

Spotting the Error & Correction of Sentences

The most common areas in the sentence correction section which are required to be polished include: sentence structure errors, subject-verb agreement errors, verb tense errors, preposition errors, pronoun errors and idiomatic errors.

Sentence Correction Tips

First look carefully at the given sentence.

Check for subject - verb agreement, if the subject is singular verb should be singular and if the subject is plural verb must satisfy it.

Example: A bouquet of roses lend colour and fragrance to the room. (**Incorrect**)

A bouquet of roses lends colour and fragrance to the room. (**Correct**)

My dog always growl at the postman. (**Incorrect**)

My dog always growls at the postman. (**Correct**)

Either Grandpa or my sisters is going to the park. (**Incorrect**)

Either Grandpa or my sisters are going to the park. (**Correct**)

Either my sisters or Grandpa are going to the park. (**Incorrect**)

Either my sisters or Grandpa is going to the park. (**Correct**)

Note: In the last two sentences the verb must be decided based on the closest subject, if the closest subject is plural verb must be plural and if the closest subject is singular, verb must be singular.

As far as verb tense errors are concerned non-native speakers generally make two frequent errors with irregular verbs. They either add an incorrect 'ed' to the end of an irregular verb or accidentally interchange the simple past and past participle. Observe the sentence given below:

Example: Jack feeled like swimming yesterday, so he putted his bathing suit and drived to the pool.

Observe the wrong usage of the verbs 'feeled', 'putted' and 'drived'

which should be used as 'felt', 'put' and 'drove'.

Apart from paying attention to verb forms another point to bear in mind is not to switch from one tense to another unless the timing of an action demands. Keep verb tense consistent in sentences. Do not change tenses when there is no time change for the action.

Example: During the movie, John stood up and then drops his popcorn. (**Incorrect**)

During the movie, John stood up and then dropped his popcorn. (**Correct**)

When Mary walks into a room, everyone will stare. (**Incorrect**)

When Mary walks into a room, everyone stares. (**Correct**)

Note: In the first sentence since there is no indication that the actions happened apart from one another; there is no reason to shift the tense of the second verb. In the second example Mary walks into a room at times. The action is habitual present. The second action happens when the first one does. Therefore, the second verb should be used in present as well.

Check for preposition errors. There are 2 major rules when it comes to the use of prepositions.

1. The first major rule deals with preposition choice. Certain prepositions must follow certain words, and the correct preposition must be used to make relationships between words in the sentences clear.
2. The second major rule deals with the prepositions place in the sentence. Prepositions must be followed by nouns, and prepositions can only go on the end of the sentence in certain situations.

Example: This material is superior than that. (**Incorrect**)
This material is superior to that. (**Correct**)

She married to/with her boss. (**Incorrect**)

She married her boss. (**Correct**)

This resembles to that. (**Incorrect**)

This resembles that. (**Correct**)

- Whenever you use a pronoun, make sure that it has the same person, number, and gender as its antecedent.

- See the word, "which," when "which" introduces a clause (called an adjective clause), make sure that the clause introduced by "which" immediately follows the noun idea it modifies. Just as an adjective must describe a noun, so an adjective clause must describe a noun.

Example:

It is I who is sorry. (**Incorrect**)

It is I who am sorry. (**Correct**)

Note: When who refers to a personal pronoun (I, you, he, she, we, they), it takes the verb that agrees with that pronoun.

Example:

Please give it to John or myself. (**Incorrect**)

Please give it to John or me. (**Correct**)

Note: Don't use myself unless the pronoun I or me precedes it in the sentence.

- If a sentence is about some sort of numerical quantity (ex. "the percentage of illiterates in Mahaboobnagar" or "the number of women studying Sanskrit") check for idiomatic errors (remember: "fewer"

describes a countable quantity, like people; "less" describes an uncountable quantity, like sugar).

Example:

There are less pieces of cheese on this plate. (**Incorrect**)

There are fewer pieces of cheese on this plate. (**Correct**)

There are less crows in Hyderabad than there used to be. (**Incorrect**)

There are fewer crows in Hyderabad than there used to be. (**Correct**)

In future, there will be less coins in circulation. (**Incorrect**)

In future, there will be fewer coins in circulation. (**Correct**)

- Make sure that the items compared make sense while using the words "as," "than," and "like".

Practice test

Directions: Read each sentence to find out whether there is any grammatical error or idiomatic error in it. The error if any will be in one part of the sentence. The number of that part will be the

answer. If there is no error, mark (5) as your answer. (Ignore punctuation errors if any.)

