An Amateur's Approach to GMAT SC

Hi, While preparing for my GMAT, I felt the necessity for notes as no single source was complete and started my own notes. I gave my test recently (my experience : http://www.scoretop.com/forum/forum_posts.asp?TID=25462&PN=1). Felt my notes would be useful to many more. I also wanted to share my learning's through this. Some information provided here may not be correct. I am no grammar expert. The information presented here has been gathered from different sources. All I have done is compile, edit and organize. Its very likely that you will find part of your post or a post that you have seen in some forum. Please don't sue me ☺.

All the very Best
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1. Plan Your Preparation

There are many materials available. Its important that you choose the right material and not regret on wasting time on some unwanted material. These materials are considered the best.

OG 10/11 by far the best books to start with. OG 10 has more number of questions. I would suggest starting with OG10 and going through OG 11 towards the end.

GMAT Prep: The new GMAT Prep by Pearson is the closest the real GMAT Test. Though some questions from OG are repeated, It has a v big bank of questions. The OE is not found and you will have to resort to Forums. It has 2 practice tests. However you can take around 6-8 tests by deleting the old ones. From third test on questions will be repeated but still, you are sure to encounter many new questions.

1000 Series: Some 1000 SC/ CR/ RC and Quant questions have been compiled by Scoretop. These contain questions from different sources and they are must do.

SETS,   **VJJ/**   **MJJ:**   Visit **FAQs**(http://www.scoretop.com/forum/forum_posts.asp?TID=9058&PN=1&FID=21&PR=3) for more information. Most of the VJJ's are part of Sets. Don't solve VJJ's till the end. If you solve it before you solve sets, you end up knowing answers to them while taking time sets. Solve these VJJ's 2-3 days before your exam.

Manhattan: I personally have never used them and have no idea. But many people consider it good.

Forums: ScoreTop(www.scoretop.com),   GMATClub(www.gmatclub.com), SentenceCorrection(www.sentencecorrection.com)

~~Princeton, Kaplan.~~ (DONT USE THEM)

1.1. Schedule: 20 Weeks to GMAT

A proper plan and commitment towards implementing is the next step. This schedule is just a sample that I followed. You can tailor it as per your convenience and competency level.

Some Tips:

i. **Practice** the material in the form of Timed Practice tests. Track the day, test, answers, accuracy, average time taken for each question in an excel sheet. Create a sheet for every test you take.

ii. **Analysis** is the most important part. Spend as much time as possible in understanding each and every option. Its more important to know why an option is wrong than why an option is right. GMAT OG explains why the other options are wrong. The very same concepts are tested. When you analyze make sure to:
   a. Find why you went wrong. Check if you know tested concept? Check the material on the tested concept.
   b. Check if your reasoning for every option matches with the given reasoning.

iii. **1000 series** doesn't have any explanation. You will have to resort to online Forums. Try to find why each option is not correct.

iv. **Check** your **performance** time to time. Accuracy doesn't increase over night. It happens with time and practice. Be patient. It happens not by solving more questions but only when you learn from your mistakes.

Week	Activity	Progress/ Time (Hours)
1	**Familiarize** yourself with the pattern, Quant/ Verbal guides by Princeton or Manhattan or any other guide. Just to get hang.	
2	Start with 5 SC/CR/RC. Take each section as timed test with short 5 min break.	OG-35/35/7 Test – 1 Hr Analsys-1 Hr
3	Take the timed sections with **no breaks**.	OG-70/70/14 Test – 1 Hr Analsys-1 Hr
4	**Time to accelerate. Increase** the number of questions in each section to **10**.	OG-140/140/21 Test – 1 Hr Analsys-1.5 Hr
5	**Time to take up Math** Include Math from OG. Solve 50 Math in 1 hour. Take a 10 min break before starting Verbal. To make it more like a real test, Take Math, Break , 5 SC, 5 CR, 1 RC, 5 SC, 5 CR, 1 RC.	OG-210/205/35 OG-M-300 Test – 2 Hr Analsys-2 Hr
6	**Change the Gears. Increase** the number of questions in each section to **15**. You would have done with OG-CR Math, Break , 5 SC, 5 CR, 1 RC, 5 SC, 5 CR, 1 RC, 5 SC, 5 CR OG 10 – **COMPLETE.**	OG-270/205/43 OG-M-600 Test – 2 Hr Analsys-2 Hr
	Check Point: Check if there has been an improvement on accuracy towards the end. If so time to take up 1000 SC/CR/RC. Else Re-Do OG 10.	
7-8	**Time for 1000 SC/ CR/ RC.** 15 SC, 15 CR, 3 RC. Increase the no of RC's to 3. Pattern: Maths, Break, 5 SC, 5 CR, 1 RC, 5 SC, 5 CR, 1 RC, 5 SC, 5 CR, 1 RC.	1K-200/200/40 M-600 Test – 2.5 Hr Analsys-2.5 Hr
9-10	**Change the gears. Increase the SC/ CR questions to 20** Math, Break, 5 SC, 5 CR, 1 RC, 5 SC, 5 CR, 1 RC, 5 SC, 5 CR, and 1 RC.	1K-480/480/80 M-1200 Test – 2.5 Hr Analsys-2.5 Hr
	Check Point: Check if there has been an improvement on accuracy towards the end. If so continue with 1000 SC/CR/RC. Else Re-Do OG 10.	
11-12	**Continue.** Continue the same schedule. **Re-Start** the Math	1K-750/750/120 M-600

		Test – 2.5 Hr Analsys-2.5 Hr
13-14	**Re-visit OG. Refresh** your basics. 25 SC/ 25 CR/ 4 RC. Pattern: 50 Maths, Break, 5 SC, 5 CR, 1 RC, 5 SC, 5 CR, 1 RC, 5 SC, 5 CR, 1 RC, 5 SC, 5 CR, 1 RC, 5 SC, 5 CR, 1 RC.	Complete OG Test – 2.5 Hr Analsys-2.5 Hr
15-16	**Continue with 1000 SC. Increase** the no of questions to **25**. 25 SC/ 25 CR/ 4 RC. 60 Math, break, 5 SC, 5 CR, 1 RC, 5 SC, 5 CR, 1 RC, 5 SC, 5 CR, 1 RC, 5 SC, 5 CR, 1 RC, 5 SC, 5 CR. **1000 Series - COMPLETE.**	1K-COMPLETE OG-M-150 Test – 2.5 Hr Analsys-2.5 Hr
	Check Point: Check for improvement on accuracy towards the end. If yes, Time to Move on to SETS else re-do OG	
17-18	**Start SETS/ MJJ's.** Start with SETS. One set everyday. Spare one more hour for MJJ's. Take one GMAT PREP Test	SETS-12 GMAT PREP-1 Test-2.5 MJJ-1 Analysys-1.5
19	**Continue SETS/ MJJ's.** Continue with SETS. One set everyday. Spare one more hour for MJJ's. Take one GMAT PREP Test	SETS-18 GMAT PREP-2 Test-2.5 MJJ-1 Analysys-1.5
20	**Continue SETS/ MJJ's.** Continue with SETS. One set everyday. Spare one more hour for MJJ's. Take one GMAT PREP Test. Spare one more hour to do GMAT Prep. It won't take more than a hour as many questions will repeat.	SETS-24 GMAT Prep-Retake-4 Test-2.5 Hr MJJ-1 Hr Analysys-1.5 GMAT Prep-1 Hr
FINAL	**Revise.** Complete some more sets and Revise everything. **VJJ:** Check out the VJJ's	SETS-28 GMAT Prep-Retake-1 VJJ's – 1Hr

1.2. Forums

There are many Forums on GMAT. These forums play an important role in bringing many people onto the same platform. Some of these members are dedicated and contribute useful information.

Efficient usage of **forums**. Efficient doesn't mean **over posting.** Who cares how many 'A' or 'B' or 'Agree' you post? There is no award for highest posters, but there will be admirers for every good post. you end up wasting time for all those unnecessary posts. Your objective is to learn and not being highest poster.

Search: Make use of search instead of posting every question as new thread. There will be enough posts on every question. You will be able to read lots of queries and answers that you may not be able to by posting a thread.

Post your **explanation** clearly. Try to answers to queries, give full explanation. There could be some misleading information as well. If you differ from any other explanation, post it. By doing so, you can correct others, correct yourself.

Don't solve every post on forum. Don't solve them unless you have solved them as part of your schedule earlier. If you solve them now, you will know answers while solving them in timed tests. This will affect in checking your accuracy and progress.

Track Ur posts: Track all your posts through Excel. Create 4 columns: Date, Post link, Post type(query, explanation), Status(open, Resolved)

2. Question Format

2.1. Process of Elimination

One of the most useful skills you can master for any standardized test is **Process of Elimination** (POE).

