



THE BANG BANG FLASH CARD SET



VERBAL STRATEGIES

Contents of Flash Cards



- Basic Strategies and Principles of Sentence Correction, Critical Reasoning, and Reading Comprehension with a few examples
- Illustration of errors and right answer choices through examples



Critical Reasoning

Contents



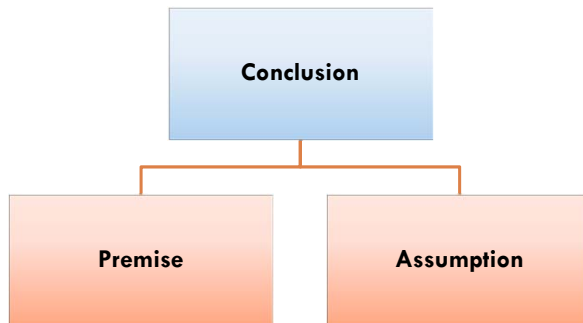
- Main Point / Must Be True
- Weaken
- Strengthen
- Assumption
- Resolve the Paradox
- Reasoning
- Bold Faced
- Numbers and Percents

Basic Deconstruction



- **Step 1:** Read the question stem and categorize the question.
- **Step 2:** Read the stimulus and identify the premise and the conclusion
- **Step 3:** Try to focus on the conclusion and think of answer choices that might be right
- **Step 4:** Use process of elimination to rule out wrong answer choices. Don't try to make them fit!
- **Step 5:** Make sure answer choice makes sense!

Main parts of a CR question



Main parts of a CR question



- **Conclusion:** This is the final argument that the author makes.
- **Premise:** These are evidentiary statements that support the conclusion
- **Assumption:** These are unstated premises, on which the conclusion and sometimes the premise rest on.

Premise & Conclusion



PREMISE	CONCLUSION
Supports the conclusion – Answers the question of “Why?”	Has a tone of finality and conveys the final message of what the author is saying
Because	Thus
Since	Therefore
For/For the reason	Hence
Due to	So
As indicated by	As a result of/Consequently
Furthermore	Accordingly
Given that	It follows that/It must be that

Type I – Ascertain Conclusion



- These are questions where we **assume that the stimulus is true** and try to find **answer choices that are supported by the conclusion**

- Possible Question Types:

1. Inference
2. Main Point
3. Must-be-True

Type II – Strengthen & Support



- These are questions where **we assume that the given answer choices are true** and try to pick the **best one that will support the stimulus**

- Possible Question Types:

1. Strengthen
2. Assumption

Type III – Weaken and Hurt



- This is basically the opposite of the above type and aims to **disprove the conclusion of the stimulus**. Hence **we take the answer choice to be true** here as well.

- Possible Question Types:

1. Strengthen
2. Assumption

Most Common Mistake Types



Opposite Answers

- ❖ Does the opposite of what the answer choice is supposed to do
- ❖ People pick them because they might get confused about the question type

Shell Game Answers

- ❖ Sounds really similar to the stimulus but differs by just the right amount to be incorrect but still lucrative.
- ❖ People pick these when they're not paying close attention

Most Common Mistake Types



Out of Scope/Irrelevant Answers

- ❖ Talks about something completely irrelevant to the discussion at hand.
- ❖ People tend to pick these when they're completely unsure of what they're supposed to be doing

Tone Mismatch Answers

- ❖ Answers that don't agree with the tone of the passage
- ❖ Might be too strong or too weak when compared to stimulus

Main Point/Must-Be-True



"Which of the following represents the main idea of the paragraph?"
"Which of the following can be inferred from the above?"

Correct Answer Choices

- ❑ **Can this answer choice be proven or validated by what is given in the stimulus? Is this answer choice true to the stimulus AND the main point of the passage, i.e. similar to the conclusion?**
- ❑ Should be validated by the stimulus (Stimulus is taken to be true)
- ❑ Should be the main point of the stimulus, not just a premise (for Main Point questions)
- ❑ Will either restate conclusion or present it in a different manner

A B C D E



To be considered for this year's merit scholarship award, students need to have perfect attendance and a 4.0 GPA. Alex is the only person in the class who has a 4.0 but he has had 5 absences.

The claims above, if true, most strongly support which of the following conclusions?

- A. No student at this school has perfect attendance for the year
- B. Some students at this school who did not have a 4.0 also did not have perfect attendance
- C. Alex is the only student who could be considered for the award
- D. No student at this school qualifies for the award this year
- E. Many students have achieved perfect attendance but never 4.0 GPAs.

A B C **D** E



- A:** Exaggeration.
- B:** Possible, but not necessary
- C:** The stimulus clearly says that you need both perfect attendance and 4.0 GPA.
- D:** This is true. If Alex is the only one who has a 4.0 and he doesn't have a perfect attendance, it means the entire school is barred from qualifying for the award. Correct choice.
- E:** Out of scope answer.

Weaken



"Which of the following, if true, calls into question the validity of the argument?"

"Which of the following most seriously undermines the conclusion?"

Correct Answer Choices

- Does this answer choice break down causality? Does it give an alternate cause, show that the cause-effect relationship is non-existent or reversed?
- Answer choice should break down structure of stimulus (Answer is taken to be true)
- Could be in relation to a gross generalization, a wrong conclusion or incorrect hypothesis from facts.

A B C **D** E



There are 350 brands of cell phones in the market today. However, our store only stocks the top 10 brands. In order to increase our sales, we plan to increase the size of our inventory to the top 50 brands.

Which of the following, if true, points out a major flaw in the plan above?

