

2011



e-GMAT LLC

By Payal Tandon

[5 STRATEGIES THAT GMAC USES TO CHANGE MEANING]

The purpose of this document is to outline 5 strategies that GMAC uses to distort the intended logical meaning of the sentence in a “grammatically correct” answer choice. This document also outlines the process that GMAT aspirants can follow so that they don’t fall into this trap.

CONTENTS

5 Strategies that GMAT uses to distort Meaning	2
How is this article organized	2
The 5 STRATEGIES GMAC USES to distort meaning	2
Strategy 1 - Change Placement of Modifiers	3
Simple example	3
Official Question 1 – Verbal Review 2 – Q#37	4
Official Question 2 – OG 12 – Q#112	5
How to evaluate choices that change the meaning?	6
Exercise Sentences	7
Strategy 2 – Use of Modifiers	12
Simple example	12
Official Question 1 – OG 12 – Q#126	13
Official Question 2 – OG Verbal Review 2 – Q#108	14
How to evaluate choices that change the meaning?	15
Exercise Sentences	16
Strategy 3 – Change of Conjunctions	21
Simple example 1	21
Simple example 2	22
Official Question 1 – OG VR2 – Q#31	22
Official Question 2 – GMATPrep – Largest trade-book publisher	23
How to evaluate choices that change the meaning?	23
Exercise Sentences	24
Strategy 4 - Change Of voice	30
Simple example	30
Official Question 1 – GMATPrep – Declaration of Sentiments	30
Official Question 2 – GMATPrep – Largest trade-book publisher	31
How to evaluate choices that change the meaning?	32
Exercise Sentences	33
Strategy 5 – Change/remove words that provide context	37
Simple example	37
Official Question 1 – OG Verbal Review 2 – Q#43	37
Official Question 2 – OG Verbal Review 2 – Q#52	38
How to evaluate choices that change the meaning?	39
Exercise Sentences	40

5 STRATEGIES THAT GMAT USES TO DISTORT MEANING

A lot of you are re-taking the GMAT in December and have somewhat limited experience on how to deal with the “recent” meaning based SC questions in which the answer choices may contain more than one grammatically correct answer choice. In this case, the student is often confused as to how to select the correct answer choice. This post is designed to address the same. Read through the post to understand

1. 5 Strategies that GMAC uses to distort the intended logical meaning of the sentence in a “grammatically correct” answer choice.
2. A process to approach SC questions to answer such questions successfully
3. Official examples and exercise questions for practice.

Note, in addition to this article, we also have a full (audio-visual) concept available free of charge to all registered users. I recommend you also review that.

HOW IS THIS ARTICLE ORGANIZED

My initial forum post today will summarize the 5 strategies and describe the first strategy – placement of modifiers - in detail. The second strategy will be discussed on 9th December and so on. Those who want to be notified as soon as some exercise problem is posted can follow me on the forum.

THE 5 STRATEGIES GMAC USES TO DISTORT MEANING

GMAT Sentence Correction questions test the test taker on how effectively he/she can express the idea or relationship using correct expression conforming to the rules of standard written English. Many times an answer choice may be grammatically correct but may not be the correct choice because it distorts the intended logical meaning of the original sentence. The table below provides a quick summary on strategies that GMAC deploys to achieve the same.

Strategy for changing Meaning	Description	Official Question Reference
Change placement of modifiers	By changing the placement of modifier, the modified entity can be changed, thereby causing a shift or distortion in meaning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> OGVR2#37 OG12#115
Use different modifiers	By changing the type of modifier, meaning of the sentence can be changed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> OG12#126 OGVR2#108
Use different conjunctions	By changing the conjunctions in a sentence, meaning can be changed in several ways – independent items may be made dependent or vice versa.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> OGVR2#31 GMATPrep – Largest Trade-Book Publisher GMATPrep – Edith Abbott OG12#84
Change Voice of the sentence	By changing voice of the sentence, the focus of sentence can be shifted enough to cause a shift in the meaning of the sentence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GMATPrep – Declaration of Sentiments GMATPrep – Synthetic Growth Hormone
Remove/add words that provide context or use word differently.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By removing or adding certain words that add context to the sentence, the meaning of the sentence can be changed. By changing the way in which words can be used, the meaning of the sentence can be changed. This includes use of different prepositions with the word. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> OGVR2#43 OGVR2#52

STRATEGY 1 - CHANGE PLACEMENT OF MODIFIERS

How does GMAC use this strategy: Modifiers provide additional or descriptive information about another entity in the sentence. So if these modifiers are placed at different locations in the sentence, the meaning of the sentence changes. This is how GMAC may introduce such meaning based errors. In these cases, both the placements result in logical meaning but only one is correct and that is determined by what the intended meaning of the sentence is.

Lets take a simple example below:

SIMPLE EXAMPLE

The **cat** with black stripes **is running** after the rat.

So here is the scene that I picture. Cat is running after the rat. Cat has black stripes. Now let's check this sentence below.

The **cat is running** after the rat with black stripes.



Now the scene that I picture is – cat is running after the rat. The rat has black stripes. So per this sentence, I no longer have any information about the stripes on the cat. But I have information about the stripes on the rat.

So simply by placing “with black stripes” differently, the meaning communicated by the sentence changes.

This is exactly how GMAT may introduce a difference in meaning.

OFFICIAL QUESTION 1 – VERBAL REVIEW 2 – Q#37

Now let's take an official question:

Some buildings that were destroyed and heavily damaged in the earthquake last year were constructed in violation of the city's building code.

- A. Some buildings that were destroyed and heavily damaged in the earthquake last year were
- B. Some buildings that were destroyed or heavily damaged in the earthquake last year had been
- C. Some buildings that the earthquake destroyed and heavily damaged last year have been
- D. Last year the earthquake destroyed or heavily damaged some buildings that have been
- E. Last year some of the buildings that were destroyed or heavily damaged in the earthquake had been

Intended meaning from Choice A: The intended meaning of the sentence from choice A can be inferred as follows:

1. Some buildings had been destroyed in the earthquake last year.
2. (Prior to the destruction) These buildings were constructed in violation of the city's building code

Some buildings that were destroyed in the earthquake last year
were constructed in violation of city's building code.



Note that this sentence has two verbs and based on where “last year” is placed, it can modify either of the two verbs.

Notice that choice A is incorrect since it uses the simple past – were constructed. The correct verb should be “had been constructed” to illustrate correct sequencing with respect to “were destroyed” to show that the buildings were constructed prior to the destruction.

Correct: Choice B corrects this error and is the correct choice.

Grammatically Correct but Incorrect choice (E) – Notice how in choice E the test takers have cleverly moved “last year” in the clause that with SV pair - “some of buildings had been constructed” such that it now describes when some of these buildings were constructed. It no longer describes the timing of the earthquakes.

Last year some of the buildings that were destroyed in the earthquake
had been constructed in violation of city’s building code.

when

The intended meaning communicated by Choice E is the following:

1. Some of the buildings had been constructed in violation of city’s building code last year.
2. These buildings were destroyed in the earthquake.