For every question on the GMAT, there are five answers, but only one of them is deemed 'best' by GMAC. (But 'best' is rat her subjective, especially when it comes to GMAC and verbal questions.) Often the easiest way to identify the right answer is to find all the wrong answers and eliminate them.

POE is very useful in verbal because often the *best* answer isn't all that great. While the credited response might suck, there isn't anything in it that makes it *wrong*. There's nothing in it you can point to and say *this is wrong*.

Focus your energy on getting rid of the answers that you know are wrong. We'll go over the individual problems that wrong answers are most likely to have in the appropriate topics and lessons.

And remember, use your erasable noteboard for POE. Since you can't cross off the wrong answers on the screen, write "ABCDE" on your noteboard and cross off choices as you eliminate them

One of the keys to successful POE is to avoid creating stuff. A great many of the wrong answers in the verbal section, especially in critical reasoning, are tempting *only* if you work to connect the answer to the question.

As soon as you start working to justify an answer choice, or start telling some story to connect an answer back to the question or the argument, you're almost certainly dealing with a wrong answer.

The right answer doesn't need any help from you to be right; it is supported by the information in the passage or argument or question

Ultimately, even the verbal part of the GMAT is objective. Objective? Well, maybe not exactly. But the fact is that there are definite reasons why every right answer is right and every wrong answer is wrong.

The key to success on the verbal section of the test is figuring out what rules GMAC uses to determine the right and wrong answers.

Focus on why GMAC thinks answers are wrong, and the verbal section will become a breeze.

2.2. Identify Wrong Answers

Sentence Correction questions present you with a sentence that has a portion underlined. Your job is to decide if that underlined portion contains a grammatical error.

Be careful--just because you speak English well does not mean that you know the rules of grammar.

These basic facts will further introduce you to the sentence correction section

- The underlined portion of a sentence may or may not contain an error.
- The first answer choice always repeats the underlined portion exactly.
- The other answer choices represent potential corrections to the initial sentence.
- Choose the first answer choice only when you can find no error in the original sentence and you can find errors in the other four answer choices.
- More than one answer choice may correct an error that exists in the given sentence.
- Some answer choices correct the initial error but introduce a secondary grammatical error--eliminate these answers.
- Some answer choices correct the initial error but re-word the sentence so that the meaning is changed--eliminate these.
- Eliminate wrong answers and choose the choice that is left

The Basic Approach to Sentence Correction Questions

- Read the sentence and look at the answer choices.
- Does the sentence contain a grammatical error? Look for the frequently tested errors you've learned.
- Eliminate answer choices based on your evaluation of the 2/3 split and any answers that contain grammatical errors.
- Evaluate the answer choices you have left. Look for differences and determine which ones are wrong.
- Don't fall into these traps on Sentence Correction questions!
- Don't pick the answer choice that sounds right! It may contain grammar mistakes.
- Don't think that you must find an error. Answer choice (A) can be the credited answer.
- Don't get so caught up in looking for the error in the question that you forget to use the answer choices to help you.
- Don't forget about the little errors like passive construction and subjunctive; they're often important when you're down to two.
- Do stay calm and focused. Find the four answer choices with errors and eliminate them

Some most commonly observed similarities in the questions. Remember they WILL not be same in every case.

- Answer choices in which the word "being" is a verb are rarely correct
- "There" constructions are rarely correct

- "Less" and "amount" refer to non-countable things and answer: "How much?" [soup]
- "Fewer" and "number" refer to countable things and answer: "How many?" [people]
- "Like" or "unlike" almost always trigger a comparison trap. Make sure that apples are being compared with apples
- All comparisons require parallel structure (analogies, metaphors, similes)
- If you have to guess, go for the shortest answer that's clear and unambiguous
- Sometimes the best way to correct ambiguous pronouns is to avoid pronouns altogether
- A descriptive phrase at the beginning of a sentence set off by a comma is a trap; what follows the comma should be the subject of the phrase
- A descriptive phrase at the beginning of a sentence set off by a comma [usually signals] a [modification] trap; what follows the comma should be the subject of the phrase

2.3. Approach to solve a SC

The golden retriever is one of the smartest breeds of dog, but they get confused should they be confronted by a multiple-choice question.

(A) *smartest* breeds of dog, but they get confused should they be

(B) *smartest* breeds of dog, but it gets confused when being

(C) *smartest* breeds of dog, but it gets confused when

(D) *smarter* breeds of dog, but they get confused when they are

(E) *smarter* breeds of dog, but getting confused as it is

Look for a 2/3 Split in the answer choices. Most of the time, two of the answers will try to correct the sentence in one way and the other three will try to correct the sentence in another way. This '2/3 Split' is very useful in helping you determine what grammatical issue is being tested.

Using the 2/3 Split and your assessment of the question, eliminate answers that fail to correct the error you found.

Evaluate the remaining answer choices. Eliminate those that introduce secondary errors. Examine all the differences among the remaining answers and choose the best one. Here C is best

Look at the 2/3 split. Should we go with 'they' or 'the codes'. They : Are you sure you know what 'they' refers to?.

While brokers, as a rule, are not permitted to know executive access codes, in many instances they are widely known.

(A) *they* are widely known

(B) *they* are widely known to be

(C) *they* are widely known by many

(D) *the codes* are able to be widely known

(E) *the codes* are widely known

The Codes : We must use 'the codes' to eliminate the ambiguity with the word 'they.

Which is the best answer between D and E? Look for secondary errors

D : No. This answer changes the meaning of the original. sentence by adding the language 'able to be.

E : Yes. This answer corrects the initial error and introduces no secondary mistakes.

Just because a sentence 'sounds right' does not mean that it is grammatically correct. Our ears are trained by everyday speech, and everyday speech is frequently grammatically wrong. GMAC knows many cases of sentences that sound right but are actually wrong, and they will utilize these special cases to trap you. Instead of using your ear, always try to apply a rule of grammar

Depending on which scholar you consult, either Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, Henry Fielding's *Joseph Andrews*, or Samuel Richardson's *Pamela is believed to have been the first English novel ever written.*

(A) is believed to have been the first English novel ever written

(B) is believed as being the first English novel ever written

(C) are the English novels believed to be the first written

(D) are the English novels which were believed as the first written

(E) are the first English novels ever believed to be written

Don't forget that a sentence can be correct as written. Sometimes GMAC will use a sentence that 'doesn't sound right' but is actually correct. Notice that the wording of the sentence below is somewhat stilted and formal. But can you find a grammatical error?

When you can't find an error, you should look at the 2/3 split for clues as to what issue might be being tested. In this case, which is correct: 'is' or 'are'?

In this sentence, 'is' is the correct verb because the word 'either' followed by singular choices takes a singular verb. So the correct answer has to be either (A) or (B). Can you find a secondary error in one of them?

'as being' in answer (B) is incorrect, so (A) is the correct answer.

3.   Basic Grammar & Rules

Although there are thousands of rules of English grammar, GMAC tests only a relatively small number on the GMAT. In fact, six grammatical issues show up in approximately 80% of all the questions in Sentence Correction.

Learn the Big Eight well before you move on to less-tested subjects.

- o   Verb Tense
- o   Pronouns
- o   Idioms
- o   Misplaced Modifiers
- o   Parallel Construction
- o   Subject/Verb Agreement
- o   Comparison
- o   Quantity

3.1.   Basic English

Parts of a sentence	Description
Adjective	Describes things or people.
Adverb	Alters the meaning of the verb slightly
Article	a, an - indefinite articles
	the - definite articles
Conjunction	Joins words or sentences together
Interjection	A short word showing emotion or feeling
Noun	Names things
Preposition	Relates one thing to another
Pronoun	used instead of a noun to avoid repetition
Proper noun (subject)	The actual names of people or places etc.
Verb	Action or doing word

3.1.1. Subject

The subject is the person or thing the sentence is 'about'. Often (but not always) it will be the first part of the sentence. The subject will usually be a noun phrase (a noun and the words, such as adjectives, that modify it) followed by a verb.

e.g.: David works hard.
 Who "works hard"?=David does=the subject.

     Beer and wine are my favourite drinks.
 What "are my favourite drinks"? Beer and wine are=the subjects.

The subject(s) of a sentence will answer the questions, "who or what."

3.1.2. Clause

It is a group of related words, but unlike a phrase, a clause has a subject and predicate.

Dependent Clause

Dependent Clause is a sentence that cannot stand alone.

e.g.: When I went to store...