- A. The capabilities of the top five cell phones are almost the same, with no brand having consistent superiority in all respects.
- B. The top 8 brands account for almost all the cell phones sold
- C. As users get more sophisticated, they want to try out the lesser known brands which might offer some other value to them.
- D. Less popular brands provide little profit to the store because they have to be discounted to be sold
- E. The leading brands are now losing sales to less popular brands that offer similar features for a lower cost

A **B** C D E



- A:** Irrelevant. Does this affect profit margins for the store if they were to increase inventory? No
- B:** This means that the store already has the brands that sell the most. Increasing inventory will have little effect on profit margins. Correct Answer.
- C:** This almost strengthens the argument.
- D:** This tells you that the lesser brands will provide lesser profit. But "less" is a relative term. This is an unclear statement.
- E:** This almost strengthens the argument by favoring an increase in inventory. Hence incorrect.

Strengthen



“Which of the following, if true, strengthens the argument the most?”
“Which of the following, if true, would most significantly help prove the scientist’s hypothesis?”

Correct Answer Choices

- **Does this answer choice reinforce the conclusion directly? Does it validate an assumption or rule out a discrepancy? Does it help establish causality?**
- Answer choice should strengthen structure of stimulus (Answer is taken to be true)
- Needs to directly strengthen conclusion by bridging logical gaps, validating reasons or assumptions or finding missing links. If it’s not a direct strengthening, move on! Don’t try to make the connections!

A B C D E



Recently, several companies have withdrawn their ads from Magazine A, because the editorial board of the magazine had decided to change the image that the magazine portrays from one of family values to one concerned more with sex and violence. Surely this indicates that the decision-makers in advertising agencies do still have a sense of moral propriety that occasionally drives their actions.

Which of the following, if true, would strengthen this conclusion?

- A) The advertisers regularly review the placement of their advertisements.
- B) It is a rare event for several advertisers to withdraw all their advertisements simultaneously from a publication.
- C) The advertisers, when questioned, admitted that their clients would lose revenue as a result of the advertisements being withdrawn.
- D) The advertisers all placed new advertisements with other publications that emphasised family values.
- E) A survey of the readership of Magazine X suggested that the majority of the readership think that the standard of the magazine’s contents had failed since its transformation.

Question from GMAT Club (95810)

A B C **D** E



- A:** This is irrelevant to the question of moral propriety.
- B:** This doesn’t necessarily point to moral propriety directly. Don’t make unnecessary connections!
- C:** Once again, no correlation to what we’re talking about
- D:** If this is true, then it shows that the agencies care about where their ads go. Hence correct.
- E:** This is about the magazine. Not the advertisers.

Assumption



“The author assumes which of the following in saying that ...”
“The argument cannot be true unless which of the following statements are assumed?”

Correct Answer Choices

- **Supporter:** Links unrelated elements in the stimulus and fills in logical gaps
- **Defender:** Eliminates the alternatives and any choices that might weaken the conclusion.
- **Assumption Negation Technique:** Narrow it down to the final answer choices and then negate them – the main modifier or a verb (such that the meaning of the sentence is reversed) and if the negated choice weakens the conclusion, the answer is right.

A B C D E



In theory, it's possible that bacteria developed on Mars early in its history and some were carried to Earth by a meteorite. However, strains of bacteria from different planets would probably have substantial differences in protein structure that would persist over time, and no two bacterial strains on Earth are different enough to have arisen on different planets. So, even if bacteria did arrive on Earth from Mars, they must have died out.

The argument is most vulnerable to which of the following criticisms?

- A. It fails to establish whether bacteria actually developed on Mars.
- B. It fails to establish how likely it is that Martian bacteria were transported to Earth.
- C. It fails to consider whether there were means other than meteorites by which Martian bacteria could have been carried to Earth.
- D. It fails to consider whether all bacteria now on Earth could have arisen from transported Martian bacteria.
- E. It fails to consider whether there could have been strains of bacteria that originated on Earth and later died out.

Question from GMAT Club (80726)

A B C **D** E



- A:** This is irrelevant to the argument that states that even if bacteria came from Mars, they must have died out.
- B:** Out of Scope!
- C:** Again, this doesn't talk about bacteria strains dying out
- D:** If this is true, then there need not have to be any significant difference between the strains found on Earth, since they all originated from Mars.
- E:** We are not concerned about this.

Resolve the Paradox



"Which of the following, if true, helps explain the paradox above?"

"Which of the following, if true, helps explain the apparent discrepancy in the argument?"

Correct Answer Choices

- Active Resolution:** Don't try to disprove the stimulus, take it as a given.
- Does the answer choice address the facts?** The answer choice MUST conform to the stimulus
- The answer should address BOTH sides of the paradox, and resolve it. It shouldn't strengthen the paradox.

A B C D E



A severe drought can lessen the total amount of government aid that US farmers receive as a group. The government pays farmers the amount, if any, by which the market price at which crops are actually sold falls short of a preset target price per bushel for the crops. The drought of 1983, for example, caused farm-program payments to drop by \$10 billion.

Given the information above, which of the following, if true, best explains why the drought of 1983 resulted in a reduction in farm-program payments?

- A. Prior to the drought of 1983, the government raised the target price for crops in order to aid farmers in reducing their debt loads.
- B. Due to the drought of 1983, United States farmers exported less food in 1983 than in the preceding year.
- C. Due to the drought of 1983, United States farmers had smaller harvests and thus received a higher market price for the 1983 crop than for the larger crop of the preceding year.
- D. Due to the drought of 1983, United States farmers planned to plant smaller crops in 1984 than they had in 1983.
- E. Despite the drought of 1983, retail prices for food did not increase significantly between 1982 and 1983.

