

Thursday with Ron: Nov 12 2009: Sentence Correction:

Pronoun ambiguity: Is not an absolute rule, sometimes you can get away with it.

Example: If I say “take the pizza out of the box and put it..” what do you think about It?
You think about Pizza. That’s our intuition, even though the antecedent is further away from the pronoun than the box.

Take	the pizza	out of	the box	and	put	it	.. in oven
(verb)	(direct object)	-prep	obj of prep		verb	direct object	

Parallel to the pronoun ---- (if you add in the oven then it becomes obvious)

Important Takeaway: GMAT will tolerate ambiguity if

- 1) Context is OBVIOUS**
- 2) Pronoun is parallel to the intended noun**
- 3) Pronoun is not parallel to the other nouns.**

Especially vs specially -

Especially means: To unusually high degree – more so than comparable things

Specially: the adverb form of especially – done in a special manner.

Idiom: --Because of diminishing (because of verb ing is wrong) because of clause is correct. Use because then follow it by a whole clause. – **Capability “in” is wrong.**

Was vs were - Subject verb agreement.

*things that can’t be subjects... object of verbs & objects of prepositions. Subordinate clauses (although these have their own, separate subject and verbs).

.... Basically, all the stuff you would eliminate in problems.

****If something is before the verb then that can be the subject**

**** If nothing is before the verb but is after the verb that is backward construction. For e.g. “on the table is/are two cellphones.” – Are two cellphones. The subject is “Two cells.”**

If you have a compound subject (X and Y) or a list (X, Y, and Z)

Then you should Treat that as you would Treat a Single Plural Noun.

Example: James and Stephanie met to discuss her homework. This is WRONG-

The subject is Plural but the pronoun is Singular.... Both must be Plural... so we could say: They must to discuss their homework... OR you could break up the list for e.g.

James met with Stephanie to discuss her homework or James met with Stephannie to discuss steps homework.

Careful with Backward construction lists. **Is X, Y, and Z (is wrong). Its Are x, y, and Z. I got this wrong so be careful!**

Lets say Professor X won a Nobel prize and the Professor X and Y are standing on a stage..

Sentence: On the stage are **Professor Y and Professor X**, who recently won a nobel prize for his work on XYZ.

Must treat Prof X and Y as **(ONE WORD)**. So this is a problem for the modifier.

Correct:

- 1) On the stage are Prof X, who recently, and Prof Y.
- 2) On the stage is Prof Y along with Prof X, who recently won....
- 3) On the Stage are Prof Y and Prof X the latter of whom recently won a
- 4) On the stage is Prof Y with Prof X, who recently

Take aways:

Locate the subject: Manually by eliminating modifiers or think about context

Compound Nouns: (X and Y) and Lists (X, Y, and Z) should be treated as Single Words.

One sentences such as (X is/ are Y")

If X is eligible to be subject then X is subject, if not then Y is (must be backward construction).

Important Takeaway: Be extremely suspicious of this structure:

Preposition + Noun + Verbing

There is no evidence of + my brother + steal ING the candy

We want Evidence OF stealing ... NOT evidence of "my Brother"

"There is no evidence of my brother's stealing the candy – Correct but VERY awkward

Preposition + Noun + Verbing is only correct if the Noun is intended object of the preposition for example:

I gave \$5 to the beggar walking on the street --- Correct.

Of + Noun + Verbing (usually never correct). --- The End.

Jan 21st 2010: Parallelism, Ambiguous Sentences & Comparison Quantities

Parallel signal words or markers:

Either, or, and ... If one of the words like "in" follows the marker then they must made parallel like either in X or in Y.

Either in X or Y (Wrong)

Either in X or in Y (Correct)

In Either X or in Y (Wrong)

in Either X or Y (Correct)

in X or Y (Correct because parallelism starts after Or, and you can choose only X).

Ix X or in Y (Also Correct).

Modifiers don't have to and shouldn't – be parallel to the MAIN ACTION. i.e.

Joe ran down the street, flapping his arms wildly.

Joe ran down the street, **flapping his arms wildly and screaming at the ..of his lungs.**

Flapping & Screaming are parallel but they are not parallel to ran down the street.

If you have 3 or more things (List), you must have a comma before the last item... i.e.

X, Y and Z → This is NOT a proper list of three things.

