentence 2 'less' is only modifying the adjective 'intelligent' and is basically saying that students in my class have a lower intelligence level in general.

So before you mark an answer make sure you understand the correct meaning of the sentence.

To Sum it Up

1. Use 'less' to modify uncountable nouns
2. You can also use 'less' to modify adverbs and adjectives
3. Use 'fewer' to only modify countable nouns.
4. Remember, if a noun can be preceded by a number (one student, five cats, four of us, nineteen questions, etc.), it should be modified with fewer; otherwise, less is best.

13) Agree to v/s Agree with

While there can be a fairly lengthy explanation of when to use 'agree with' and 'agree to', the following simplified rule should suffice for the GMAT:

Rule: You agree 'with' a noun and you agree 'to' a verb.

Examples:

1. John agrees with his brother. ('brother' is a noun so agree 'with')
2. John agreed to run an extra mile. ('run' is a verb so agree 'to')
3. The manager agreed with the proposal. ('proposal' is a noun so agree 'with')
4. The manager agreed to open the office on Sundays. ('open' is a verb so agree 'to')

In short you agree 'with' something but you agree 'to' do something.

14) Shall v/s Will

Though we've rarely seen the GMAT test students on the usage of 'shall' and 'will', on the off-chance that they do decide to do so, remember the following basic rule:

Rule: Use 'shall' when speaking in the first person and 'will' when speaking in the second or third person.

In case you've forgotten your 'persons', here's a ready reckoner:

First Person – I

Second Person – You

Third Person - He, She, etc.

So,

I shall win the championship BUT You/We will win the championship.

15) Will v/s Would v/s Should

Which of these is correct?

- 1. I think you will do well on the GMAT*
- 2. I think you would do well on the GMAT*
- 3. I think you should do well on the GMAT*

It's the first one!

Use **will** to refer to some event that will happen in the future in relation to the present and use **would** to refer to the future in the past.

(OG 12 – Q 67, 122)

Examples

I predict that Germany will win the world cup

BUT,

I predicted that Germany would win the world cup

'Should' is almost always used incorrectly in English to refer to an event that will or might happen in the future. Remember 'should' is only used to give your recommendation or suggestion.

In option 3 of the above sentence it seems as if I am recommending the student that he does well, whereas it is more of a prediction on my part.

Also remember that 'should' will never be used with verbs such as 'recommend', 'suggest', etc. because it would lead to an error of redundancy since both the words are conveying the same meaning of tentativeness.

Example

Incorrect: *I recommend that you should come on time*

Correct: I recommend that you come on time

(OG 12 – Q 54)
(OG 11 – Q 82, 124)

To Sum it Up

1. Use *will* to refer to future in the present
2. Use *'would'* to refer to future in the past
3. Use *'should'* to denote suggestion or recommendation
4. Never use *'should'* along with verbs such as *'recommend'*, *'suggest'*, etc.

15) 'Between' v/s 'Among'

The simplest of choices but, surprisingly, a large number of students seem to be unaware of the correct usage of 'between' and 'among'.

Rule: Use 'between' while evaluating two options and 'among' while evaluating more than two options.

Examples:

- 1. John can't decide between a bike and a scooter.*
- 2. John can't decide among a bike, a scooter and a moped.*

Important: Remember 'between' and 'among' will ALWAYS take 'and' and not 'or'. To say that 'John can't decide between a bike **or** a scooter' will always be INCORRECT.

16) Farther v/s Further

Is this sentence correct?

John can run further than Jerry.

It's actually incorrect because of the improper usage of the word 'further'. The correct word in this case would be 'farther'.

Rule: 'Farther' refers to actual measurable distance whereas 'Further' refers to degree, quantity, time, or some such other quality that cannot or is not being precisely measured.

Examples:

- 1. John promised his boss that there would be no further delays*
- 2. The map says the city is farther than we expected.*
- 3. The students discussed further after the teacher left.*
- 4. He is running farther everyday.*

17) Differ with v/s Differ from

Is this sentence correct?

