

GMAT Sentence Correction Note Cards

General Strategy

- Make sure to check each sentence for errors related to the following grammatical topics:
 - subject-verb agreement
 - parallelism
 - pronouns
 - modifiers
 - verb tense, mood & voice
 - comparisons
 - idioms
- Stay with the intent of the original sentence, whether it uses “will” or “may”. HOWEVER, in “the court ruled that plaintiff MUST/ SHOULD pay full damages” - the word “should” means “moral obligation” -- for example, something a court cannot impose. So in this case, you should go with “must”.
- Pay attention to the original sentence’s helping verbs - and only change them if the original sentence is obviously nonsensical.
- If a word changes its position in the answer choices, you must consider whether the change has an impact on the meaning of the sentence. Look out especially for the short words (such as “only” and “all”) that quantify nouns or otherwise restrict meaning.
- If two words in a GMAT sentence mean the same thing, check the sentence for redundancy.
- Always test WHICH clauses to make sure that the WHICH refers to the noun immediately preceding the WHICH.

Adjectives tell us which one, what kind, or how many.

- Cumulative adjectives build up to one modifying phrase and do not take commas. If you can logically insert the word AND between two consecutive adjectives, there should be a comma between them.
 - the ligh blue paint really brightens the room (light describes blue)
 - the fierce, steady north wind (fierce and steady both describe the north wind)

Adverbs tell us when, where, how, and why; under what conditions; and to what degree. They describe or modify verbs, adjectives, and other adverbs.

- Justin took the BAD news very WELL. (bad modifies news; well modifies took)
- Justin took the GOOD news quite BADLY. (good modifies news; badly modifies took)
- -ly is a common adverb ending; slowly, badly, etc.
- Limiting modifiers such as ALMOST, EVEN, JUST, NEARLY, and ONLY belong in front of the word they limit:
 - WRONG: The workers have finished nearly remodeling the kitchen.
 - CORRECT: The workers have nearly finished remodeling the kitchen.

Comparative/Superlative

Comparative (more, -er) compares TWO things

Superlative (most, -est) compares three or more things

Subjunctive

The present subjunctive expresses something wishes for, requested, or contrary to fact. The subjunctive mood uses the base form for all verbs in the present tense except, as usual, be, which uses WERE for the subjunctive. (for example: I wish I WERE a little older, I might be a little wiser.)

Example: Connie recommends THAT James DO some research before he plants his garden.

This question revolves around the correct use of the subjunctive mood in English. Whenever a sentence involves orders or recommendations, we must use the subjunctive. In this case, the organization's charter *mandates* something. When using the verb 'to mandate' we must follow it with the word 'that' and then make sure that the following verb is in the infinitive form dropping the 'to' from the beginning. In this can we need "mandates *that* the organization *be* ." This would give us the requisite 'that', and puts the verb 'to be' in the infinitive without the 'to' at the beginning.

Use THAT after these Reporting Verbs: Agree / Claim / Content / Declare / Find / Indicate / Reveal / Rule / Show

Subject - Verb Agreements

- must agree in number

- the subject and verb must have a sensible meaning together
- “and” can unite two or more singular subjects to form a COMPOUND PLURAL SUBJECT
- If the compound subject is preceded by EACH or EVERY (thus referring to each subject individually), then the verb should be singular
- Additive phrases function as modifiers and cannot change the number of subject. IE: Joe, as well as his friends, IS going to the beach. (as well as his friends = additive phrase)
- Subjects are NEVER in prepositional phrases
- “Mathematics” is singular, as are “aerobics”, “diabetes”, “news”, “mumps”, “economics”, “statistics”.
 - HOWEVER, when one of these words describe individual items rather than a collective entity, then the verb should be plural: THESE statistics SHOW a strong correlation between goal setting and achievement.
- Either...or, Neither...nor

make sure that the verb agrees in number with the closest noun.