Note that in choice E we now know that the buildings were constructed last year. This is the information that we did not have in choice A. Thus, the meaning communicated by this choice is certainly different from the meaning communicated by choice A. Hence, while choice E is grammatically correct, it changes the logical intended meaning and is not the correct choice.

PS: Access our free concepts on sentence structure if you want to know how to break a compound sentence into simple sentences. Just register at e-gmat.com

OFFICIAL QUESTION 2 – OG 12 – Q#112

Now let’s take another official question. This time from OG 12.

Gall's hypothesis of there being different mental functions localized in different parts of the brain is widely accepted today.

- A. of there being different mental functions localized in different parts of the brain is widely accepted today
- B. of different mental functions that are localized in different parts of the brain is widely accepted today
- C. that different mental functions are localized in different parts of the brain is widely accepted today
- D. which is that there are different mental functions localized in different parts of the brain is widely accepted today
- E. which is widely accepted today is that there are different mental functions localized in different parts of the brain

Intended meaning from Choice A: The sentence is written in an awkward manner but we can certainly infer the intended meaning.

- A specific hypothesis of Gall is widely accepted today.
- What is the hypothesis? Per this hypothesis - different mental functions are localized in different parts of the brain.

Notice how we know precisely what the hypothesis is.

Error in the original choice: Choice A is not the correct choice since it is not written in concise manner. The expression “of there being” is very wordy.

Choice C corrects this error and is the correct choice.

Gall's hypothesis *that different mental functions are localized* in different parts of the brain **is widely accepted** today.

Grammatically Correct but Incorrect choice B: Notice how the *test makers have moved the descriptive “that” modifier here. Also, the information presented by “that modifier” has also been changed to make logical sense in the changed context.* The change in meaning in choice B happens because of placement and wording of “that” modifier. Instead of now stating the hypothesis, now “that” modifier talks about the mental functions. The meaning communicated by choice B is as follows:

1. Gall has certain hypothesis about different mental functions.
2. This hypothesis is widely accepted today.
3. These different mental functions are localized in different parts of the brain
4. Notice carefully that per this choice we do not know precisely what the hypothesis is. All we know is that some hypothesis of different mental functions is widely accepted and we know where the different mental functions are located.

Gall's hypothesis of different mental functions *that are localized* in different parts of the brain **is widely accepted** today.

HOW TO EVALUATE CHOICES THAT CHANGE THE MEANING?

1. Understand the logical meaning of the original choice. (note placement of modifiers)
2. Look for the answer choice that best communicates the same meaning in un-ambiguous and grammatically correct manner.
3. Ignore choices that may be grammatically correct but change the meaning.

Exercise Sentences

EXAMPLE 1 – HEARTLESS HUMAN BEINGS

Heartless human beings are like wild animals, which will rip its own kin at the slightest of need and that too without a sign of remorse.

- A. Heartless human beings are like wild animals, which will rip its own kin at the slightest of need
- B. Heartless human beings were like wild animals, which have ripped their own kin at the slightest of need
- C. Human beings are like heartless wild animals, which rip their own kin in the slightest of need
- D. Human beings are like heartless wild animals, which rip at its own kin in the slightest of need
- E. Heartless human beings are like wild animals, which rip their own kin in the slightest of need.

UNDERSTAND THE MEANING OF THE ORIGINAL SENTENCE

The sentence presents a similarity (use of word like) between heartless human beings and wild animals. Heartless human beings are like wild animals. These wild animals rip their own kin when the need arises and they do not even feel any sign of remorse.

FIND THE ERRORS IN THE ORIGINAL SENTENCE

1. Heartless human beings are like wild animals.
2. which will rip its own kin at the slightest of need and that too without a sign of remorse.

The sentence structure of the sentence is as shown above. The two SV pairs agree in number and logically make sense. The simple present tense “are” is appropriate as this sentence states a fact that is true in the present context. However, use of future tense “will rip” appears incorrect. This is a general fact about the wild animals and hence should be stated in simple present tense. Furthermore, “its” pronoun refers to wild animals but it does not agree in number. It should be “their”.

REVIEW ANSWER CHOICES TO DO POE

Choice B – use of past tense “were” implies that heartless humans beings are no longer like wild animals. This distorts the intended meaning. Furthermore, “have ripped” is incorrect since it now no longer communicates a general fact about wild animals. It states as if the action of “have ripped” is a one-time action that has been completed.

Choice C – This choice changes the intended meaning of the sentence. It now implies that “human beings” in general are like “heartless wild animals”. Note that the original sentence implied that “heartless human beings” are like “wild animals”. Thus, by changing the placement of the modifier “heartless”, the meaning of the sentence has changed. Note that this sentence is otherwise grammatically sound.

Choice D – This choice changes the intended meaning of the sentence as choice C does. It also has pronoun error as choice A does. Also, the expression “rip at its own kin” distorts the meaning of the expression “rip its own kin”.

Choice E – Correct Choice.

TAKE- AWAYS

1. Understand the intended meaning of the sentence and then select the choice that correctly communicates that meaning. Understand the role of each modifier in the sentence and note for any changes in the placement of these modifiers.
2. Use appropriate verb tense to communicate the intended logical meaning. This implies that you should understand two things
 - a. The function of each verb tense – grammatical knowledge
 - b. The intent of the sentence – What does the sentence want to communicate? – meaning



©e-GMAT LLC. Unauthorized copying for commercial and competitive purposes is not allowed.

EXAMPLE 2 – MRS MERCKEL

At the heart of euro crisis is Mrs. Merkel's lack of quick or bold reaction, the reason for lack of halting of the downward spiral of the euro.

- A. Mrs. Merkel's lack of quick or bold reaction, the reason for lack of halting of the downward spiral of the euro
- B. Mrs. Merkel, whose lack of quick or bold reaction is the reason that the downward spiral on the euro has not halted
- C. the lack of quick or bold reaction by Mrs. Merkel, the reason that the downward spiral on the euro has not halted.
- D. Mrs. Merkel, whose lack of quick or bold reaction is the reason of lack of halting of the downward spiral of the euro.
- E. the lack of quick or bold reaction by Mrs. Merkel, resulting in the downward spiral of the euro.

UNDERSTAND THE MEANING OF THE ORIGINAL SENTENCE

The sentence presents a few facts

1. Mrs. Merckel's lack of quick or bold reaction is at the heart of euro crisis.
2. Her lack of bold reaction is the reason for lack of halting of the downward spiral of the Euro
 - a. This is rather confusing expression. It intends to say that her lack of bold reaction is the reason why downward spiral of Euro has not halted or stopped.

FIND THE ERRORS IN THE ORIGINAL SENTENCE

- At the heart of euro crisis is Mrs. Merckel's lack of quick or bold reaction, the reason for lack of halting of the downward spiral of the euro.

This sentence has only 1 clause with inverted SV order. Grammatically this sentence appears to be fine but it is not written in concise manner. The expression – “lack of halting of ...” is overly complicated and confusing.

REVIEW ANSWER CHOICES TO DO POE

Choice B – This choice changes the meaning of the sentence. It now states that Mrs. Merckel is at the heart of Euro crisis. Per the original sentence, her lack of quick or bold decision is at the heart of Euro crisis.

