

SENTENCE CORRECTION

Sentence Correction or Error Spotting is one of the most scoring areas of the verbal section in any competitive exam. In these questions, one or more sentences, with some parts of it underlined or bold, are given. You are required to check if there is an error in the sentence or in the marked parts of it. Accordingly, you will choose the option, which is grammatically correct.

Here we will be showing some examples and explaining how to do the sentence correction and find the errors. In order to score more marks, there are some parameters which candidates must be aware of. These parameters are as listed below.

1. Subject-verb agreement: In any sentence, the verb should agree with the subject in person as well as in number. In other words, if the subject is singular then the verb should also be singular and if the subject is plural then the verb should also be plural.

For example 'he plays' and 'they play'. There are two important tricks to correct these types of question and these are '**F.S.R**' i.e. first or *farthest subject rule* and the second is '**N.S.R**' i.e. '*nearest subject rule*'.

'Not only the principal but also the teachers (is/are) playing'. In this example, the correct form of the verb is '**are**' as it is based on the nearest subject rule. *'The Principal, as well as the teachers, (is/are) playing'.* In this example, the correct form of the verb here will be 'is' as the question is based on **F.S.R** or the **first subject rule**.

2. Modifier: It can be a word or phrase which is used to modify any other word or a phrase. In this, the parts of speech that are considered '**modifiers**' are

- '**Adjectives**' as they are used to modify either nouns or pronouns.
- '**Adverbs**' as they are used to modify adjectives, adverbs, and verbs

Example: Chic and smart, the travel agency could not help admiring the model's clothes.

In the above sentence, chic and smart seem to refer to Travel Agency, though they were meant to refer to the Model's clothes.

The correct sentence would be:

The travel agency could not help admiring the model's chic and smart clothes.

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- ‘Participles’ as they are used to modify nouns.

Example: Walking down the road, my hat flew off.

In the above sentence, it seems as if the hat was walking down the road and it flew, thus we need to specify who was walking down the road.

The correct sentence should be:

While walking down the road, my hat flew off.

3. Parallelism: If a sentence expresses many ideas that are similar to each other, they should be presented in parallel constructions i.e. they should be in the same grammatical form.

Example: He desired to make a lot of money and that he might earn a good reputation.

In the above example, the sentence presents two same ideas but the grammatical form is different.

Therefore the correct sentence should be:

He desired to make a lot of money and to earn a good reputation.

4. Pronoun reference error: A pronoun is a word used to stand for (or take the place of) a noun.

A pronoun should refer clearly to one, clear, unmistakable noun coming before the pronoun. This noun is called the pronoun’s antecedent.

Unfortunately, it is very easy to create a sentence that uses a pronoun WITHOUT a clear, unmistakable noun antecedent.

Example: The minister met the manager and he recognized him.

In this sentence "he" is neither referring to the minister nor the manager, hence

the	sentence	can	be
corrected	in	two	ways:

In this sentence

- The minister met the manager who recognized him.
- The minister met the manager and recognized him.

5. Diction: An incorrect choice of words makes the sentence erroneous. The mistakes could be in the usage of simple words

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- *Later* and *latter*, *its* and *it's*, *lie* and *lay*, and the like. There can be confusion in words that sound alike
- *adapt* and *adept*, *principal* and *principle*, *affront* and *confront* etc. The only way to tackle these is to know the meanings of these words.

6. Redundancy: Avoid needless repetition of a fact or an idea

Example: We shall combine the three departments into one.

In this sentence, it has been written to combine the three departments into one, but whenever things are combined, we always get one thing only. Thus the correct sentence is:

We shall combine the three departments.

Sentence Correction Questions

Directions: Select the correct option to replace the underlined part of the sentence given in the questions.

1. The President of Costa Rica, along with two vice-presidents, are elected for a four-year term by the people.

1. are elected for a four-year term by the people.
2. are elected, by the people, for a four-year term.
3. is elected for a four-year term by the people.
4. are elected for four-year terms by the people.
5. is elected for four-year terms by the people.

Here, the answer will be option **3** as it uses the correct the subject-verb agreement rule that with "The President" the singular verb "is" will be used.