 - Neither the coach nor the players ARE going to the beach.
 - Neither the player nor the coach IS going to the beach.
 - When “either” or “neither” are in a sentence alone (without “or” or “nor”), they are considered singular and take only singular verbs.
- Indefinite Pronouns = usually singular

All pronouns that end in -one, -body, or -thing fall into this category

 - Anyone, anybody, anything
 - Each, every (as pronouns)
 - Everyone, everybody, everything
 - Either, neither (may require plural verb if paired with or/nor)
 - No one, nobody, nothing
 - Someone, somebody, something
 - Whatever, whoever
- 5 indefinite pronouns that can be singular or plural: SANAM: SOME, ANY, NONE, ALL, MORE/MOST
 - Some of the money WAS stolen from my wallet. (money is singular)
 - Some of the documents WERE stolen. (documents is plural)
 - HOWEVER, “not one of” is always singular: Not one of my friends IS going to be here.
 - “none of” can take either singular or plural form like “some” does.
- Each/Every: singular
 - Every dog has paws
 - Every dog and cat has paws
 - Each of these shirts is pretty
 - If “each” follows a subject, it has no bearing on the verb form.
 - They each ARE great tennis players.
- The number of: singular. A number of: plural.
- Treat quantity phrases in the same way as SANAM pronouns: the noun in the Of-prepositional phrase will indicate whether the verb is singular or plural.
 - The majority of the students in this class ARE hard workers
 - In the Senate, the majority HAS voted for the bill.
- HALF of the pie IS blueberry; HALF of the slices ARE already gone.
- Flip It! examples
 - WRONG: Near those buildings SIT a lonely house, inhabited by squatters.
 - FLIP IT: A lonely house, inhabited by squatters, SITS near those buildings.
 - RIGHT: Near those buildings SITS a lonely house, inhabited by squatters.
- Collective Noun
 - Collective noun is a noun that looks singular but can refer to a group of people or objects.
 - agency, army, audience, class, committee, equipment, fleet, fruit, citrus
 - Collective nouns can be considered plural when you emphasize the individual actors, not their unity.
 - The class put THEIR signatures on the petition.
 - The class expressed ITS approval with loud applause.
- For THERE IS/ARE sentences, determine first what IS--this is the true subject. Then check for subject-verb agreement.
- For questions and other inverted sentences, identify the verb. Then determine who or what performs that action -- this is the subject. Now check for S-V agreement.

PRONOUNS

- Pronouns should agree with the words they replace. It must be clear to which words the pronouns refer, and we must use the proper case.
 - Toby and I love OUR dog.
- If a compound antecedent is connected by AND, the pronoun should be plural.
- If a compound antecedent is connected by OR or NOR, and both are singular, the pronoun should be singular.
 - Neither LJ NOR Elliot has finished HIS homework.
- If one antecedent is female and the other male, the sentence must be rewritten.
 - CORRECT: Both LJ and Maggie still have to do THEIR homework.
 - CORRECT: Neither LJ nor Maggie has finished the assignment.
- If a compound antecedent is connected by OR or NOR, the pronoun must agree with the nearest antecedent.
 - Neither LJ NOR his sisters have finished THEIR homework.
 - Neither the twins nor LJ has finished HIS homework.
- Unless you know that EVERYONE referred to is of the same gender, you cannot pick one pronoun or the other. Revise the sentence one of three ways:
 - Use two pronouns: Does EVERYONE have HIS or HER password?
 - Rewrite so the antecedent is plural: Do all of the students have THEIR passwords?
 - Rewrite to eliminate pronoun: Does every student have a password?
- Generic Nouns
 - WRONG: A student must work hard if SHE wants to earn good grades.
 - WRONG: A student must work hard if THEY want to earn good grades.
 - CORRECT: A student must work hard if HE OR SHE wants to earn good grades.
 - CORRECT: Students must work hard if THEY want to earn good grades.
 - CORRECT: A student must work hard to earn good grades.
- Who, whom, whose -- refer to people
 - Use WHO or WHOEVER for subjects
 - WHOM or WHOMEVER for objects
- which, that - refer to animals or things (beloved pets or creatures can use WHO)
- Use WHICH for clauses that are NOT essential to the meaning of the sentence
- Use THAT for clauses that ARE essential to the meaning of the sentence
- It was I who called the police.
- Between you and ME, Laura should study harder.
- Nouns in the possessive case (with 's or s') are often poor antecedents
- Never skip past IT, ITS, THEY, THEM, or THEIR in a sentence. Stop and check whether the pronoun is being used correctly.
- On the GMAT, do not use THIS, THAT, THESE, THOSE in place of nouns. Use IT, THEY or THEM instead.
 - WRONG: her products are unusual; many consider THESE unique.
 - RIGHT: Her products are unusual; many consider THEM unique.