Choice C – Correct Choice.

Choice D – This choice repeats the errors of Choice B

Choice E – This choice is grammatically correct. But it changes the intended meaning of the sentence. Now it implies that lack of bold reaction is the reason behind the downward spiral of the Euro. This is not correct. Note that per the intended meaning – downward spiral of Euro is already happening. Mrs. Merckel is not taking a quick or bold decision. This indecisiveness results in continuation of the downward spiral. Thus, its not like this indecisiveness results in the downward spiral of Euro. It results in not being able to stop this downward spiral.

TAKE- AWAYS

- Understand the intended meaning of the sentence and then select the choice that correctly communicates that meaning. Understand the role of each modifier in the sentence and note for any changes in the placement of these modifiers.

STRATEGY 2 – USE OF MODIFIERS

How does GMAT use this strategy: There are a finite number of commonly used modifiers. These modifiers typically play well-defined role. You may find below the list of modifiers and what they typically modify. E-GMAT customers may view the concept file “Types of Modifiers” to find more details on this topic.

Type of Modifier	What does it Modify?
Single word adjective	Modifies the closest noun
Single word adverb	Modifies the verb
Relative pronoun clause	Modifies the noun <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • which, that – modify things • who – modifies people • whose – modifies people or things
Verb-ed modifier	Modifies the noun
Verb-ing modifier	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If separated by comma, modifies preceding clause and associates with the subject • If separated by comma, modifies the following clause or modifies only the subject • If not separated by comma, modifies the noun
Prepositional modifier	Modifies verb or noun – depends on the context
Noun + noun modifier	Modifies any aspect of the preceding clause

Lets take a simple example below:

SIMPLE EXAMPLE

The swift cat caught the rat.

So here is the scene that I picture. Cat is swift. It caught the rat. Now lets check this sentence below.

The cat swiftly caught the rat.

Now the scene that I picture is – cat swiftly grabbed the rat. So per this sentence, I no longer know whether the cat is generally swift or not. But I do know that the cat acted swiftly and caught the rat.

So changing the modifier from “adjective” to “adverb” leads to change in the meaning communicated by the sentence.

This is exactly how GMAT may introduce a difference in meaning.

OFFICIAL QUESTION 1 – OG 12 – Q#126

Now let's take an official question:

The use of lie detectors is based on the assumption that lying produces emotional reactions in an individual that, in turn, create unconscious physiological responses.

- A. that, in turn, create unconscious physiological responses
- B. that create unconscious physiological responses in turn
- C. creating, in turn, unconscious physiological responses
- D. to create, in turn, physiological responses that are unconscious
- E. who creates unconscious physiological responses in turn

Intended meaning from Choice A: The intended meaning of the sentence from choice A can be inferred as follows:

1. Use of lie detectors is based on a certain assumption. Here is the assumption
2. Lying produces emotional reactions in an individual
3. These emotional reactions then create unconscious physiological responses.

The **use** of lie detectors **is based** on the assumption that **lying produces emotional reactions** in an individual **that**, in turn, **create** unconscious physiological responses

Note that “that clause” in this sentence clearly modifies – emotional reactions. Yes, typically relative pronoun modifiers modify the closest noun. However, they can also modify slightly far away noun when this noun is the head of the noun phrase and when such modification makes sense. E-GMAT customers can find detailed description of this concept in the concept file – Modifiers – Relative Pronouns. Also, I cover this topic in excruciating detail in one of the live sessions in the Verbal Live Complete.

This choice is absolutely correct. There are no grammatical and meaning based errors in this sentence.

Grammatically Correct but Incorrect choice (E) – Notice how in choice E the test makers have changed the modifier from “that clause” to “who clause”. See, “who” modifiers cannot modify things. They can only modify people. So by changing ‘thing’ modifying modifier to ‘person’ modifying modifier, now automatically the entity being modified changes to “individual”. Now the modifier no longer modifies “emotional reactions”. This changes the meaning. This results in different yet still logical meaning.

The **use** of lie detectors **is based** on the assumption that **lying produces emotional reactions** in an individual **who creates** unconscious physiological responses in turn.

The intended meaning communicated by Choice E is the following:

1. Use of lie detectors is based on a certain assumption. Here is the assumption:
2. Lying produces emotional reactions in an individual
3. The individual then creates unconscious physiological responses.

Note that without subject matter knowledge, the above cause and effect sequence appears to be logical. Lying produces certain reactions in the individual and then the individual unknowingly creates certain type of responses.

Thus, the meaning communicated by this choice is certainly different from the meaning communicated by choice A. Hence, while choice E is grammatically correct, it changes the logical intended meaning and is not the correct choice.

PS: Access our free concepts on sentence structure if you want to know how to break a compound sentence into simple sentences. Just register at e-gmat.com

OFFICIAL QUESTION 2 – OG VERBAL REVIEW 2 – Q#108

Now let's take another official question.

Sound can travel through water for enormous distances, prevented from dissipating its acoustic energy as a result of boundaries in the ocean created by water layers of different temperatures and densities.

- A. prevented from dissipating its acoustic energy as a result of
- B. prevented from having its acoustic energy dissipated by
- C. its acoustic energy prevented from dissipating by
- D. its acoustic energy prevented from being dissipated as a result of
- E. preventing its acoustic energy from dissipating by

Intended meaning from Choice A: The sentence is written in an awkward manner but we can certainly infer the intended meaning.

1. Sound can travel through water for long distances.
2. The acoustic energy of sound is prevented from dissipating because of the boundaries in the ocean. These boundaries are created by water layers of different temperatures and densities.

Now it is logical to say that because of statement 2, statement 1 happens. That is because the acoustic energy of sound is not dissipated easily, sound can travel through water for long distances. At this point you can picture in your mind that these two facts can be connected in multiple ways:

1. Use connectors that state reason such as because, since.
2. Use modifier that extends the thought of preceding clause.

Error in the original choice: Choice A is not the correct choice since it is not written properly.

Choice C corrects this error and is the correct choice. It uses noun + noun modifier construction to explain how sound can travel through water for long distances. Notice that a noun + noun modifier construction is very versatile. It can modify any aspect of the preceding clause. It need not be

necessarily connected to the subject of the clause. This is what sets it apart from a verb-ing modifier which has been used in choice E.

Explains how this is possible

Sound can travel through water for enormous distances, *its acoustic energy prevented from dissipating by boundaries in the ocean created by water layers of different temperatures and densities.*

Grammatically Correct but Incorrect choice E: Notice how the *test makers have changed this modifier to verb-ing modifier*. As we discussed earlier, a verb-ing modifier when separated by a comma modifies the preceding clause but is connected with the subject of that clause. It may also present the result of the action in the preceding clause. Neither of these modifications in this sentence creates an illogical meaning. Two possible interpretations are:

- Illogical meaning 1
 - Sound can travel through water for long distances.
 - Sound prevents its energy from dissipating because of the boundaries in the ocean. These boundaries are created by water layers of different temperatures and densities.
 - This is illogical since sound itself does not prevent its energy from being dissipated. The boundaries in the ocean prevent the energy of sound from being dissipated.
- Illogical meaning 2
 - Sound can travel through water for enormous distances
 - This leads to its energy being prevented from dissipation

Illogically implies that sound "prevents its energy from dissipating"

Sound can travel through water for enormous distances, *preventing its acoustic energy from dissipating by boundaries in the ocean created by water layers of different temperatures and densities.*

So as you can see, by changing the modifier, the context of the sentence changes, resulting in this case in an illogical meaning. Now at first look this choice may appear to be correct since grammatically there are no errors. However, since the correct choice must communicate intended logical meaning, this choice is not the correct answer.