Independent Clause

It's a stand alone sentence.

e.g.: I went to store

Independent Marker

A connecting word used at the beginning of an independent clause.

e.g.: Jim studied in the Sweet Shop for his chemistry quiz; however, it was hard to concentrate because of the noise.

e.g.: also, consequently, furthermore, however, moreover, nevertheless, and therefore

Dependent Marker

A dependent marker word is a word added to the beginning of an independent clause that makes it into a dependent clause.

e.g.: When Jim studied in the Sweet Shop for his chemistry quiz, it was very noisy. *when* is the Dependent Marker

e.g.: after, although, as, as if, because, before, even if, even though, if, in order to, since, though, unless, until, whatever, when, whenever, whether, and while

Rules: These are some of the rules I found.

i.   <Dependent sentence or clause><comma><Independent Clause>
     Or <Independent Marker><independent clause><independent clause>
     Ex: when I went to the store, I did not buy a bread
ii. <Independent Clause><full stop><Independent clause>
iii. <Independent Clause><semi colon><Independent clause>
     <Independent Clause><comma><conjunction><Independent clause>
iv. <Independent clause><;><Independent marker><comma><independent clause>
v.   <independent clause><dependent clause>

3.1.3. Phrase

A phrase (modifier after comma) usually modifies the subject of the earlier phrase or the preceding noun, which ever is appropriate. Its a group of related words that have no subject-predicate combination and cannot stand alone as a sentence.

Absolute Phrase

A participial phrase does not modifying the immediately preceding word: Refer 1000SC-663

Example: Some of the tenth-century stave churches of Norway are still standing, demonstrating that with sound design and maintenance, wooden buildings can last indefinitely.

The first portion before the comma is the independent clause followed by the portion in blue, an absolute phrase. An absolute phrase does not modify any word in particular. It modifies the whole sentence that either precedes or follows it. Therefore, it is not the churches which demonstrate anything. Instead, it is the fact that they are still standing which demonstrate X.

Now, the absolute phrase in and of itself has a sub-structure which looks like this: [...] demonstrating that *with sound design and maintenance*, wooden buildings can last indefinitely.

In red is a prepositional phrase which if you remove, you are left with: [...] demonstrating that wooden buildings can last indefinitely. As we see, the absolute phrase has within itself a restrictive clause, in green, introduced by "that". The comma mentioned by jpv is necessary in order to separate the prepositional away from the split restrictive clause. Try to read the second half of the sentence without that comma and you will wonder whether "wooden buildings can last indefinitely" is part of the prepositional phrase. It just does not sound kosher

Additive Phrase

An expression typically set off with commas, that while it seems to be part of the subject is not, and therefore does not change the number of the verb.

e.g.:   And, Along with, In addition to, as well as, accompanied by, together with, Including

Only 'and' can form a compound subject. The other additive phrases do not form compound subjects.

E.g.   Wilfred and John are going to the beach.
        Wilfred, along with John, is going to the beach

Disjunctive Phrase

e.g.:   Or, Either-or, Neither-nor

For disjunctive phrases with the use of 'or', 'either-nor' or 'neither-nor', find the subject nearest to the verb and make that verb agree in number with this subject.

e.g.:   Neither Wilfred nor his friends are going to work.
         Either his friends or Wilfred is going on a holiday.

Note: When either or neither are in a sentence alone (without or/nor), they are not considered to be part of a disjunctive phrase. In such cases, they are considered singular and take only singular verbs.

3.1.4. Conjunction

A conjunction is required to join to independent clauses. Conjunctions are connecting words at the beginning of an independent clause. Watch out for sentences that have no logical connectors between two independent clauses. These sentences are termed as run-on sentences because they involve two independent sentences connected by nothing more than a comma. It can be corrected by adding a coordinating conjunction.

e.g. (run-on sentence):   I need to relax, I have so many things to do.
e.g. (Fixing run-on sentence): I need to relax *but* I have so many things to do.

I saw two movies this weekend; both of them were good. (Joining two sentences with a semi-colon)
- I saw two movies this weekend, *both* of which were good. (Using a relative pronoun (aka subordinating conjunction) to join two sentences)
- I saw two movies this weekend, *and both* of them were good. (Using a coordinating conjunction to join two sentences)

e.g.:   Jim studied in the Sweet Shop for his chemistry quiz, but it was hard to concentrate because of the noise.
e.g.:   and, but, for, or, nor, so, and yet.

When two clauses are connected by a Subordinating conjunction one cause has to be an Independent one.

3.1.5. Adjectives and Adverbs

Many adverbs are formed by adding '–ly' to the adjective. An adjective can only modify nouns or pronouns. An adverb can modify verbs, adjectives, another adverb, preposition, or a phrase.

e.g.: Real, Really. Nice, Nicely. Slow, Slowly.

e.g.: Schumacher is a real good driver. (Incorrect)
The adjective 'good' modifying driver can only be modified by an adverb. 'Real' is an adjective and so should not be used.
Correct: Schumacher is a really good driver.
The adverb 'really' now modifies the adjective 'good' correctly.

3.1.6. Colon & Semicolon

The colon is used to equate two parts of a sentence where the second part is dependent on the first part. It is used primarily to introduce a list, introduce a quotation or formal statement, or introduce a restatement or explanation. Usually examples are states after colon

The semicolon is used to connect two closely related statements. Both statements must be able to stand alone as independent sentences.

e.g.: Andrew and Lisa are inseparable; doing everything together. (Incorrect)
Correct: Andrew and Lisa are inseparable; they do everything together

Colon: You should be able to insert the word namely after the colon.
e.g. I love listening to: classical, rock, and pop music. (Incorrect)
Correct: I love many kinds of music: [namely] classical, rock, and pop.

3.1.7. Gerunds

Gerunds are words ending in '-*ing*.' Remember to treat them as if they were nouns.

Use the word *like* to compare them and give them a possessive noun or pronoun such as *my*.

3.2. Rule 1 : Subject Verb Agreement

Subjects and verbs must agree in number.

Always identify the subject and verb of a sentence. Eliminate any intervening phrases that are designed to distract you. Watch out for words that sound plural and are really singular, or vice versa

GMAC will place irrelevant text, usually in the form of a prepositional phrase, in between the subject and verb of a sentence in order to distract you from the correct answer.

This is GMAC's favorite trick in the Sentence Correction section, so for the last time, **be sure to isolate the subject and verb from any intervening information when you consider whether they are in agreement**

3.2.1. Pre-Exercise

   i.   The number of workers have/has increased steadily each year.

   ii.   Neither the cost nor the selling price of the new product due to be introduced over the next two years has/have been determined as of yet.

   iii.   The number of job offers a typical business school graduate receives stagger/staggers the mind.

   iv.   Every Sunday, Bob and three of his college fraternity brothers goes/go to a neighborhood pub and reminisce.

   v.   The species of dinosaur known as the humongosaurus is/are among the largest creatures ever to walk the earth.

   vi.   Each of her suitors plead/pleads with her on bended knee.

Answers

Has, has, staggers, go (Compound subjects, like 'Bob and his friends' require plural verbs), is (Species is singular), pleads ('Each' really means 'each one', which is a singular subject.)

3.2.2. Approach

Identify the Subject and Verb.
The first step in subject/verb agreement problems is to identify the subject and verb in a sentence. What do you think are the subject and verb in this sample question?
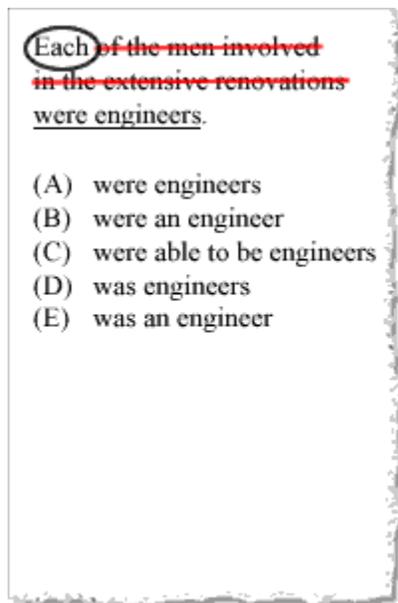
(Each) of the men involved in the extensive renovations were engineers.

(A) were engineers
(B) were an engineer
(C) were able to be engineers
(D) was engineers
(E) was an engineer

Anything that Separates the Two. 'Each' is the subject of this sentence and 'were' is the verb. Notice that the intervening prepositional phrases 'of the men involved' and 'in the extensive renovations' are irrelevant to the subject and verb. So, take them out and read what is left of the sentence

Check for Agreement. Now that you have the correct subject and verb, make sure that they agree: singular subjects must have singular verbs, plural subjects must have plural verbs. Is 'each' singular or plural? Does it go with 'was' or 'were'?

Look for the 2/3 Split. 'Each' is singular and should be paired with 'was'. 'Each was engineers' is

incorrect, so (E) is the correct answer

3.2.3. Either/Neither

'Either' and 'Neither' both are singular when used as the subject of a sentence. For example:

Neither of the boys **has** been arrested before.

If a sentence is of the form 'either A or B' or 'neither A nor B' then match the verb to the second subject.

For example, the following sentence is correct:

Neither Joe *nor* his **cousins were** happy on the first day of school.

3.2.4. The Number vs. A Number

As a stand-alone word and as a collective noun, "number" can take a singular or a plural form.

e.g.Two hundreds persons were at the party; the number(s) is (are) just astounding.