X, Y, and Z → This is a list of three things

Remember to read parallel structures from RIGHT to LEFT not Left to Right. For e.g.

Food that is nutritious for cats but poisonous for dogs (CORRECT)

If you read from left to right, you might make mistake and think its not parallel.

(Parallelism starts from But, so you start from nutritious NOT is).

That is nutritious for cats but that is poisonous for dogs (Also Correct because both That).

that is nutritious for cats but is poisonous for dogs (ALSO Correct because starts from is).

If you start from Left to Right, then you start making a lot of mistakes.

First find the Tag/Marker (or, and ...) and look for parallelism from RIGHT to LEFT

hand signs “used by natives” and “appearing in local rituals” (CORRECT)

(Past participle)

(present participle)

hand sings that natives use and that appear in local rituals (CORRECT)

hand signs that natives use and appear in local rituals (WRONG appear -- use not ParaL)

They argue “just as frequently” and “about the same topic” as the couple living next door.

(adverb modifying argue)

(prep phrase –Adverb modifying argue) – Parallel

Can't end modifier with a Preposition. For ex: **The restaurant we ate at (Wrong).**

The person I spoke with (WRONG)

The restaurant at which we ate (Correct) – the person with whom I spoke (Correct).

Usage of “Compared to/With” with statistics/quantities. – No functional difference at all.

- If you present statistics with “compared to” or “compared with”, then you DO NOT INCLUDE ANY OTHER WORDS OF COMPARISON.

in other words:

“twice as much... compared to” → redundant, wrong (Twice as much as – CORRECT)

“more/less .. compared to” → redundant: (should just be “more/less THAN-) CORRECT

When you use Compared TO or Compared WITH, make sure you compare the correct quantities. For ex: percentages, **(Look into E-Gmat for Comparisons)**

The End. –

Thursday with Ron May 13 2010:

This animal lives in grass and trees (Correct) --- Parallel markers are Both & And.

This animal lives in grass and in trees (Correct) Markers are boundaries

This animal lives both in grass and in trees (Correct)

This animal lives in both grass and in trees. (Wrong)

This animal lives both in grass and trees. (Wrong)

This animal lives in both grass and trees. (Correct)

“Either in X or in Y” Correct

“Either in X or Y” – Wrong

:Either as X or as Y” Correct

“Either as X or Y” Wrong

AND -

“There was a great deal of traffic today, and I was late to work”

-> the traffic is NOT responsible for being late for work, these are presented as two independent events.”

“There was a great deal of traffic today, and **THUS** I was late to work”

→ Now there is a connection between traffic and lateness. **THUS** connects the two events.

“desert to be eaten for tonight’s meals”

Noun + no comma + to be VERBed → This is going to happen to the noun.

This student cheats on exams by copy other students answers and writing hints on hidpen slips of paper. – Parallel?

This student cheats on exams by copying other students answers and writes hints on...

This student cheats on exams by copying and stealing food from the school

This student cheats on exams by copying And steals food

Parallelism is not random!! You only want structures to be parallel IF THE IDEAS REPRESENTED BY THOSE WORDS are parallel.



Thomas Walsh continued:

Apposition:

The man, a paragon of virtue, went home.

The house by the road is on fire. (modifies noun)

By the time you read this, I’ll be gone. (verb modifier).

Noun Modifiers must touch what they modify.

Relative pronouns only modify nouns, like apposition.

Prepositions/participles can modify both

Verb modifiers:

They don't have to touch

participles with commas generally modify entire clauses

Verb Tense:

Look for other verbs in the sentence to use as context

Then ask yourself, do my two actions happen at the same time

or does one happen before the other?

Use that pick a tense.

Present Perfect: has/have

Something that starts in the past and continues in the present.

Past Perfect: had

Action that finished in the past before another past tense action – you need a simple past verb to use past perfect. – CANNOT USE UNLESS ANOTHER PAST VERB.

I have been to Los Angeles four times. – went four times, not gone again...

Before x, I had been to Los Angeles four times. – went four times, then went again.

I went to LA four times. – its possible that I went again (a little ambiguous).

Comparisons: Markers (like/as/than/ -er/more(

Fix: Exactly like parallelism (Isolate individual elements and make sure they're comparable).

My car is nicer than my brother. (WRONG!) don't compare car to brother.

Like = compare nouns

As = compare clauses

I have a lot of cheese, like my brother. (This is OK, technically both are nouns).