HOW TO EVALUATE CHOICES THAT CHANGE THE MEANING?

1. Understand the logical meaning of the original choice.
 - a. Note how the modifiers have been used.
 - b. If the meaning is not clear in the original choice, then apply your knowledge of modifiers and determine the suitable modifier for the sentence. Such pre-thinking helps when you review the answer choices.
2. Look for the answer choice that best communicates the same meaning in un-ambiguous and grammatically correct manner.

3. Ignore choices that may be grammatically correct but change the meaning. A seemingly correct grammatical choice may also communicate an illogical meaning.

EXERCISE SENTENCES

EXAMPLE 1 – EUROPEAN LEADERS

European leaders, who met until the early hours of Friday, agreed for signing, with the head of the World Bank, an intergovernmental treaty that would require it to enforce stricter fiscal and financial discipline in their future budgets

- A. for signing, with the head of the World Bank, an intergovernmental treaty that would require it
- B. to sign an intergovernmental treaty with the head of the world bank who would require them
- C. to sign an intergovernmental treaty with the head of the world bank, requiring them
- D. to sign, with the head of the world bank, an intergovernmental treaty that would require them
- E. for signing an intergovernmental treaty with the head of the World Bank that would require them

UNDERSTAND THE MEANING OF THE ORIGINAL SENTENCE

The sentence states the following:

- European leaders met until Friday morning
- They agreed to sign a treaty – an intergovernmental treaty.
- They agreed to sign this treaty with the head of the World Bank.
- This treaty would require the leaders to enforce stricter fiscal and financial discipline in their future budgets.

FIND THE ERRORS IN THE ORIGINAL SENTENCE

- European leaders,
 - who met until the early hours of Friday,
- agreed for signing, with the head of the World Bank, an intergovernmental treaty
- that would require it to enforce stricter fiscal and financial discipline in their future budgets.

The sentence has been simplified into its clauses as shown above. All subject verb pairs are accounted for. The pronoun “it” in underlined portion of the sentence logically refers to “European leaders” but does not agree in number with its antecedent. Thus, this sentence has pronoun-antecedent number agreement error. Notice that the other pronoun “their” in non-underlined portion also logically refers to “European leaders”. Context of the sentence requires both these pronouns to refer to the “leaders”. Furthermore, the expression “for signing” is not appropriate. The sentence expresses an intention here – leaders agreed to do something. Thus, the more appropriate expression is “to sign”.

REVIEW ANSWER CHOICES TO DO POE

Choice B – Even though this choice is grammatically correct, it is not the correct answer since it distorts the meaning of the original sentence. The sentence per choice B implies that the head of the World Bank would require the leaders to enforce stricter rules. Even though this is logical, it is not what the original sentence states. Per the original sentence, it is the treaty that will enforce these regulations.

Choice C – This choice is grammatically correct but it no longer communicates the logical intended meaning of the sentence. By changing the “that modifier” into a “verb-ing modifier”, this sentence now implies that merely by agreeing to sign this treaty would result in enforcement of stricter controls and regulations. This is clearly not the logical sense.

Choice D – Correct choice.

Choice E – This choice repeats the “for signing” error as in choice A. Furthermore, the structure of this choice is such that now it is no longer clear what would require the leaders to enforce stricter controls. – the World Bank or the treaty. Notice carefully the change in placement of the modifiers in this choice.

TAKE- AWAYS

1. Understand the intended meaning of the sentence well before you review the answer choices. If you do not do so, you may mark the seemingly correct choice as the correct answer when this choice in fact changes the meaning of the sentence.
2. Notice carefully any change in the modifier structure itself. The changed modifier may change the meaning of the sentence while still being grammatically correct and/or logically sound.
3. Use “to verb” to present intention.

EXAMPLE 2 - DARPA

DARPA's Falcon Hypersonic Technology Vehicle can fly as fast as 6X the speed of sound and can attack a target 2000 miles away in 30 minutes, its engine's thrust prevented from dissipating in the stratosphere by its conical unibody design.

- A. its engine's thrust prevented from dissipating in the stratosphere by its conical unibody design
- B. preventing its engine's thrust from dissipating in the stratosphere because of its conical unibody design
- C. preventing the dissipation of its engine's thrust in the stratosphere due to its conical unibody design
- D. prevented its engine's thrust from being dissipated in the stratosphere by its conical unibody design
- E. its engine's thrust is prevented from being dissipated in the stratosphere because of its conical unibody design

UNDERSTAND THE MEANING OF THE ORIGINAL SENTENCE

The sentence presents a fact about DARPA's Falcon Hypersonic Technology Vehicle (FHTV). It states that this vehicle can fly as fast as 6 times the speed of sound. It can attack a target 2000 miles away in 30 minutes. Then the sentence presents the reason why such performance is achievable. The engine's thrust is prevented from being dissipated in the stratosphere. This is because of the conical unibody design.

FIND THE ERRORS IN THE ORIGINAL SENTENCE

- DARPA's Falcon Hypersonic Technology Vehicle can fly as fast as 6X the speed of sound and can attack a target 2000 miles away in 30 minutes, its engine's thrust prevented from dissipating in the stratosphere by its conical unibody design.

This sentence contains a single clause with the SV pair highlighted. The underlined portion of the sentence contains a modifier – a noun + noun modifier structure. This modifier provides further information about how the vehicle can fly this fast and can attack this fast and this far away. The sentence has no grammatical errors and communicates the meaning very clearly.

REVIEW ANSWER CHOICES TO DO POE

Choice B – Even though grammatically correct, this choice distorts the meaning of the sentence since now it uses “verb-ing modifier” in place of “noun + noun modifier”. Thus instead of now presenting a mechanism of how the vehicle is this fast, it presents the following two meanings, both of which are illogical:

1. The vehicle itself prevents its thrust from dissipating – Illogical.
2. The vehicle goes this fast and this results in preventing its thrust from dissipating. – Reversed causal relationship - hence illogical.

Choice C – Same errors as in Choice B. Furthermore, “due to” is not used correctly. Here it may illogically imply that the dissipation of thrust is due to conical design.

Choice D – Use of verb-ed modifier in this sentence is not correct. Typically these modifiers are used to modify the nouns. Even if they are used to modify the clauses, they associate with the subject of the clause, and this is non-sensical in the context of this sentence as discussed in choice B analysis.

Choice E – This choice connects two independent clauses using comma. Semicolon should be used. Furthermore, this choice is very wordy.

TAKE- AWAYS

1. Understand the meaning of the original sentence and determine the role of each modifier.
2. Be cautious of change of structure of modifiers since such changes even though grammatically correct may distort the meaning of the sentence.

