Thoroughly Revised and Updated

General ENGLISH

For

GATE • PSUs

Comprehensive Theory with Solved Examples
and Previous Solved Questions of GATE

Also useful for
SSC, Bank (PO), NDA, CDS, State Public Services Commissions, various Public Sector Units and other Competitive Exams conducted by UPSC
The General English Section is an important section of GATE and various PSUs’ entrance tests. The book is designed to test the candidate’s understanding of English and workmanlike use of words. It is unique in the way that it provides concrete content review for the test as well as strategies for tackling the tricky questions.

Features of this book:

- Strategies and tricks on how to understand evaluate and manipulate Comprehension Passages and Vocabulary. You’ll be able to articulate the passage in your own words.
- Techniques to eliminate 3 wrong choices confidently even if you can’t fully comprehend a question or a passage.
- Gist of ten types of grammar errors and help you develop a strong sense of both grammar and the conventions of English language.
- Keywords searching tips to find what you need to look for when you are answering the questions. You will not waste time re-reading the whole passage. Techniques to locate facts, trace an author’s line of logic, and map the structure of a passage.
- This book briefs you on the different aspects of Grammar, Vocabulary-in-context and Reading comprehension questions giving you key tips on how to tackle these important types of questions.
- Made Easy book on General English offers you enough material for a year-long study program as well as for a short duration preparation module so that you don’t have to settle for last-minute cram sessions. Pace yourself as you work your way through the wealth of practice exercises designed for you.
- It contains high-frequency word list, incorporating vocabulary from various exam of last 10 years’ papers.
- Practice questions with explained answers to prepare you for the spotting the errors, sentence completion and reading comprehension questions. Practice exercises have been organized according to level of difficulty with dozens of clear, helpful pointers and several new questions modelled closely on questions appearing in various exams.
- MADE EASY Book on General English takes you through the very basics of General English to the toughest questions that might be tested in GATE and PSUs papers.

This latest edition of Made Easy Book on General English is a sign of MadeEasy’s on-going commitment to make this book India’s outstanding guide for various competitive exams. It has benefited from the dedicated labours of the editorial staff of Made Easy, and from the research and writing skills of our authors. We are greatly indebted to them.

We wish you all the best for your preparation!!!
How to use this book?

1. The book is divided in Units which deal with particular problems coming under one category so start your preparation in the same order.

2. Every Section has been divided into Chapters covering different topics from that particular segment.

3. Once you have completed a particular chapter; do the practice exercises given in it and then take the tests. Analyse your score and re-read the questions that you went wrong with.

4. Once you have completed all the units and feel confident about taking model papers then you can confidently attempt the five mock papers provided at the end of the book.

5. Take full advantage of the questions from the previous years papers which have been discussed in every chapter. Understand the paper pattern and trends of exam.

6. Once again revise the fundamentals before your exam.
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The verbal ability section of the GATE is designed to test a candidate's ability to reason with words in solving problems. Reasoning effectively in a verbal medium depends primarily upon the ability to discern, comprehend, and analyse relationships among words or groups of words and within larger units of discourse such as sentences and critical reasoning arguments.

The verbal ability of the GATE usually consists of four question types: Analogies, Antonyms/Synonyms, Sentence Completion, and Critical Reasoning.

The conceptual framework along with the practice questions which have been provided in every chapter of this book are organized by content category and represent the types of questions included in GATE. The purpose of these questions is to provide some indication of the range of topics covered in the test as well as to provide some additional questions for practice purposes.

Analogies

Analogy questions test the ability of the candidate to recognize the relationship that exists between the words in a word pair and to recognize when two word pairs display parallel relationships. To answer an analogy question, you must formulate the relationship between the words in the given word pair and then must identify the answer choice containing words that are related to one another in most nearly the same way. Some examples of relationships that might be found in analogy questions are relationships of kind, size, spatial contiguity, or degree.

Approaches for answering Analogy Questions:

- Before looking at the answer choices, try to establish a precise relationship between the words in the given pair. It is usually helpful to express that relationship in a phrase or sentence.
- Next, look for the answer choice with the pair of words whose relationship is closest to that of the given pair and can be expressed in a similar fashion.
- Occasionally, more than one of the answer choices may seem at first to express a relationship similar to that of the given pair. Try to state the relationship more precisely or identify some aspect of the relationship between the given pair of words that is paralleled in only one choice pair.
- Remember that a single word can have several different meanings. Check to be sure you have not overlooked a possible second meaning for one of the words.
- Never decide on the best answer without reading all the answer choices.
- Practice recognizing and formulating relationships between word pairs. You can do this with the following sample questions.

Sample Questions

Directions: The question below consists of a pair of related words followed by four pairs of words. Select the pair that best expresses the relation in the original pair.

1. COLOR: SPECTRUM
   (a) Tone: Scale
   (b) Sound: Waves
   (c) Verse: Poem
   (d) Dimension: Space

Solution: The relationship between color and spectrum is not merely that of part to whole, in which case (c) might be defended as correct. A spectrum is made up of a progressive, graduated series of colors, as a scale is of a progressive, graduated sequence of tones. Thus, (a) is the correct answer choice. In this instance, the best answer must be selected from a group of fairly close choices.

2. HEADLONG: FORETHOUGHT
   (a) Barefaced: Shame
   (b) Mealy-mouthed: Talent
   (c) Heartbroken: Emotion
   (d) Level-headed: Resolve

Solution: The difficulty of this question probably derives primarily from the complexity of the
relationship between headlong and forethought rather than from any inherent difficulty in the words. Analysis of the relationship between headlong and forethought reveals the following: an action or behaviour that is headlong is one that lacks forethought. Only answer choice (A) displays the same relationship between its two terms.