It sounds like my brother is like cheese but this is actually OK.

I have a lot of cheese, like my brother does. (does is a VERB, so this becomes a clause, **so like is incorrect**. You need to use AS for a clause.

I have a lot of cheese, as my brother does. (CORRECT). AS compares a clause.

Like vs. Ass

The words LIKE and AS are not interchangeable.

Like is used to compare NOUNS

AS is used to compare clauses. A clause contains a verb in a tense.

Are the following sentences correct?

1) Joe, like Mary, lives in a stucco house. (This is OK)

2) Joe lives in a stucco house, like Mary. (This is OK because Mary is not a clause)

3) Joe lives in a stucco house like Mary. (THIS IS A PROBLEM. Like pointing to house)

4) Joe lives in a stucco house like Mary's. (Comparing Houses- THIS IS OK)

5) Joe lives in a stucco house, as Mary does. (Correct- Clause, does make it CLAUSE).

- 6) Sinking is a great way to burn calories like swimming is. (WRONG, is = clause)
7) Just as swimming is good exercise, skiing is a great way to burn calories. (CORRECT)
8) Like swimming, skiing is a great way to burn calories. (CORRECT, comparing nouns)

Like vs Such as: (Like means is similar to, Such as is used for examples).

Idioms:

Consider X Y,

How do you connect two independent clauses: - Independent clauses can only be connected by period or semicolon.

I walked to the store. I went home.

I walked to the store and I went home.

I want a chicken or I want more money.

There are too many cars on the road; yesterday, I was in traffic for three hours.

Whatever comes before a colon must be an independent clause. (IMPORTANT)

Independent clauses could stand alone as a sentence. Dependent clause could not.

I'm into all kinds of music: rap, jazz, and hip-hop. (This is fine).

I like: rap, jazz, and hip-hop. (WRONG)

The way they get you, before semicolon they will have non-independent clause.

Critical Reasoning:

Assumption: How do you identify, assumption question.

Start taking Notes! You will never get better if you do not take notes! Your brain works better if you take notes! BUT Don't write down too much because it takes too long. The problem with taking too many notes is takes too much mental energy. Focus on the important part like premises, assumption, conclusion, argument etc....

Find the Assumption/Strengthen/Weaken:

Outline: Write down the conclusion (Biggest claim)

Write down the Premises (any facts or claims that support the conclusion)

Write down the counter premises (any facts or claims that undermine the conclusion)

Draw a conclusion:

Outline: Write down the premises.

Explain discrepancy: Write down the discrepancy in your own words.

For assumption questions: USE THE NEGATION TECHNIQUE!

Draw a conclusion:

Which of the following is best supported BY THE PASSAGE? (easy to confuse with STRENGTHEN! DO NOT CONFUSE)

Fix: You're looking for something that MUST BE TRUE, based on the premises.

The correct answer will generally be very wussy.

Stay away from EXTREME LANGUAGE: "ALL" "EVERY" "ALWAYS"....

Strengthen/Weaken:

ID: support, undermine...

Fix: Make the S-W-Slash chart for each answer.

(work out if each answer has no effect, strengthens or weakens).

Bold questions:

Fix: work out whether each bold is a conclusion, a premise, or a counter-premise.

The END—

Quick Off-topic Questions:

What is a sentence fragment? How to recognize it...

How is THAT used?

Double meaning words (Advances forward, perhaps redundant because Advances and forward mean the same thing? Look for redundancy)

September 23 2010

Today's topics: "including" "based on" "due to" – SC: Appositive modifiers & Statistics

"Based on" – extremely different in spoken language vs written language..

People say "based on" your behaviour last night, I think you're crazy. This is WRONG.

1)Based on MUST modify a **NOUN** – Based on _____ subj + verb. -

2) Subj + VERB – OBJ based on

3) Noun is/was/are/were based on -

DO NOT USE BASED ON in the way its used in spoken language.

-- I am going to make sliques based on students' submissions. (CORRECT).

Based on the accounts of ancient observers, historians have pieced together a reasonably accurate picture of the original Games. (WRONG! Modifies Historian)

(Based on _____, subj + verb , must modify the noun – Historian after comma).

As a child Frank invented his own secret code, based on rebus like puzzles and on the substitution of numbers for letters. (CORRECT – Sub + Verb – Object based on...)