STRATEGY 3 – CHANGE OF CONJUNCTIONS


How does GMAC use this strategy: Conjunctions connect two or more parts of the sentence and establish certain relationship between/among these parts. Thus, conjunctions are connectors. Each conjunction/connector establishes a certain relationship. Thus, if we change the conjunction/connector, the relationship expressed may change, thereby changing the meaning of the sentence.

In the table below some of the commonly used connectors are presented. This is not an exhaustive list, but just an representative one.

Conjunction/Connector	What relationship does it establish?
And	The parts connected are independent
Along with	The parts connected are linked or dependent
So that	The parts connected are linked or dependent through a purpose
Or	The parts connected are independent. However, its different from “and” since it presents a sense of “either..or”.
Because, since, as	Present causal relationship

Lets take a few examples:

SIMPLE EXAMPLE 1

1.  Tom loves to eat sandwich and cheese.

Per this sentence, Tom loves to eat two things – sandwich and cheese. Now lets check this sentence below.

2. Tom loves to eat sandwich along with cheese. 

Now per this sentence, Tom loves to eat sandwich along with cheese.

Thus, if we compare the two sentences we get the difference in the implied meaning. In sentence 1, when the two entities “sandwich and cheese” were combined using “and”, we got the sense of two independent entities that Tom loves to eat. However, in sentence 2, by using “along with”, now we do not consider sandwich and cheese as two separated entities. They are somehow connected with each other – in this case obviously, cheese is used in the sandwich.

But notice how both meanings are absolutely logical. This is exactly how GMAT may introduce a difference in meaning.

SIMPLE EXAMPLE 2

- 1
2
1. Amy eats balanced diet and does regular workouts.

Per this sentence, Amy does two things. She eats balanced diet and she does regular workouts. Pretty logical meaning!!

- 1
A
2. Amy eats balanced diet or does regular workouts.

Now per this sentence, Amy only does one of the two things. She either eats balanced diet. Or she does regular workouts. This is also logical. *(From personal experience I can tell that there are times when I only do one or the other. But yes, I know doing both is what makes the difference!!)*

- Amy eats balanced diet so that she can do effective workout.

1
2
- 3.

Now per this sentence, Amy does one action – eats balanced diet – so that she can do the other action effectively – workout. This is also logical. *(From personal experience, I can vouch for this as well. When I eat in balanced proportions, I feel energized and I can do better workouts!!)*

So as you can see, all three sentences above are logical but all three communicate different meanings and this happened because of change in the connectors/conjunctions. This is exactly how GMAT may introduce a difference in meaning.

OFFICIAL QUESTION 1 – OG VR2 – Q#31

Now lets take an official question:

Nearly two tons of nuclear-reactor fuel have already been put into orbit around the Earth, and the chances of a collision involving such material increase greatly as the amount of both space debris and satellites continue to rise.

- A. as the amount of both space debris and satellites continue to rise
- B. as the rise continues in both the amount of satellites and space debris
- C. as the amount of space debris and the number of satellites continue to rise
- D. with the continually increasing amount of space debris and the number of satellites
- E. with the amount of space debris continuing to increase along with the number of satellites

Intended meaning from Choice A (and Correct Choice C): The intended meaning of the sentence from choice A can be inferred as follows:

- Nearly two tons of nuclear-reactor fuel have been put into orbit around the Earth.
- The chances of collision involving such material increase greatly as two things continue to increase
 - the amount of space debris
 - and
 - the number of satellites

Grammatically Correct but Incorrect choice (E) – Notice how in choice E the test makers have changed the connector of the two things. Now the connection is made with “along with”. This now implies that there is a relationship between the “increase in number of satellites” and “rise in amount of space debris”. It implies that amount of space debris increases as the number of satellites increase. Although perfectly logical, this is not what choice A implied. And hence this choice is incorrect.

OFFICIAL QUESTION 2 – GMATPREP – LARGEST TRADE-BOOK PUBLISHER

The largest trade-book publisher in the US has announced the creation of a new digital imprint division, under which it will publish about 20 purely digital works to be sold online as either electronic books or downloadable copies that can be printed upon purchase.

- A. works to be sold online as either electronic books or
- B. works to sell them online, either as electronic books or
- C. works and it will sell them online as either electronic books or as
- D. works, and selling them online as either electronic books or as
- E. works, and it will sell them online as either electronic books or

Intended meaning from Choice A: Per choice A, the publisher will publish these works with a purpose of having them sold online. Note clearly that this choice does not indicate who will sell the works. It only indicates that online selling is the purpose of taking on this project.

Grammatically Correct but Incorrect choice (E) – This choice communicates the sense that publisher will publish these works and will sell them online. Notice how that the purpose of embarking on that project is no longer communicated. By using “and”, the sentence simply presents the two as independent facts rather than as purpose relationship. Furthermore, this choice adds the information that publisher will be selling the books online. This information is not presented in the original sentence.

So notice how by simply changing the way the two entities are connected, meaning can be drastically changed. This is why it is of utmost importance that one reads and understands the meaning of the original sentence.

HOW TO EVALUATE CHOICES THAT CHANGE THE MEANING?

1. Understand the logical meaning of the original choice.
 - a. Note what ideas have been communicated
 - b. Note how the ideas have been connected.
2. Look for the answer choice that best communicates the same meaning in un-ambiguous and grammatically correct manner.
3. Ignore choices that may be grammatically correct but change the meaning. A seemingly correct grammatical choice may also communicate an illogical meaning.

EXERCISE SENTENCES

EXAMPLE 1 – DRUG TO MARKET

The possibilities opened by the recent federal court decision are frightening because now a radical pro-business secretary, in principle, can bypass the clinical trial system and also the F.D.A. approval process in order that he brings a drug faster to the market.

- A. bypass the clinical trial system and also the F.D.A. approval process in order that he brings a drug faster to the market
- B. bypass the clinical trial system or the F.D.A. approval process in order to bring a drug faster to market
- C. bring a drug faster to the market along with the F.D.A. approval process by bypassing the clinical trial system
- D. bypass the clinical trial system and the F.D.A. approval process to bring a drug faster to the market
- E. bypasses the clinical trial system and the F.D.A. approval process, bringing a drug faster to the market

UNDERSTAND THE MEANING OF THE ORIGINAL SENTENCE

The author implies that the possibilities per the recent court decision are frightening. This is because now a radical person of authority in medical system can bypass two gates – the clinical trial system and the FDA approval process with an intention to bring a drug faster to the market.

FIND THE ERRORS IN THE ORIGINAL SENTENCE

1. The **possibilities** opened by the recent federal court decision **are frightening**
2. because now a **radical pro-business secretary**, in principle, **can bypass the clinical trial system and also the F.D.A. approval process in order that he brings a drug faster to the market.**

The sentence structure is as shown above. The SV pairs for both clauses are accounted for and agree in number. The pronoun “he” correctly refers to the radical pro-business secretary. The verb – can bypass – is written in correct verb tense to indicate the capability that the secretary will have after the new court decision. The use of “also” is **redundant**. The list of two things that can be bypassed is already connected using “and”. Also, the intention is expressed using “in order to” or “to verb”. “**in order that**” is **not the correct idiom** to express the intention.