However, when preceded by an article and followed by preposition "of", "number" is singular and the verb that follows "number" will be conjugated singular or plural depending on whether there is a definite or indefinite article in front. The expression 'the number of . . .' is singular, while 'a number of . . .' is plural.

The following sentences are both correct:

The number of bad movies showing this summer **is** unbelievable.

A number of my friends **are** going to the beach this weekend

3.2.5. Indefinite Pronouns

All of these words take a singular verb when used as the subject of a sentence.

E.g. Everyone, Everybody, Everything Anyone, Anybody, Anything Someone, Somebody, Something No one, Nobody, Nothing
Everyone in the senior class **is** sick with the flu.

3.2.6. Compound Subjects

The use of *and* usually signals a compound subject. This means you've got several people or things performing the action. The subject is plural. For example:

The **bride** and her **bridesmaids were** a nervous wreck

3.2.7. Collective Nouns

Nouns that represent a group of objects are usually singular, and require a singular subject. Collective nouns include words such as group, team, assembly, species, and The French Antilles. They are plural when they act as individuals.

e.g.:   family, majority, team, audience, or anything that represents one group.
My company's softball **team** always **celebrates** a victory with a group hug.

3.2.8. Singular Subjects that look Plural.

Sometimes a subject has an 's' on the end, even though it is really singular. Test this by asking yourself whether the subject is one thing or several. For example:

Economics is one of my favorite subjects.

3.2.9. Definite/ Indefinite articles

English has two types of articles: definite (the) and indefinite (a, an.) The use of these articles depends mainly on whether you are referring to any member of a group, or to a specific member of a group.

Indefinite Articles: A and AN signal that the noun modified is indefinite, referring to any member of a group. These indefinite articles are used with singular nouns when the noun is general.

Definite Article: A definite article is used before singular and plural nouns when the noun is particular or specific. The signals that the noun is definite, that it refers to a particular member of a group.

3.2.10.   None vs. All

None is always *singular*.

e.g.: **None** of my friends **is** coming to dinner tonight.

All is always *plural*.

e.g.: **all** of my friends **are** coming to the party

3.2.11.   Singular noun + of + plural noun

When "of" is preceded by a singular noun and followed by a plural one, the rule is to conjugate the following verb with the plural noun if the latter can perform the action conveyed. Otherwise, conjugate it with the singular noun preceding "of".

E.g.: The swarm of flies was very dense.

As you can see, the flies cannot be dense. However, the "swarm" is singular. Hence, "was" is singular.

E.g.: He is one of the students who believe math is boring.

In the above, since "students" can perform the action of believing, the verb is conjugated with the plural noun "students". This is an example similar to the original question. An exception applies in the case of "one of":

E.g.: One of the students believes that math is boring.

In the above, it is actually not an exception; it is about logic. Ask yourself: Do the students believe that math is boring? No. Only that one student believes so. Hence, "believes" should be third person singular.

3.2.12. Each of…/ One of…that

A commonly tested GMAT concept is that of "each of/one of + plural noun". The verb that immediately follows will agree with the subject "each of/one of" if there is no relative pronoun following.

E.g.: **Each** of the witnesses **was** questioned by the police.
E.g.: Each of the books reminds me of her

In red is the independent clause and in blue is the prepositional phrase. "reminds" in this case is part of the independent clause and should be conjugated with the subject of the independent clause "each". In blue is just extraneous information splitting the independent clause. Do not get bothered by it. "reminds" should still be singularly conjugated.

E.g.: Princeton built 300 houses on a large portion of the 210-acre site of the Battle of Princeton, one of only eight Revolutionary War battlefields that remain undeveloped.

In the above sentence, the independent clause and prepositional phrase have the same explanation as in the first example. "one of" will *usually* require a singular verb after. However, when there is an intruder, splitting the independent clause such as "*that*", the relative/restrictive clause, the verb can be either singular/plural. A relative clause usually refers to the closest noun and in this case, it is "battlefields" from the prepositional phrase. Hence, "remain", the immediately following verb is singular. However in the example below it is "rests" and not "rest". That can refer to either "one book" or "books". The verb that follows that determines what that refers to.

E.g.: One of the books that rests on the table reminds me of her

3.2.13. Majority of…/ Percentage of

"A high percentage of X" will be part of the exceptions in English language whereby the following verb, belonging to the same independent clause, will be conjugated singular or plural depending on the object of the preposition. Hence, "a high percentage of the population is" and "a high percentage of people are". Other such examples, but not limited to these, would include: "most of", "percent of", "Some of, "All of" and "The majority of "

e.g.   Most of the class is not present
        Most of the people are gone

As you can see, "most" in this case does not determine the number of the verb but the object of the preposition is (class or people).

e.g.   10% of the students are not in the class
        10% of the pie is gone

Majority/Minority/Plurality: can be singular or plural depending on their context. When they refer to the many parts of the totality, they are plural. When they refer to the totality itself they are singular.

e.g. The majority of the members in GMAT Club are going to score more than 700 in the GMAT.
The students majority is opposed to the new grade classification.
The majority of students were staying in the hostel. Here "students" are acting on their own will and hence they are individual hence majority would be plural

3.2.14. Post-Exercise

i.   I must have either chocolate ice cream _____ carrot cake to complete a great meal.

ii.   Because Jenny was grounded, she could neither leave the house _____ use the telephone.

iii. When given the choice, I choose both ice cream _____ cake.

iv.   The chimpanzee is much more intelligent _____ the orangutan.

v.   Democrats are not so different _____ Republicans.

vi.   Memorizing idioms is not as fun _____ playing bingo.

vii. He was so late _____ he missed the meal.

viii.   Scores on the GMAT range from 200 _____ 800.

ix.   Many amusing quips are attributed _____ Dorothy Parker.

x.   Before you enter the house you are required _____ take off your hat.

Answers

i.   I must have either chocolate ice cream or carrot cake to complete a great meal.

ii.   Because Jenny was grounded, she could neither leave the house nor use the telephone

iii.   When given the choice, I choose both ice cream and cake

iv.   The chimpanzee is much more intelligent than the orangutan

v.   Democrats are not so different from Republicans

vi.   Memorizing idioms is not as fun as playing bingo

vii.   He was so late that he missed the meal

viii.   Scores on the GMAT range from 200 to 800

ix.   Many amusing quips are attributed to Dorothy Parker

x.   Before you enter the house you are required to take off your hat

3.3.   Rule 2: Pronouns

Pronouns must unambiguously refer to a specific noun and also must agree in number with that noun. The relative pronouns (that, which, who, what, when, where) refer to the nearest antecedent noun.

Ignore context when trying to determine if a pronoun is unambiguous
Pronouns are words that are intended to substitute for more specific nouns.

The rule on ambiguity is strictly construed, so a pronoun is considered ambiguous if there is any chance it could refer to more than one noun

Subject	Object	Possessive
I	Me	My, Mine
You	You	Your, Yours
He	Him	His
She	Her	Her, Hers

It	It	Its
We	Us	Ours
They	Them	Theirs
Who	Whom	Whose

John and Tim went to the
bank and <u>he</u> made a deposit.

(A) he
(B) they
(C) it
(D) their
(E) you

In this sentence, there is no way to tell for sure what the word 'he' is supposed to be referring to. This is called ambiguity.
GMAC will correct a pronoun error in one of two ways: either by using a different pronoun that eliminates the ambiguity, or by eliminating the pronoun and using a specific noun.
Which of these answers corrects the ambiguity?

Answer (B) corrects the problem by substituting the pronoun 'they' for 'he'. This eliminates any ambiguity because 'they' refers to both John and Tim

3.3.1. Indefinite Pronouns

An indefinite pronoun is one that is not specific about the thing to which it refers (no clear referent) All pronouns that end in –one, -body or –thing are indefinite pronouns.

E.g. Everyone, Everybody, Everything Anyone, Anybody, Anything Someone, Somebody, Something No one, Nobody, Nothing

the following are also indefinite: Whatever, whoever, Neither, Either, Each, Every

All the indefinite pronouns are singular. For each/every, if they precede a noun, the verb will take on a singular form as well.

E.g.   Each of the students is allowed to go on the field trip.
         Every dog and cat has paws.

However, when each/every follow a subject, it has no bearing on the verb form.

E.g.   They each are good soccer players.

There are however 5 indefinite pronouns that can singular or plural depending on the subject. They are: Some, Any, None, All, Most

E.g.   Some of my marbles are missing (subject: marbles, verb: are).
        Most of the students are tired.
        None of my money is missing.

3.3.2. Each… other/another; one…one

When two persons are referred in a sentence using *each, other* should be used. Incase of three people the usage is *each…another*. Refer SC 1000 # 718

When *one* is used to refer a noun only *one* can refer in that sentence.
e.g : One can achieve succeed in GMAT when one works hard.