Question from GMAT Club (80726)

A B **C** D E



- A:** Strengthens the paradox.
Amount Paid = Target – Market. We can't say anything unless we know what happened to the market price.
- B:** Exports are irrelevant here.
- C:** This talks about the higher market prices. This could explain the paradox because target – market will become lesser if market becomes higher
- D:** Size of crops is irrelevant.
- E:** Between 1982-1983? Retail price? Out of Scope!

Reasoning



- “Which of the following most accurately describes the author's method of defending the case?”
- “Which of the following is most parallel to the argument in logical structure?”

Correct Answer Choices

- Should follow the same pattern of reasoning. Focus on the logic, not the content of the argument!
- Answer choice must be a description of the author's logic!**
- Answer choice should not be inconsistent with the stimulus, even if the stimulus has flawed logic. We are not asked to evaluate the logic of the stimulus; we are merely asked to find an answer that follows the same pattern – right or not.

A B C D E



Shakespeare was the world's greatest playwright, which means that he must have written the world's greatest plays. The fact that he wrote the greatest plays in the world only goes to prove that he is the world's greatest playwright.

Which of the following statements best matches the argument shown above?

- A.** Dr. Smith is the only member of the twenty-strong English department who thinks that Byron wrote greater poetry than Keats. Therefore Byron was not as good a poet as Keats was.
- B.** A miscarriage of justice occurs when an innocent person is sent to prison. However, there are no miscarriages of justice because people in prison are guilty. Otherwise they would not have been sent to prison.
- C.** The presence of enlarged white corpuscles in the blood would indicate that the patient must be suffering from disease X. However, his blood sample contains no enlarged white corpuscles, so he cannot be suffering from disease X.
- D.** Blair denies having committed the robbery, but has implicated Brown. Brown on the other hand, claims that he was elsewhere at the time, and points the finger squarely back at Blair.
- E.** I believe that the presence of the tartar sauce helps to accentuate the flavour of the other ingredients, but they in turn release chemicals which tend to neutralise the tartar sauce. Therefore the dish is much less spicy than pure tartar sauce would be.

Question from GMAT Club (92697)

A **B** C D E



- A:** This calls for making a judgment based on someone's opinion. Not true.
- B:** This is true. The argument in the stimulus is a circular argument that says A proves B and then uses B to prove A. A similar pattern exists here.
- C:** This has a negation effect in the reasoning. Not relevant.
- D:** Shell game answer. Might seem like circular logic, but it's actually just a circular sequence of events.
- E:** Some kind of contradictory reasoning. Not relevant.

Bold Faced Questions



“The two bold faced sentences play which of the following roles?”

Correct Answer Choices

- Should address both the boldfaced portions, not just one.
- **Will be true to the stimulus and mimic the reasoning in the stimulus!**
- Answer choice should not be inconsistent with the stimulus, and it should follow the same logical pattern in order to arrive at the argument of the stimulus. .

A B C D E



Although the earliest surviving Greek inscriptions written in an alphabet date from the eighth century B.C., a strong case can be made that the **Greeks actually adopted alphabetic writing at least two centuries earlier**. Significantly, the text of these earliest surviving Greek inscriptions sometimes runs from right to left and sometimes from left to right. Now, the Greeks learned alphabetic writing from the Phoenicians, and in the process **they would surely have adopted whatever convention the Phoenicians were then using with respect to the direction of writing**. Originally, Phoenician writing ran in either direction, but by the eighth century B.C. it had been consistently written from right to left for about two centuries.

In the argument given, the two portions in boldface play which of the following roles?

- A. The first is the position that the argument seeks to establish; the second reports a discovery that has been used to support a position that the argument opposes.
- B. The first is the position that the argument seeks to establish; the second presents an assumption on which the argument relies.
- C. The first presents evidence that is used in support of the position that the argument seeks to establish; the second presents an assumption on which the argument relies.
- D. The first is an objection raised against a position that the argument opposes; the second is the position that the argument seeks to establish.
- E. The first is an objection raised against a position that the argument opposes; the second is evidence that has been used to support that position.

Question from GMAT Club (98749)

A B C D E



- A:** The second boldfaced portion doesn't represent a discovery; it's an assumption
- B:** This is true. The first part is a clause the stimulus wants to prove and the second is an assumption
- C:** The first boldfaced portion doesn't object to any statement.
- D:** The first boldfaced portion doesn't object to any statement.
- E:** The first boldfaced portion doesn't object to any statement.

Numbers & Percents



- Larger numbers doesn't mean larger percentage and smaller number doesn't mean smaller percentage. For example, $\frac{2}{3} > \frac{90}{243}$
- Increase in percentage is not the same as saying there is an increase in absolute numbers. This could merely be the result of a change in the group size. For example, 5% of 100 > 10% of 50.

A B C D E



A recent survey of all auto accident victims in Dole County found that, of the severely injured drivers and front-seat passengers, 80 percent were not wearing seat belts at the time of their accidents. This indicates that, by wearing seat belts, drivers and front-seat passengers can greatly reduce their risk of being severely injured if they are in an auto accident.

The conclusion above is not properly drawn unless which of the following is true?

- A. Of all the drivers and front-seat passengers in the survey, more than 20 percent were wearing seat belts at the time of their accidents.
- B. Considerably more than 20 percent of drivers and front-seat passengers in Dole County always wear seat belts when travelling by car.
- C. More drivers and front-seat passengers in the survey than rear-seat passengers were very severely injured.
- D. More than half of the drivers and front-seat passengers in the survey were not wearing seat belts at the time of their accidents.
- E. Most of the auto accidents reported to police in Dole County do not involve any serious injury.