**Synonyms / Antonyms**

Although synonym / antonym questions test knowledge of vocabulary more directly than do any of the other verbal question types, the purpose of the synonym / antonym questions is to measure not merely the strength of your vocabulary but also the ability to reason from a given concept to its opposite. Synonyms / Antonyms may require only rather general knowledge of a word, or they may require you to make fine distinctions among answer choices. Synonyms / Antonyms are generally confined to nouns, verbs, and adjectives; answer choices may be single words or phrases.

**Approaches for answering Synonym / Antonym questions:**

- Remember that you are looking for the word that is the most nearly similar / opposite to the given word; since many words do not have a precise synonym / opposite, you must look for the answer choice that expresses a concept most nearly same / opposite to that of the given word.
- In some cases more than one of the answer choices may appear at first to be similar / opposite to the given word. Questions that require you to make fine distinctions among two or more answer choices are best handled by defining more precisely or in greater detail the meaning of the given word.
- It is often useful, in weighing answer choices, to make up a sentence using the given word or words. Substituting the answer choices in the phrase or sentence and seeing which best “fits,” in that, may help you determine the best answer.
- Remember that a particular word may have more than one meaning.
- Use your knowledge of root, prefix, and suffix meanings to help you determine the meanings of words with which you are not entirely familiar.
- The practice questions will help you prepare for your test in many ways. First, completing the practice exercises will make you familiar with the question format. They will also get you thinking of words in terms of other words with similar or opposite meanings.
- For example, a word may be familiar to you—you may have seen it in print and have a general sense of what it means—but when tested, you may discover that you do not know the word’s precise meaning. These exercises will help you pinpoint those familiar words for which you need to learn the exact definition. In addition, you will probably encounter words that are totally unfamiliar.
- By memorizing their definitions, you can add these words to your vocabulary and call upon them at test time to improve your score.
- Third, many of the questions in your Aptitude Test of GATE test your ability to discern nuances of meaning. The question may ask you to identify the synonym for a secondary definition of a common word—for example, “inclination or natural ability” is a secondary definition of the word “bent.” Also, the direction for these exercises usually ask you to identify the word that is “most similar” or “most dissimilar” in meaning to the word in the question. This means that you may be asked to pick between degrees of meaning. For example, “atrocious” means “utterly revolting”; in this case, “revolting” would be a more accurate synonym than “unpleasant.”
- Make a list of all the words that you missed and their definitions. Then study this list as a quick and concentrated method to improve your vocabulary. In some cases, you will also benefit from looking up the definitions of the words that you selected incorrectly to ensure that you know the precise meaning of these words. Then add these words to your study list as well.

**Sample Questions**

**Directions:** Each question below consists of a word printed in capital letters followed by five lettered words or phrases. Choose the lettered word or phrase that is most nearly opposite in meaning to the word in capital letters. Since some of the questions require you to distinguish fine shades of meaning, be sure to consider all the choices before deciding which one is best.

1. **DIFFUSE**
   (a) Contend
   (b) Concentrate
   (c) Imply
   (d) Pretend
Solution: The best answer is (b). *Diffuse* means to permit or cause to spread out; only (b) presents an idea that is in any way opposite to *diffuse*.

2. **MULTIFARIOUS**
   (a) Deprived of freedom
   (b) Deprived of comfort
   (c) Lacking space
   (d) Lacking diversity

Solution: *Multifarious* means having or occurring in great variety, so the best answer is (d). Even if you are not entirely familiar with the meaning of *multifarious*, it is possible to use the clue provided by "multi-" to help find the right answer to this question.

Sentence Completion
The purpose of the sentence completion questions is to measure the ability to use the various kinds of cues provided by syntax and grammar to recognize the overall meaning of a sentence. In deciding which of five words or sets of words can best be substituted for blank spaces in a sentence, you must analyse the relationships among the component parts of the incomplete sentence. You must consider each answer choice and decide which completes the sentence in such a way that the sentence has a logically satisfying meaning and can be read as a stylistically integrated whole.

Sentence completion questions provide a context within which to analyse the function of words as they relate to and combine with one another to form a meaningful unit of discourse.

Approaches for answering Sentence Completion Questions:
- **Read the entire incomplete sentence carefully before you consider the answer choices.** Be sure you understand the ideas expressed and examine the sentence for possible indications of tone (irony, humour, etc.)
- Before reading the answer choices, you may find it helpful to fill in the blanks with a word or words of your own that complete the meaning of the sentence. Then examine the answer choices to see if any of them parallels your own completion of the sentence.
- Pay attention to grammatical clues in the sentence. For example, words like although and nevertheless indicate that some qualification or opposition is taking place in the sentence, whereas moreover implies an intensification or support of some idea in the sentence.
- **If a sentence has two blanks, be sure that both parts of your answer choice fit logically and stylistically into the sentence.**
- When you have chosen an answer, read the complete sentence through to check that it has acquired a logically and stylistically satisfying meaning.

Sample Questions
**Directions:** Each sentence below has one or two blanks, each blank indicating that something has been omitted. Beneath the sentence are five lettered words or sets of words. Choose the word or set of words for each blank that best fits the meaning of the sentence as a whole.

1. Early -------- of hearing loss is -------- by the fact that the other senses are able to compensate for moderate amounts of loss, so that people frequently do not know that their hearing is imperfect.
   (a) Discovery ... Indicated
   (b) Development ... Prevented
   (c) Detection ... Complicated
   (d) Treatment ... Facilitated

   **Solution:** The statement that the other senses compensate for partial loss of hearing indicates that the hearing loss is not prevented or corrected; therefore, choice (b) can be eliminated. Furthermore, the ability to compensate for hearing loss certainly does not facilitate the early treatment (d) or the early discovery (A) of hearing loss. It is reasonable; however, that early detection of hearing loss is complicated by the ability to compensate for it. The best answer is (c).