1. I went to(1)/ the library to get (2)/ as many information(3)/as I could.(4)/ No Error (5)
2. It wasn't until (1)/ she saw the smirk (2)/ on his face that Anny noticed (3)/ he was just putting her leg. (4)/ No Error (5)
3. Both of the (1)/ bicycles (2)/ in the garage (3)/ is broken. (4)/ No Error (5)
4. Few of (1)/ the suggestions (2)/ sounds (3)/ reasonable to me. (4)/ No Error (5)
5. The soccer player (1)/ was ejected because (2)/ he had done something (3)/ that was without the rules. (4)/ No Error (5)
6. She's the kind (1)/ of girl who knows (2)/ everything about (3)/ everyone. (4) / No Error (5)
7. Ramesh is (1)/ as tall if not, (2)/ taller (3)/ than Mahesh. (4)/ No Error (5)
8. Look, it's (1)/ nearly midnight. (2)/ It's almost time (3)/ we went. (4)/ No Error (5)
9. Medicine should (1)/not be placed (2)/ with in reach (3)/ of small children. (4)/ No Error (5)
10. You should (1)/ not do it (2)/ because it is (3)/ almost the rules.(4)/ No Error (5)
11. The mother (1)/ divided the (2)/ birthday cake (3)/ between the children at the party. (4)/ No Error (5)
12. The tourist hired (1)/ a car in order (2)/ to travel round (3)/ the countryside, sightseeing. (4)/ No Error (5)
13. The salesman did not have (1)/ to pay for his car (2)/ as it was provided by (3)/ his company's expense. (4)/ No Error (5)
14. She is (1)/ rather old-fashioned (2)/ and below (3)/ the times. (4)/ No Error (5)
15. I have got some tea, (1)/ but I do (2)/ not have (3)/ a sugar. (4) / No Error (5)

16. She cooks, (1)/ washes dishes, (2)/ does her homework (3)/ and then relaxing. (4)/ No Error (5)
17. The man who has (1)/ committed such a serious (2)/ crime must get the mostly (3)/ severe punishment. (4)/ No Error (5)
18. He never(1)/ has and ever (2)/ will take such (3)/ strong measures. (4)/ No error(5)
19. Technology must (1)/ use to (2)/ feed the forces (3)/ of change. (4)/ No error (5)
20. Anyone interested (1)/ in the use of computers (2)/ can learn much if you have (3)/ access to a personal computer. (4)/ No error (5)
21. Despite of their differences (1)/ on matters of principles, (2)/ they all agree on (3)/ the demand of hike in salary. (4)/ No error (5)
22. Mr. Mathews, (1)/ a schoolmaster (2)/ has been got (3)/ in trouble. (4)/ No error (5)

23. The notes (1)/ were pinned up (2)/ to the (3)/ classroom wall. (4)/ No error (5)
24. Do you know (1)/ anybody whose (2)/ going to U.S.A. (3)/ in the next few days? (4)/ No error (5)
25. She has (1)/ got longer (2)/ hair then (3)/ I have. (4)/ No error (5)

Answers

1. (3) I went to the library to get as much information as I could. The word information is an uncountable noun and should be used with much not with many.
2. (4) 'Pulling your leg' is an idiomatic expression which means just joking.
3. (4) The subject "both" is always plural.
4. (3) The correct response is 'sound'. The subject, "few," is always plural, so we can't have an -s ending on the verb.

5. (4) The correct preposition to be used in this sentence is 'against'.
6. (5)
7. (2) The correct construction should be 'as tall as'.
8. (3) 'About time' is the correct usage.
9. (3) 'Within' should be used as a single word.
10. (4) 'Against the rules' is the right usage.
11. (4) It should be 'among the children' not 'between'.
12. (3) The preposition to be used here is either 'about' or 'around'.
13. (3) 'Provided at' is the right usage.
14. (3) 'Behind' is the correct word.
15. (4) Sugar is an uncountable noun so the article 'a' is not correct here.
16. (4) All the verbs used in the sentence except the last verb are used in the same tense
17. (3) It is not the adverb form which should be used here; it should be the adjective form.
18. (2) The verb should be in past form. He never had taken nor will ever take such strong measures.
19. (2) The correct sentence is 'Technology must be used to feed the forces of change'.
20. (3) The pronoun should be used in subjective case third person.
21. The preposition 'of' is not required.
22. The usage of 'been' is not required.
23. Omit 'up' in the sentence.
24. (2) Whose is the possessive form of who. Who's means who is or who has.

25. (3) 'Than' is used to form comparative sentences. 'Then' is an adverb.

Exercise

Directions (Q. 1 to 50): Each of the following sentences has been broken in three parts (A), (B) and (C). If there is any grammatical error in any of these parts, that is your answer. If there is no error, the answer is (D).

1. He is the man (A)/ which I know (B)/ you can trust (C) / No error (D).
2. I shall ask him (A)/ not to come on Monday (B)/ as it is a working day(C)./No error (D)
3. I get up at five (A)/ and studied for two hours. (B)/ After taking bath, I took breakfast. Then, I went to school on bike (C)/ No error (D).
4. You need (A)/ not have wasted (B) your time in this useless activity (C)/ No error (D).
5. I dare (A)/ not to (B)/ go to my father (C)/ No error (D).
6. The chairman welcomed (A)/all the guests and (B)/ gave an outline of the activities performing by the Company.(C)/No error (D)
7. Why did people get (A)/so much annoyed even at little provocation (B)/is a matter of investigation. (C)/No error (D)
8. The success of our efforts depend upon the (A)/number of people who (B)/ actually use the new methods.(C)/No error (D)
9. You should inform (A)/your superiors about all those events which is (B)/directly related to your work.(C)/No error (D)
10. From over last five years (A)/I have been trying (B)/ my best to convince him but without success.(C)/No error (D)
11. In spite of toiling very hardly he (A)/ realized that he had (B)/ not earned anything substantial. (C)/No error (D)
12. Children enjoy listening to (A) / ghosts stories (B) / especially on Halloween night. (C) / No error (D).