Correct Example:

Based on double meaning, subtle humour, and jokes that only make sense to other members of the culture, British humour is often completely not (CORRECT).

Is british humour the thing that is being modified? Yes!

Are Historians based on accounts of ancient observers? NO! No sense.

The use of bright red-colored stop signs and traffic lights is based on the well-known fact that red things attract human attention more quickly than do items of other colours.
(Correct – it's the #3 rule).

“Due to” – This is another modifier that must modify a noun. The rule, therefore is the same as the aforementioned rule for “based on”.

I have to stay up all night “due to the presentation” that I must finish. (WRONG)

Due to has to point to a NOUN - the Noun in this case is NIGHT, so that doesn't make sense. “Due to the presentation” modifies NIGHT. This does not make sense. Due to can only modify a noun.. It cannot modify a CLAUSE (“I have to stay up all night”).

2 Ways to process “Due to”

Due to = caused by. You should be able to make this substitution. If you can't make this substitution then its wrong.

“I have to stay up all night caused by the presentation that I must finish” Doesn't WORK.

1) The observation deck at the top of the tower was closed due to constructions.

2) Due to the six mile long traffic jam on the freeway, I was two hours late to the meeting.
(Wrong) Due to six... modifies (subject) I, this doesn't make sense. It says “I” am due to the six mile long traffic jam! Wrong. --
“Caused by” the six hour long traffic jam.

From the helicopter, I saw a six-mile traffic jam due to an overturned truck(Correct.
Due to modifies (Traffic jam). – traffic jam due to overturned truck.

“Because of” modifies an ENTIRE CLAUSE.

Because of this difference – one modifies a clause, while the other modifies a noun.
It is IMPOSSIBLE to write a sentence in which both “Due to” and “Because of “...

I was two hours late to the meeting “due to” the six-mile long traffic jam, which was...
(This implies that meeting was due to traffic jam). WRONG MEANING.

“INCLUDING”

The national fitness test consists mostly of body-weight exercises, including sit-ups, push-ups and chin ups.

How “comma + Including” is used: It modifies the preceding noun

It should give a list of SOME, BUT NOT ALL, of that NOUN.

Including sort of works like WHICH. (comma + including modifies the noun before it).

APPOSITIVE MODIFIERS: -- set off by commas * consists of just a noun

Four correct Sentences:

- 1) I went to the bar with Mr. Smith, a consultant from Fresno. (modifies Mr. Smith)
- 2) The plover gets its food by cleaning the mouth of the crocodile, a reptile that could eat the bird at any time. (a reptile modifies the crocodile)
- 3) I went to the bar with Mr. Smith, an outing that was far more fun than staying at work. (an outing modifies the whole clause).

How do appositives work?

If the Appositive is CONCRETE (like a reptile, a consultant) it **MUST** modify the **PRECEDING NOUN**.

IF the appositive is ABSTRACT, it can modify the WHOLE IDRA OF THE PRECEDING CLAUSE. **BUT if the PRECEDING NOUN is ALSO an abstraction, then these can also modify the preceding noun.**

November 18 2010:

A new way to study sentence correction: Verb Tense Basics--

When people study SC, they study everything at the same time and end up learning nothing. Imagine how you would learn how to box. Master one skill at a time. DO NOT just step into the ring without mastering the fundamentals or you will get destroyed.

Master one thing at a time, focus on one type of error i.e. parallelism, verb tense, pronoun and just correct that one type of problem and come back to the same problems and fix another type of issue. This is the same as mastering on fundamental at a time.

The tense of a verb is 0% determined by GRAMMAR and 100% by meaning.

The verb tense is only determined by what you're trying to say. In picking verb tenses, you only have to think about context and what is happening i.e. meaning. You do not have to analyze grammar. The bad news is that many people don't really like to consider the meaning of the sentence. **YOU HAVE TO GET USED TO PAYING ATTENTION TO MEANING.**

In a blow to those who still harbored the illusion that E-mail exchanges are private, a watchdog grup recently uncovered a trick for enabling an interloper to rig an E-mail messages so that this person will be privy to any comments that a receiptient has added as the message is forwarded to others or sent back and forth.

Present tense does not necessarily mean present. Present tense is used to :
State general truth (The US is a democracy)

Present general actions/states (not actions!) that are currently true.

It is NOT used for actions that are specifically ongoing in the present timeframe.

