

- 1) It has been estimated that the annual cost to the United States of illiteracy in lost industrial output and tax revenues is at least \$20 billion a year. (OG11 –Q 120)

Meaning: Because of illiteracy, United States is losing \$20 billion a year in lost industrial output and tax revenue.

Errors:

Error 1:- Wordy and confusing.

Error 2:- The annual costis \$ 20 billion **a year.** (Redundant)

Error 3:- One of the choices said “The annual cost of illiteracy to the United States is \$ 20 billion a year **because of** lost industrial output and tax revenues”

- Here it is to be noted that the correct idiom is **cost of.....** is \$ 20 billion a year... **in.....**lost industrial output and tax revenues.

Correction:

Illiteracy costs United States \$ 20 billion a year in lost industrial output and tax revenues.

Take Note: *The best way to attack an SC question for me is to **find an error first** and remove the choices that incorporate that error. Also make sure the meaning of the sentence is known.*

- 2) More than 30 years ago Dr. Barbara McClintock, the Noble Prize winner, reported that the genes can “jump”, as pearls moving mysteriously from one necklace to another. (OG 13- Q122)

Meaning: The doc found out that genes can jump which seemed like pearls moving mysteriously from one necklace to another.

Errors:

- i) First of all the question is whether to include “do” or not in the correction i.e. whether it should be **jump as pearls** or **jump as pearls do.**

Official Explanation: Since the movement of pearls is a suggestion of image only i.e. pearls do not actually move, doc is only suggesting the movement hence the use of do is incorrect. Had it been the actual movement of pearls, the use of do should have been correct. Think of it this way:

It felt like flying in a dream. (Correct)

It felt like flying in a dream does. (Incorrect)

Because flying in a dream is just an image of what it felt like. It’s not exactly flying in the dream.

Second it is As Vs Like: **Jump as pearls** or **jump like pearls.**

Official Explanation:

As: To introduce *clause* we use ‘as’. A clause contains both subject and the verb. (A complete sentence)

- i) As pearls do that move mysteriously from one necklace to another. (Complete sentence with subject pearl and verb do)

Like: To introduce phrases, we use preposition ‘like’. A phrase does not have a subject and verb (Incomplete or a partial sentence)

- i) Like pearls moving mysteriously from one necklace to another. (Incomplete sentence with no verb leading to the subject)
- Like a man willing to take risk, he jumped into the situation.
- As a man who is willing to take risk, he jumped into the situation.

Take Note: After coming down to two options, do look for any small dissimilarity between the options. There is no point considering more than two options, so first locate an error, then shorten your choices to consider till only two remains, and then compare the two for any dissimilarity. Mark and move on.

- 3) Canadian scientists have calculated that one human being should be struck every nine years by a meteorite, while each year 16 buildings can be expected to sustain damage from such objects. (OG 13 Q 124)

Meaning: Inferred easily.

Errors and Points of Thought:

- i) Whether the usage of 'should be' struck is appropriate. Doesn't it sound as if scientists want one human to be struck by meteorite every nine years?

One human **should be** struck every nine years.

Official Explanation: Correctly pointed out. The sentence sounds like a person ought to be struck, as if the person deserved it. However the sentence has replaced **will** in place of should and the Official explanation has **justified** using 'will' for predictions.

*The scientists calculated that a human **will be** struck every nine years by a meteorite.*

We can use will for future predictions based on calculations. (Even though it sounds definite, as if surely a human will be struck every nine years.)

- ii) Since after comma, the sentence begins with ...**while each year** 16 buildings can be expected..... So shouldn't the previous sentence also begin taking the time notation in consideration?

E.g. **Every nine years**....followed by the sentence.....while each year.....

Official Explanation: The OE doesn't support this theory, so it doesn't matter whether the previous sentence began with a time frame or not. That means:

- Canadian scientists have calculated that **a human being will be struck every nine years by a meteorite, while each year** 16 buildings can be expected to sustain damage from such objects. **(Correct)**
- Canadian scientists have calculated that **every nine years a human being will be struck by a meteorite, while each year** 16 buildings can be expected to sustain damage from such objects. **(Correct)**

Moreover the official explanation says that since it is a generalization, specific words shouldn't be used i.e.