Question from GMAT Club (88036)

A B C D E



A: This is a tricky question. Our aim is to prove a correlation. Let's say 100 people were severely injured and 100 were not. Out of the 100 severely injured, 80 didn't wear seat belts.

$$\text{Probability of a person not wearing seat belt to get injured} = \frac{80}{100} = 80\%$$

$$\text{Probability of a person wearing seat belt to get injured} = \frac{20}{120} = 16.7\%$$

- B:** Doesn't establish the correlation between what's being said. Hence incorrect.
- C:** This doesn't even give us a relative indication. Incorrect.
- D:** This tells us about the number of people who were not wearing seat belts, but not about the number of people who were injured.
- E:** Completely irrelevant to the scope of the discussion.

Reading Comprehension



Contents



- **Global Questions**
 - Main Point / Primary Purpose
 - Passage Organization
 - Author's Perspective / Passage Tone
- **Local Questions**
 - Specific Reference
 - Function
 - Strengthen and Weaken
 - Parallel Reasoning Question

Four Questions for RC



- Read from general to specific at three levels. Change your reading strategy, not your reading speed. Answer the following questions.
- **Why?** Main Point of the passage.
- **How?** Structure of the passage – Introduction, Example and Counter-Example. And so on.
- **What?** What is being said? (Main Point of Individual Paragraphs)
- **What Tone?** Make sure answer choice makes sense!

New vs. Existing Ideas



CONTINUATION OF OLD IDEAS	INTRODUCTION OF NEW IDEAS
Continues elaborating on an idea that's already been presented	Introduces another new idea, perhaps to contrast something presented.
Furthermore	However
For Instance	But
For Example	Nevertheless
Additionally	Yet
Similarly	In Contrast
Indeed	Although
In fact	Still

Common Indicators



Main Point or Strong Purpose

- Very Common Question Type
- Primary goal of reading passage – Find the main point!

Common Indicators



Difficult Words, Phrases & Concepts

- Very Common Distraction
- Don't focus on the difficulty of the words or terminologies
- Instead, choose to focus on the underlying meaning of what it's saying

Common Indicators



List of Things/Enumerations

- Pay close attention!
- Don't memorize!
- Very common question indicator. Make a mental note of where the list occurs, so you can return to it, if necessary.

Common Indicators



Reference with Authority

- If authorities are mentioned, think about how and why this authoritative remark is necessary.
- Might represent conflicting view points or ideas.
- Make note of what each authority says and why their authority is relevant.
- Very, very important, and very easy to misinterpret!

Common Indicators



Dates and Numbers

- Match the correct dates with the events mentioned
- Perhaps, make a note of the dates and a short-hand version of the event on your notepad.

Common Indicators



Hidden References

- Ideas that are mentioned more than once in the passage.
- Even if the question cites a line number for one of the references, the answer choice might draw on the same idea mentioned elsewhere, or another part of the passage.

Common Indicators



Contrasting Views

- If several view points are presented in the passage, make note of each point and who's saying it/why it's being said.
- Understanding of these counter-examples or views are very important! They will be indicated by words such as "However" or "In contrast"

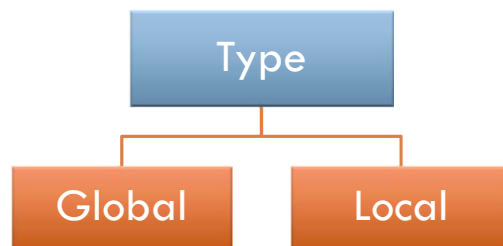
Common Indicators



Definitions

- Common when the passage is of scientific nature
- Make a note of the definition and expect to be questioned about your understanding of the definition

Basic Question Types



Question Types



Global – Broad Questions

- **Main Point/Primary Purpose**
- **Passage Organization**
- **Author's Perspective/Passage Tone**

Broad Questions



Main Point/Primary Purpose

- Represents Core Ideas
- Will ask about the broader meaning of the passage, and what it seeks to convey.

Broad Questions



Passage Organization

- This will ask about the structure of a passage
- For instance, the structure might be something like this:
 - Introduction
 - Example
 - Counter-Example

Broad Questions



Author's Perspective/Tone of Passage

- These questions ask you to reflect on an author's perspective
- Understand what the author is trying to say, and where he or she stands with respect to the views presented.
- Is the author aggressive? Or is the author docile? What is the tone of the message conveyed?

Question Types



Local – Specific Questions (Four Types)

- Specific Reference
- Function
- Strengthen and Weaken
- Parallel Reasoning Question

Local Questions



Specific Reference

- Will refer to a specific line or paragraph in the passage and ask for a question relating to that.
- Might involve cross-referencing with other relevant information presented elsewhere in the passage

Local Questions



Function

- Questions about what a piece of the passage – either a paragraph, a line or even a word is trying to accomplish with respect to the broader scope of the passage
- Try to infer something about the context and tone of the specific reference, and ask yourself – “What does this line do?”

Local Questions



Strengthen/Weaken

- Similar to Critical Reasoning Questions of the same type.
- The required answer will either help or hurt the conclusive view point presented by the author, i.e. the main point
- Assume the answer choices given to be true.

Local Questions



Parallel Reasoning

- Again, similar to Critical Reasoning Question of the same type
- Will ask to identify an action, among given actions, or a view point that mimics the reasoning that the author follows.
- Identifying the structure of the passage and the structure of a line within a passage as necessary would greatly help!