Correct Uses of Present Tense:

1) Blood circulates through the arteries and veins of the human body (general truth)

In the year 1550, greek doctor discovered the blood circulates blood through veins (CORRECT) - general truth (present tense is OK).

In 1987, Smith first observed that the Cuyahoga river was full of pollution (Only correct if the river is no longer polluted).

In 1987, Smith first observed that the Cuyahoga river is full of pollution. (CORRECT, if still polluted, still true).

Going back to the example of “are” in above sentences, general truth so OK.

“Would” and “Could”

These words have 2 different incarnations

Usage#1

“Would” is the past tense of “will” and “could” is the past tense of “can”

According to his most recent advertisement, mookie the Rookie can predict with 100% accuracy which teams WILL win next week’s game. (correct)

His October 2, 1982 advertisement declared that Mookie the Rookie COULD predict with 100% accuracy which teams WOULD win the following week’s games. (correct)

Hypothetical WOULD

“Would” and “Could” are used to describe hypothetical situations that are not true.

If I had one million \$, I COULD buy XYZ at the gas station. (CORRECT)

If I had one million dollars, I WOULD donate XYZ to the food bank. (CORRECT)

Subjunctive Hypothetical

If I “WERE” a millionaire, I WOULD donate xyz to the food bank. (CORRECT).

- The first detailed study of magpie attacks in Australia indicates that by the time they had reached adulthood, 98percent of men and 75 percent of women born in the country have been attacked by the birds.

Problem with this sentence is verb tense (had reached and have been attacked-)

This doesn’t make sense because it suggested they reached adulthood before they were attacked.

To correct this. You could say “reach adulthood, - & have been attacked). The problem with this is (this would be a general truth, something that can’t be shown by study).

OR - By the time they reached adulthood, they had been attacked. – (This is correct).

This is ok because it shows that attacks happened before they reached adulthood.

- Also Born by itself is a (past participle) & not a verb.

To avoid being overwhelmed – Focus on one issue at a time. – Also if you focus too much on grammar, you turn off the thinking and lose the meaning. This is how you make mistakes, Meaning is really important. First think about the meaning.
The END

Thursday with Ron: (Tommy) - December 16 2010
Verb Tense, Probability, Essays, Critical Reasoning

5 Major Tenses:

Simple Present: I walk to the store

Simple Past- I walked to the store

Simple Future – I will walk to the store

Present Perfect – Formed with has/have and the past participle

Past Perfect – formed with had and the past participle

He has gone to the store

They have gone to the store

He had gone to the store

They had gone to the store.

Major verb Tense Rules:

1) Simplicity is best (only use perfect tenses when you have to)

2) Consistency is best (only changes tenses when you have to)

3) No verb tense is inherently wrong, so you must use context (namely, other verbs) to figure out the correct sequence of tenses

Identification: Changes in tense of one verb

has gone, had gone, went, has gone, had gone

Only use perfect tenses when you have to! Keep it to simple tenses! No verb tense is inherently wrong. What makes it wrong is its used out of CONTEXT. Based on other verbs in the sentences. You have to look at other verbs to give you context.

“Though he had had success broadcasting his controversial radio program on highly regulated terrestrial airwaves, Howard Stern opted out of terrestrial broadcasting in favor of the less regulated satellite radio medium.”

Lets talk about Process -

First thing you need to do is – Identify the issue (this is verb tense). Find the verb (this is past tense OPTED). Now think about the sequence! Simple past – to Perfect past because one thing happened before another.

Participle – “ing” or “ed” words used as adjectives

Running from the police, Dave got tired. (Correct)

Gerund: The running of the bulls is awesome (Correct).

“Timmy is learning about the war in which much of Europe will be reduced to rubble.”

You can't say Timmy learned about the war in which much of Europe had been reduced to rubble. (This is wrong) Because you have to keep things SIMPLE.

For example: I went to store, bought a chicken and went home. (You don't need Had gone to store....) Because there is no ambiguity, you don't always need to establish the order of events.

Problem with verb tense (is learning, and will be) This doesn't make sense.

- Though he had success – (this sounds like he had success but later on he opted).

How do you know how to establish order?

If the meaning of the sentence inherently implies the order. For instance if you are learning about a war that happened before, the meaning is implied. You know the order of event. You only use past perfect when the meaning isn't exactly clear what happened.