Modifiers

- A noun and its modifier should TOUCH each other.
 - WRONG: Jim biked along an old dirt road to get to his house, which cut through the woods.
 - RIGHT: To get to his house, Jim biked along an old dirt road, which cut through the woods.
- A verb modifier, however, does not have to touch the subject.
- Modifiers cannot normally modify a noun in the possessive case.
 - WRONG: Unskilled in complex math, Bill's score on the exam was poor.
- WHO and WHOM must modify people. WHOSE can modify either people or things. (The town whose water supply was contaminated.)
 - RIGHT: The security guard WHOM we met was nice
 - WRONG: The security guard WHO we met was nice
 - The above is wrong because security guard is the object of receiving WE MEETING him.

- WHICH must modify things.
- According to GMAT, clauses led by the pronoun THAT cannot modify people.
- Modifiers should be placed as close as possible to the word(s) they modify.
- Subgroup Modifiers
 - When you describe a part of a larger group with a modifier:
 - RIGHT: This model explains all known subatomic particles, SOME OF WHICH WERE only recently discovered.
 - RIGHT: ..., SOME OF THEM only recently discovered.
 - RIGHT: ..., SOME only recently discovered.
 - WRONG: ... , OF WHICH SOME WERE only recently discovered.
 - WRONG: ..., SOME OF THEM WHICH WERE only recently discovered.
 - WRONG: ..., SOME OF WHICH only recently discovered.

Quantity

Countable vs Uncountable modifiers

<u>Countable</u>	<u>Uncountable</u>
MANY/NOT MANY hats	MUCH/NOT MUCH patience
FEW/FEWER/FEWEST	LITTLE
NUMBER OF	LESS/LEAST
FEWER THAN	AMOUNT OF
NUMEROUS/MORE NUMEROUS	LESS THAN a certain AMOUNT of patience
	GREAT/GREATER patience

However, with unit nouns, such as DOLLARS, or GALLONS. even though they are countable, if you are emphasizing what they represent, such as MONEY, or VOLUME (which are uncountable). Then you should use Uncountable modifiers.

- RIGHT: We have LESS THAN 20 dollars. (emphasizing the amount of money)
- RIGHT: We have FEWER THAN 20 dollars. (means we have fewer than 20 pieces of the actual bills/paper)

Use BETWEEN for 2 things, AMONG for 3 or more things.

THE NUMBER OF is singular. A NUMBER OF is plural.

If you want to relate the quantities by multiplication, use TIMES, and AS...AS... together.

- RIGHT: The man is FIVE TIMES AS OLD AS his grandson.
- WRONG: The man is FIVE TIMES OLDER THAN his grandson.

Rules

- “like” cannot introduce examples. “such as” must be used. “like” is used for comparison.
 - WRONG: LIKE her brother DID, Ava aced the test.
 - RIGHT: AS her brother DID, Ava aced the test.
 - RIGHT: LIKE her brother, Ava aced the test.
- Essential elements are not set off by commas.
- Direct address and direct quotations get commas; indirect addresses and indirect quotations do not.
 - DIRECT: Omar said, “Ted, I need your help.”
 - INDIRECT: Omar told Ted he really needs his help.
- Generally, items in a series should be separated by commas, but if one or more items in a list contain a comma, use semicolons to separate each item:
 - Bela’s list of favorite bands includes Coldplay; Ween; and Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young.
- Direct Object
 - The direct object is the thing or person that is receiving the action
 - ie: I understand your message.
 - Direct objects are NEVER in prepositional phrases.
- Clauses
 - Two independent clauses cannot be separated by a comma alone. If you use a comma, you must also have a coordinating conjunction (and, or, nor, for, so, but, yet).

- Separate clauses with semicolon only if the two sentences are closely related. This means that the two ideas are distinct but important enough to each other that they need a strong physical connection.
- Separate clauses with a colon or dash. If the second independent clause summarizes or explains the first, then use a colon: if the idea in the second clause is strongly connected to the first and deserves emphasis, use a dash.
- Colons -- What comes before the colon must be able to stand alone as a sentence. What comes after the colon does not have to be able to stand alone.

■ RIGHT: I love listening to many kinds of music: namely, classical, rock, and rap.