RC in a Nutshell



- **The right mentality :** The passage **WILL** be intentionally confusing. Get used to it!
- **Awareness of content:** The passages might be from humanities, social sciences or sciences. **Don't get bogged down by one kind or get excited about another**
- **Reading Pattern: General to Specific**

RC in a Nutshell



- **Understand question types: Global or Local**
- **Pre-phrase: Frame a rough answer before you pick answer choices!**
- **Process of Elimination: Don't keep an answer that you have to make connections for.**

Sentence Correction



Contents



- **Subject Verb Agreement**
- **Verb Tense Errors**
- **Noun Agreement**
- **Pronouns**
- **Modifiers**
- **Comparisons**
- **Parallelism**

Deconstructing SC



- **Step 1:** Read the question stem and think of possible errors in the sentence, subject-verb agreement, tense mismatch etc.
- **Step 2:** Read the answer choice and split it into two groups based on overall structure.
- **Step 3:** One of the groups will contain an error. Eliminate the group and re-split the next group.
- **Step 4:** Use process of elimination to rule out wrong answer choices. Don't try to make them fit!
- **Step 5:** Make sure the answer choice makes sense!

What's Tested?



Three Question Types You Will See

- **Grammar** – The sentence has to adhere to the rules of grammar followed by Standard English.
- **Meaning** – The sentence has to have a relevant meaning and convey it properly
- **Concision** – If what is being said can be said in five words instead of ten, then the former is preferred (Active vs. Passive voice, for example)

And what's not?



Three Question Types You Won't See

- **Spelling** – The GMAT will not test you on your knowledge of spellings
- **Punctuation** – Adding a comma or an apostrophe and similar things will not be tested. Semi-colons, however, are tested.
- **Capitalization** – The GMAT doesn't test you on your knowledge of capitalization either.

Errors Tested



Subject-Verb Agreement

- This deals with the issue of plurality.
- Singular subjects must use singular verbs. For example: He **was** eating.
- Plural Verbs must use plural verbs. For example: The elephants **were** walking.

Trap 1: Phrases between subject and verb



Remove the additional information and read the sentence without them.

- Barely seventeen and leading the French army wearing a man's armor, Joan of Arc, **an illiterate peasant girl from the French countryside**, broke the seven month-old seize of Orleans in nine days.
- Reading the sentence without that part we have: Barely seventeen and leading the French army wearing a man's armor, Joan of Arc, broke the seven month-old seize of Orleans in nine days.

Trap 2: Subject Follows Verb



□ If there are expletives, then check for subject-verb agreement, by rearranging the sentence.

□ Some common expletives:

- There
- Here
- It
- Or

Trap 3: Multiple Nouns or Pronouns



□ If there is more than one noun or the usage of a pronoun in a sentence, then the subject-verb agreement **MUST** be consistent!!

□ Two Exceptions:

- Conjunctions (OR, NOR) – Always SINGULAR
- Usage of EACH or EVERY – Always SINGULAR

Trap 4: Indefinite Pronouns



□ Pronouns like all, any, more, most, somebody, nobody and so on.

□ Plurality is based on what the indefinite pronoun is referring to! (This is the antecedent)

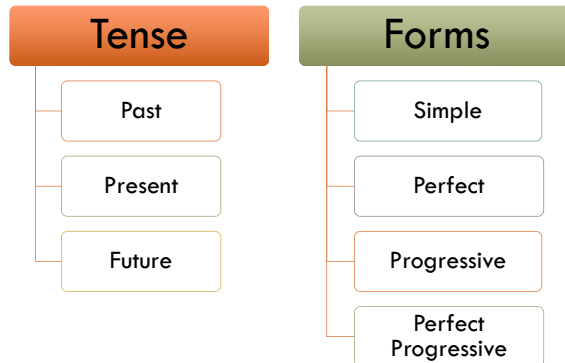
□ Exceptions:

- Each, Either, Neither, Every, Number – Always singular irrespective of what follows!
- Example: A number of reasons – Singular! A number of cars – Singular!

Errors Tested



Verb Tense



Errors Tested



Verb Tense – Sub Types

- Incorrect Verb Tense
- Shift in Verb Tense
- Verb Voice

Errors Tested



Noun Agreement

- The number of nouns must be consistent with what they are referencing.
- **Incorrect:** Matt and Dave believed that their hard work in their engineering class will help them realize their dream of becoming a great engineer.
- **Correct:** Matt and Dave believed that their hard work in their engineering class will help them realize their dream of becoming great engineers.

Errors Tested



Use of Pronouns

- Pronoun-Antecedent Disagreement
- Incorrect Use of Relative Pronouns
- Ambiguous and Implied Pronouns

Pronoun Error Sub Types



Pronoun Antecedent Disagreement

- The pronoun **MUST** refer to it's antecedent.
- The pronoun-antecedent relationship should be consistent throughout the sentence.
- **Incorrect:** Each of the women selected for the scholarship were asked to submit an application.
- **Correct:** Each of the women selected for the scholarship was asked to submit an application.

Trap 1: Distance btw. pronoun & antecedent



- This happens when there is additional information between the pronoun and antecedent making it easy to lose track of the relationship between pronouns and their antecedents.
- **Incorrect:** The library, with it's many books and databases, require a special membership.
- **Correct:** The library, with it's many books and databases, requires a special membership.

Trap 2: Indefinite Pronouns



- These are very general pronouns – many, few, both, every and so on.
- **Incorrect:** Many of the students were surprised to learn that his or her exam was unfairly graded.
- **Correct:** Many of the students were surprised to learn that their exams was unfairly graded.

Trap 3: Misleading Antecedents



- Antecedents that **SOUNDS** plural but actual are singular or vice versa.
- For example, family is singular, and persons is singular too. It might be a group of people in a family, but being a collective noun, it's still singular!