2. The -------- science of seismology has grown just enough so that the first overly bold theories have been --------.
   (a) Magnetic ... Accepted
   (b) Fledgling ... Refuted
   (c) Tentative ... Analysed
   (d) Predictive ... Protected

   **Solution:** At first reading, there may appear to be more than one answer choice that “makes sense” when substituted in the blanks of the sentence. (a), (c), and (d) can be dismissed fairly readily when it is seen that *accepted, tentative, and protected* are not compatible with *overly bold* in the sentence.
Critical Reasoning

Critical Reasoning questions are designed to gauge your ability to think critically and analytically — more specifically:

- To recognize reasoning errors and unstated assumptions
- To follow an argument’s line of reasoning
- To draw reasonable inferences from stated premises

Each Critical Reasoning question provides a paragraph-length argument, along with a question pertaining to that argument. Each question will require you to perform one of the following seven tasks:

1. Recognizing how to undermine (weaken) an argument. (“Which of the following, if true, would most seriously weaken the argument above?”)
2. Recognizing how to support (strengthen) an argument. (“Which of the following, if true, would provide most support for the conclusion of the argument above?”)
3. Identifying unstated assumptions. (“The foregoing argument depends on which of the following assumptions?”)
4. Drawing an inference from a series of stated premises. (“If all of the statements above are true, which of the following is most strongly supported by them?”)
5. Making valid deductions based on a series of premises and/or a conclusion. (“If all of the statements above are true, which of the following must also be true?”) (“Which of the following statements must be true in order for the conclusion in the argument above to be inferable?”)
6. Recognizing patterns of reasoning. (“Which of the following demonstrates a pattern of reasoning most similar to the reasoning contained in the argument above?”) (“The flawed reasoning above is most similar to the flaw in which of the following?”)
7. Recognizing the main point, or final conclusion, of an argument. (“Which of the following best expresses the main point of the passage above?”)
8. The best approach to the question often depends on the question type. Thus you should always read the question before reading the argument, so that you know how to think about the argument as you read it. On the other hand, you won’t gain any insight by reading the answer choices beforehand; you’ll just be wasting precious time by doing so.

6-Step Approach for Critical Reasoning Questions

The 6-step approach for handling any unstated-assumption, undermining-evidence, or supporting-evidence question is as follows:

1. **Read the question stem** (the question itself, but not the answer choices) **before you read the argument.**
2. As you read the argument, **identify the premises and the conclusion.** Doing so will help you follow the argument’s line of reasoning. Keep in mind that the conclusion will not always appear last.
   
   **Look at this example:**
   During the past year consumers have clearly become less concerned about their health and level of fitness. After all, during the past year nationwide membership in fitness clubs has declined by about fifteen percent, while sales of fast-food products widely known to contribute to health problems, have risen by about the same percent.
3. Ask yourself: What relevant conditions must be assumed equal, or unchanged over time, in order for the conclusion to be strongly inferable from the premises? Try to formulate at least one or two assumptions — but don’t dwell on it too long. If nothing occurs to you after a few seconds, go on to step 4.
4. **Scan the answer choices** for one that reflects any of the unstated assumptions that have already occurred to you. Chances are you’ll find one of them among the choices.
5. If your predetermined assumption is not among the answer choices, then consider each answer choice more carefully, in turn. Having taken a highly active approach to the question, you’re far more likely to recognize the best response when you see it.
6. If you’re unable to determine the best response, look for answer choices that accomplish the opposite of what the question asks for, and answer choices that are irrelevant to the argument. Eliminate them in order to increase your odds of responding correctly to the question.
Broadly the questions can be divided into the following categories:

- Unstated-assumption questions
- Undermining-evidence questions
- Supporting-evidence questions

For any of these three question types, your task is essentially the same: to recognize a particular unstated assumption — a certain fact or condition not explicitly provided but which must be assumed in order for the argument’s conclusion to be readily inferable.

To help you appreciate how similar your approach should be for all three types, let’s follow what should be your basic train-of-thought for each type:

**Unstated-assumption question:** As you read the argument ask yourself, “In addition to the stated premises, what must be assumed true here in order for the argument to leap to its conclusion?” Then look for that missing link among the answer choices; that choice will be the best one.

**Undermining-evidence question:** As you read the argument ask yourself, “In addition to the stated premises, what must be assumed true here in order for the argument to leap to its conclusion?” Then scan the answer choices, looking for one that refutes, contradicts, or rules out that unstated assumption. That choice will be the best response to the question.

**Supporting-evidence question:** As you read the argument ask yourself, “In addition to the stated premises, what must be assumed true here in order for the argument to leap to its conclusion?” Then look for the answer choice that provides, or affirms, the missing link; that choice will be the best response to the question.

Consider the following argument. The argument’s first sentence contains two premises, while the second sentence states the argument’s conclusion:

During the past year nationwide membership in fitness clubs has declined by about fifteen percent, while sales of fast-food products widely known to contribute to health problems have risen by about the same percent. These statistics clearly show that during the past year consumers have become less concerned about their health and level of fitness.

This same argument could be used for any of the three question types. Regardless of the question, your analysis — as you go from the premises to the conclusion — is the same: Ask yourself what the missing link is. Did any assumptions occur to you? If not, let’s do some brainstorming. Doesn’t the argument depend on all of the following assumptions?

- People join fitness clubs because they are concerned about their health.
- Membership in fitness clubs is the only means by which consumers demonstrate their concern for fitness.
- Renewal rates at fitness clubs are not increasing.
- The fitness-club membership decline is not due to factors such as: (1) memberships becoming prohibitively expensive or (2) the discontinuation of operations by a large nationwide fitness-club chain.

Additional unstated assumptions might occur to you as well. You can take any one of these assumptions and draft it as the best answer choice for any of the three question types.