REVIEW ANSWER CHOICES TO DO POE

Choice B – Use of “or” changes the intended meaning of the sentence. Now it appears as though the secretary will have the capability to bypass only one or the other and not both. So per this sentence, the secretary has less capability than per the original sentence (per which he could bypass both systems). Note that “in order to” is perfect fine. Yes “to verb” is more precise but this choice is not incorrect because of use of “in order to”. It is incorrect because it changes the intended meaning.

Choice C – This choice completely distorts the meaning of the sentence. Note that per the original sentence, the secretary had the option of bypassing the two systems. Using this capability he could have taken the drug faster to market. Per this sentence it appears as though the court decision will explicitly allow the secretary to bring a drug faster to the market. Furthermore, now this choice implies that secretary can bring drug faster to market along with the FDA approval process. This is non-sensical. The purpose of “along with the FDA approval process” is no longer clear. Is the secretary going to also bring the FDA approval process faster to the market? In any case, the way “along with” has been used, distorts the significance of FDA approval process.

Choice D – Correct choice.

Choice E – Subject-verb do not agree in number. “Can bypasses” is incorrect. Also, ‘bringing a drug...” now shows a consequence instead of an intention. Even though logically and grammatically correct, it does not communicate the intended “intention” of the secretary to bypass the two systems.

TAKE- AWAYS

1. Understand the meaning of the original sentence. Note the relationships among each part of the sentence – both from grammatical standpoint and from logical standpoint.
2. Make sure that these relationships are maintained in the correct choice as well.

3. Focus on entire sentence and not just the underlined portion of the sentence. For example, in choice E, can is in non-underlined portion, so if one does not pay attention to that, one may not be able to catch – bypasses – error.

EXAMPLE 2 – QUALITY OF TEACHING

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development in Finland requires that all teachers have master's degree and funds the same to ensure that its teachers impart high quality of teaching.

- A. degree and funds the same to ensure
- B. degree, funds the same, and ensures
- C. degree and fund the same to ensure
- D. degree, funds the same, ensuring
- E. degree, funding the same to ensure

MEANING ANALYSIS

The sentence presents two facts about an organization in Finland - Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. This organization does two things with an aim to ensure that its teachers impart high quality of teaching.

1. It requires that all teachers have masters' degree
2. It funds the same – i.e. it funds the masters' degree education of teachers.

ERROR ANALYSIS

1. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development in Finland requires
 - a. that all teachers have master's degree
2. and funds the same to ensure that its teachers impart high quality of teaching.

In this sentence the two verbs – requires and funds – make sense and agree in number with the subject - organization. Per the context of the modifier “to ensure that its teachers...” it is clear that it provides the purpose of both the actions of the organization. This sentence is correct as is.

ANSWER CHOICE ANALYSIS

Choice B – This choice no longer provides the purpose of the actions. By changing “to ensure” to “and ensures”, the sentence implies that the organization somehow (probably with some other measures) ensures that its teachers impart high quality of teachers. This is not the intended meaning of the sentence.

Choice C – This choice is also grammatically correct but it changes the intended meaning of the sentence. Per this choice, the organization requires two things from the teachers.

1. Teachers have master's degree
2. Teachers fund the master's degree

This is clearly not the intended meaning. Per the intended meaning, the organization requires that teachers have master's degree and in fact the organization itself funds the same (obviously for the teachers who do not have master's degree). The organization implements this requirement and funds the education with a single aim – high quality of teaching.

Choice D – This choice does not use correct punctuation to connect the two verbs – requires and funds.

Choice E – Use of “funding the same...” is incorrect here. Neither of the two interpretations of the verb-ing modifier is correct:

1. Organization requires that teachers have master's degree – this results in the organization funding the education. –Illogical.
2. Organization requires that teachers have master's degree by funding the same. - Illogical

TAKE- AWAYS

1. Understand the meaning of the original sentence. Note the relationships among each part of the sentence – both from grammatical standpoint and from logical standpoint.
2. Make sure that these relationships are maintained in the correct choice as well.

STRATEGY 4 - CHANGE OF VOICE

How does GMAC use this strategy: We know that when a sentence is written in active voice, more emphasis is put on the subject performing the action. Likewise, when a sentence is written in passive voice, more emphasis is put on the entity (object) on which the action is performed. This shift in emphasis may lead to sufficient change in the meaning of the sentence.

Lets take a simple example below:

SIMPLE EXAMPLE

Mary cooked the dinner with Thai spices

Following information is presented in the sentence above:

- Who cooked the dinner – Mary
- Any other information – The dinner was cooked with Thai spices

The dinner was cooked with Thai spices

Following information is presented in the sentence above:

- What was cooked – Dinner
- Any other information – The dinner was cooked with Thai spices
 - Note that we no longer know who cooked the dinner.

This is exactly how GMAT may introduce a difference in meaning. An answer choice may either introduce the person who does the action (use active voice) or may remove the information about the doer of the action (use passive voice). Lets take another example:

1. The decayed tree had to be cut to prepare the backyard for the New Year party.
2. The gardener had to cut the decayed tree to prepare the backyard for the New Year party.
 - a. Notice how in sentence 1 – the emphasis is on the action that is required for the preparation of the party.
 - b. However in sentence 2 – the emphasis is now on the doer of the action as well. The gardener had to cut the decayed tree. So sentence 2 provides this additional piece of information.

Thus, you need to understand clearly as to what all information does the original sentence provide. And then you should select the choice that communicates all that information in grammatically correct manner.

OFFICIAL QUESTION 1 – GMATPREP – DECLARATION OF SENTIMENTS

Now lets take an official question:

Before scientists learned how to make a synthetic growth hormone, removing it painstakingly in small amounts from the pituitary glands of human cadavers.

- A. scientists learned how to make a synthetic growth hormone, removing it painstakingly

- B. scientists had learned about making a synthetic growth hormone, they had to remove it painstakingly
- C. scientists learned how to synthesize the growth hormone, it had to be painstakingly removed
- D. learning how to make a synthetic growth hormone, scientists had to remove it painstakingly
- E. learning how to synthesize the growth hormone, it have to be painstakingly removed by scientists

Intended meaning from Choice A: This choice does not communicate a clear meaning. The intended meaning of the sentence from choice A can be inferred as follows:

- Some kind of sequencing is shown using the word “before”.
- Scientists learned how to make a synthetic growth hormone
- However, due to the construction of the sentence, the event that happened prior to this event is not clearly specified. However, we can infer that the prior event may be - removing the growth hormone painstakingly from the pituitary glands of human cadavers.

Thus this choice is incorrect because it does not communicate the meaning of the sentence clearly. Grammatically, this choice does not have an independent clause and hence is a fragment.

Correct: Choice C corrects these errors and communicates the inferred meaning clearly. It effectively uses passive voice “it had to be painstakingly removed” to present the prior event. Note that the original sentence (choice A) does not say anything about who actually painstakingly removed the hormone from the human cadavers.