3.3.3. Which

"*Which*" can be used as a restrictive or non-restrictive clause. It is a relative pronoun and should have an antecedent. In non restrictive clauses It refers to the closest noun. Its always preceded by a comma.

However, it does not always refer to the immediately preceding noun. Sometimes, it, much like an absolute phrase does, will refer to the previous sentence as a whole

e.g.:   My brother got 95% in his exam, which really surprised me given the
         amount of studying he put in.

"which" here does not refer to subject of prepositional phrase "exam

E.g. OG - 253

From the bark of the paper birch tree the Menomini crafted a canoe about twenty feet long and two feet wide, with small ribs and rails of cedar, which could carry four persons or eight hundred pounds of baggage yet was so light that a person could easily portage it around impeding rapids.

Here "Which" obviously doesn't refer to cedar, rather, it refers to "canoe". The noun that the nonrestrictive clause modifies doesn't necessarily need to be immediately proceed the comma. The OG concept is that it cannot refer to a vague idea that is expressed in the entire sentence, and that it must point to a noun (again, not necessarily immediately before the comma).

Eg.: "The earth is not flat, which had puzzled many people in the old days." is wrong

3.3.4. Who/ Whom

You can tell when 'who' is more appropriate, and when 'whom' is more appropriate by changing the adjective clause into a free running sentence. If the free running sentence contains he, she or they – use who

e.g.: He had none of the appearance of a man who sailed before the mast.
(He sailed before the mast)

If the free running sentence contains him, her or them – use whom

e.g.: A man stepped in on whom I had never set my eyes before.
(I have never set my eyes on him before)

e.g.: Who are you going to marry? I am going to marry 'he/she'. (Wrong)
Whom are you going to marry? I am going to marry 'him/her'. (Correct)

3.3.5. Whose

Whose relates to people or to things. You can tell when to use 'whose' by changing the adjective clause into a free-running sentence. If the free running sentence contains his, hers, its, theirs – use whose

e.g.: I am walking beside my father whose name is Simon Dedalus.
(His name is Simon Dedalus)

3.3.6. Where

"Where" is generally used to indicate a place.

3.3.7. When

"When" is generally used to indicate time.

3.3.8. That

''That'' modifies the nouns. It refers to the immediate previous noun in the previous clause. It is a restrictive clause and provides essential information about the subject of a sentence.

e.g.: The big GMAT book that is kept on the table is good.

Note: No comma is used! "that" here refers to "the particular (definite/fixed) book on the table"

That can refer to singular or plural. Refer SC-1000#193/ 379

e.g.: In good years, the patchwork of green fields that surround the San Joaquin Valley town bustles with farm workers, many of them in the area just for the season.

In the above example, what that refers to depends on the verb that follows it. If the sentence reads, 'a patchwork of greenfields that surround'. Here, 'that' refers

to 'greenfields'. If the sentence reads, 'a patchwork of greenfields that surrounds'. Here, 'that' refers to 'patchwork'.

3.3.9. Possessive Noun & Pronoun Reference

GMAT frequently tests pronoun reference in convoluted sentences in which pronoun is referred to possessive form of noun. The pronoun should have logical noun reference.

e.g.: The department of labor allows the investment officers' fees to be based on the performance of the funds they manage"

In the sentence above, "they" can't refer to "officers". "Officers" is used as a possessive noun to modify "fees". Whereas, in the sentence below, "they" refers to "officers"

"The department of labor allows the fees of investment officers to be based on the performance of the funds they manage"

3.4.   Rule 3 : Verb Tense

Use the *present perfect* (has or have) when an activity began in the past and continues uninterrupted to the present.

Use *past perfect* (had) when an activity began in the past but is then interrupted by another action in the past.

Some sentences will contain errors in their **verb tense**. Although there are many verb tenses in the English language, GMAC has chosen to test only a few.

Just remember that *tense* refers to time and always look for time clues in a sentence to let you know when something is supposed to have happened.

Generally, if a sentence starts in a particular tense, it should stay in that tense.

Examples:

This machine has printed 5,000 copies every hour today.

The days have grown shorter since the summer solstice.
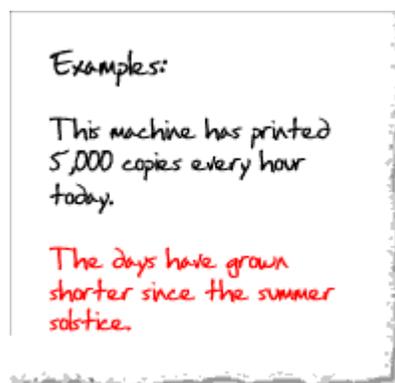
The **present perfect** is used for actions that began in the past and continue to the present.
Use has for singular subjects and have for plural subjects.

     In each of these examples the implication is that the action is still continuing.

Future tenses are not used in "before" clauses: refer SC-1000-446.
Could is a modal expressing past (potential) ability. If something is assumed in the past the usage of "Could" is appropriate. It is used to refer to Future in the past. If it is ongoing, "*Could*" cannot be used. Refer: SC-1000#119

Correct:
This machine had printed 5,000 copies per hour until it jammed.
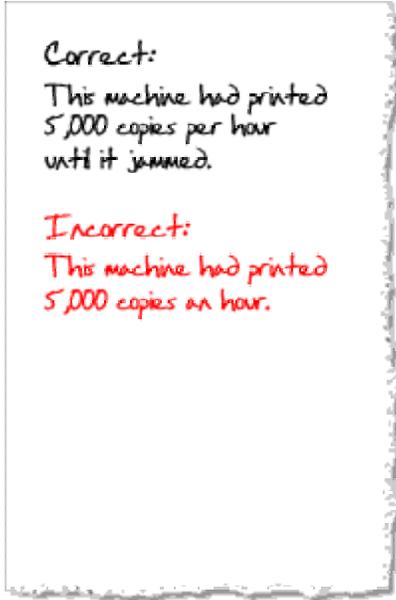
Incorrect:
This machine had printed 5,000 copies an hour.

Past perfect is used for actions that start in the past and are interrupted by another action also occurring in the past.
Use *had* for both singular and plural subjects.

On the GMAT, the past perfect is *only* appropriate when a sentence makes clear that there was an interrupting action and that the original action is no longer occurring.
Here, 'until it jammed' makes clear that the copy machine is no longer working.

Some Past Participle of Irregular Verbs

Verb	Simple Past	Past Participle
Begin	Began	Begun
Brought	Brought	Brought
Do	Did	Done
Drink	Drank	Drunk
Forget	Forgot	Forgotten
Go	Went	Gone
Hang (Object)	Hung	Hung
Hang (Person)	Hanged	Hanged
Lay (to put)	Laid	Laid
Lie (to tell a lie)	Lied	Lied
Lie (to recline)	Lay	Lain
Rise	Rose	Risen
Swim	Swam	Swum
Throw	Threw	Thrown

3.4.1. Will/ Shall

"Shall" expresses simple futurity, while *Will* expresses determination. But which word expresses which meaning depends on whether you're using first person (I, we), on the one hand, or second (you) or third person (it, they), on the other. In the first person, "shall" expresses futurity, and "will" expresses determination.

e.g.:   I shall do it tomorrow. I will succeed, even if it's the last thing I do.

In the second and third persons, it's the opposite. "Shall" expresses determination, and "will" expresses futurity.

e.g.:   You shall succeed, even if it's the last thing you do. They will do it tomorrow.

3.4.2. Since

Since should have a present perfect tense, refer: Test code 55 Q#21, 1000 SC - 538

3.4.3. Exercise

i.   Just as I crossed over to the dark side, _____ will you, my son.

ii.   The mule, _____ the donkey, is a close relative of the horse.

iii.   Many of my favorite ice cream flavors, _____ chocolate chip and strawberry, are also available as frozen yogurt.

iv.   Her coat is just _____ mine.

v.   He did not vote for Ralph Nader, _____ I did.

vi.   Aimee said he wasn't coming, and Luis said he was, so now I don't know _____ he's coming.

vii.   What I do know is that _____ he comes, he'll bring a nice bottle of Rioja.

viii. His friends do not believe the ring he bought at the auction _____ Jackie O's; they all think he was tricked.

Answers :

i.   so to

ii.   like; "like" means "similar to."

iii.   such as; "such as" means "for example."

iv.   like; use "like" when comparing nouns

v.   as; use "as" when comparing noun/verb combinations

vi.   whether; use "whether" when choosing between two options. Avoid the redundant phrase "whether or not".

vii.   if; use "if" when dealing with a conditional statement

viii.   to be; while you can believe that something is true, you believe something to be true

3.5.   Rule 4 : Misplaced modifier

A modifier, or modifying phrase, describes someone or something in the sentence. Modifiers are usually (not always) set off from the rest of the sentence by commas. If the noun that is being modified by a modifier or modifying phrase is not in the sentence, we have a **dangling modifier**. In some cases, the modified noun is in the sentence but is not directly next to the modifying phrase. This is called a **misplaced modifier**. A modifying phrase should not be separated from the noun it modifies. Descriptive phrases must be placed directly next to what they   modify.