For each of the three question types, here’s a sample question along with a viable best answer choice:

**Unstated Assumption**

**Question:**

The argument above depends on which of the following assumptions about the most recent one-year period?

**Best answer choice:**

Concern about health is the primary reason that consumers join fitness clubs.

**Undermining Evidence**

**Question:**

Which of the following statements about the most recent one-year period, if true, would most seriously weaken the argument above?

**Best answer choice:**

People join fitness clubs for the primary purpose of socializing with other club members.

**Supporting Evidence**

**Question:**

Which of the following statements about the most recent one-year period, if true, provides most support for the conclusion drawn above?

**Best answer choice:**

Most consumers who join fitness clubs do so for the purpose of maintaining or enhancing their level of health and fitness.
Regardless of whichever type of question you are dealing with, most of the remaining wrong-answer choices will simply be irrelevant to the argument. In other words, even if true they accomplish nothing toward either weakening or strengthening the argument. Here are three examples, which could easily be used together as answer choices for any of the three types of questions involving my health-and-fitness argument:

- Last year consumers spent less money on fitness-club memberships than on fast food. [Irrelevant; the argument seeks to explain changes in two spending patterns, not to compare total spending in one area with total spending in another.]
- The overall level of health and fitness among consumers declined last year. [Irrelevant; the argument's conclusion involves a trend in concern among consumers about health and fitness, not in their actual health and fitness.]
- Consumers having a low level of health and fitness tend to spend more money on fast food than other consumers do. [Irrelevant; the argument's conclusion involves a trend in concern among consumers about health and fitness, not in their actual health and fitness.]
- Preparing for Critical Reasoning questions should involve developing skills — along with consistent practice.
Spotting Errors & Sentence Correction
Introduction

This chapter is intended as a basic and simple guide to English grammar. Your score depends more on accuracy than on speed. In the Sentence Improvement & Spotting Errors section the questions are basically on Grammar which appear to be difficult questions at times, but they are not so difficult by their basic nature.

Relevance of the section

English Grammar is one of the most important sections from the perspective of General English section. So, to increase your General English score, you should be very familiar with all the items on this list:

1. Subject-Verb agreement
2. Verbs, Tenses. The different Structures of Sentence
3. Conditional Sentences
4. Direct & Indirect Speech
5. Active & Passive Voice
6. Modifiers
7. Parallelism
8. Use of Pronouns
9. Idioms & Phrasal Verbs

The directions for these questions look like this:

In this section a number of sentences are given. The sentences are underlined in three separate parts and each one is labelled as (a), (b), (c). Read each sentence to find out whether there is an error in any underlined part. No sentence has more than one error. When you find an error in any one of the underlined parts (a), (b) or (c), indicate your response on the Separate Answer Sheet at the appropriate space. You may feel that there is no error in the sentence. In that case letter (d) will signify a “No error” response.

You are to indicate only one response for each item in your Answer Sheet. Errors may be in grammar, word usage or idioms. There may be a word missing or they may be a word which should be removed.

You are not required to correct the error. You are required only to indicate your response on the Answer Sheet.

Sample Questions are Spotting Errors

1. Many a student in our college are extremely fond of the new game.
   (a)                      (b)
   No error.               (c)                      (d)

2. During India’s struggle for freedom many brilliant students gave up their studies by Mahatma Gandhi’s call.
   (a)                      (b)                      (c)
   No error.               (d)

3. He opposed the scheme at first but when it was fully explained he came to over views.
   (a)                      (b)
   No error.               (c)                      (d)

4. The world we live presents an infinite variety of experience everyday.
   (a)                      (b)                      (c)
   No error.               (d)

5. Any meaningful discussion of national integration must take stock about the tendencies.
   (a)                      (b)
   No error.               (c)                      (d)

6. The lion told the fox the he is very week and that he had no appetite.
   (a)                      (b)                      (c)
   No error.               (d)
7. The traveler was so hungry
    (a) that he gulped all the food
    (b) placed over the table. No error. (c) (d)

8. You may have to regret later
    (a) if you do not start living
    (b) within your mean. No error. (c) (d)

9. She was ashamed
    (a) when she remembered
    (b) that she did not visit her mother for a year.
    No error. (d)

10. Tell me
    (a) what all you know about it
    (b) before I take a decision in the matter.
    No error. (d)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answers</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. (a)</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. (b)</td>
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The Approach of attempting Spotting the Error Questions:

Read the complete sentence. Go through the entire sentence without breaking it in three different segments, because context may be important in determining the correct answer. If you cannot find any error, grammatical or otherwise, in the entire sentence, choose D, and move on. If you don’t find an error in the underlined portion, or if you’re not sure, work with the approach of elimination.

This section tests only a limited number of grammar error types. After you’ve read the sentence, look for clues indicating what grammar rule the question is testing. Always look for one or more of these errors:

1. Subject-Verb agreement: Do they agree?
2. Tenses, the different Structures of Sentence. Active- Passive Voice, Reported Speech etc.
3. Use of Pronouns
4. Modifiers: Look for introductory phrases set off by a comma: is the modifier used correctly?
5. Parallelism: Look for commas separating words in a list, as well as expressions such as not only...but also, both…. and, either...or, neither...nor: is everything parallel?
6. Idioms and Phrasal Verbs
7. The error of conditional sentences.

After you have scrutinized the question, compare answer choices and note how they differ. Look for the answer choice that preserves the meaning of the original sentence without creating new errors. Eliminate answer choices without grammar errors.

Concentrate on the answer choices and Eliminate

Spotting the Errors and Sentence Improvement are the most mechanical question types in the General English Section. Speed is of the essence, and the best way to gain speed is to eliminate the answer choices confidently. The question set below presents a typical structure. Notice how two choices are different from each other.