Pronoun Error Sub Types



Incorrect use of relative pronouns

- They relate groups of words to a noun or pronoun – which, whom, whomsoever, where and why.
- Two traps of incorrect usage:
 - Incorrect Pronoun Choice for People and Things
 - Difference between who and whom

Trap 1: Pronoun Choice



- Who and Whom will always relate to people.
 - The doctor that performed the surgery was honored – should be “who”
- That and Which will always relate to things, i.e. inanimate objects.
 - The machine who performed the surgery was showcased in the exhibit – should be “that”

Trap 2: Who vs. Whom?



- Very simple trick!
- Make the following substitutions:
 - He – Who
 - Him – Whom
- The substitution that makes sense will correspond with the correct word in that context.
- Sometimes it might be necessary to rearrange the sentence for it to make sense.

Errors Tested



Modifiers

- Misplacement of adjectives (describes nouns - serene) and adverbs (describe verbs - serenely)
- For example: The new BMW model is designed to drive faster and more **efficient** than the previous model.
 - The usage of the word “efficient” is wrong here since it’s modifying the verb. The correct word usage would be “efficiently”

Trap 1 Quantifiers



- Errors in Count Nouns (can be counted – trees, bottles, billions). Quantifiers are many, both, few, several, a couple and so on.
- Errors in Non-Count Nouns (cannot be counted – water, liquid). Quantifiers are much, a little, a bit and so on.
- Some modifiers like all, and some can be used for both.

Trap 2 Placement



- Misplaced modifiers are modifiers that are placed in the wrong position on a sentence.
 - **Incorrect:** Short on money, the car was the best one Tanya could find.
 - **Correct:** Short on money, Tanya knew that the car was the best one she could find.
- Dangling Modifiers are those where the referent is completely absent.
 - **Incorrect:** Walking to the university, the cat had to stop.
 - **Correct:** Walking to the university, he had to stop because of his cat.

Trap 2 Placement



- Misplaced modifiers with relative clauses (like that or which)
 - **Incorrect:** According to the report, bicycles will be confiscated that have not been registered with the university.
 - **Correct:** According to the report, bicycles that have not been registered with the university will be confiscated.

Errors Tested



Comparisons

- Incorrect use of comparative degree
- Illogical Comparisons

Comparison Sub Type



Degree of Comparison

- When there are two objects being compared, you have to use a comparative word. When more than two objects are compared, you have to use a superlative word.
- **Incorrect:** Though the reporters felt that injury played a part in Tennessee's loss to Minnesota, Tennessee's coach said that Minnesota had the best team that night.
- **Correct:** Though the reporters felt that injury played a part in Tennessee's loss to Minnesota, Tennessee's coach said that Minnesota had the better team that night.

Comparison Sub Type



Illogical Comparison

- Only similar objects can be compared. You cannot compare a human to a dog.
- **Incorrect:** Though the recent Lays food poisoning incident has caused some buyers to question its quality, the Lays chips are sold more often than any other food company.
- **Correct:** Though the recent Lays food poisoning incident has caused some buyers to question its quality, the Lays chips are sold more often than those produced by any other food company.

Errors Tested



Parallelism

- Parallel Verbs and Verb Form Errors
- Parallel Noun Errors
- Parallel Prepositions and Articles
- Parallel Conjunctions
- Parallel Comparisons

Parallelism Sub Type



Verb Errors

- Nouns are naturally parallel. But when they are in the form with an -ing at the end (gerunds), they are confused for verbs.
- **Incorrect:** The common symptoms of the stomach flu are indigestion, vomiting and drinking less water than usual.
- **Correct:** The common symptoms of the stomach flu are indigestion, vomiting and decreased water intake.

Parallelism Sub Type



Noun Errors

- When a sentence has two or more similar parts linked by a conjunction, each part has to be of the same verb form.
- **Incorrect:** The new exam pattern requires students to enter their student IDs and signing their names on the roster.
- **Correct:** The new exam pattern requires students to enter their student IDs and sign their names on the roster.

Parallelism Sub Type



Prepositional/Article Errors

- A preposition and an article must either be used by all parts of a sentence or by just the first part.
- **Incorrect:** By doing each assignment, turning in homeworks on time and by attending all the classes, one might be able to obtain the highest grade in the class.
- **Correct:** By doing each assignment, turning in homeworks on time, and attending all the classes, one might be able to obtain the highest grade in the class.

Parallelism Sub Type



Parallel Conjunctions

- The conjunctions used must be parallel in structure.
- Some examples:

Neither ... nor	Either ... or
Not only ... but also	Both ... and
Whether ... or	As ... as
- **Incorrect:** The restaurant not only hired a new chef, but it also expanded its seating capacity.
- **Correct:** The restaurant not only hired a new chef, but also expanded its seating capacity.

Parallelism Sub Type



Parallel Comparisons

- When comparisons are left unparallel, that can amount to an error as well.
- **Incorrect:** In the book, the author mentions that he found editing pictures much more arduous and difficult than when he had to take the actual pictures.
- **Correct:** In the book, the author mentions that he found editing pictures much more arduous and difficult than taking pictures.

Errors Tested



Semi Colons

- Usage of fragments or dependent clauses on either side of a semi-colon
 - **Incorrect:** The guinea pig is not a true pig; rather, a rodent that belongs to the Caviidae family.
 - **Correct:** The guinea pig is not a true pig, but rather a rodent that belongs to the Caviidae family.
 - **Correct:** The guinea pig is not a true pig; it's a rodent that belongs to the Caviidae family.