Grammatically Correct but Incorrect choice (D) – Notice how in choice D the test makers have changed the voice of one of the verbs. Now the sentence uses active voice “scientists had to painstakingly remove...”. This changes the meaning of the original sentence since it now adds new information that “scientists” actually had to remove the hormone. This information is not present in the original choice. And hence this choice by “adding” to the meaning of the sentence changes the meaning and hence is incorrect. Carefully notice that this sentence does not have any grammatical errors.

OFFICIAL QUESTION 2 – GMATPREP – LARGEST TRADE-BOOK PUBLISHER

The largest trade-book publisher in the US has announced the creation of a new digital imprint division, under which it will publish about 20 purely digital works to be sold online as either electronic books or downloadable copies that can be printed upon purchase.

- A. works to be sold online as either electronic books or
- B. works to sell them online, either as electronic books or
- C. works and it will sell them online as either electronic books or as
- D. works, and selling them online as either electronic books or as
- E. works, and it will sell them online as either electronic books or

Intended meaning from Choice A: Per choice A, the publisher will publish these works with a purpose of having them sold online. Note clearly that this choice does not indicate who will sell the works. It only indicates that online selling is the purpose of taking on this project.

Grammatically Correct but Incorrect choice (E) – This choice communicates the sense that publisher will publish these works and will sell them online. Thus this choice adds the information

that publisher will be selling the books online. This information is not presented in the original sentence. Furthermore, as discussed earlier per strategy 3, this choice also changes the meaning by now simply presenting the two events as independent facts rather than as purpose relationship.

So notice how choice E even though is grammatically correct, is not the correct choice because it communicates different meaning from the intended meaning. Notice how the test makers have introduced meaning change by using two different strategies.

HOW TO EVALUATE CHOICES THAT CHANGE THE MEANING?

1. Understand the logical meaning of the original choice.
 - a. Carefully note all the information that is presented.
2. Look for the answer choice that best communicates the same meaning in un-ambiguous and grammatically correct manner.
3. Ignore choices that may be grammatically correct but change the meaning or the emphasis in the sentence. Pay close attention to choices that add information (by changing to active voice) or remove information (by changing to passive voice).

EXERCISE SENTENCES

EXAMPLE 1 – ADVERTISEMENT DESIGN

Before the managers started using word processors and graphic representation tools, advertisements designed by in house calligraphers.

- A. the managers started using word processors and graphic representation tools, advertisements designed by in house calligraphers.
- B. using word processors and graphic representation tools, managers had to get in house calligraphers to design advertisements.
- C. the managers started using word processors and graphic representation tools, advertisements were designed by in house calligraphers.
- D. the managers had started to use word processors and graphic representation tools, they had to get in house calligraphers to design advertisements.
- E. the use of word processors and graphic representation tools started, advertisements had to be designed by in house calligraphers.

UNDERSTAND THE MEANING OF THE ORIGINAL SENTENCE

This sentence does not communicate complete meaning. Presence of word “before” indicates that sequencing of two events has been presented. The latter event is – managers started using word processors and graphic representation tools. The earlier event is not clearly specified. The noun – advertisements does not have any verb. This part simply indicates that advertisements were designed by in house calligraphers, but the lack of verb for the noun – advertisements – leaves the reader with only partial meaning.

FIND THE ERRORS IN THE ORIGINAL SENTENCE

- Before the managers started using word processors and graphic representation tools, advertisements designed by in house calligraphers.

This sentence **does not contain an independent clause**. The presence of word “before” makes this a dependent clause. Also, the role of “advertisements designed...” is not clear. The way this part is positioned, it appears as though this “noun + noun modifier” modifies certain aspect of the preceding clause. But **logically this modification does not make sense**. Both these errors can be corrected if “designed by in...” is converted into a verb by saying “were designed”.

REVIEW ANSWER CHOICES TO DO POE

Choice B – Grammatically correct but incorrect. This choice adds information about who got calligraphers to design ads. The original sentence only indicates that the advertisements were designed by in-house calligraphers.

Choice C – Correct. This choice converts the modifier – advertisements designed...- in a clause. Now the sentence has an independent clause. Also, the intended meaning is preserved.

Choice D – This choice distorts the intended sequencing of actions. The later action – “started using” has now been written in past perfect tense – the tense that is used to denote earlier of two actions in the past tense. This choice also repeats the error in Choice B by adding the information about who got the in-house calligraphers to design advertisements.

Choice E – Grammatically Correct but incorrect- This choice omits information that is present in the original sentence. There is no mention of who has started using the word processors and the graphic representation tools.

TAKE- AWAYS

1. Always understand the intended meaning of the original sentence.
2. It is very important to note ALL the information present in the sentence.
3. The correct choice should communicate ALL that information – no more and no less – in a grammatically correct manner.

EXAMPLE 2 – RISE IN AMERICAN EXPORTS

The rise in American exports was possible because international trade barriers were lowered and unprecedented gains in efficiency had been obtained through the use of automated robotic equipment in American manufacturing plants.

- A. international trade barriers were lowered and unprecedented gains in efficiency had been obtained through the use of automated robotic equipment in American manufacturing plants
- B. America lowered international trade barriers and the use of automated robotic equipment in American manufacturing plants resulted in unprecedented gains in efficiency
- C. international trade barriers were lowered and unprecedented gains in efficiency were obtained through the use of automated robotic equipment in American manufacturing plants
- D. international trade barriers were lowered, obtaining unprecedented gains in efficiency through the automated use of robotic equipment in manufacturing plants of America
- E. America lowered trade barriers internationally and the use of unprecedented automated robotic equipment in American manufacturing plants resulted in efficiency gains

UNDERSTAND THE MEANING OF THE ORIGINAL SENTENCE

This sentence presents a cause and effect. The effect is – rise in American exports. There are two causes:

- international trade barriers were lowered
- unprecedented gains in efficiency were obtained. This was done through the use of automated robotic equipment in US plants.

FIND THE ERRORS IN THE ORIGINAL SENTENCE

- The **rise** in American exports **was possible**
- because
 - international trade **barriers were lowered** and
 - unprecedented **gains** in efficiency **had been obtained** through the use of automated robotic equipment in American manufacturing plants

All SV pairs are accounted for and agree in number. This sentence has verb tense error. Logically there is no reason to indicate one of the causes in simple past tense and the other cause in past perfect tense. There is no basis for such sequencing. Thus the **verb – had been obtained** – should be expressed as ‘were obtained’.

REVIEW ANSWER CHOICES TO DO POE

Choice B – Grammatically Correct but Incorrect Choice – By changing the causes from passive voice to active voice, this choice adds information that is not present in the original choice. It is not stated that America lowered the international trade barriers. Thus, this choice is incorrect.

Choice C – Correct choice. The verb tense error has been corrected.

Choice D – This choice distorts the intended meaning. It links the two rather independent tasks in causal relationship. Per this choice, the international trade barriers were lowered and this led to achieving gains in efficiency through use of automatic equipment. This is neither logical nor the intended meaning.

Choice E – Grammatically Correct but Incorrect Choice – This choice repeats the error in Choice B. It further changes the intended meaning by using “unprecedented” to describe “automated robotic equipment” instead of “efficiency gains”.