John differs from his boss on the usefulness of the business restructuring strategy.

A lot of you might think that the sentence sounds correct, specially those of you who think 'differ from' is the correct idiom; the sentence is in fact wrong as the correct idiom here would be 'differ with' and not 'differ from'.

Rule: Use 'differ from' to imply 'unlike' (as in one thing differing from the other) and 'differ with' to imply 'disagreement' (as in differing with a point of view).

Examples:

1. *No one can tell how the two cars differ from one another.*
2. *The two political parties differ with each other's ideologies.*
3. *How is the book different from the movie?*
4. *The director differs with the producer.*

18) Rather than v/s Instead of

It is extremely unlikely that the GMAT will ask you to chose between two choices only on the basis of 'rather than' and 'instead of'. Usually there will be some other error as well in one of the options.

Still you should know the difference between the two:

'Rather than' is used to express preference of one thing over another whereas 'instead of' is used to replace one thing with another.

I will have tea rather than coffee.

What you are saying is that you would prefer tea but if tea is not available you will be ok with coffee as well.

I will have tea instead of coffee.

Here you are not just expressing preference but rather you are replacing one option with another; so no coffee, only tea.

Also remember that technically, 'rather than' is a conjunction so it can be followed by anything - noun, phrase, clause - whereas 'instead of' is a preposition so it can be followed only by nouns.

Example

I went in the house instead of in the garden.

I went in the house instead of the garden.

In Sentence 1 above, 'instead of' is incorrect because it is followed by the phrase 'in the garden'. Here the correct usage would be 'rather than'.

In Sentence 2 'instead of' is correct since it is followed by the noun 'garden'. Note that 'rather than' can also be used in this sentence to replace 'instead of'.

To Sum it Up:

1. Use 'rather than' to show preference or as a conjunction to link nouns, phrases and clauses.
2. Use 'instead of' to replace one thing with another or as a preposition before nouns.
3. If confused go with 'rather than'.

19) Advice v/s Advise

Take a look at this sentence:

I advice/advise you to stop procrastinating.

What is the correct word here - 'advice' or advise'?

Rule: *Advice* is a noun and it means a recommendation about behavior of some kind. Its last consonant sound is "sss."

"Advise" is a verb and it means the act of giving a recommendation. Its last consonant sound is "zzz."

So the correct word in the sentence above will be 'advise' since you are giving a recommendation.

Here are some more examples:

1. *John did not listen to my advice.*
2. *The Board advised the CEO to resign.*
3. *The disciple went to the priest for advice.*

20) Subordination and Coordination

We looked at the concepts of coordinating and subordinating conjunctions in the chapter on grammar review. Now let's take a look at how these might be tested on the GMAT.

Incorrect: *High cholesterol content in blood can lead to heart failure and blockage of arteries in the heart.'*

The use of 'and' here incorrectly signifies that both 'heart failure' and 'blockage of arteries' are equally important and more importantly, that they could be mutually exclusive whereas the two are actually related in the sense that one is causing the other. Thus we need to subordinate the last part of the sentence to the first part by using a subordinating conjunction such as 'by'.

Correct: *High cholesterol content in blood can lead to heart failure by blocking the arteries in the heart.*

Thus, when you want to draw equal emphasis to two parts of a sentence, or coordinate them, you use coordinating conjunctions such as 'and' or 'but' but when you want to emphasize one part over the other, you

subordinate one to the other with words such as *'although'*, *'while'*, or *'since'*.

20) The use of Double Negatives

A double negative occurs when two forms of negation are used in the same clause or sentence.

Examples

- *I don't need no education.*
- *He hasn't done nothing*

A double negative is an absolute no-no on the GMAT.

Incorrect: *There were **no** goals **nor** corners in the match.*

Correct: *There were **no** goals **or** corners in the match*

Correct: *There were **neither** goals **nor** corners in the match*

ALL THE BEST!