Errors Tested



Wordiness and Redundancy

- The GMAT will prefer usage of the most concise sentences possible.
 - **Incorrect:** He decided to not purchase the car due to the fact that it was too expensive.
 - **Correct:** He decided to not purchase the car because it was too expensive.
 - **Incorrect:** In addition to playing the guitar, Rob **also** plays the viola.
 - **Correct:** In addition to playing the guitar, Rob plays the viola.

Errors Tested



Idioms

- Very, very common error tested.
- A phrase that is commonly accepted as correct even though its grammatically inconsistent
- An idiom error will misrepresent the idiom.
- Idioms are provided with right and wrong usage in the cards that follow.

Errors Tested Idiom Rules



Among vs. Between

Among:

- Used when more than two items are in question.
- **Example:** He was the best among three candidates.

Between:

- Used when two items are in question
- **Example:** He was the best between the two of them.

Errors Tested**Idiom Rules****Both vs. Each****Both:**

- Used to point out similarities.
- Example: Both of them were good at swimming.

Each:

- Used to point out differences/dissimilarities. (Always singular)
- Example: Each girl had her own niche.

Errors Tested**Idiom Rules****Twice vs. Double****Twice:**

- Twice/Thrice etc. are used for comparison
- Example: The Toyota was twice as fast as the Honda.

Double:

- Used as a verb only.
- Example: He more than doubled his wealth by investing in stocks.

Errors Tested**Idiom Rules****Each Other vs. One Another****Each Other:**

- Used to compare two things.
- Example: They loved each other dearly.

One another:

- Used to compare more than two things.
- Example: The three brothers loved one another dearly.

Errors Tested**Idiom Rules****If vs. Whether****If:**

- Primarily used only in "If ... else" sentences.
- Example: If this is true, the market will collapse. Else, it will be okay tomorrow.

Whether:

- Used more frequently as a comparison.
- Example: Whether or not he chooses to accept the prize is up to him.

Errors Tested

Idiom Rules



Like vs. Such As

Like:

- Used when indicating similarities between things.
- Example: Like John, Amy was a violinist too.

Such as:

- Used to list examples.
- Example: There are different kinds of tigers such as the Bengal Tigers, white tigers and so on.

Errors Tested

Idioms



Ability To

- **Correct:** Dolphins have the ability to emit low frequency whistles
- **Incorrect:** Dolphins have the ability of emitting low frequency whistles.

Act as/like

- **Correct:** A signature can attack as legal attestation.
- **Incorrect:** A signature can attack like a legal attestation.

- **Correct:** He was acting like a child.
- **Incorrect:** He was acting as a child.

Errors Tested

Idioms



Agree upon/to

- **Correct:** We agreed upon the date of the meeting
- **Incorrect:** We agreed to the date of the meeting.

- **Correct:** We agreed to share our room.
- **Incorrect:** We agreed upon sharing our room.

Allow for

- **Correct:** One must always allow for a margin of error while calculating axial loads.
- **Incorrect:** One must always allow to have a margin of error while calculating axial loads.

Errors Tested

Idioms



Appeal to

- **Correct:** I appealed to his sense of justice.
- **Incorrect:** I appealed for his sense of justice.

Are in danger of

- **Correct:** The giant panda bears are in danger of extinction.
- **Incorrect:** The giant panda bears have a danger of dying from deforestation.

Errors Tested Idioms



As an adolescent

- **Correct:** As an adolescent, he suffered from attention disorder
- **Incorrect:** While in adolescence, he suffered from attention disorder.

As good as

- **Correct:** It's as good as new.

Errors Tested Idioms



As an adolescent

- **Correct:** As an adolescent, he suffered from attention disorder
- **Incorrect:** While in adolescence, he suffered from attention disorder.

As good as

- **Correct:** It's as good as new.

Errors Tested Idioms



Associate with

- **Correct:** I associate spring with flowers.
- **Incorrect:** I always associate water to Niagara falls.

Attend to

- **Correct:** I have to attend to some duties
- **Incorrect:** I have to attend for some duties.

Errors Tested Idioms



Attribute to

- **Correct:** I attribute my success to hard work.
- **Incorrect:** I attribute my success with hard work.

Base on

- **Correct:** The decision was made based on multiple criteria.
- **Incorrect:** The decision was made based of multiple criteria.

Errors Tested Idioms



Begin to see daylight

- **Correct:** After working on the project all night, I am finally beginning to see daylight.
- **Incorrect:** After working on the project all night, I am finally beginning to view the daylight.

Between <> and <>

- **Correct:** I had to choose between chocolates and cakes.
- **Incorrect:** I had to choose between chocolates with cakes.

Errors Tested Idioms



Care for/about

- **Correct:** I don't care much for sweets
- **Correct:** I care about her a lot.

Claim to/Claim that

- **Correct:** I never claimed to possess remarkable singing talent.
- **Incorrect:** I never claimed that possess remarkable singing talent.
- **Correct:** I never claimed that I possessed remarkable talent.

Errors Tested Idioms



Come to a dead end

- **Correct:** He came to a dead end after researching topics.
- **Incorrect:** He came by a dead end after researching topics.

Compare to/with

- **Correct:** I never compared myself to her.
- **Incorrect:** I never compared myself for her.

- **Correct:** Let's compare the pros of the situation with the cons.
- **Incorrect:** Let's compare the pros of the situation for the cons.

Errors Tested Idioms



Consider (as)

- **Correct:** I don't consider him a serious contender
- **Incorrect:** I don't consider him with a serious contender

Conform to

- **Correct:** You must conform to the standards
- **Incorrect:** You must conform with the standards

Errors Tested Idioms



Contrast to/with

- **Correct:** In contrast to the previous report, this one is better
- **Incorrect:** In contrast with the previous report, this one is better.