GMAC loves to start off sentences with introductory descriptive phrases set off by a comma that are not followed by what they modify.

If the phrase itself is underlined, GMAC often corrects the error by converting it to a   clause.

If the rest of the sentence is underlined, GMAC often corrects the error by moving whatever is being modified so that it is directly next to the modifying phrase

Misplaced modifier problems typically present you with a sentence that begins with a descriptive phrase set off by a comma.

Sometimes the *second part* of the sentence is underlined as in this example

Running down the street,
<u>a brick fell on my head.</u>

(A)   a brick fell on my head

(B)   I was hit by a falling brick

(C)   I hit a falling brick
       with my head

(D)   my head was hit
       by a falling brick

(E)   a falling brick hit my head

For this sentence, if you ask yourself, 'Who was running down the street?', then you can begin to see what's wrong with the sentence as written.

Answers (B) and (C) put the word '*I*' next to '*running down the street*' and correct the misplaced modifier problem.

Answer (C) doesn't make any sense; therefore, (B) is the credited answer

Remember this rule about misplaced modifiers: Phrases that modify or describe other parts of a sentence must be placed directly next to the part of the sentence that they modify. Some types of misplaced modifier problems underline the introductory phrase instead of the second part of the sentence, as in this example.

Sold over the counter at the turn of the century, the government now prohibits the sale of cocaine derivatives.

(A) Sold over the counter at the turn of the century,

(B) While sold over the counter at the turn of the century,

(C) Being sold over the counter at the turn of the century,

(D) Although they were selling them over the counter at the turn of the century,

(E) Although they were sold over the counter at the turn of the century,

Since you cannot move the modified part of the sentence closer to the modifier (because the modified part, cocaine derivatives, is not underlined), you must select an answer that changes the modifier so that it no longer violates the misplaced modifier rule.

(A), (B), and (C) all repeat the original misplaced modifier error. Notice that (D) and (E) both correct the original error by re-wording the modifying phrase into a clause. The choice between (D) and (E) is tough.

(E) is the correct answer. (D) is wrong because 'they were selling them' contains a pronoun reference error. 'The government, a singular noun, ' cannot be a 'they'.

3.5.1. Adverbial Modifier

When the word being modified is not a noun, the modifying phrase is called an adverbial phrase and does not need to touch the word being modified.

e.g.: The running back ran towards the end zone, faster and harder than he had ever run before.
The modifying phrase, *faster and harder than he had ever run before* modifies how the running back ran. Thus the phrase modifies 'ran' and not 'running back'.

3.5.2. Modifiers with relative pronouns

Modifying phrases are often introduced by relative pronouns such as: which, that, where, who, whose, whom. On the GMAT, it is sometimes preferable to insert a modifier using a relative pronoun and a simple verb tense than using just an '-ing' form of a verb.

e.g.:   We test-drove a car having engine trouble (Awkward and not preferable)
        We test-drove a car that had engine trouble. (Relative Pronoun + Simple Verb Tense)

3.5.3. Essential vs. Non-Essential Modifier

'*Which*' is used to introduce **non-essential modifiers**. These are clauses that provide information about a noun that is not necessary for identifying that noun. '*That*' is used to introduce **essential modifiers**. These are clauses that provide information about a noun that is necessary for identifying that noun.

e.g. (Non-Essential): To find my house, walk down the left side of the road until you reach the third house, which is red.
The sentence above always leads you to the third house on the left side of the road, and this house happens to be red.

e.g. (Essential): To find my house, walk down the left side of the road until you reach the third house that is red.
The sentence above leads you to the third red house on the left side of the road. This may be the third house on the left side of the road, or it may be the tenth house on the left side of the road.

A modifier introduced by 'which' can be removed from the sentence without the sentence losing any essential meaning. Whereas a modifier introduced by 'that' is essential to the meaning. Commas are used to separate non-essential modifiers from the noun that is modified.

The pronoun 'who' can be used in either essential or non-essential modifiers.

e.g. (Essential): Only guests who are accompanied by tenants may use the gym facilities.
The sentence above identifies a subgroup of guest to whom the pool is open: those accompanied by tenants.

e.g. (Non-Essential): Only guests, who are accompanied by tenants, may use the gym facilities.

The sentence above indicates that only guests (as opposed to tenants) may use the gym facilities and that they just happen to be accompanied by tenants.

3.5.4. Exercise Identify the Correct Modifiers

i.   Although taken largely for granted in America, the Chinese are seeing the debut of nationwide broadcasting only now.
ii. Once the dominant world power, Great Britain has seen its colonial holdings and international prominence shrink concurrently throughout the twentieth century.
iii. The irritation of the stomach caused by aspirin can be avoided if the aspirin tablet is given a coating that will not dissolve until the tablet reaches the intestine.
iv. Based on a comprehensive study done in the 1980s, nutritionists have made strong recommendations about the percentage of our daily calories that

should come from fat, although they do make some distinctions between animal and other kinds of fats.

v.   Although born poor and with virtually no social connections, the remarkable rise of John J. McCloy to the position of ultimate insider took only 10 years.

Answers

i.   Yes. 'The Chinese' were not 'taken lately for granted in America.' The introductory phrase is intended to modify 'nationwide broadcasting'.

ii.   No, this sentence does not contain a misplaced modifier because the descriptive phrase ('once the dominant world power') is next to what it modifies ('Great Britain').

iii.   No, this sentence does not contain a misplaced modifier because it does not have a descriptive phrase separated from something that it modifies

iv.   Yes, this sentence contains a misplaced modifier because 'nutritionists' were not 'based on a comprehensive study done in the 1980s'. The sentence could be corrected by starting it with 'relying on a comprehensive study done in the 1980s'

v.   Yes, there is a misplaced modifier here because the opening phrase ('although born poor and with virtually no social connections') is not next to what it modifies ('John J. McCloy')

3.5.5. Subjunctive

The subjunctive is a voice that follows very specific rules.

A verb is in the subjunctive mood when it expresses a condition which is doubtful or not factual. For *hypothetical situations*, be sure to use both a 'were' and a 'would

For a *demand* or *recommendation*, make sure you use the infinitive form of a verb without the word '*to*.' Refer SC-1000-636

E.g. several senior officials spoke to the press on condition that they not be named in the story.

There is an uncertainty of what the press will do. Obviously the sentence tests for subjunctive mood. Since it is uncertain the usage of "will" is wrong

Subjective "Verb"

There are 2 forms it takes up. "*<subjunctive verb> + Noun + < infinitive>*" or "*<subjunctive verb>+that + Noun*". Note that there is no "*to*" in the later. Although both are grammatically correct, later form is always preferred over former. Remember use of "*should*" following subjective verb is always wrong.

e.g.: Form 1: requires that ... send (SC-1000-437)
e.g.: Form 2: requires... to send (SC-1000-437)

E.g. of subjective verbs: advise, ask, arrange, better, demand, desire, direct imperative, pray, order, propose, recommend, request, suggest, insist and urge.

Subjective if & non if

According to traditional rules, you use the subjunctive to describe an occurrence that you have presupposed to be contrary to fact. It takes up the form "*if ...were ... would*"

e.g.:   *If* he *were* sorry, he *would* have apologized by now.
I wish she were not going away.
She's already acting as if she were going to be promoted.
Suppose she were to resign, what would you do then?
Refer – 1000 – SC – 118

3.5.6. If…Then Construction

Sentences that use the word 'if' to describe hypothetical conditions require a conditional verb construction. These sentences have two parts: if clause, and the then clause. The word 'if' does not always signal a conditional sentence. Only when the sentence has a 'then' clause, then the sentence is considered a conditional sentence. Also note would/could never appears in the 'if' clause.

The actual word then is frequently omitted in the GMAT Test.

If Clause	Then Clause
Present Tense	Will + Base Verb
Past Tense	Would/Could + Base Verb
Past Perfect Tense	Would/Could + Have + Past Participle

3.5.7. If *v/s* Whether

"*Whether*" is used to introduce the first of 2 or more alternatives and sometimes repeated before the second alternative. "*Whether*" is preferred over "*if*" when a future possibility is stated. Usage of "*whether …or…not*" is almost wrong on GMAT Land

e.g.:   Incorrect: I do not know if I will go to the dance
Correct: I do not know whether I will go to the dance
It does not matter to me whether we buy the car or lease it
Whether John decides to go to the party or whether he stays at home is not the issue.

3.5.8. Because *v/s* Due to

"Due to" means "caused by" It should only be used if it can be substituted with "caused by". It is used in situations where it means "attributable to". "Because" is used to state a reason.

