

Hi fellow test taker,

Acing SC on the GMAT is one of the easiest way to boost your score. All that you need is

- a) the ability to read sentences and understand their meaning and
- b) to memorize some grammar rules

The first, though sounds easy, requires common sense and a lot of practice to realize the types of dumb mistakes you could make on test day and for the second, I think you can totally rely on this flashcard! 😊

To make the best use of this flashcard, highlight the rules you did not know and keep reviewing them repeatedly unless you know them amazingly well. Follow this strategy with these flashcards as well - [123](#), - just to be over sure that you are not missing out on any rules! 😊

Best Wishes,

[Joseph Alexander](#)

Ultimately Comprehensive GMAT Sentence Correction Flashcard V4

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Disclaimer ☺

While every effort has been taken to ensure that this material is free of errors, there is a possibility that some errors might have unintentionally crept in. I take no responsibility for any loss occurring to anyone due to relying on this material. If you come across any error, kindly [write to me](#) so that I can update this material.

This material is compiled from lots of study materials and discussion threads on GMAT forums. This material can't and shouldn't be distributed for any monetary value. I only wish to give back to GMAT Club and it's users for all the benefits I've derived. So don't sue me! ☺

While compiling this material, I didn't prepare it from an English student's perspective but from a GMAT student's perspective. So some rules might not be under the right topic. Earnestly hope this compilation helps you! ☺

Few things you **MUST DO** while preparing for GMAT SC:

- 1) [Watch the 4 parts of Veritas Prep SC lessons on you tube](#)
- 2) Go through Manhattan SC guide extensively; there is no substitute for this guide
- 3) Memorize rules by going through this flashcard; [let me know](#) if I have to make any additions or corrections
- 4) While solving OG SC questions, even if you get the correct answer, see the video explanations of Magoosh; the videos are short, elegant and will make you wonder yikes I could have solved this Q like this in 40 seconds! ☺
- 5) [Solve all official material questions](#) and nothing apart from these questions
- 6) [Time your practice sessions](#) and aim to complete each SC question within a minute
- 7) Have an error log and track **why** and **what** mistake you made
- 8) Keep reviewing the log and the portions you highlight in this flashcard

Good luck! ☺

Sources:

1. Knewton on demand course
2. MGMAT SC guide
3. Veritas SC video lessons
4. GMAT club, Manhattan, Beat the GMAT discussion forums



Strategy

- 1) Follow this process:
 - a) Read the sentence and understand the meaning of the sentence and see if “Option A” conveys it clearly
 - b) Scan and group the answer choices, look at first and last words of options more carefully. While looking for words to categorise answers do them based on the subject, verb and pronoun selection first, and thereafter select based on awkwardness, passive voice, word selection, etc.
 - c) Use the **IMPACTS** checklist
 - i. I Illogical meaning & redundant words/phrases
 - ii. M Modifiers
 - iii. P Pronoun
 - iv. A Agreement – subject verb
 - v. C Comparisons & Parallelism
 - vi. T Tense/time line
 - vii. S Sentence structure
 - d) Use slash and burn to remove clutter and read through the structure of sentences
 - e) Don’t look for/guess the correct answer choice but look to eliminate all wrong answer choices such that you are left to choose the correct answer
 - f) Once you find a nature of an error, eliminate all other answer choices having the same error
 - g) Read the question with the answer and see if the sentence is logical
 - h) Strike out incorrect choices in your scratch pad. Never re visit a wrong/eliminated choice.
- 2) If you have 2 ANSWER CHOICES THAT DIFFER ONLY IN THE PRESENCE/ABSENCE OF A LITTLE WORD, then CHANCES ARE THAT THE **LITTLE WORD IS NECESSARY**. (Ron Purewal can’t guarantee this 100%, but he suggests to LOOK FOR AN AMBIGUITY that arises if the little word is omitted.) If the little word isn’t the sole difference between 2 answer choices, then try to concentrate on the other differences between the answer choices first.
- 3) Be careful when answer choices have words “May”, “Can” and “Will”. If any of these words are removed or altered in answer choices, the meaning of the sentence always changes!
- 4) Some test prep sources claim that when the entire sentence is underlined in the question, the answer has a higher probability of being ‘D’ or ‘E’.



Modifiers

- 1) Ensure that the modifier modifies the correct verb/noun to retain logic. Modifiers that **describe verbs or adjectives** can have flexible placements. **A NOUN and its MODIFIER should TOUCH each other, EXCEPTIONS ARE:**
 - a) The phrase is **modified twice** or is **part of a series of parallel modifiers, one** of which **touches the noun**. (In heraldry, the term "tincture" refers to a color emblazoned on a coat of arms and labeled with a special French word.)
 - b) The phrase is modified by an ING word. When an ING word is used as a modifier, it can be in a different tense compared to the event it is modifying. Further, it need not necessarily be immediately next to the noun it modifies (the dog walked down the street, ~~which was~~ carrying a stick → meaning the dog carrying a stick walked down the street)
 - c) A **"mission-critical"** modifier falls in between. This modifier is often an *Of* phrase that defines the noun. The less important modifier refers to the noun plus the first modifier. (**He had a way OF DODGING OPPONENTS that impressed the scouts.** / ~~He had a way that impressed the scouts OF DODGING OPPONENTS.~~)
 - d) A **very short predicate** falls between, **shifting a very long modifier back**. (A new CEO **has been hired** who will transform the company by decentralizing authority to various division heads while increasing their accountability through the use of public scorecards ~~has been hired.~~)
 - e) A **short non-essential phrase** intervenes and is **set off by commas**. (Our system of Presidential elections favors states, **such as Delaware**, that by population are over-represented in the Electoral College.)
 - f) **WHEN A NOUN IS MODIFIED TWICE**, identify which modifier is more essential to describe the noun. The essential modifier must ideally be immediately next to the noun and the non essential modifier must definitely be set off with commas
- 2) When a modifying phrase appears in different places in the answer choices, determine the phrase to be modified and prefer the option that places the modifier and modified phrase together (remember the exceptions stated above)
- 3) Look out for modifier errors specifically in these scenarios:
 - a) _____, x y z. → choose a modifier that describes X
 - b) Modifier, _____ x y z. → pick the phrase that can be logically described by the modifier
 - c) _____, _____ (x y z) → pick the correct combination of modifier/noun
- 6) When "with" is followed by a comma, it describes the text which comes earlier in the sentence and not the text which appears just before "with".
- 7) Summative modifiers → begin with "a" or "an" and a noun that re-names or summarizes the gist of the previous clause. Summative modifiers often fix other modifier errors because they don't need to describe a specific noun
- 8) Try to use "do so" whenever you're stuck between "do it" and "do so"
- 9) The phrase **"based on X"** is often incorrectly used in the place of **"because of"**