- a) We should not use **one human being** and instead use **a human being**.
- b) We should not use **once in every nine years** and instead use **every nine years**.

The above sentences mean that the scientists are predicting that a specific human being (One human being) will be struck by a meteorite once in every nine years.

- 4) The direction in which the Earth and the other solid planets – Mercury, Venus and Mars- spins were determined from collisions with giant celestial bodies in the early history of the solar System. (OG 13 Q 138)

Meaning: Easy to infer.

Errors and point of thinking: The only point which is difficult for me is the idiom to be used here i.e. whether it should be;

- i) The direction was determined **from collisions** with celestial bodies.
- ii) The direction was determined **by collisions** with giant celestial bodies.
- iii) The direction was determined **as a result of collision** with giant celestial bodies.
- iv) The direction was determined **through collisions** with celestial bodies.

Official Explanation: The official guideline says that the idiom **determined by** is used to express cause. For example in this case the author believes that the collisions with giant celestial bodies was the cause of the direction of the spin movement of planet, hence the correct answer should be phrased as:

The direction was determined **by collisions** with giant celestial bodies.

- a) How far you go is determined by the amount of hard work you do. (Success is caused by hard work)
- b) How far you go is determined from the amount of hard work you do. (success is deduced from hard work)
- c) How far you go is determined as a result of the amount of hard work you do. (Incorrect)

Take Note: Once you rework the sentence cutting unnecessary flab, the correction of the sentence becomes smooth. REMOVE UNNECESSARY FLAB.

- 1) Heavy commitment by an executive to a course of action, especially if it has worked well in the past, makes it likely to miss signs of incipient trouble or misinterpret them when they do appear.

Errors and point of thinking:

The sentence appeared correct to me.

Official Explanation:

- i) The reference of 'it' in the original sentence is ambiguous.

Heavy commitment by an executive to a course of action, especially if *it* has worked well...

- In this case, 'it' refers to the course of action.

Heavy commitment..... makes *it* likely to miss signs of incipient trouble.....

- In this case 'it' refers to heavy commitment.

Take note: *If there are too many pronouns in the sentence (it, this, his....etc) check for any ambiguity. Watch out for too many 'it' or 'this'.*

- ii) There is no reference as to who will miss sign. The executive? Yes but it is not mentioned in the line specifically.

Think of it like this:

- Heavy commitment by an executive makes it likely to miss signs of trouble. (Wrong)
- Heavy commitment makes it likely for an executive to miss signs of trouble. (Right)
- Being heavily committed makes it likely for an executive to miss signs of trouble (Right)
- Using latest technology, the problem was identified. (Incorrect)
- Using latest technology, the engineer identified the problem. (Correct)

Take note: *whenever there is an effect, make sure it is preceded by the mention of the 'person/thing' which is affected.*

- 2) As rainfall began to decrease in the Southwest about the middle of the twelfth century, most of the Monument Valley Anasazi abandoned their homes to join other clans whose access to water was less limited.

Official Explanation:

The sentence is correct for the following reasons:

- The use of 'whose' after clans is appropriate. (Clans whose access to water...). This possessive pronoun 'whose' the OG says appropriately refers to its immediate precedent clans and modifies access.
 - a) He quit his job to join a company **whose** HR policies were flexible.
 - b) The man in search of peace left the temple to live with monks **who** were famous.
- The option carrying 'less limitation' was incorrect for the reason that limitation is a quantifiable term and hence **fewer limitations** is correct and **less limitations** is wrong.
 - a) Monument Valley Anasazi abandoned their homes to join other clans with less limitations. (incorrect)
 - b) Monument Valley Anasazi abandoned their homes to join other clans with fewer limitations. (correct)

- 3) Beatrix Potter, in her book illustrations, carefully coordinating them with her narratives, capitalized on her keen observation and love of the natural world.