- **Correct:** The red background contrasts nicely with the blue flowers
- **Incorrect:** The red background contrasts nicely to the blue flowers.

Count on

- **Correct:** I knew that I could count on you.
- **Incorrect:** I knew that I could count for you.

Errors Tested Idioms



Credit for/to/with

- **Correct:** You should take credit for what you did.
- **Incorrect:** You should take credit to what you did.

- **Correct:** I credit my success to my hard work.
- **Incorrect:** I credit my success for my hard work.

- **Correct:** He is credited with the discovery of penicillin.
- **Incorrect:** He is credited for/to the discovery of penicillin.

Errors Tested Idioms



Debate about

- **Correct:** There was a raging debate about standards.
- **Incorrect:** There was a raging debate for standards.

Decide on

- **Correct:** I am yet to decide on a color for the wall.
- **Incorrect:** I am yet to decide about a color for the wall.

Errors Tested Idioms



Declared <>

- **Correct:** The teacher declared all exams worthy.
- **Incorrect:** The teacher declared all exams as worthy.

Define as

- **Correct:** Light is defined as radiation.
- **Incorrect:** Light is defined for radiation.

Errors Tested Idioms



Delighted to

- **Correct:** I am delighted to accept this prize.
- **Incorrect:** I am delighted for accepting this prize.

Different from

- **Correct:** This sandwich is different from the others.
- **Incorrect:** This sandwich is different with the others.

Errors Tested Idioms



Distinguish between/from

- **Correct:** I had to distinguish between good and bad.
- **Incorrect:** I had to distinguish from good and bad.

- **Correct:** I had to distinguish good from bad.
- **Incorrect:** I had to distinguish good with bad.

Draw a line

- **Correct:** We had to draw a line somewhere.
- **Incorrect:** We had to draw the line before.

Errors Tested Idioms



Draw attention to

- **Correct:** I hate to draw attention to the fact that the quality of food has gone down.
- **Incorrect:** I hate to draw attention for the fact that the quality of food has gone down.

Draw upon

- **Correct:** We had to draw upon the reserves to keep the car running.
- **Incorrect:** We had to draw on the reserves to keep the car running.

Errors Tested Idioms



Draw to

- **Correct:** He was drawn to her from the moment he met her.
- **Incorrect:** He was drawn for her from the moment he met her.

Easier said than done

- **Correct:** It's always easier said than done.
- **Incorrect:** It's always easier said than to be done.

Errors Tested Idioms



Elect as/to

- **Correct:** He was elected to office.
- **Incorrect:** He was elected to officer.

- **Correct:** He was elected as an officer.
- **Incorrect:** He was elected as office.

Easier said than done

- **Correct:** It's always easier said than done.
- **Incorrect:** It's always easier said than to be done.

Errors Tested Idioms



Indicate that

- **Correct:** Studies indicate that stress is a common cause of heart attacks.
- **Incorrect:** Studies indicate about stress being a common cause of heart attacks.

In order to

- **Correct:** She began studying in order to get a good grade in the class.
- **Incorrect:** She began studying in order that she got a good grade in the class.

Errors Tested Idioms



Just as <>, so <>

- **Correct:** Just as Tyra was considered for the scholarship, so was Mia.
- **Incorrect:** Just as Tyra was considered for the scholarship, Mia as also considered.

Known to

- **Correct:** Even as a student, Rick was known to do things differently.
- **Incorrect:** Even as a student, Rick was known as wanting to do things differently.

Errors Tested Idioms



Left, right and center

- **Correct:** She was shooting emails to people left, right and center.
- **Incorrect:** She was, left right and center, sending emails.

Known to

- **Correct:** Even as a student, Rick was known to do things differently.
- **Incorrect:** Even as a student, Rick was known as wanting to do things differently.

Errors Tested Idioms



A means to

- **Correct:** She only viewed it as a means to the end.
- **Incorrect:** For some people, money is considered a means for/of an end.

Mistaken for

- **Correct:** The twins were often mistaken for one another.
- **Incorrect:** The twins were often mistaken as one another.

Errors Tested Idioms



More than ever

- **Correct:** I regret not going to Europe, now more than ever.
- **Incorrect:** I regret not going to Europe, now more than never.

Native of/to

- **Correct:** She is a native of Vienna.
- **Incorrect:** She is a native to Vienna.

- **Correct:** The Bengal Tiger is native to India.
- **Incorrect:** The Bengal Tiger is native of India.

Errors Tested Idioms



Prohibit from

- **Correct:** Only when we prohibit people from buying drinks for minors, will we reduce the problem of underage drinking.
- **Incorrect:** Only when we prohibit people to buy drinks for minors, will we reduce the problem of underage drinking.

Range from

- **Correct:** The quality of these products range from good to excellent.
- **Incorrect:** The quality of these products range between good to excellent.

Errors Tested Idioms



Reluctant to

- **Correct:** She was reluctant to take on such a huge task.
- **Incorrect:** She was reluctant about taking on such a huge task.

Require of

- **Correct:** It is required of all candidates to report here daily.
- **Incorrect:** It is required from all candidates to report here daily.

Errors Tested Idioms



Seem to

- **Correct:** He seemed to be hiding something in his pocket.
- **Incorrect:** He seemed as he was hiding something in his pocket.

Take advantage of

- **Correct:** He took advantage of all the opportunities he had.
- **Incorrect:** He took advantage for all the opportunities he had.

References



- **Manhattan GMAT Sentence Correction Guide**
- **Powerscore On-Demand Lectures**
- **Idioms Test by Saruba – GMAT Club**



Thank you GMAT Club!