Modifiers

10) Adjective clauses (when, where, which, that and who): Such clauses must describe the noun or noun idea immediately before it. When no new subject is introduced, the verb in the clause must agree with the noun described by the clause. If a “noun + prepositional phrase” makes up a “noun idea,” the clause can describe either the noun before the prepositional phrase or the object of the prepositional phrase. The verb in the clause must agree with the logically modified noun.

- a) **WHICH:** must **MODIFY THINGS** and be preceded by a comma (except when used as “in which”) and **MUST REFER TO THE NOUN JUST BEFORE THE COMMA**
 - i. The books on the desk, **which was** the most expensive item in the furniture store, are open. (“which” logically refers to the noun “desk.”)
 - ii. The books on the desk, **which include** a history textbook and a fiction novel, are open. (“which” logically refers to the noun idea “the books on the desk.”)
 - iii. Crime has recently decreased in our neighborhood, **WHICH has leading** to a rise in property values. (“which” can’t refer to a clause)
 - iv. Taylor broke her leg, **which kept keeping** her from competing in the race. (“which” refers to an abstract idea/clause)
- b) **Whose:** can modify a **PERSON** or a **THING**
- c) **When:** must refer to an **ACTUAL TIME**
- d) **Where:** must refer to an **ACTUAL PLACE**
- e) **Who/Whom:** must refer to a **PERSON** (if the answer to the question is I, he or she, then use “who” & if the answer is me, him or her, use “whom”)
- f) **That:** use “that” when without the data following “that”, the sentence would not make complete sense. That can’t be used to modify people!

11) That Vs. Which:

- a) Punctuation distinguishes between essential and non-essential modifiers:
 - i. **Put COMMAS between NON-ESSENTIAL modifiers and their nouns.**
 - ii. **Don’t Put COMMAS between ESSENTIAL modifiers and their nouns.**
- b) If you have a choice between *which* and *that*, then follow this general rule:
 - i. Use **WHICH** (and **commas**) if the modifier is non-essential. **This mansion, WHICH HAS BEEN RECENTLY PAINTED RED, is owned by the Lees.**
 - ii. Use **THAT** (and **no commas**) if the modifier is essential. **The mansion THAT HAS BEEN PAINTED RED is owned by the Lees.**
- c) Use commas with non-essential uses of *Which*, but not with essential uses of *Which*.
 - i. Non-essential: **This mansion, FOR WHICH I YEARN, is owned by the Lees.**
 - ii. Essential: **The mansion FOR WHICH I YEARN is owned by the Lees.**



Modifiers

12) Often, the GMAT provides two grammatically correct phrasings. For instance, one phrasing might be [Adjective + Adjective + Noun], in which the two adjectives both modify the noun. The other phrasing would be [Adverb + Adjective + Noun], in which the adverb modifies the adjective, which in turn modifies the noun. **These two phrasings do not mean the same thing. Pick the phrasing that reflects the authors intent.**

Wrong: James Joyce is Max's **SUPPOSEDLY Irish ancestor**. (Supposedly modifies Irish)

Right: James Joyce is Max's **SUPPOSED Irish ancestor**. (Supposed and Irish together modify ancestor)

James Joyce may or may not be Max's ancestor, but James Joyce was certainly Irish. Thus, we want the adjective *supposed*, so that we can modify the noun *ancestor*.

Wrong: **Max's grandmother** is his **SUPPOSED Irish ancestor**. (Supposed and Irish together modify ancestor)

Right: **Max's grandmother** is his **SUPPOSEDLY Irish ancestor**. (Supposedly modifies Irish)

What is in question here is whether Max's grandmother was Irish, not whether she is Max's ancestor. Thus, we want the adverb *supposedly*, so that we can modify the adjective *Irish*.

13) *More, most, enough*, and *all* work with both countable (plural) and uncountable (singular) nouns: *More hats; More patience; Most peoples; Most furniture; Enough hats; Enough patience; All people; All furniture*.

14) Be careful with unit nouns, such as dollars or gallons. By their nature, unit nouns are countable: one dollar, two dollars, three dollars. Thus, they work with most of the countable modifiers. However, unit nouns represent uncountable quantities: money, volume. (You can count money, of course, but you cannot count the noun money: one money (?), two moneys (?), stop.) As a result, we use less with unit nouns, when we really want to indicate something about the underlying quantity.