Official Explanation:

Errors and points of thinking:

- Beatrix Potter.....and capitalized should be placed closer.

(These modifiers sound choppy and create too much separation between the subject, *Beatrix Potter*, and the verb *capitalized*.)

- In her book illustrations, which she carefully coordinated with her narratives, Beatrix Potter.....

Let's rearrange and check:

- In her book illustrations, which she carefully coordinated with her narratives, Beatrix Potter capitalized on her keen observation and love of the natural world. (The correct sentence)
- Beatrix Potter capitalized on her keen observation and love of the natural world in her **book illustrations, which** she carefully coordinated with her narratives. (which should refer to a noun not necessarily just preceding it. Check the next example)

Take Note: i) Rearrange the sentence to see if the sentence sounds well after rearranging.

- iii) The use of 'which' is subjected to the condition that which should modify the immediate preceding noun and not the entire clause. As in this case:
.....natural world in her **book illustrations, which (modifies illustrations)**

- 4) Emily Dickinson's letters to Susan Huntington Dickinson were written over a period beginning a few years before Susan's marriage to Emily's brother and ending shortly before Emily's death in 1886, outnumbering her letters to anyone else.

Errors and point of thoughts:

Why the sentence is wrong?

Official Explanation:

- It says that there is too much emphasis on the period whereas the main verb of the sentence is 'outnumber'.
- It further says that it is unclear what outnumbering refers to.

Step 1: Let's cut the flab:

- **Emily letters were written over a period between this to this, outnumbering her letters to anyone else.**
This sounds incomplete.

Meaning is important. This sentence is entirely based on meaning. It says *Girl X has written letters to girl Y which outnumber Girl X letter to anyone else.*

The correct choice says:

- Dickinson, which were written over a period beginning a few years before Susan's marriage to Emily's brother and ending shortly before Emily's death in 1886, outnumber

Let's cut the flab with the right choice:

- **Emily letters, which were written over a period between this to this, outnumber her letters to anyone else.**

Sounds good, but I didn't pick this because I thought the noun has to precede 'which' and this was not there in the option.

Emily Dickinson's letters to **Susan Huntington Dickinson, which** were written...

- Here even though 'which' is not preceded by the noun it refers to (letters), still it is accepted because the noun of the preceding clause is the noun 'which' is referring to.
- Emily Dickinson's **letters** to Susan Huntington Dickinson, **which** were written...

Take note: 'Which' can be used even when the preceding clause has the noun, and there is no need of immediate precedence of noun which is modified by 'which'.

ii) Cut the flab and see the magic.

The Company required the employees to sign a confidentiality agreement **prohibiting disclosure of** its water purification technology to **any** company using an analogous purification process. **(Correct)**

The Company required the employees to sign a confidentiality agreement **that would prohibit** its water purification technology to be disclosed to **a** company using an analogous purification process. (Wrong)

- 5) Nuclear fusion is the force that powers the Sun, the stars, and hydrogen bombs, merging the nuclei of atoms and not splitting them apart, as in nuclear reactors.

Errors and point of thinking:

- Whether it should be merges in place of merging, to be parallel to powers? Let's check:

Step 1: Cut the flab

- a) Nuclear fusion is the force that powers the sun, merging the nuclei of atoms.
- b) Nuclear fusion is the force that powers the sun, merges the nuclei of atoms.

Sentence (a) sounds logical but I feel 'by' is missing. The comma I think is enough to convey the meaning.

Sentence (b) says entirely different meaning. Powering the sun and merging the nuclei are two different functions of nuclear fusion. (Could be)

Let's rearrange it:

- Merging the nuclei of atoms, nuclear fusion is the force that powers the Sun, the stars, and hydrogen bombs. (Sounds cool)

Take Note: According to GMAT The use of 'and not' is inappropriate for comparison. In place of 'and not' instead, unlike, rather than etc. can be used.