Possible structures: 'Due to + Noun Phrase' and 'Due to the fact that + Main Clause', and 'Because + Main Clause' and 'Because of + Noun Phrase'.

e.g.: SC-1000#504 (Because Vs due to)
        SC-1000#879 (Because Vs due to)
        SC-1000#990 (Usage of "due to")

3.6. Rule 5 : Parallelism

Sentences containing a list or a comparison must follow the rule of parallel construction.

First, every item in a *list* must be treated similarly. Look for an item in the list that is not underlined to determine the proper form.

Second, items being *compared* must be of similar type. Apples must be compared to apples and oranges to oranges. Often, this means that nouns must be compared to nouns and action words to action words

There are two common errors that come into play when making sure one part of a sentence is **parallel to**, or in balance with, the other parts.

3.6.1. Lists

The Rule: All items in a list must be treated similarly.

Floyd wanted to <u>work, play, and to go</u> to the store.

(A) work, play, and to go
(B) work, play, and go
(C) work, to play, and go
(D) have worked, to play, and to go
(E) work, to have played, and to have gone

In this example, the list consists of '*to work, play, and to go*'. The items in the list are not treated the same

Examine the answers.
In which answer are all the items treated similarly?

In answer (B), all the items in the list are treated the same.
Note that if the sentence had read, '*Floyd wanted to work, to play, and to go to the store*', this would also be grammatically correct

> Poor voter turnout was blamed on the
> <u>unusally cold weather</u> on election day, a
> <u>general feeling of dissatisfaction</u> with the
> candidates, and <u>knowing that this was</u>
> <u>only a local election</u> of little consequence.

Lists are not always easy to spot. Make sure to take the time to identify all the elements in a list. Sometimes you have to read a sentence in a different way to correctly identify all the elements.

All items in the list must be parallel and there must be an "and" before the last item. If the list does not contain "and" , it's incomplete hence wrong. If the list contains more than one "and", then it's a trapped list. However there can be multiple ands when list items are different.

e.g.: Agrarian revolution involved the large-scale introduction of enclosed fields and of new farming techniques and crops, and the substitution of commercial for subsistence farming.

Some bat caves take on different duties such as defending the entrance, acting as sentinels and sounding a warning at the approach of danger, and scouting outside the cave

3.6.2. Pronouns

Often, pronouns such as 'which', 'that', 'those', 'who', etc. - signal parallel structures. If one item includes a pronoun, it is often appropriate to include the same pronoun in parallel items.

e.g.:   I prefer to hire employees who work hard to those who don't.
I enjoy going out with people who are humorous than those who aren't.

3.6.3. Exceptions in Parallelism

However there are some exceptions in parallelism which should not be confused with parallelism. Two gerunds + noun constructing is valid

e.g.: He liked sailing, swimming and girls.

Verb + Gerund

e.g.: Some bat caves act as sentinels, sounding a warning at the approach of danger, and scout outside the cave

3.6.4. Split Infinitive

The infinitive is the 'to' form of a verb. When a verb takes the form to + the verb, it is called the infinitive form. Avoid sentences that insert a word between to and the verb. This error is called a split infinitive and is often incorrect. Don't split it. Don't put anything between '*to*' and the verb

e.g.   Correct: I need you to run quickly to the store.
        Wrong: I need you to quickly run to the store.

        Wrong : I cycled down to beach and swimmed.
        Correct: I cycled down to beach to swim.

3.7.   Rule 6 : Idioms

An accepted phrase or expression that doesn't follow the usual patterns of language, or has a meaning other than the literal. Though there is a big list of idioms, it's not required to memorize all of them.

Most frequently encountered idioms

i.   not so much by X as by Y
ii.   So … as to
iii.   Neither… nor
iv.   Either … or
v.   Forbid/ Prohibit
        a. x forbids y to do z
        b. x prohibits y from doing z.
        c. Negative cannot after bans is illogical.
vi.   Distinguish can be used in an infinitive, therefore apart from the standard construction distinguish X from Y , to distinguish X and Y is also correct
vii.   Forbade to
viii.   just as...so/ just as...so too
ix.   not so much … as / not only .. but also/ not …but
x.   Neither...nor, but that does not mean, a sentence cannot have a nor without the neither. Not … Nor is also right usage
xi.   Regard …as
xii.   Consider. Consider shouldn't be followed with anything
xiii.   Estimated … to be
xiv.   Between …and
xv.   As … as (As MUST be followed with as)

More idioms

xvi.   Attempt to e.g.:SC-1000-110
xvii.   To seek support from e.g.:SC-1000-85
xviii. Increase in
xix.   Negotiations with
xx.   Expected to

xxi.   Valid ...For. e.g.:SC-190-1000
xxii.   Dispute over
xxiii.   Ability to Verb/ Ability of Noun
xxiv.   No less than e.g.: SC-1000-534
xxv.   Making do e.g. SC-1000– 548
xxvi.   Superior to
xxvii.   merge X with Y
xxviii. Resemblance between A and B
xxix.   Determined by e.g.: OG-257
xxx.   Credit…With/ Credit to

Context based idioms

xxxi.   **to sympathize** .. noun; **for sympathizing** …verb
         e.g.: to sympathize the regime (noun)
         e,g: for sympathizing with the regime (verb)
         e.g SC : 1000-190

xxxii.   **"result from"** is used when result is used as a verb
         eg. Bad temper *results from* lack of sleep
         "result of" is used when result is used as a noun
         eg. Bad temper is a **result of** lack of sleep

xxxiii. "Acclaim as" and "acclaim to be" both are right. But it depends on the sentence which one to use

xxxiv.   **Aim for** is used with Noun/ Gerund.
         e.g.: I wan't to aim for a better school.
         Aiming to is used with Verbs.
         e.g.: I am aiming to score well in the GMAT. Refer : SC-1000-106
         Aid in + doing something
         e.g.: The UN's *aid in* alleviating poverty in Africa is not enough.
         e.g.: The UN's *aid to* African countries is not enough.

3.7.1. Exercise

i.   She is not only beautiful, _____ smart.

ii.   I can't distinguish day _____ night.

iii.   I can distinguish between black _____ white.

iv.   You have a responsibility ____ take care of the child.

v.   You are responsible _____ the child.

vi.   Art historians regard the Mona Lisa _____ one of the greatest works of art.

vii.   Art historians consider the Mona Lisa _____ one of the greatest works of art.

viii.   He is not so much smart _____ cunning.

ix.   My GMAT teacher defines the conclusion _____ the main point of the argument.

x.   Think of it more _____ a promise than _____ threat.

xi.   Many people see euthanasia _____ an escape from pain.

xii.   The hypothesis _____ aspartame causes brain tumors has not been proven definitively yet.

xiii.   Mel Gibson is a native _____ Australia.

xiv.   The kangaroo is native _____ Australia.

xv.   My pasta sauce is far superior _____ my mother-in-law's.

xvi.   Try _____ stay awake during the essay section of the test.

Answers

i.   She is not only beautiful, but also smart.

If you have not only you must have but also as well

ii.   I can't distinguish day from night.

You distinguish something from something else

iii.   I can distinguish between black and white.

distinguish between . . . and . . .

iv.   You have a responsibility to take care of the child.

You have a responsibility to do something

v.   You are responsible for the child.

You have a responsibility for something/someone

vi.   Art historians regard the Mona Lisa as one of the greatest works of art.

Regard as is the correct idiom here

vii. Art historians *consider* the Mona Lisa one of the greatest works of art.

Nothing goes in the blank in this case. The word *consider* needs no other words for a correct idiomatic expression

viii. He is *not so* much smart **as** cunning.

Not so . . . as is the idiom to remember here

ix. My *GMAT* teacher *defines* the conclusion **as** the main point of the argument.

*Define as . . .*is the idiom here.

x. as . . . a

xi. as

xii. that

xiii. of

xiv. to

xv. to

xvi. to

3.7.2. Between\ Among

When more than two entities are involved or when the number of entities is unspecified, the word choice depends on what you want to say. You use between when the entities are considered as distinct individuals and among when they are considered as a mass or collectivity. Thus in the sentence "*The balloon landed between the houses*", the houses are seen as points that define the boundaries of the area where the balloon touched down. We assume, therefore, that the balloon did not land on any of the individual houses. In e.g.:"*The balloon landed among the houses*", the area of landing is considered to be the general location of the houses, taken together. It leaves open the possibility that the balloon came down on one of the houses.

By the same token, we may speak of a series of wars between the Greek cities, which suggests that each city was an independent participant in the hostilities, or of a series of wars among the Greek cities, which allows for the possibility that the participants were shifting alliances of cities. For this reason, among is used to indicate inclusion in a group: e.g.: *She is among the best of our young sculptors.* There is a spy among you. Use between when the entities are seen as determining the limits or endpoints of a range: They searched the area between

the river, the farmhouse, and the woods. The truck driver had obviously been drinking between stops.