- Parallelism

Any construction that expresses two or more things in the same way requires parallelism, such as lists, pairs, or comparisons -- whenever these items are comparable or analogous.

<u>Markers</u>	<u>Structures</u>	<u>Examples</u>
And	X and Y X, Y, and Z	apples AND pears apples, pears, AND bananas
Both/and	Both X and Y	BOTH apples AND pears
Or	X or Y	Apples OR pears
Either/Or	Either X or Y	EITHER apples OR pears
Not/But	Not X but Y	NOT apples BUT pears
Not only/but also	Not only X but also Y	NOT ONLY apples BUT ALSO pears
rather than	X rather than Y	apples RATHER THAN pears
from/to	From X to Y	FROM apples TO pears
as...as	as X as Y	

Parallel clauses should start with the same word

- I want to retire to a place WHERE I can relax and WHERE the taxes are low.
- Ralph likes BOTH THOSE WHO are popular AND THOSE WHO are not.

Idioms with Built-in Parallel Structure

X Acts As Y As X, So Y Between X And Y Compared to X, Y Consider X Y In Contrast to X, Y Declare X Y X Develops Into Y X Differs from Y	Distinguish X From Y Estimate X to Be Y X Instead of Y X is Known To Be Y X is Less Than Y Make X Y Mistake X for Y Not Only X(,) But Also Y -- <i>the comma is optional</i> Regard X As Y	X is the Same As Y X is good, and So Too is Y X, Such As Y (example) Think of X As Y X is Thought To Be Y View X as Y Whether X Or Y
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- Linking Verb with Parallel Structure

- WRONG: The bouquet of flowers WAS a giving of love.
- RIGHT: The bouquet of flowers WAS a gift of love.

Irregular Past Tense and Past Participle (what follows have been, for example)

Base Form	Simple Past	Past Participle
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Shine	Shone	Shone
Grind	Ground	Ground
Forsake	Forsook	Forsook
Lie	Lay	Lain
Lay	Laid	Laid

Tenses

- Simple Future: Will + base form
- Present Perfect: Have or has + past participle
 - Actions that began in the past and are still occurring in the present
 - Actions that began in the past and have been completed at an unspecified time
- Past Perfect: Had + past participle
 - Actions already completed before another past time or action
 - We do not always use the Past Perfect for earlier actions. It should be used only to clarify sequence of events. If the sequence is already obvious then there is no need to use it. Also do not use if the earlier action does not have a direct bearing on the context of the later action (ie: Joe LEARNED about an epoch in which dinosaurs WALKED the earth)
- Future Perfect: will + have + past participle
 - Actions that will be completed before or by a specific future time
 - EXAMPLE: By the time the renovations are completed, I will have gone 10 percent over budget
- Present Perfect Progressive: have/has + been + present participle
 - Express an action that has been in progress for a length of time
 - We have been thinking about throwing Ted a surprise birthday party
- Past Perfect Progressive: had + been + present participle
 - Express that an action had been in progress for a length of time
 - We had been thinking of throwing Ted a surprise birthday party until he told us how much he hated surprises.
- Future Perfect Progressive: will + have + been + present participle
 - Express how long an action will be in progress
 - By the time I finish my degree, I will have been studying ants for two decades.
- DONT OVER USE PAST PERFECT! For two past actions that occurred almost simultaneously; use the past tense for both actions.
- Example: I LIVED on Main Street for 15 years before I FOUND this house. (the past perfect tense isn't needed here because the word "before" establishes the sequence of events)
- EXAMPLES
 - RIGHT: The scientist BELIEVES (present) that the machine WILL BE (future) wonderful.
 - RIGHT: The scientist BELIEVED (past) that the machine WOULD BE (conditional) wonderful.
 - WRONG: The scientist BELIEVES (present) that the machine WOULD BE (conditional) wonderful.
 - WRONG: The scientist BELIEVED (past) that the machine WILL BE (future) wonderful.
- If you need to change tenses, repeat the whole verb in the new tense.
 - WRONG: I HAVE never SEEN an aardvark, but last year my father DID.
 - RIGHT: I HAVE never SEEN an aardvark, but last year my father SAW one.