Pronouns

- 1) Common pronoun errors (check for these errors **ALWAYS** when either the pronoun or subject is underlined)
 - a) Misuse of it/they
 - b) Pronoun doesn't clearly refer to a specific noun or doesn't have a specific noun - except the pronoun OUR
 - c) Doesn't agree in number/gender
 - d) The pronoun doesn't refer to the closest eligible antecedent
- 2) Never use "they" to refer to a third person singular noun even if you don't know or don't want to specify the gender.
 - a) Whenever a student calls, take down **HIS or HER THEIR** information.
 - b) Whenever students call, take down **THEIR** information.
- 3) Pronoun structure:
 - a) If subject of dependent clause = pronoun. Then subject of independent clause **MUST BE** the pronoun's antecedent.
 - b) Sentence with two independent clauses: If subject of the second clause is a pronoun, this pronoun's antecedent **MUST BE** the subject of the first clause.
- 4) Pronouns – singular vs. plural

Singular	= each (one), every (one), anyone, nobody, one
Plural	= both, few
Depends on noun	= Some, Any, None, All, Most/More/Majority (SANAM)
- 5) Demonstrative Pronouns are *this*, *that*, *these*, and *those*.
 - a) Use any of these pronouns as adjectives in front of nouns. **New "nano-papers" incorporate fibers that give THESE MATERIALS strength.**
 - b) You may also **use that or those to indicate a "New Copy" OR "copies of the antecedent"**. **The money spent by her parents is less than THAT spent by her children.** In this example, *that spent by her children* means *the money spent by her children*. Note that the two pots of money are NOT the same. One pot of money is spent by the parents; another pot of money, spent by the children, is the New Copy. **That or those indicating either the "New Copy" or "copies" must be modified.** In other words, you have to add a description to indicate how the new copy is different from the previous version. **The money spent by her parents is less than THAT SPENT by her children.**
 - c) In contrast, when you **use it, they, or other personal pronouns**, **you mean the same actual thing as the antecedent.** **The money spent by her parents is more than IT was expected to be SPENT.** Don't modify the noun!
 - d) A little oddly, the GMAT insists that **any "New Copy" that or those agree in number with the previous version.** If you must change number, repeat the noun. Her company is outperforming **THE COMPANIES OF-THOSE-OF** her competitors.
 - e) Finally, on the GMAT, **do not use this or these in place of nouns.** A sentence such as *This is great* is unacceptably vague to the GMAT. **Also, do not use that or those in place of nouns, unless you modify that or those to make them New Copies. Instead, use it, they, or them.** Her products are unusual; many consider **THEM THESE** unique.
- 6) Every *it* and *its* must refer to the same singular antecedent. Every *they*, *them* and *their* must refer to the same plural antecedent. Otherwise, **don't apply pronoun ambiguity unless you are backed into a corner.** If you are down to two answer choices that are absolutely identical, except that one has *they* (referring to *executives* earlier) and the other has *these executives*, go with the latter, just to be super-safe.

When using **that/those** the count of both nouns must be the same, else repeat the noun!

When using **that/those** → modify the noun! When using **it/they/them** → don't modify the noun!



Subject-Verb Agreement

- 1) When a verb is underlined, first see if it matches with the subject and pronoun
- 2) When the subject is something like “A, X or Y” or “X nor Y”, the verb tense must match with the part of the subject which is closest to (N)OR, that is “Y” in this case!
- 3) Some rules

- a) Subject and verb won’t be within a comma hug
- b) Singular scenarios:
 - i. Collective nouns (team, jury, board, company, cluster, group)
 - ii. A singular subjects connected with other nouns by an **additive phrase** “along with/accompanied by/in addition to/together with/as well as/including”
 - iii. Noun beginning with what
 - iv. Nouns ending with ing (Collecting cards is my hobby)
- c) Plural scenarios:
 - i. Members of a collective noun
 - ii. Subjects connected by “and”
- d) When choices have “have”/”has” in answer choices, see if the noun of the relevant clause is singular/plural

- 4) Indefinite pronouns (“each”, “every”) are usually singular. If SANAM pronouns are used:

- a) SANAM <of> X. Use the plurality of the word after “of” i.e. X.
(Eg: Some of his **friends are** coming for dinner.)
- b) “None of” and “Any of” needn’t follow this rule

- 5) List of tenses:

- a) Simple present – Permanent situations
- b) Simple past – Describe an event that happened at a specific time in the past
- c) Simple future – Uses “will” or “be going to” where “will” is voluntary, and “be going to” refers to a plan of action.
- d) Present Perfect – Used to denote an event that happened at an unspecified time before the present: **[Has/Have] + Present Participle**
- e) Past Perfect - Used to denote the event that happened in the far past when referring to two things that happened in the past. The near past event is referred to using the simple tense: **[Had] + Past Participle**
- f) Present Perfect Continuous – Used to denote something that started in the past and has continued into the present: **[Has/Have] + Been + Present participle**
- g) Past Perfect Continuous – Denote something that started in the past and continued till some other time in the past: **[Had] + Been + Past Participle**

- 6) Between simple and continuous tenses – try to avoid continuous tenses unless the action is ongoing.

Singular Subject	Plural Subjects	It Depends
A singular subject to linked to other nouns by an additive phrase	Subjects joined by and	Subjects joined by or or nor
Collective nouns	Numbers greater than one are plural unless you refer to the number itself	Some, Any, None, All, Most/More/Majority (SANAM)
Most indefinite pronouns		
Subjects preceded by each or every		
Subjects preceded by the number of	Subjects preceded by a number of	Other numerical words and phrases
Subject phrases or clauses		

When unable to decide on the number of the subject, go with singular!

Remember, politics = singular and people = plural!