Let us see some Illustrative Examples:

1. Many a student in our college are extremely fond of the new game.
   (a) (b) (c) (d)
   Correct Answer Choice: (a)
   ‘Many a’ is an indefinite pronoun which always takes singular verb with it. It would have been right to say, "Many students in our college are extremely fond of the new game".
   Alternatively you can say “Many a student in our college is extremely fond of the new game”.

2. During India’s struggle for freedom many brilliant students gave up their studies by Mahatma Gandhi’s call.
   (a) (b) (c) (d)
   Correct Answer Choice: (a)
   The correct sentence will be, “During India’s struggle for freedom many brilliant students gave up their studies on Mahatma Gandhi’s call”.

Answers

1. (a) 2. (c) 3. (b) 4. (a) 5. (b)
6. (b) 7. (c) 8. (c) 9. (c) 10. (b)
Lalita Sharma, broke and confused, wandered away from her keepers,

(a) however she soon found a campaign manager

(b) and successfully ran for governor. No error

(c) (d)

Correct Answer Choice: (b)

However can't legally join two sentences. According to the grammar rules, the comma in front of however should be a semicolon.

The key to spotting the errors questions is to assume for a moment that the underlining doesn't exist. Just read the sentence to see what sounds wrong, and then look for the letter. If nothing comes in your mind on first reading, check each underlined portion carefully. Still no mistake? Go for (D), which is always no error.

The following helpful do's and don'ts can make answering spotting the errors questions much easier:

- Do keep an eye open for incorrect punctuation. Always check apostrophes and commas.

- Do look for vocabulary mistakes. Spotting errors questions sometimes contain mistakes in vocabulary. Words that are commonly confused (affect and effect, for example) or non-existent but still popular (such as irregardless) may show up.

- Don't worry about spelling and capitalization mistakes. They never appear in the spotting errors sentences. Assume that the words are spelled correctly and that the capital letters are in the right spots.

- Do watch out for verbs. Verb tense is a big deal, as is subject-verb agreement (choosing a singular or plural verb). Refer to the chapter on Subject Verb Agreement in the book.

- Do pay attention to pronouns. The paper-setters often mix singular and plural forms incorrectly.

- Don't waste time figuring out how to correct the error. Just find it, mark the answer choice and move on. The next question is waiting for you. It is important that you maintain a good speed.

- Don’t be afraid to choose no error if you can’t find anything wrong.
What is a word?
A word can be divided into its **Root** (the basic part of the word containing its meaning) and its **Prefixes / Suffixes** (the things added at the beginning of or ending of the root to indicate things like a noun is plural or a verb is in the past tense).

Examples:
(i) Root: **dog**
    Suffix: **s** in **dogs**
(ii) Root: **run**
    Suffix: **s** in **runs**

What is a Sentence?
A Sentence comprises of the following:

**Subject:**
The subject is the doer/performer of the action which is taking place in the sentence. It may be a person, thing or topic which the sentence deals with. To discover the subject, ask **who** or **what** before the verb.

For example in the sentence **The Sky is blue.**, what **is blue?** Answer: **The Sky.**

**Predicate:**
The predicate is the entire part of the sentence except the subject. Examples: **The Sky is blue.**

“Is blue” is the **predicate** here.

**Object:**
The object is that part of the sentence on which the action is being done. It is the person or thing on which the action of the verb is carried out by the subject. To discover the object, ask **who** or **what** after the verb, e.g.

Rohit cheated me.
Rohit cheated who?
Answer: **me.**

Examples:
I saw the **movie.**
Mukul sees **himself in the mirror** carefully.

Certain times a sentence can have two objects. Where one of these can alternatively be expressed by placing **to** before it, it is called the **indirect object.**

For example, instead of **Kunal gave me the cash** we can say **Kunal gave the cash to me.** Here the **cash** is the direct object and the **me** the indirect object.

**Complement**
Whatever comes after the verb ‘to be’ is the complement. After the verb **to be** (is / am / are in Present Tense and was /were in Past tense) there is no object since the noun which follows refers to the same thing as that which precedes the verb (the subject). The noun following the verb **to be** is called the complement.

Examples:
She is a **girl.**
This is the **Sudoku Puzzle.**

**PARTS OF SPEECH**
Parts of Speech are the basic formative parts of English without which understanding of the nuances of any language cannot be developed. They are the “building blocks” of the language. Consider them as the parts of a house. As a house cannot be constructed without all the necessary ingredients, similarly English Grammar cannot be understood without understanding Parts of Speech. When we want to build a house, we use concrete to make the foundations or base. We use bricks to make the walls. We use window frames to make the windows, and door frames to make the doorways. And we use cement to join them all together. Each part of the house has its own job. And when we want to build a sentence, we use different types of words. Each type of word has its own job.
In English, we can categorize parts of speech (can be understood as parts of a sentence) into 8 basic types or classes. These classes are called “parts of speech”. It’s quite important to recognize the parts of speech. This helps you to analyse sentences and understand them. It also helps you to construct good sentences.