3.8. Rule 7: Comparison

Apples-and-Oranges: When a sentence makes a comparison, check to see whether the two things compared are really comparable. When 2 things are compared "than" is always preferred.

The Rule: For comparisons to be valid, the two things being compared must be similar in *type*.

The rules of written English are more stringent than spoken English.

(A) than spoken English

(B) as spoken English

(C) than those of spoken English

(D) as those of spoken English

(E) so than those of spoken English

Look at this example. What two things are compared?

In this sentence, the author is trying to compare 'rules' directly to 'spoken English.' This is like trying to compare apples to oranges, and it's not grammatically correct. Which of the answers corrects the problem?

(C) is the correct answer because it compares 'the rules of written English' to 'those of spoken English.'
Note that it's not necessary to repeat the word 'rules'; a pronoun such as 'those' suffices.

3.8.1. Like/ As/ Such

"Like" is used when comparing nouns or adjectives; "As" is used when comparing verbs. "Be like Mike" is proper because the comparison is to the noun Mike. "Do as Michael Jordan does" is proper because the comparison is to the verb "do".

Such v/s Like

Such is used to indicate examples. Like is used to indicate similarities. In GMATLand, *like* means *similar to*, and *such as* means *for example*.

E.g.: The zoo has animals such as elephants, tigers and lions.
John, like his brother, enjoys going to the gym.

3.8.2. Compare to/ with

Rule 1: Compare to compares unlike things, whereas compare with compares like things.

Rule 2: Compare to is used to stress the resemblance. Compare with can be used to show either similarity or difference but is usually used to stress the difference.

"Compare to" is used when comparing unlike things.

e.g.:   He compared her to a summer day.
        Scientists sometimes compare the human brain to a computer.

Compare takes with when it refers to the act of examining two like things in order to discern their similarities or differences.
"Compare between x and y" is used when comparing like things.
"Compare with" is used when comparing like things.

e.g.:   The police compared the forged signature with the original.
        The committee will have to compare the Senate's version of the bill with the version that was passed by the House.

3.9.   Rule 8 : Quantity Words

The main issue is *countability*.

If something is countable, use *fewer*, *number*, and *many*; for things that are not countable, use *less*, *quantity*, *amount*, or *much*.

When comparing two things, use *-er*, *more*, or *between*; if comparing three or more, use *-est*, *most* or *among*

On most questions involving quantity words, the issue is whether the items are **countable** (pencils, coins, or people) or **not countable** (Jello, love, or soup). Amount is not countable. Number is countable. *Fewer*, *number*, and *many* are used for things that are *countable*. *Less*, *amount*, *quantity*, and *much* are used for things that are *not countable*.

The other quantity word situation involves **comparisons**. Once again, the rule is pretty straightforward:
When two things are being compared, use the *-er* suffix, *more*, and *between*.
When three or more things are compared, use the *-est* suffix, *most*, and *among*.

Similarly "**equivalent**" and "**equal**" often modify nouns referring to uncountable things, as in "an equivalent amount of resistance" or "a volume of water equal to Lake Michigan."
and to establish numerical comparability between groups with countable members, the phrase as many as is preferable. – Refer OG - 132

3.9.1. Double *v/s* Twice

Double: can be used with Noun/ Verb/ Adjective/ Adverb
e.g.:   Noun: 36 is the double of 18
            Verb: The population doubled within 50 years.
            Adjective: An egg with a double yolk
            Adverb: His eyes were double bright.

Twice is always adverb. Usage depends upon the structure of the sentence. In GMAT Twice as...much....as, twice as many....as are frequently tested.

3.9.2. Exercise

i.   I wish there were fewer/less cars on the road.

ii.   The amount/number of students in my classes has been increasing lately.

iii.   Between/Among the four of us, I am the tallest.

iv.   Of the entire class, he is the taller/tallest.

Answers

i.   'Fewer' is correct here because cars are countable
        No. 'Less' does not work here because cars are not countable

ii.   'Amount' is not correct because 'students' are countable
        'Number' is correct because students are countable

iii.   'Between' is used only when two things are being compared
        'Among' is used when more than two things are being compared

iv.   You only use the comparative (-er) when you're comparing two things.
        You use the superlative (-est) when you're comparing three or more
        You use the superlative (-est) form when you are comparing three or more
    t   hings, the comparative (-er) when you compare two

3.10.   Non-Fatal Errors

- English grammar not only has rules, but it also has preferences.
- There are certain ways of saying things that, although not technically wrong, are still considered 'not preferred.'
- We call these constructions non-fatal errors.
- Non-fatal errors come into play when comparing the remaining answer choices after eliminating those with standard grammatical errors.
- Sometimes you will have more than one answer choice that contain no grammatical error and preserve the meaning of the original sentence.

- In these situations, choose the answer with the preferred construction.
- If more than one answer choice contains no grammatical errors and no changes in meaning, non-fatal errors will help you make the right choice.

3.10.1.   Active /Passive

Passive voice occurs when the subject of a sentence is being acted upon and is not the actor. While it is not incorrect, GMAC doesn't like it. If there is a better (more active) option, choose it instead

Remember that GMAC is an expert at making sentences sound bad even though they contain no grammatical errors.

On the GMAT, it is quite possible that the correct answer will be in passive voice. So don't cross off an answer simply because you notice that it is in passive voice. However, if you are given two answers that are otherwise equally correct, and one is in passive voice and the other in active voice, always choose the answer in active voice. Notice how easy it is to word the same sentence in both ways.

Don't be too eager to call a sentence wrong unless you can articulate the error

A sentence is in *passive voice* when the subject of the sentence is receiving, rather than performing, the action of the sentence.

A sentence is in *active voice* when the subject of the sentence is the actor. Here are some examples.

e.g.: The window was fixed by my father (Passive)
My father fixed window (Active)

Mistakes were made (Passive)
I made a mistake (Active)

More work was done by the high schoolers than by the lazy college students. (Passive)
The high schoolers did more work than by the lazy college students did. (Active)

The passive voice is formed with a form of to be, followed by a past participle. The person or people performing the action in the sentence almost always follow the verb.

e.g.:   The pizza was eaten by the hungry students.
        It has been decided by Jason that he will not attend college

The passive voice is required when the non-underlines portion of the sentence contains the person or agent performing the action preceded by the word 'by'.

e.g.: The shuttle launch was seen around the world by people of all ages, all races, and all religions.

3.10.2. Short and Sweet

GMAC prefers concise or shorter formulations over longer, wordier ones

The GMAT prefers conciseness over wordiness. If you are left with two answer choices that appear to be grammatically correct, select the shorter and more succinct option.
Short and sweet comes into play only after you have corrected any grammatical errors in the original sentence.

The distribution of mass within the core of the Earth, like the mantle that surrounds the core, has been deduced from the orbital behavior of the Earth and the motions of satellites controlled by the Earth's gravity.

(A) the mantle that surrounds the core

(B) that within the mantle surrounding the core

(C) that of the mantle surrounding the core

(D) the mantle the core surrounds

(E) the distribution of mass within the mantle that surrounds the core

Which answer choices correct the error in this sentence?

In this example, (A) and (D) are incorrect because of an Apples and Oranges problem. The 'distribution of mass' cannot be compared directly to the 'mantle.'
Answers (B), (C), and (E) all attempt to correct the problem and compare the 'distribution of mass' to 'distribution of mass,' either directly or by using the pronoun 'that.'
Can you choose among (B), (C), and (E)? Although it's close, we can eliminate answer choice (C) because it refers to the distribution of mass of the mantle. We want to compare distribution of mass within the core and within the mantle

Between (B) and (E), we can apply the *short and sweet* technique.
Although (E) is grammatically correct, answer choice (C) expresses the same idea more concisely and is the correct answer.

3.10.3. Redundancy

Sentences that include repetitive or redundant words or phrases should be avoided. Sometimes authors repeat themselves within a sentence. GMAC considers this an error. Some typical redundancy examples:

- regain …again ...
- rise ...up ...
- decline ...down ...
- It is likely that …may …
- soar ...up ...
- decrease ...down
- re-Verb ...again ...
- the reason ... is because

- the reason why .. is because
- close proximity
- true fact
- circulate around
- Attempt…try
- Can…potential
- Although…but

Professor Lieder, head of a privately funded think tank, reports that plummeting <u>values on the Japanese stock exchange have fallen to force</u> many Tokyo brokerage companies to rethink their policies on margin accounts.

(A) values on the Japanese stock exchange have fallen to force

(B) Japanese stock exchange values have fallen, forcing

(C) values on the Japanese stock exchange are forcing

(D) falls in the value of the Japanese stock exchange are forcing

(E) values on the Japanese stock exchange have fallen which is forcing

Can you find the redundancy in this sentence?

'Plummeting values . . . have fallen' is redundant and therefore wrong. Find the answer choice that eliminates the redundancy.

Answer choice (C) corrects the error by eliminating the second reference to a decrease and is therefore the best answer