Comparison & Parallelism

1) Comparison errors occur when:

- a) Items compared are not parallel
- b) Items compared are not logical (apples with taste of orange)
- c) Wrong phrase of comparison is used
- d) Phrases are not in the same voice (both must be either active or passive)

Frank's build, **LIKE** his brother's, is broad and muscular.

Frank's build, **LIKE** that of his brother, is broad and muscular.

Frank, **LIKE** his brother, has a broad and muscular build.

Frank's build, **LIKE** his brother, is broad and muscular.

2) When these words are present, see if the comparisons are grammatically and logically correct

Like/unlike*	As*	Compared to
Less than	More than	Other than
Other	That of	Those of

*“**like/unlike**” should be used only when comparing nouns, pronouns or noun phrases and “**as**” must not be used for comparing nouns but only while comparing clauses (a clause contains a working verb, one that can be the main verb in a sentence). **LIKE** her **brother**, **Ava** **aced** the test. / **LIKE-AS** her brother **DID**, **Ava** **aced** the test.

3) That Vs. those: **THAT** – singular (I ate **the apple that** was on the table.) / **THOSE** – plural (The **couches** in the ... are smaller than **those** in ...)

4) Use slash and burn to identify the core of the sentence and to check for parallelism errors

5) When some choices have a “that”, look for parallelism errors

6) Parallelism phrases

AS constructions:

(SubX) (Verb) as Y did or In X (Sub) (Verb) as in Y

And/From	To	(N)Or	Not/but	Miscellaneous
Both X and Y	From X to Y	Either X or Y	Not only X ... but also Y	As much as X as Y
Between X and Y	Prefer X to Y	Whether X or Y	Not to be X ... but to be Y	Just as X so Y
At once X and Y	To consider X Y	Neither X nor Y	(Not) X but Y	More X than Y
Distinction between X and has from Y	To consider X should be Y		Not so much X as Y	More because X than because Y
Distinguish between X and has from Y	To consider X as being Y		Caused not by ... but by	No sooner ... than
Distinguish X from and has from Y	To consider X to be Y		Not caused by...but are by	So X so/that Y
	Same to X ... as to Y			



Comparison & Parallelism

X Acts As Y	Distinguish X From Y	X is the Same As Y
As X, SoY	Estimate X To Be Y	X is good, and So Too is
Between X And Y	X Instead Of Y	X, Such As Y (example)
Compared To X, Y	X is Known To Be Y	Think Of X As Y
Consider X Y	X is Less Than Y	X is Thought To Be Y
In Contrast To X, Y	MakeXY	View X As Y
Declare XY	Mistake X For Y	Whether X Or Y
X Develops Into Y	Regard X As Y	X Differs From Y
Not Only X(,) But Also Y (the comma is optional)		

Whereas **X** (Subject, Verb) ... **Y** (Subject, Verb)
Unlike **X** (Subject), **Y**(subject, Verb)

Parallelism: Concrete Nouns and Action Nouns

Not every noun can be made parallel to every other noun. Remember this example?

The **bouquet (concrete)** of flowers was a **giving (action) token (concrete)** of love.

The bouquet is not parallel to *a giving of love*, even though *giving* in this context is technically a noun (if an awkward one). We can divide nouns into two categories:

1. **Concrete nouns** refer to things, people, places, and even time periods or certain events. **rock, continent, electron, politician, region, holiday, week**
2. **Action nouns** refer to actions, as their name implies. They are often formed from verbs. **eruption, pollution, nomination, withdrawal, development, change, growth**

To maintain logical parallelism, avoid making concrete nouns and action nouns parallel.

When comparing two things, use the Comparative Form of an adjective or adverb. When comparing more than two things, use the Superlative Form of an adjective or adverb.

Example: **Comparative:** She is **SHORTER** than her sister. (Add -er)

Superlative: She is the **SHORTEST** of her five siblings. (Add -est)

Always use **than** with a comparative form

I have higher bills ~~over~~/**than** last year.

Do not compare an adverb that ends in -ly by changing the ending to -er. This error is common in speech. Instead, *add more*.

Adrian runs QUICKLY. He runs ~~QUICKER~~/MORE QUICKLY than Jacob.



Comparison & Parallelism

A. Simple Gerund Phrases

Tracking satellites accurately is important for the space agency.

Simple gerund phrases are “Nouns on the Outside, Verbs on the Inside,” like some kind of crunchy grammatical cookie. The underlined phrase acts as a noun:

Something is important for the space agency.

However, inside the actual phrase, the words are arranged as if they follow a verb. Tracking satellites accurately can easily be made part of a working verb phrase: *I AM tracking satellites accurately.*

B. Complex Gerund Phrases

The accurate tracking of satellites is important for the space agency.

Complex gerund phrases are “Nouns Through and Through.” The *-ing* gerund form is made fully into a noun; in fact, it is often preceded by articles (*a, any* or *the*) or adjectives (*accurate*). The object is put into an *Of-* prepositional phrase (e.g., *the running of marathons*) or placed in front of the *-ing* form (e.g., *marathon running*). Complex gerund phrases may sometimes sound less natural than simple gerund phrases, as in the example above. Why on earth does this matter? The reason is that the GMAT follows very strict rules of structural parallelism with these gerund forms. **Simple gerund phrases are NEVER PARALLEL to complex gerund phrases**—even though they both are *-ing* forms of a verb, and both are used as nouns!

I enjoyed drinking the water AND ~~the wine-tasting~~/tasting the wine.

Of the two types of gerund phrases, only complex ones can be parallel to action nouns. In a list of action nouns, a simple gerund phrase might be mistaken for something other than a noun.