Conditional Tenses

If your sentence:	Use this in the "if" clause	Use this in the "then" clause	Example
states a conditional fact	simple present	simple present	when the car HITS 65 miles per hour, it STARTS to shimmy.
makes a prediction	simple present	will, can, may, should or might + base form of base verb	If I TAKE one extra course each semester, I SHOULD graduate a

			semester early.
speculates about something unlikely to happen	past tense	could, might, or would + base form of base verb	If I WON the lottery, I WOULD QUIT my job and TRAVEL the world.
speculates about something that didn't happen in the past	past perfect	could have, might have, or would have + past participle	If I HAD WON the lottery, I WOULD HAVE QUIT my job and TRAVELED the world
speculates about something that's contrary to fact	were	could, might, or would + base form of base verb	If I WERE rich, I WOULD QUIT my job and TRAVEL the world.

Note from Questions I Answered Wrong

- The verb ESTIMATED should be followed by the infinitive TO BE, not the preposition AT -- unless the writer intends to indicate a location at which someone made the estimate.
- When comparing two groups of people, the best phrase to use for a comparison of two countable quantities (such as people) is AS MANY AS.
- When doubt is used in a negative context such as "there is no doubt" or "he does not doubt", it should be followed by that.
- **Idioms** - With the aim of ... (followed by -ing verb form). INCORRECT: with the aim to

LIE/LAY, SIT/SET, RISE/RAISE

Remember that LIE, SIT, and RISE do not take objects. LAY, SET, and RAISE have different meanings because an object receives the action.

No Object (Intransitive)	Takes an Object (Transitive)
lie: to rest or recline. I will lie down	lay: to put or place Lay your body down.
rise: to go up [You] Rise and shine! "Rise" is used only in contexts where there is no direct object.	raise: to move (something) up Raise your hand.
sit: to rest Please sit down.	set: to put or place (something) Set your bags down.

Cousin Words with distinct but similar meanings:

- Aggravate (worsen) - aggravating (irritating)
- known as (named) - known to be (acknowledged as)
- loss of (no longer in possession of) - loss in (decline in value)
- mandate (command) - have a mandate (have authority from voters)
- native of (person from) - native to (species that originated in)
- range of (variety of) - ranging (varying)
- rate of (speed or frequency of) - rates for (prices for)
- rise (general increase) - raise (a bet or a salary increase)
- try to do (seek to accomplish) - try doing (experiment with)

Commonly Confused Words

Ascent (n): climb, upward movement.
Assent (v): to agree (n): agreement.

capital (n): a seat of government; accumulated assets (adj) first rate; extremely serious; involving the death penalty. IE: state capital of new york, capital punishment
capitol (n): the buildings in which lawmakers meet. IE, capitol building

council (n): an assembly of officials or advisors. IE, the town council

counsel (v) to advise or recommend (n) advise or guidance; a lawyer. IE: i try to keep my own counsel.
principal (n) head of school; primary participant; main sum of money (adj) main, most important. principle (n) a basic truth or law
rein (n) a means of restraint or guidance (v) to restrain, control. IE: you need to rein in your temper. reign (v) to exercise power (n) period in which a ruler exercised power.
stationary (adj) not moving; not capable of moving. stationery (n) writing paper
altogether (adv): entirely; all included or counted. all together (adj or adv) everyone fathered; all members of a group acting collectively
advice (n) recommendation advise (v) to recommend what should be done
amount (n) number or quantity (v) to add up in number or quantity [Usage note: use amount with quantities that cannot be counted. IE: She has a great amount of courage] number (n) symbol representing a mathematical unit; total, sum; quantity of units or individuals (v) to count; add up to. [Usage note: use number with quantities that can be counted. IE: she has auditioned for a number of plays.]
Fewer (adj) consisting of a smaller number. [note: use fewer with countable items. IE: We received fewer votes than expected.] Less (adj) not as great in quantity or amount; of lower rank or importance. [note: use less with general amounts. IE: voter turnout this year was less than last year.]
continual (adj) repeated regularly and frequently continuous (adj) extended or prolonged without interruption
discreet (adj) modest, having discretion; not allowing others to notice discrete (adj) separate, not connected
disinterested (adj) impartial, objective uninterested (adj) not interested
sensual (adj) sensory; gratifying to the physical and esp sexual appetites sensuous (adj) pleasing to or gratifying the senses [note: sensual is used primarily to describe physical gratification while sensuous describes aesthetic enjoyment of art and music.]
censor (v) to remove or suppress objectionable material (n) one who censors censure (v) to criticize severely.