- He went to the playground and not library. (Incorrect)
- He went to playground instead of library. (Correct)

OG- 12

Q: 57 That educators have not anticipated the impact of microcomputer technology can hardly be said that it is their fault : Alvin Toffler, one of the most prominent students of the future, did not even mention microcomputers in *Future Shock*, published in 1970.

Errors and points of thinking:

- i) Sentence begins with an awkward construction ‘that educators....’

Official Explanation:

The official explanation says that it is all right to begin a sentence with a subordinate clause ‘that’, but usually such a construction will create errors as in this sentence. For example in this one:

That educators have not anticipated the impact of microcomputer technology (**Subordinate clause 1**)
can hardly be said (**Main verb**) *that it is their fault* (**Subordinate clause 2**)

Rearranging:

Can hardly be said *that it is their fault that educators have not anticipated the impact of microcomputer technology*. (Confused meaning).

The OG says that the best way to solve this problem is put the sentence in a correct order with the main clause preceding the subordinate clause:

- It can hardly be said that it is the fault of educators who have not anticipated the impact of microcomputer technology (*Contender*)
 - a) **It** can hardly be said that **it** is.... (Watch out for multiple it, they are considered awkward)
 - b) **That it** is the fault of educators **who have not** (awkward and distorts meaning. As if only those educators are considered who have not anticipated among all.)
- It can hardly be said that educators are at fault for not anticipating the impact of microcomputer technology (*Correct*)
 - a) It can hardly be said (**Main clause**) that educators are at fault for not anticipating the impact of microcomputer technology (**Subordinate clause**)

Q 58) The Olympic Games helped to keep peace among the pugnacious states of the Greek world in that a sacred truce was proclaimed during the festival’s month.

Errors and points of thinking:

- i) The main problem lies in the usage of joining sentences: (Correct conjunction to join two independent clauses)

The Olympic Games helped to keep peace among the pugnacious states of the Greek world **(clause 1)** in that **(conjunction)** a sacred truce was proclaimed during the festival's month. **(Clause 2)**

Official Explanation:

The GMAT finds use of 'in that' overly formal. It also says that 'in that' uses 2 words where one is sufficient.

Take note: avoid using the conjunction 'in that', instead use 'for'

The yield is expected **to increase** till 2005 and then **to stabilize** at six billion cu ft. per day, an extraction rate that will allow for 50 years' production.

- In a plan to stop the erosion of East Coast beaches, the Army Corps of Engineers proposed building parallel to shore breakwater of rocks that would rise six feet above the waterline and act as a buffer, so that it absorbs the energy of crashing waves and protecting the beaches.

Official Explanation:

...breakwater of rocks **that would** rise six feet above the waterline and **act as a** buffer, so that it **absorbs** the energy of crashing waves and **protecting** the beaches.

- That would act as a buffer, absorbing the energy and protecting the beaches. (correct)
- That would acting like a buffer, absorb the energy (Wrong)
- **Would** has to be parallel with **act as** and **absorbing** has to be parallel with **protecting**.
- **Acted like** a buffer is wrong. Act like has to be used for a person only.

- Affording strategic proximity to the Strait of Gibraltar, Morocco was also of interest to the French throughout the first half of the twentieth century because they assumed that if they did not hold it, their grip on Algeria was always insecure.

Official Explanation:

- The past condition 'if' uses the condition 'would'. If x happened then y **would** happen.
- They assumed that if they did not hold, their grip **was always** insecure (incorrect)
- They assumed that without it, their grip **would be** insecure. (Correct)

- The first trenches that were cut into a 500-acre site at Tell Hamoukar, Syria, have yielded strong evidence for centrally administered complex societies in northern regions of the Middle East that were arising simultaneously with but independently of the more celebrated city-states of southern Mesopotamia, in what is now southern Iraq.

Official Explanation:

- Wordy. Cut the flab.
- First trenches **that were cut** have yielded evidence for societies **that were arising** simultaneously with (unnecessarily wordy and confusing)
- First trenches **cut** have yielded evidence that societies **arose** simultaneously with (precise and concise)

- His studies of ice-polished rocks in his Alpine homeland, far outside the range of present-day glaciers, led Louis Agassiz in 1837 to propose the concept of an age in which great ice sheets had existed in now currently temperate areas.