Wrong: **The rebels demanded the withdrawal of government forces from disputed regions, significant reductions in overall troop levels, raising the rebel flag on holidays, AND a general pardon.**

Withdrawal, reductions, and pardon are all action nouns. Thus, you should not include the word *raising* by itself (it might be misinterpreted as a modifier). Rather, you should choose *THE raising OF*.

Right: **The rebels demanded the withdrawal of government forces from disputed regions, significant reductions in overall troop levels, THE raising OF the rebel flag on holidays, AND a general pardon.**

In any list of action nouns, always choose the complex gerund phrase (often with articles and the word *Of*) over the simple gerund phrase!

Also, if an appropriate action noun for a particular verb already exists in English, then avoid creating a complex gerund phrase. Instead, use the pre-existing action noun.

Wrong: **The rebels demanded the withdrawal of government forces from disputed regions AND releasing certain political prisoners.**

Wrong: **The rebels demanded the withdrawal of government forces from disputed regions AND THE releasing OF certain political prisoners.**

Right: **The rebels demanded the withdrawal of government forces from disputed regions AND THE RELEASE OF certain political prisoners.**

Release is a pre-existing action noun (meaning *the act of releasing*), so use this noun. Fortunately, the complex gerund phrase will generally sound worse than the pre-existing action noun.



Comparison & Parallelism

COMPARISON REVISION:

- 1) Like many other states, Virginia is technically a commonwealth.
- 2) I scored three goals in yesterday's game, as did Suzanne.
- 3) Juggling is a favorite pastime for me, as for you (or) as it is for you.
- 4) The rate of foreclosure of owner-occupied homes in the northern counties is 75% higher than that in the southern counties.
- 5) Law students learn to think as a lawyer *does*.
- 6) A leopard cannot run as fast as a cheetah.
- 7) A leopard cannot catch a wildebeest as fast as a cheetah *can*.
- 8) A leopard's skill in catching a wildebeest is as impressive as that of a cheetah (or) as a cheetah's.
- 9) The clothes looked more appealing inside the store than on the racks outside.
- 10) The clothes inside the store looked more appealing than those on the racks outside.
- 11) **Martin's routine includes reading the daily newspaper and going to the gym/Martin's daily routine includes reading the newspaper and going to the gym** (The original sentence does not say how often Martin goes to the gym, nor even how often he reads the newspaper. (Perhaps he subscribes to a daily newspaper, but saves all the issues until the weekend, when he reads them all at once.) The boldface version, on the other hand, asserts that Martin reads the paper every day and goes to the gym every day. It does not make clear, as the original sentence does, that the newspaper is a daily (as opposed to, for example, a Sunday paper). These changes of meaning are all UNJUSTIFIED.)
- 12) He received a medal **for the sinking of** an enemy ship **and the capture of** its crew.

Like/unlike & than tips:

- 1) First check and see if the things compared are similar. If they are not – strike out that option
- 2) In the remaining options, check if the things compared are:
 - a) **Singular:** than that of
 - b) **Plural:** than those ofmust be the sentence structure!



CR Strengthen question tip ☺:

Objective of the answer choice is to add to the ~~possibility~~ credibility of the solution



Verb Tense

- 1) To determine whether the verbs in a sentence are in the proper tense, pick one event as a standard and measure every other event against the standard asking whether the other events are supposed to happen Before/After/While the standard event took place and choose verbs accordingly.
- 2) When there are 2 events with the past tense, the event which occurs chronologically/logically first must be in the past perfect tense. This is the most misused error. Exceptions:
 - a) Do not use the perfect tenses when the simple tenses will do. (Joe LEARNED about an epoch in which dinosaurs ~~HAD~~ WALKED the earth.)
 - b) When the event is something fixed (Daniel just before he died told the doctor that his blood group ~~had been/was~~ **is** O positive.) Blood group of Daniel is fixed.
 - c) Clauses linked by **and** or **but** do not require the Past Perfect as a general rule.
 - d) The words “before” and “after” indicate the sequence of events clearly and emphatically enough to make the use of the Past Perfect unnecessary. (Laura ~~HAD~~ LOCKED the house before she LEFT for work.)
 - e) Also note that the later past event does not need to be expressed with a Simple Past tense verb. You could just use a date or another time reference. (By 1945, the United States HAD BEEN at war for several years.) and (The band U2 WAS just one of many new groups on the rock music scene in the early 1980's, but less than ten years later, U2 HAD fully ECLIPSED its early rivals in the pantheon of popular music.)
- 3) When an action began in the past and continues till future, the sentence structure would be “by the time she retires, she **will have saved** enough money to allow her to live comfortably”
- 4) “has/have + present participle” describes an event that began at a point in the past and may continue. This is a frequently tested error.
- 5) While using the passive voice, the usual sequences are EITHER Present + Future OR Past +Conditional.
- 6) Use the ING form of verbs only to emphasize that:
 - a) An action is continuing OR
 - b) 2 actions are occurring simultaneously OR
 - c) when they are used as modifiers – when an ING word is used as a modifier, it can be in a different tense compared to the event it is modifying. Further, it need not necessarily be immediately next to the noun it modifies (the dog walked down the street, ~~which was~~ carrying a stick → meaning the dog carrying the stick walked down the street)
- 7) Each – when singular and when plural
 - a) **EACH = subject**, then **singular** verb. **Each child has** a different chocolate.
 - b) **EACH comes after the subject**, the subject agrees with a plural verb. The **children each have** a different chocolate.
- 8) Helen would feel better if she swallowed this pill. Helen will feel better if she swallows this pill.
- 9) If a **word** is there in the **verb form** in one **and** in a **noun form** in another option, prefer the option in which the word is in the **VERB FORM!**

AVOID ING FORM: When the GMAT gives you a choice between one verb tense that uses an “ing” form and another that does not, usually the “ing” form is wrong.