Traditional Grammar divides Parts of Speech into 8 parts; some modern Grammarians define 9 or 10 parts of speech also. However we will go with the traditional Grammar Approach. Here is the classification:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part of speech</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Examples</th>
<th>Sentences using the Part of Speech</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Verb</td>
<td>action or state</td>
<td>(to) be, have, do, like, work, sing, can, must</td>
<td>I go to my MadeEasy Classes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noun</td>
<td>thing or person</td>
<td>pen, dog, work, music, town, London, teacher, John</td>
<td>This is my dog. He lives in my house. We live in Delhi.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjective</td>
<td>describes a noun</td>
<td>a/an, the, some, good, big, red, well, interesting</td>
<td>My dog is big. I like big dogs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adverb</td>
<td>describes a verb,</td>
<td>quickly, silently,</td>
<td>My dog eats quickly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>adjective or adverb</td>
<td>well, badly, very, really</td>
<td>When he is very hungry, he eats really quickly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pronoun</td>
<td>replaces a noun</td>
<td>I, you, he, she, some</td>
<td>Tara is Indian. She is beautiful.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preposition</td>
<td>links a noun to another word</td>
<td>to, at, after, on, but</td>
<td>We went to school on Monday.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conjunction</td>
<td>joins clauses or sentences or words</td>
<td>and, but, when</td>
<td>I like dogs and I like cats. I like cats and dogs. I like dogs but I don’t like cats.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interjection</td>
<td>short exclamation, sometimes inserted into a sentence</td>
<td>oh!, ouch!, hi!, well</td>
<td>Ouch! That hurts! Hi! How are you? Well, I don’t know.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Subject Verb Agreement

Subject is the person who performs the action. It can also be a thing which is being talked about. In other words, subject is the doer/performer of the action and Verb is the action itself. Subject-Verb Agreement simply implies that there should be an agreement between the subject and the form of the verb. There is an agreement between the subject and the verb in a sentence when their forms match. The subject and verb of a sentence must agree. Agreement between a subject and a verb occurs when both are singular or both plural, that is, a singular subject should be followed by a singular verb. And the same applies to the plural subject.

- Rule: A singular subject should be followed by a singular verb and a plural subject should always have a plural verb with it.
- In Simple Present Tense, along with a singular subject always add s/es in the main verb. For example, go becomes ‘goes’, talk becomes ‘talks’ etc.
- In Simple Present Tense, along with a plural subject, I and You, there should not be any s/es. For example, I go (and not goes). They talk (and not talks).

Examples:
My uncle stays in Gurgaon, he is a working professional.
My relatives stay in Gurgaon, they are working professionals.

Sample Questions from the last few Years Papers

1. A block of commercial projects
   (a) are coming up in Noida
   (b) near our house.
   (c) No error
   (d)

2. The boss, along with his assistants
   (a) are going
   (b) on a foreign trip.
   (c) No error
   (d)

3. A Series of plants have been growing
   (a) along the path.
   (b) No error
   (c) (d)

4. Concerti are the plural form of concerto.
   (a) No error
   (b) (c)

5. Chemistry has never been exactly
   (a) my cup of tea.
   (b) No error
   (c) (d)

Answers:
1. Correct Answer: B
   In the sentence the subject is ‘A block of commercial projects’ which is a singular unit, so it should be followed by a singular verb ‘is’. Remember the sentence doesn’t refer to the ‘commercial projects’ as a subject so the verb cannot be ‘are’.

2. Correct Answer: B
   The subject of the sentence is ‘the boss’. ‘The boss’ is the main subject. ‘The assistants’ has been added over the main subject as an additive, which doesn’t make any difference to the verb. Remember, the answer would have been plural if the subject had been, “The boss and his assistants”.

3. Correct Answer: B
   Subject of the sentence is ‘a series of plants’ and not ‘plants’. It would have been right to say, “Plants have been growing along the path”. Or
“A series of plants has been growing along the path”.

4. Correct Answer: D  
   Concerti are the plural form of concerto.

5. Correct Answer: D  
   Chemistry has never been exactly my cup of tea.

When a subject is plural or it refers to more than one thing or persons, it should be followed by a plural verb. The ‘subject’ of a sentence is the noun/person to which the verb in the sentence refers, and the subject and the verb should always agree in number. This agreement should apply to all the forms of the subjects and verbs. Singular subjects must be used with singular verbs; and plural subjects, with plural verbs. Though it may sound simple, the General English Test uses tricky questions and phrasings that make these questions seem far more complicated than they actually are.

The smart looking young gentleman was wearing a business suit.

Subject: gentleman

Verb: was wearing

What is agreement?

The Subject Verb Agreement rule simply means that the subject and the verb of a sentence must match – “agree with” – one another. What exactly does this mean? When you change the form of a word to make it fit properly into the sentence, like changing the ending of a masculine adjective to feminine because the noun it modifies is feminine – that’s agreement. Agreement helps us to understand who’s doing what in a sentence in a clear and unambiguous manner. Because along with the sentences being grammatically correct they should be clear, unambiguous & precise in their construction. Without such a method of clarification – of indicating which adjectives in a sentence modify which nouns, or which nouns are governed by which verbs – clear expression, in writing and speech alike, would be very difficult.

Types of Agreement

In English Grammar, Subject Verb Agreement is applicable to several different kinds of groups: nouns and their verbs; pronouns and their verbs; adjectives and the nouns they modify; prepositions and the verb(s) they govern. Depending on the nature of the pairing, agreement is needed in terms of the following cases:

- Tense
- Number or
- Case

Tense and number apply to verbs; number applies to verbs, nouns, and pronouns; and case applies to nouns, pronouns, and modifiers:

- Tense: shows the time of the action. In other words, it indicates when an action happened, is happening, or will happen

- Number: shows the number or the unit. It indicates “how many” - singular (one) or plural (more than one)

- Case: shows what role the word is playing in the sentence like, a noun, pronoun etc. It indicates role of noun or pronoun in sentence. In English, nouns only change form for the possessive case, while pronouns have different forms for the possessive, subjective, and objective cases.

Just to simplify, you can also say, singular nouns agree with singular verbs, plural nouns with plural verbs, and so forth. For an agreement the subject and a verb of a sentence match in as many of these ways as possible: for example, a noun and verb can agree in terms of number (singular or plural) only, while a noun and a pronoun can agree in terms of both number (singular and plural) and case (possessive or otherwise). But more complex sentences - those containing several nouns, verbs, and/or pronouns can sometimes make even the simplest applications of agreement confusing.