13. I (A) / have (B) /many works to do. (C) / No error (D).
14. There are so many filths (A) / all around (B) /the place. (C) / No error (D).
15. A Senior doctor (A) / expressed concern (B) /about physicians recommended the vaccine. (C)/ No error (D).
16. We have discussing (A) / all the known mechanisms (B) / of physical growth. (C) / No error (D).
17. He who has suffered most (A) / for the cause, (B) / let him speak. (C) / No error. (D)
18. A cup of coffee (A) / is an excellent complement (B) for breakfast / but has no nutritional value (C) / No error.(D)
19. He is a university professor (A) / but of his three sons (B) / neither has any talent (C) / No error. (D)
20. After knowing truth, (A) / they took the right decision (B) / on the matter. (C) / No error. (D)
21. It's time you (A) / decide on your next (B) / course of action. (C) / No error. (D)
22. The new pizza (A) / that I ordered (B) / is tasting good. (C) / No error. (D)
23. The students who was involved in communal disturbances (A)/ were asked to leave the hostel (B)/ with bag and baggage. (C)/ No error. (D)
24. Before men came there were only animals; (A)/ and before the animals, there was a time when (B)/ no kind of life existed on the earth.(C)/ No error (D)
25. I am one of those (A)/ that cannot describe (B)/ what I have not seen. (C)/ No error. (D)
26. It never occurs to me (A)/ that I should have sent my application (B)/ through the proper channel. (C)/ No error (D)
27. The teacher asked him write the answer (A)/ ten times as he has again (B)/ committed mistakes in answering it in spite of repeated corrections. (C)/ No error (D)

28. The minister was pleased (A)/ being invited to inaugurate (B)/ the world conference of religious leaders. (C)/ No error (D)
29. His circumstance (A)/ did not allow him to continue (B)/ his studies when he was young. (C)/ No error.(D)
30. No sooner did the thief see the policeman (A)/ that he jumped over the wall (B)/ and ran away as fast as his legs could carry him. (C)/ No error. (D)
31. His radical proposals for reform faced a lot of opposition (A)/ and his harm handed dealings produced so much hostility (B)/ that the whole project was killed in the bud. (C)/ No error (D)
32. In no case we can measure (A)/ the learner's achievement by a single test (B)/ however skillfully designed. (C)/ No error (D)
33. It is a common belief (A)/ that familiarity dispenses with (B)/ the necessity of politeness. (C)/ No error (D)
34. Let's buy a new sari (A)/ with the annual bonus, (B)/ can we? (C)/ No error (D)
35. None of the guests (A)/ were introduced (B)/ to the bride. (C)/ No error (D)
36. The participants are waiting (A)/ for the arrival of the speaker (B)/ for the last two hours. (C)/ No error (D)
37. Even more than my father (A)/ was she intolerant of demonstrativeness (B)/ and the wearing of one's heart on his sleeve. (C)/ No error (D)
38. None of the students (A)/ attending your class (B)/ answered your questions did they? (C)/ No error (D)
39. They left their (A)/ luggage's at (B)/ the railway station. (C)/ No error (D)
40. You will get (A)/ all the information's (B)/ if you read this book carefully. (C)/ No error (D)
41. She sang (A)/ very well (B)/ isn't it? (C)/ No error (D)

42. He is working (A)/ in a bank in New Delhi (B)/ for the past several months.(C)/ No error (D)
43. There is no question (A)/ of my failing (B)/ in the examination. (C)/ No error (D)
44. He fell from a running train (A)/ and would have died if the villagers (B)/ did not get him admitted in the nearby hospital immediately. (C)/ No error. (D)
45. He is going everyday (A)/ for a morning walk (B)/ with his friends and neighbors. (C)/ No error. (D)
46. The man told her (A)/ that he had brought his dog (B)/ out for a walk as he was afraid and that it would rain.(C)/ No error (D)
47. Even though the shirt is rather expensive (A)/ but I wish to purchase (B)/ it with my own money. (C)/ No error (D)
48. Another baffling change (A)/ that I notice in him now-a-days (B)/ is that he avoids to speak to me. (C)/ No error (D)

49. He lay the watch on the table (A)/ and then forgot all about it (B)/ when he went out. (C)/ No error (D)
50. While it is apparent (A)/ that biotechnology offers significant benefits (B)/ adequate attention has not been focused to this vital area. (C)/ No error (D)

Answers

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