Sentence Structure

- 1) When answer choices have singular and plural versions of a noun, look at the tense and count of the verb/pronoun which is not underlined for clues.
 - a) Example: Mona monkeys have been Its
 - i. Here say some answer choices have "its" and some have "their"
 - ii. Just looking at the subject (Mona monkeys), we don't know if the subject is singular or plural
 - iii. But when we look at the verb "have been", it indicates that Mona monkeys is singular and so the answer choice must have "their" and not "its"
- 2) When an object/device is a subject doing an activity, give preference to an option where a subject is using the object
 - a) The patients rare disease was treated by doctors using novel techniques developed at the medical school.
 - b) The patients rare disease was treated through the use of using novel techniques developed at the medical school.
- 3) Subjunctive mood → Subjunctive mood verb* + that + new subject + infinitive form of the verb without to
 - a) Example: He demanded that the door be opened.
 - b) * Subjunctive mood verbs = order, recommend, demand, insist, advise, ask, desire, require, urge
 - c) Many directive verbs can also be expressed using an infinitive.
 - i. The consultant urges the company to reduce its expenditure.
 - ii. The consultant urges that the company reduce its expenditure.
- 4) Hypothetical/contrary to fact situations → use "were" and "would". Eg: If I **were** rich, I **would** quit my job.
- 5) Two independent clauses must be connected with a ";" or "a comma along with an appropriate **FAN BOYS** (For, And, Nor, But, Or, Yet, So) word" or one of the **WABU SAB TWIT** (While Although Because Unless Since After Before That When If Though) connecting words.
- 6) Favour options where the subject and verb is immediately in the beginning of the second independent or dependent clause!
- 7) if you have two or more instances of "they"/"their" in the SAME CLAUSE, then they must stand for the same thing. (The first "they" is trying to stand for "depressed property values". Since the second is trying to stand for "homeowners" = wrong)
- 8) **When there is a reference to a person's time (meaning he is dead), the verb tense shouldn't ideally be in a continuous tense!**
- 9) When there is a simple prediction about the future, we use "will", but when the predictions about the future was made in the past, we use "would"
 - a) **Example:** Sam said that he would/~~will~~ do his homework by Saturday only if he is allowed to play on Sunday.



Wordy & Awkward Constructions

- 1) The sentences having the phrase “the fact that” are usually wrong on the GMAT. “The fact that” statements are definitely wrong when the statement says “the fact can be proved wrong/avoided/etc”

And + Also → redundant; But + Rather → NOT redundant
- 2) Avoid passive voice, being, having been, extra or unnecessary pronouns, “preposition + the + ing of”
- 3) “Such that” doesn't make sense. The ONLY non-awkward, correct sentences Ron Purewal has seen with “such that” are sentences about math or physics (e.g., “choose x and y such that $x + y = 10$ ”).
- 4) Here are **RULES** on how to rank parts of speech by “concision power”: drive the V-A-N : Verb > Adjective/Adverb > Noun i.e. An active verb is usually more stronger than an adjective on a action noun.
 - a) Prefer a verb to an action noun → The townspeople’s **REVOLUTION WAS AGAINST/REVOLTED AGAINST** the king.
 - b) Prefer a that clause (with verbs) to a series of phrases (with nouns) → The hypothesis **ABOUT the COMPOSITION OF the universe AS largely dark energy THAT the universe IS largely COMPOSED OF dark energy** seems strange. “Idea” nouns, such as hypothesis, idea, or suggestion, lend themselves particularly well to this pattern. Other examples include belief, discovery, evidence, indication, and report. These sorts of nouns are often modified by That-Clauses that contain full sentences: The BELIEF THAT the Earth is flat is contradicted by EVIDENCE THAT the Earth is round and the DISCOVERY THAT the Earth circles the Sun.
 - c) Prefer a verb to an adjective → The artist **WAS INFLUENTIAL TO INFLUENCED** the movement.
 - d) Prefer an adjective to a noun → **THERE IS AN ABUNDANCE OF funds for .../Funds for ... ARE ABUNDANT.**
 - e) Prefer adverb to prepositional phrase → X prices have fallen, but prices of Y have not fallen **TO A COMPARABLE EXTENT/ COMPARABLY.**
 - f) Prefer an Adjective to an Adjective Clause with Be → Marcos is a **professor WHO IS ADMIRABLE/Marcos is an ADMIRABLE professor.**
- 5) **SUGGESTIONS** on how to rank parts of concision power.
 - a) Remove it is ... that... → **IT IS without fear THAT children should play/Children should play without fear.**
- 6) Use helping verbs to stand for longer verbs or verb phrases. The first instance of the verb should usually match the helping verb in tense. If you need to change tenses, repeat the whole verb in the new tense.
 - a) Wordy: I **have** never seen an aardvark, but my father **has seen an aardvark.**
 - b) Better: I **have** never seen an aardvark, but my father **HAS.**
 - c) Wrong: I **have** never seen an aardvark, but last year my father **DID.**
 - d) Right: I **have** never seen an aardvark, but last year my father **saw one.**

May think to be true = awkward
- 7) In rare cases in which the tenses do not need to match, the exact “verb form” missing after the helping verb should be present elsewhere in the sentence.
 - a) Our cars were designed to **inspire envy**, and **they DO/ ARE.**
 - b) **They DO inspire** is fine, but **they ARE inspire** is not. For **they ARE** to work, the form *inspiring* would need to be present in the sentence.
- 8) **Awkward:** **SHOULD he PASS** the test, he will graduate. **Right:** **IF he PASSES** the test, he will graduate.