A singular subject should have a singular verb and Plural subject should have a plural verb with it.

Examples:

- **Rajesh** is a doctor.
- **Doctors** are examining his case.
- **Rajesh treats** his patients. (Simple Present Tense)
- **Doctors treat** their patients. (Simple Present Tense)
In Spotting the Error questions of General English section of your test, don’t remember to check for agreement in every question you see, and be aware of the different ways the error can come up. You should also know how to handle – or even identify – a subject-verb agreement error without obvious isolating commas.

Rule 3: Phrases or words separated by ‘and’ are plural.

Phrases separated by or nor are singular.

- My family, friends and I are going to temple.

In this example, we can see three subjects. Because these subjects – family, friends and I - are separated by the word “and”, the plural form of the verb is used, according to the rule stated above. It’s an extremely straightforward grammatical construction: the subject is plural because it refers to more than one person (or place, or thing, or event), and plural subjects require plural verbs.

Rule 4: The use of Collective Nouns

Collective nouns, such as bouquet, bunch, panel, herd, archipelago, Cache, family, majority, audience, and committee are referred as a singular entity when they act in a collective fashion or represent one group. They are plural when the members of the collective body act as individuals. Collective nouns will usually be singular in Sentence Correction sentences. The difficulty of these questions lies in identifying a noun as a collective noun.

Certain Examples of Common Collective Nouns:

- Group, Team, Staff, Government, chain, archipelago, Cache, Class, Senate, Parliament, Society, Faculty, Family, Council, Herd etc.
- The bunch of flowers looks beautiful.
- The flowers of the bunch look beautiful.

These collective nouns usually appear plural, but are in fact singular because they are referring to a group of those units and not those units individually. For an example:

- The team has taken the decision with consensus.
- The team members are divided over the issue.
If the conjunction neither...nor appears in a sentence or the conjunction either...or, the verb form is decided on the basis of the closer subject. That is, if you see “neither” followed by “nor,” or “either” followed by “or,” you can’t automatically assume that the verb should be singular. In these constructions, “neither” and “either” are no longer the subjects of their sentences. Instead, they function as conjunctions, working in pairs with “nor” and “or” to join two other subjects in the sentence. When this occurs, the verb agrees with whichever subject is closer to it.

- Either the commander or his juniors are taking in charge.
- Either the juniors or their commander is taking in charge.
- Neither the commander nor his juniors are taking in charge.
- Neither the juniors nor their commander is taking in charge.

This “either...or” sentence contains two subjects: “commander,” and “juniors.” In these situations, the subjects are the two nouns immediately following the words “either” and “or.”-Since the latter subject, “juniors,” is plural, we therefore need a plural verb, too. The plural verb “were” is correct. Don’t forget to apply this rule only when both items of the pairs “neither/nor” and “either/or” are present in the sentence.

Rule 6: The use of Indefinite Pronouns: they are always singular.

Indefinite Pronouns always take a singular form of the Verb, irrespective of the form of any noun close to them.

Some of the commonly used Indefinite Pronouns are:

- Either
- Neither
- Each
- Everybody, Everyone
- Somebody, Someone, Something
- Anybody, Anyone, Anything
- Nobody, No one
- Many a
- Whatever, Whoever

- Neither of the students is intelligent.
Here we have an example of a sentence in which the word “neither,” not the plural noun “students” is the subject of the sentence. As per the stated rules above, **“Neither” takes a singular verb when it acts as the subject of the sentence.** Therefore, the singular verb “is” is correct. The sentence requires no changes.

Let us have another example of an indefinite pronoun:

**Either of the staff members has** completed the project work.

In this sentence, the word “either” acts as the subject, or therefore requires a singular noun. Always remember in case of either….or, the verb agrees to the closer subject. In case of either, the verb always takes a plural form. If you are not confident, a helpful tip is to think of the word “either” as an abbreviation of the phrase “either one”. Once you do so, it’s easier to see that the phrase “of us” is just filler (that you can cross it out). The subject of the sentence is “either (one)”, and so this sentence therefore requires a singular verb: “is”

**Rule 7: Exceptions of Indefinite Pronouns**

The following indefinite pronouns could be either singular or plural depending on the context in which they are used:

- None
- Any
- All
- Some
- Most
  - Some of the **sugar** is contaminated.
  - Some of the **people** are voting for the secular government.
  - Most of the **apples** are rotten.
  - Most of the **apple** is rotten.

Both sentences are equally correct, though they convey two different meanings. The first requires a plural verb and the second a singular verb because in the first sentence, ‘most’ refers to several distinct objects.

If we have, say, ten apples, then “most of the apples” means either two apples, or three apples, or four or five or six – in any case, many individual apples. But in the second sentence, “some” refers to part of one object.

One part of one apple is rotten. In this sentence, “most” means “part” – which is singular.

This very same rule works for the words like “some,” “all,” “any,” and “most”. For “any,” the verb will usually appear before the noun, but the same principle applies: if “any” is followed by a singular noun, use a singular verb; if it’s followed by a plural noun, use a plural verb.

**Rule 8: Certain Plural Pronouns**

Unlike Indefinite Pronouns, there are a few pronouns which are always used in the plural form. Such as:

- Both
- Several
- Few
- Many
- Others

**Both, Ram and Mohit, are** planning to attend the party tonight.

As both refers to the two subjects, hence will take a plural verb form.

A quick **O**verview of what we learnt so far

- Two or more than two nouns adjoined with the help of and always take a plural verb.
  Example: Ram and Shyam are studying together.
- Subject and verb may be separated by an accompanying phrase without changing the agreement.
  Example: Professor Sharma, accompanied by his students, was in the lab.
- Phrases or words separated by ‘and’ are plural.
  Example: My family, friends and I are going to temple.
- Collective nouns, such as bunch, panel, family, majority, audience, and committee are referred as a singular entity when they act in a collective fashion or represent one group.
Examples: The committee has taken the decision unanimously.
The committee members are fighting over the bylaws amendment bill.