Official Explanation:

- **Age in which** great ice sheets existed. (Correct)
- **Age when** great ice sheet existed. (Correct)
- **Age when** great ice sheet **had existed.** (Wrong)
- Age when great ice sheets existed in **current** temperate areas. (Wrong)
- Age when great ice sheets existed in **currently** temperate areas. (Correct but unclear)
- In which great ice sheets existed in what are now temperate areas. (Correct and clear)

- Combining enormous physical strength with higher intelligence, the Neanderthals appear as equipped for facing any obstacle the environment could put in their path, but their relatively sudden disappearance during the Paleolithic era indicates that an inability to adapt to some environmental change led to their extinction.

Official Explanation:

- Combining X they **appear as** equipped but their disappearance indicates that. (Wrong)
- Combining X they **appear to have been** equipped but their disappearance indicates that (Correct, since they are disappeared now, the use of 'to have been' is correct)
- the Neanderthals appear to have been **equipped for facing** any obstacle the environment could put in their path (imprecise and incorrect)
- the Neanderthals appear to have been **equipped to face** any obstacle the environment could put in their path (Correct)
- The Neanderthals **appear** to have been equipped for facing any obstacle the environment could put in their path, but their relatively sudden disappearance during the Paleolithic era **indicates** that an inability to adapt to some environmental change led to their extinction. (appear is parallel with indicates)

Take Note: there are two-three ways to attack incorrect answer choice, do explore at least 2 such avenues. In this case if I was not sure about the usage of appear or appeared, I should have targeted other errors such as 'equipped for facing' Vs 'equipped to face'

- A 1972 agreement between Canada and the United States reduced the amount of phosphates that municipalities had been allowed to dump into the Great Lakes.

Official Explanation:

- Since the agreement took place in the past and the amount was reduced in the past, the usage of 'reduced' is correct:
 - i) A 1972 agreement between Canada and the United States **reduced the amount of phosphates.... (correct)**
 - ii) A 1972 agreement between Canada and the United States **reduces the amount of phosphates.... (Wrong)**

In this case since the agreement is still in use, we need a present tense which comes later in the sentence. So if an event has occurred in past, the effect which it has generated should also be in past.

- Since the dumping continued after the agreement, the past perfect '**had been**' should be replaced with '**are**' if the dumping is still continuing or the past '**were**' if the dumping is no longer in effect.
 - i) Reduced the amount of phosphates that municipalities **had been allowed** to dump **(They are still allowed to dump, so present tense required)**
 - ii) Reduced the amount of phosphates that municipalities **are allowed** to dump
 - iii) Reduced the amount of phosphates that municipalities **were allowed** to dump **(Past, if they are no longer allowed to dump)**

- Retailers reported moderate gains in their November sales, as much because of their sales of a year earlier being so bad as that shoppers were getting a head start on buying their holiday gifts.

Official Explanation:

- Cut the flab:
 - A) As much because of x as that y. **(Wrong)**
 - B) As much because of x as because y. **(Wrong)**
 - C) As much because of x as because y. **(Wrong)**
 - D) As much because x as because y. **(Correct)**
 - E) As much because x as that y. **(Wrong)**
- Retailers reported moderate gains in their November sales, **as much because** their sales a year earlier had been so bad **as because** shoppers were getting a head start on buying their holiday gifts.

- Bluegrass musician Bill Monroe, whose repertory, views on musical collaboration, and vocal style were influential on generations of bluegrass artists, was also an inspiration to many musicians, that included Elvis Presley and Jerry Garcia, whose music differed significantly from his own.

Official Explanation:

- Unnecessarily wordy.
- We have to reduce passive form only and hence the wrong answer choice was picked.
- ‘were influential on’ is wordy.