Idioms

- 1) As much ~~than~~ as
- 2) Aware ~~about~~ of
- 3) Prefer coffee ~~over~~ to tea
- 4) Distinguish R ~~and~~ from G
- 5) Distinguish between R ~~from~~ and G
- 6) Regarded as
- 7) Considered ~~as~~ (Because consider means regard as)
- 8) Perceived ~~with~~ as
- 9) Decide between one ~~or~~ and the other
- 10) The ruling prohibits the defendant **from discussing** the case ~~with~~
- 11) The ruling prohibits the defendant **to discuss** the case **with**
- 12) Settlement ~~of~~ in
- 13) Ratio of A ~~with~~ to B
- 14) Feed ~~of~~ from
- 15) Mistake X ~~with/as/~~ for Y
- 16) Aim ~~to~~ as
- 17) Forbidden ~~from doing~~ to do; Prohibit ~~that to~~ from (Verb+ing);
Mandate ~~to from~~ that
- 18) Think X ~~to be/being/~~ as Y
- 19) As X as Y
- 20) More X than Y
- 21) More than ~~never~~ ever before
- 24) X **will do** xyz only if Y **does** abc
- 25) Interact ~~among~~ with
- 26) Attribute X ~~as the cause of~~ to Y
- ~~27) Influential on/to~~ Influenced
- 28) Allow for ("for" must be there)
- 29) Expend... ~~by~~ On...
- 30) Enamored ~~by~~ with
- 31) Conceived of X ~~to be~~ as
- 32) Aid ~~in healing~~ to heal
- 33) Except ~~for~~ in
- 34) Ability ~~of~~ to
- 35) Less successful ~~compared to~~ than
- ~~36) To persuade that X should do Y/~~To persuade X ~~in doing~~ to do Y
- 37) Although ~~+ participle~~ + noun + verb
- 38) Dated ~~as being/to be~~ at (Verb ~~to be/as being/~~ at is usually the scenario)
- 39) So XYZ as to/~~so as to XYZ~~ (Don't use "so as to" as a substitute for "in order to")
- ~~40) To include~~ including
- ~~41) To implement~~ implementing
- 42) The rising ~~of~~ costs
- 43) Reluctant ~~about~~ to
- 44) More ~~likely~~/than likely
- 45) J to K ~~similar to/~~ what P is to Q

As [adjective] **as** Object
So [adjective] **as to** Action verb
So [adjective] **that** Action verb

[\(More Idioms\)](#)



Confusing Words

1) **All Vs. Each Vs. Every:** "All" and "Every" are plural and "each" is singular, so they are not interchangeable. There is also a very small change in meaning -- you are emphasizing the individual members of a set with "each".

2) **Like Vs. As/be it Vs. Such as**

a) For stating comparison: As/be it + Clause OR Like + Noun

b) For stating function: As + noun

c) to introduce examples "Like/for example"/"Such as".

3) **Increase and Decrease Vs. Greater and less**

a) Increase and Decrease → change of one thing over time

b) Greater and Less → comparison between two things

4) **Compared with Vs. Compared to**

a) Compared with → compare 2 things

b) Compared to → liken not comparable things

5) **Greater than vs more than**

a) Greater than → comparing numbers alone

b) More than → Comparing numbers of objects

6) **Due to/Caused by Vs. because of/for**

a) Due to denotes X caused Y i.e. used to **modify nouns** and answers the question **WHAT**. Always substitute and read due to with "caused by" and see if the sentence makes sense. (Arizona's cold wave is **due to/caused by** the westward storm coming from the pacific). Due to is usually followed by verb "to be"

b) Because (**preferred over "on account of"**) **modifies verbs**. It answers the question **WHY** (cold in Arizona **because of** the westward storm coming from the pacific).

c) If the "due to" is replaced with "caused by" and it doesn't make any sense stick to "because of" or "for". Don't start a sentence with "due to".

7) (RT Preferred) **Rather than Vs. Instead of**

a) Rather than → indicates preference

b) Instead of → indicates replacement
and must be followed by a noun!

8) **Account for Vs. Account of**

a) Account for → cause

b) Account of → summary

9) **Coordinating vs Coordinated**

a) X coordinating → X is the subject

b) X coordinated → X is the object

10) **Agree to Vs. Agree with**

a) Agree to → verb

b) Agree with → noun

11) **Numbers Vs. Number**

a) Numbers → large crowd or multitude

b) Number → specific quantity

12) **If Vs. When**

a) If the conditional statement expresses a general fact 'if' and 'when' can be used interchangeably.

b) If the conditional statement expresses a possibility, 'when' cannot be used in place of 'if'.

Except Number Vs. Amount (self explanatory), the first unique alphabet which is closer to "C" (for countable) is used to refer to countable things!

Words	Countable	Uncountable
Few Vs. less	F ew	Less
Number Vs. Amount/Quantity	N umber	A mount/Quantity
As many as Vs. Equivalent	A s many as	Equivalent
Much Vs. Many	M any	Much
Father Vs. further	F arther	Further

For comparing more than 2 things, use the alphabet with the word closer to A! Exception – adverb styles!

Words	Two things	More things
If Vs. whether	Whether	I f
Between Vs. Among	Between	A mong
Adverb style	E r	e st



Confusing Words

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

1) Must (absolutely necessary) Vs. Should (morally obliged):

Absolutely Necessary: The court ruled that the plaintiff **MUST** pay full damages.

Morally Obligated: The court ruled that the plaintiff **SHOULD** pay full damages.