- If two subjects are joined by Either….or Or Neither… nor the verb should agree with the subject that is closer to it.
Examples: Either the commander or his juniors are taking in charge.
Either the juniors or their commander is taking in charge.

- Indefinite Pronouns such as, Either, Neither, Each, Everybody, Everyone,

Mark the correct answer choice out of the two options given:

1. The world (change, changes) so rapidly that we can hardly keep up.
2. People (is, are) often ten or twenty years behind the times in their knowledge of the world.
3. People who (live, lives) in poverty often do not even have television or newspapers.
4. He (doesn’t, don’t) want to be killed.
5. Life (is, are) very complicated
6. Traditionally, college students (has, have) been very active in politics.
7. There (is, are) both men and women at the meeting.
8. The students in my class (has, have) very poor work habits.
9. Each of you (has, have) an equal chance to make good grades.
10. All of the children (was, were) searching for flowers in the garden.
11. A notebook and a pen (is, are) lying on the desk in the library.
12. My son, along with two friends, (is, are) coming for the weekend.
13. Sitting on the sofa (was, were) two students from Thailand.
14. Either the workers or the manager (is, are) coming to the conference.
15. Not only the students, but also the teacher (has, have) been unhappy.
16. Everybody (hate, hates) to take tests.
17. Knowledge gained after long study (disappear, disappears) rapidly from our minds.
18. One of my greatest worries in college (was, were) that I would study hard and still flunk important tests.
19. The Bombay University (provide, provides) some scholarships for the students.
20. The news about Afghanistan (is, are) shocking, isn’t it?
Mark the choice which is grammatically correct

1. Either the photographer or her companions **was**/ **were** the first to see the gorilla.
2. Rahul's natural ability and his desire to help others **has**/ **have** led to a career in the ministry.
3. Everybody who signed up for the ski trip **was**/ **were** taking lessons.
4. Some of our luggage **was**/ **were** lost.
5. None of his advice **make**/ **makes** sense.
6. One out of every three sunsets **was**/ **were** covered with clouds.
7. A ship and a plane **has**/ **have** recently disappeared in the Pacific Ocean.
8. The teeth in a crocodile's mouth **is**/ **are** sharp.
9. The leaders of the expedition **was**/ **were** looking for a campsite.
10. The lions and the photographer **was**/ **were** face to face.
11. During the trip bread and butter **was**/ **were** the favourite meal for the two drivers.
12. Measles **is**/ **are** a contagious childhood disease.
13. On the side **is**/ **are** political correspondents hoping for an interview.
14. The trunk of the elephant and the belly of the hippo **make**/ **makes** me laugh.
15. A group of students **was**/ **were** blocking the road.
16. Arvind and Harish, members of a racing team, **drives**/ **drive** across Nepal.
17. The samples on the tray in the lab **need**/ **needs** testing.
18. Mohan **swim**/ **swims** in the cold water often.
19. The Whale Shark, the largest of all sharks, **grow**/ **grows** up to 38 feet long.
20. The board of trustees **meet**/ **meets** in Delhi on the first Tuesday of each month.
Spot the error:

1. Freedom and justice were the two cornerstones of the democracy from the beginning. No error
   (a) (b) (c) (d)

2. Neither the coach nor the students wants to do another water-color. No error
   (a) (b) (c) (d)

3. Several in the audience were beside themselves with anger at what the speaker had said. No error
   (a) (b) (c) (d)

4. Some of Manish’s time was taken up settling disputes among the workers. No error
   (a) (b) (c) (d)

5. Ninety per cent of the trees were scheduled for harvest. No error
   (a) (b) (c) (d)

6. The principal was displeased to learn that none of the foreign students is majoring in education of Chemistry. No error
   (a) (b) (c) (d)

7. The combined family have been arriving two or three at a time since last weekend. No error
   (a) (b) (c) (d)

8. For the fourth time this year, the committee are going to consider increasing the dues. No error
   (a) (b) (c) (d)

9. Beside the old gymnasium stand an elm, several maples, and a huge Indian. No error
   (a) (b) (c) (d)

10. This Master book concludes with pages that contain lists of American colleges and universities. No error
    (a) (b) (c) (d)

11. To Hussain’s way of thinking, fancy dinners is not a luxury. No error
    (a) (b) (c) (d)

12. My favourite lunch is sausage, eggs, slice, and a green salad. No error
    (a) (b) (c) (d)
16. hates 17. disappears 18. was 19. Provides 20. Is

Solutions • Practice Exercise • 2


Solutions • Practice Exercise • 3

1. (d)
   Freedom and justice were the two cornerstones of the democracy from the beginning.

2. (c)
   Neither the coach nor the students want to do another water-color.

3. (d)
   Several in the audience were beside themselves with anger at what the speaker had said.

4. (d)
   Some of Manish’s time was taken up settling disputes among the workers.

5. (d)
   Ninety per cent of the trees were scheduled for harvest.

6. (b)
   The principal was displeased to learn that none of the foreign students is majoring in education or Chemistry.

7. (a)
   The combined family has been arriving two or three at a time since last weekend.

8. (b)
   For the fourth time this year, the committee is going to consider increasing the dues.

9. (d)
   Beside the old gymnasium stand an elm, several maples, and a huge Indian.

10. (d)
    This Master book concludes with pages that contain lists of American colleges and universities.

11. (c)
    To Husain’s way of thinking, fancy dinners are not a luxury.

12. (d)
    My favourite lunch is sausage, eggs, slice, and a green salad.