Comparing the two contenders:

- **influenced** generations of bluegrass artists, **also inspired** many musicians, including Elvis Presley and Jerry Garcia, whose music **differed significantly** from
- **were an influence on** generations of bluegrass artists, **was also an inspiration to** many musicians, including Elvis Presley and Jerry Garcia, whose music **was significantly different** from that of

were an influence vs. influenced

were also an inspiration vs. also inspired

was significantly different vs. differed significantly

was different from his own vs. was different from that of his own

- It looks like when it comes down to choosing two options which seem grammatically correct, choose the one which has less nonsense. In such case ignore a simple ‘that’ or any such attractive word and choose the one which is trimmed.

- The nephew of Pliny the Elder wrote the only eyewitness account of the great eruption of Vesuvius in two letters to the historian Tacitus.

Official Explanation

- Wrong placement of phrases.
- Account of the **great eruption of Vesuvius in two letters** to the historian Tacitus. (It sounds as if the eruption took place in the letter themselves)

Comparing the contenders:

- Writing the only eyewitness account, Pliny the Elder's nephew accounted for the great eruption of Vesuvius in two letters to the historian Tacitus.

a) ‘**Accounted for**’ means to be a cause of. Here it should be wrote an ‘**account of**’.

- b) **...the great eruption of Vesuvius in two letters** to the historian Tacitus. (Sounds as if the eruption took place in the letters.

After Corrections:

Writing the only eyewitness account in two letters to the historian Tacitus, Pliny the Elder's nephew described the great eruption of Vesuvius.

- In two letters to the historian Tacitus, the nephew of Pliny the Elder wrote the only eyewitness account of the great eruption of Vesuvius.

- According to a study by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, companies in the United States are providing job training and general education for nearly eight million people, about equivalent to the enrollment of the nation's four-year colleges and universities.

Official Explanation

- The best way to compare two countable quantities is by using the phrase '**as many as**'
- Here the no of people in companies (countable quantity) is compared to the number of people in the University, hence the usage of '**as many as**' is appropriate.
- The usage of equivalent is incorrect and in the original sentence people are compared to enrollment, which is incorrect.
 - for **nearly eight million people** equivalent to the **enrollment of the**
- The usage of equal to is also incorrect because '**equal to**' is used to compare uncountable objects 'equal justice'.
 - education for nearly eight million people, about **equal to those** who are enrolled in the nation's four-year colleges (Incorrect)

- Intar, the oldest Hispanic theater company in New York, has moved away from the Spanish classics and now it draws on the works both of contemporary Hispanic authors who live abroad and of those in the United States.

Official Explanation

- Because there is no comma after *classics*, the use of *it* creates an ungrammatical construction. The construction following *both* is unclear.
- Correct:
Intar, the oldest Hispanic theater company in New York, has **moved away from** the Spanish classics and **now draws on** the works of contemporary Hispanic authors **both those who live abroad and those who live in** the United States.

- The commission proposed that funding for the park's development, which could be open to the public early next year, is obtained through a local bond issue.

Official Explanation

- 'Which' modifies the noun that precedes it.
- that funding for the park's **development, which** (Which modifies development)
- that funding for the development of the **park, which** (here which modifies park)

- Floating in the waters of the equatorial Pacific, an array of buoys collects and transmits data on long term interactions between the ocean and the atmosphere that affects global climate.
 - In this sentence it appears as if the interaction is between ocean and an atmosphere that affects global climate.

- **Many teachers choose to seek employment in the suburbs rather than facing low salaries in the city.**
 - Many teachers choose to **seek** employment in the suburbs rather than **face** low salaries in the city.
 - Many teachers choose to do X rather than Y.
- **A careful analysis of the students' test scores reveals that some of them must have cheated.**
 - A careful analysis of the **students' test scores** reveals that some of **them** must have cheated.
 - Incorrect because: **Them refers to the test scores**
 - Main subject is 'students' test scores' and not students.
 - 'students' is a possessive pronoun and hence an unattractive as an antecedent for a non-possessive pronoun as 'them'.