TAKE- AWAYS

1. Always understand the intended meaning of the original sentence.
2. It is very important to note ALL the information present in the sentence.
3. The correct choice should communicate ALL that information – no more and no less – in a grammatically correct manner.

STRATEGY 5 – CHANGE/REMOVE WORDS THAT PROVIDE CONTEXT

How does GMAC use this strategy: There are several context important words in English language. An answer choice may either add or remove such contextually important words. Since these words provide context, any such change can result in change in meaning of the sentence.

Lets take a simple example below:

SIMPLE EXAMPLE

1. Amy **has evolved into** an exceptionally talented actress.
2. Amy **is** an exceptionally talented actress.

Both sentences above are grammatically correct. Both use similar words but the slight difference in the choice of words results in change of meaning of the sentence. Sentence 1 shows the evolution of Amy into a talented actress. This sentence implies that may be Amy was not such a great actress when she began her career. But now she is evolved into one. However, note that sentence 1 omits all this information. All it states is the fact that is current now – Amy is a talented actress. The evolution part is completely omitted. And hence by removing contextually important words, the meaning has been changed.

This is exactly how GMAT may introduce a difference in meaning. Thus, you should always read the original sentence carefully and then determine all the information provided in the choice. And then you should select the choice that communicates all that information in grammatically correct manner.

Lets take another set of sentences:

1. Tom may go to gym in the evening.
 - a. Use of “may” denotes possibility. It implies that Tom may or may not go to the gym. He has not as yet decided and he may make the decision at the last minute.
2. Tom will go to gym in the evening.
 - a. Use of “will” denotes certainty. This sentence implies that Tom is determined to go to the gym. He will definitely go to the gym this evening.
3. Tom can go to the gym in the evening.
 - a. Use of “can” shows capability. This sentence implies that circumstances are such that Tom can go to the gym – may be he has completed his work and now has the time to go to the gym or may be he has a baby at home and he has been able to make the necessary arrangements.

So notice how just by changing the helping verb – may, will, can – the meaning could be changed so drastically.

OFFICIAL QUESTION 1 – OG VERBAL REVIEW 2 – Q#43

Now lets take an official question:

Though the term “graphic design” may suggest laying out corporate brochures and annual reports, they have come to signify widely ranging work, from package designs and company logotypes to signs, book jackets, computer graphics, and film titles.

- A. suggest laying out corporate brochures and annual reports, they have come to signify widely ranging
- B. suggest laying out corporate brochures and annual reports, it has come to signify a wide range of
- C. suggest corporate brochure and annual report layout, it has signified widely ranging
- D. have suggested corporate brochure and annual report layout, it has signified a wide range of
- E. have suggested laying out corporate brochures and annual reports, they have come to signify widely ranging

Intended meaning from Choice A: This choice indicates that even though “graphic design” was designed to a certain set of tasks, it has come to serve a wide range of tasks. The sentence provides this list of wide range of activities. It is important to note that the choice indicates that “graphic design” has come to serve this wide range of activities.

Correct: Choice B corrects the pronoun number disagreement error and communicates the logical intended meaning of choice A clearly.

Grammatically Correct but Incorrect choice (D) – This choice removes the contextually important term – “has come to” (or evolved). This choice now implies that even though “graphic design” may have been designed to serve purpose X, it actually serves purpose Y. This is a completely different meaning than what is presented by choices A and B. Note the difference once again in the simplified structure.

- Choice A (and Correct choice B) – Though X may be designed to do X, it has come to do Y.
- Choice D – Though X may have been designed to do X, it does Y.

OFFICIAL QUESTION 2 – OG VERBAL REVIEW 2 – Q#52

Recently discovered fossil remains strongly suggest that the Australian egg-laying mammals of today are a branch of the main stem of mammalian evolution rather than developing independently from a common ancestor of mammals more than 220 million years ago.

- A. rather than developing independently from
- B. rather than a type that developed independently from
- C. rather than a type whose developments was independent of
- D. instead of developing independently from
- E. instead of a development that was independent of

Intended meaning from Choice A: Per choice A, Australian egg-laying mammals were not developed independently from a common ancestor. Also, as stated in the non-underlined portion, they are a branch of the main stem of evolution.

Grammatically Correct but Incorrect choice (C) – Per choice C, these mammals were not of the kind whose development was independent of a common ancestor. This is different from saying that these mammals were not developed independently from a common ancestor.

The difference in meaning can be exemplified by the following set of sentences:

- Like choice A – Company ABC has developed independently from its parent organization XYZ.
 - This implies that company ABC has developed from its parent organization. But it has done so independently without any extra outside assistance.
- Like choice D – Development of company ABC is independent of its parent organization XYZ.
 - This implies that company ABC development has nothing to do with its parent organization

HOW TO EVALUATE CHOICES THAT CHANGE THE MEANING?

1. Understand the logical meaning of the original choice.
2. Look for the answer choice that best communicates the same meaning in un-ambiguous and grammatically correct manner.
3. Ignore choices that may be grammatically correct but change the meaning or the emphasis in the sentence. Pay close attention to choices that change the contextually important words.

EXERCISE SENTENCES

EXAMPLE 1 – LOGITECH SUCCESS

Although Logitech's recent press release credits its success to the innovation in its product division, its future success hinges on how closely its products are related to those of Apple's.

- A. how closely its products are related to those of Apple's
- B. its close relationship with Apple
- C. on the relationship between its products and Apple's
- D. how closely it is related to Apple
- E. how closely its products are related to Apple's

UNDERSTAND THE MEANING OF THE ORIGINAL SENTENCE

The sentence presents a disparity or a contrast. It states a fact that Logitech credits its success to the innovation in its product division. Then it states that the future success of Logitech depends on some other factor – how closely its products are related to Apple’s products.

FIND THE ERRORS IN THE ORIGINAL SENTENCE

- Although Logitech’s recent press **release credits** its success to the innovation in its product division,
- its future **success hinges** on
 - how closely its **products are related** to those of Apple’s.

All SV pairs are accounted for and agree in number. The verb tenses have been used appropriately. The comparison is not stated correctly. Logitech’s products have been compared to products of Apple’s products. Note that “Apple’s” implies “Apple’s products”. “those” also logically refer to “products”. This results in distortion of the intended comparison. Either “Apple’s” should be made “Apple” or “those” should be removed.

REVIEW ANSWER CHOICES TO DO POE

Choice B – Grammatically Correct but Incorrect Choice – This choice completely changes the intended meaning. This choice states that the success depends on relationship between the two companies. This is different from the intended meaning – how closely aligned the products of two companies are.

Choice C – Grammatically Correct but Incorrect Choice – This choice removes the contextually important word – “closely”. Now the choice states that the success hinges on the “relationship” between the products instead of the “extent of close relation” between the products.

Choice D – Grammatically Correct but Incorrect Choice – This choice completely distorts the intended meaning since it no longer talks about the close alignment of the products of the two companies. It talks about the close alignment of the companies themselves.

Choice E – Correct Choice.

TAKE- AWAYS

1. It is very important to understand the intended meaning of the sentence and then select the choice that communicates that intended meaning in grammatically correct manner.