Notice that the second sentence cannot be correct. Why? The word should means “moral obligation”— something that a court cannot impose. On the other hand, the use of must in the first sentence indicates a legally binding obligation imposed upon the plaintiff. Thus, you should go with must whether the original sentence used must or not. On the GMAT, should almost always means “moral obligation,” not “likelihood.” In everyday speech, you can say The train should arrive now to mean that the train is likely to arrive now, but the GMAT doesn’t agree with this usage.

2) Concerned for Vs. Concerned with:

- a) Concerned for → worried, anxious
- b) Concerned with → related to

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.

The first sentence means that the mans age = 5 x his grandsons age.

In the second example, the author is technically saying that the man is six times as old as his grandson. This meaning is unlikely; the author probably meant “five times as old.”

USE TIMES WITHOUT AS OR THAN to indicate direct multiplication.

(Twice means two times!)

Right: The cost of a ticket is \$12, **SIX TIMES** the cost ten years ago.

Right: The concert was attended by 300 people, **TWICE** the previous attendance.

If you want to relate two quantities by addition or subtraction, **USE MORE THAN OR LESS THAN.**

Right: I am TEN years **OLDER THAN** you.

Wrong: I am TEN years **AS OLD AS** you.

3) Small/big Vs. Length:

- a) Small/big → only for structures or shapes
- b) Length/tall → for plants/animals/persons



THAT & AND Tells

THAT

See “that”, think:

- Does “that” begin an adjective clause that logically describes the noun before it?
- Does “that” refer to a singular item in a parallel construction?
- Does “that” follow “and”? Is it parallel with another clause in the sentence?
- Does “that” follow a directive verb? Make sure that the root form of the verb is used to express the wish, demand or request.
- Does “that” introduce the results of a study or the findings of a discovery? If it is in some option but not others, choose an option that doesn’t omit “that” (Eg: The scientist proved **that** the canyon is actually growing larger every year)
- If “that” introduces the second clause in a parallel construction, then “that” must introduce the first. (Eg: The teacher is aware **that** children are sleeping less but **that** they are doing more homework)

Thinking words such as “Theory”, “belief” or “believe” are often followed by that!

The GMAT insists that the following Reporting Verbs take *that* whenever you follow them with a clause (a thought expressed in its own mini-sentence).

Verb	Better
Agree	The criminals AGREED THAT gold would be the scam.
Claim	They CLAIMED THAT gold was growing scarce.
Contend	They CONTENDED THAT the price of gold would rise.
Declare	They DECLARED THAT they had discovered gold.
Find	Investors FOUND THAT they could not get answers.
Indicate	An article INDICATED THAT the mine was worthless.
Reveal	An investigation REVEALED THAT the gold was a mirage.
Rule	The court RULED THAT the criminals were guilty of fraud.
Show	This story SHOWS THAT crime does not pay.

Other common Reporting Verbs include *announce, assert, believe, confess, demonstrate, doubt, expect, hold, know, mention, observe, proclaim, reason, recognize, repeat, state, think, and warn*, as well as various forms with the verb *be*, such as *be convinced, be certain, be assured*, and so forth. Exception: Say

AND

“And” tells:

- If “and” is preceded by a comma but is not part of a list, make sure there are independent clauses on both sides
- If “and” is part of a list, it means the last item on the list is next. (Remember, items in a list should be parallel grammatically and logically)
- If “and” connects two nouns that make up the subject of a sentence, a plural verb should agree with this compound sentence

Dependent clauses often begin with:

Subordinating conjunctions: because, although, if, since

Relative pronouns: that, which, who, whom, whose



More SC Tells & Tips

If you see...	Look for...
Many phrases and clauses	Fragments, SVA, wordiness
Lists	Parallelism
Verbals	Parallelism, modifiers, fragments
Pronouns	Reference and agreement errors
Comparisons	Illogical comparisons, parallelism, idiom errors
Quantifiers	Confusing words, redundancy
"Tell" words	Tense, wordiness, passive voice
Collective nouns	Both pronouns and verbs should be singular
Correlative conjunctions: Not only... but also; either ..or	1) Conjunction pair correct 2) Conjunction items parallel
Lots of phrases and clauses	1) Hiding agreement error 2) Misplaced modifier or parallelism/comparison error

Other tells:

- 1) "If" indicates hypothetical situation/result errors.
- 2) Present/Past perfect indicates tense relationship errors.
- 3) Possessives indicate modifier and comparison errors.
- 4) Differences in prepositions indicate idiom errors.
- 5) Added pronouns indicate wordiness errors.
- 6) Being/having been indicate awkwardness errors.
- 7) Correlative constructions indicate parallelism errors.

More tips:

- 1) A pronoun can seem to have multiple antecedents, but as long as only one is logical, the sentence is correct.
- 2) Try to stay away from It is/They are/There is/There are
- 3) Connect two full sentences with a "comma + FANBOYS"
- 4) Collective nouns are used to test both subject-verb agreement and pronoun-antecedent agreement



Changes Made In Each Version

Version	Date	Changes
1	16-Sep-14	NA
2	22-Sep-14	Slide 16, Point 16 OLD: Aim to as NEW: Aim to at/with the aim of
3	19-Nov-14	Slide 03, point 1(h) inserted Slide 12, Like/unlike and than tells and CR Strengthening question tip added Slide 15, “May think to be true = awkward” added Slide 16, Idiom 43 added Slide 17, point 6 → most text in green added Slide 18, point 3 added
4		Slide 16, Idiom 44 added Slide 14, Point 9 added Slide 14, Point 1(a)(iii), have “their” and not “its” replaced with have “its” and not “their”