In 1860, the Philological Society launched its effort to create a dictionary more comprehensive than the world had ever seen; although the project would take more than 60 years to complete, the Oxford English Dictionary had been born.

Split would vs took. Would is conditional. When do we use the conditional? You use the conditional when you want to talk about the future, from the perspective of the past.

Are we looking into the future from the past? – Yes. So even though the dictionary wasn't going to be finished for 60 years (it would take 60 years from that past moment), the Dictionary WAS BORN!

You also have to take out ALTHOUGH from this sentence. Although implies conflict for example ALTHOUGH I don't have money I want this car... So when you say Although it took ... it was (implies conflict) Don't need it.

March 31 2011:

Sentence Correction: "Which" Modifiers Sentence Correction: Ambiguous Pronouns

Basic rule of which modifier: is that they modify the noun that precedes the comma. This is a basic rule. BUT it can also modify the noun + prepositional phrase that precedes the comma. So it can modify a noun or a noun + prepositional phrase.

E.D.'s letters to S.H.D., which were written
(noun + prep phrase).

The problem with modifying S.H.D by which (nonsense, also subject verb agreement issues). - which can modify (letters to S.H.D)..

The old capitol building in Benicia, **which** was the capital city of California for a few years in the 19th century, is a historic landmark.
(In this case, which modifies the NOUN ONLY - so its correct)

The old capitol building in Benicia, **which** was built in under a year when the city was designated capital of California, is now a historic landmark.
(In this case, which modifies the Noun before the prep phrase) CORRECT

So both are correct, and we must make sure we understand the context before applying the rigid rule of which. Which does NOT ALWAYS modify the noun preceding the comma.

The old capitol building **that was built in Benicia, which was built**
(WRONG) No longer a noun + prep phrase.

Comma + ING modify the whole preceding clause. So be careful make sure the context and meaning makes sense.

On a table is a box, which contacts all my paperwork (Correct)
On the table is a box which contains all my paperwork (WRONG)

“especially” means to “a greater extent than others”
“specially” means “in a special way” unique perhaps?

DO NOT USE ACTIVE VS PASSIVE AS A GUESSING TOOL. PASSIVE IS OFTEN CORRECT, AS OFTEN AS ACTIVE.

Using a Geiger counter, radioactive emissions from an object can be detected **(WRONG)** modifier error... using modifies radioactive emission
Using a Geiger counter, scientists can detect emissions from an object
(CORRECT, this may seems like passive vs active, it's a modifier issue)

BECAUSE OF VERB-ING is ALWAYS INCORRECT
PRONOUN AMBIGUITY IS NOT NECESSARILY AN ERROR
Ignore pronoun ambiguity for the most part. Exception:

All that matters with pronouns:

Does the pronoun have a noun to match with and if so does it match with the noun in terms of singular or plural?

Only time you should pay attention to pronoun ambiguity, is when a pronoun is replaced with a NOUN in other answer choices. In that case, eliminate ambiguous pronouns.

Summary:

If you just see an ambiguous pronoun → Just ignore them

If you see ambiguous pronoun vs specific NOUN → go ahead and kill the ambiguity.

LIKE must be followed by a NOUN or noun + (modifier -)

As should be followed by a clause or by a PREPOSITIONAL PHRASE.

As any star or similar mass would, once the hydrogen the hydrogen in the Sun's core is exhausted, IT will expand into a red giant and will eventually eject (this should be correct but the pronoun IT refer to Hydrogen and not the SUN so doesn't make sense). ??

As would be the case with any star or similar mass, once the Sun exhausts the hydrogen in its core it will expend into a red giant and eventually eject. ??

What is "IT" intended to refer to?? Ambiguity is not an issue since NOUN not replaced with pronoun. IT = THE SUN.

Possessives are adjectives, not NOUN!! The only exception is in parallel structure. If you have a possessive, they can function as a NOUN in parallel structure.

i.e. My brother's wife is the same height as Joe's. In this case Joe's stands for his wife (This is fine because of parallelism).

If the antecedent is NOT THERE, DON'T BOTHER TO ASSIGN a pronoun!!

August 25th 2011

Sentence Correction: "Which" Modifiers (SKIPPED "INITIAL MODIFIERS")

In the past several years, astronomers have detected more than 80 massive planets, most of them as large or larger than Jupiter, which circle other stars. (Which points to Jupiter which is wrong).

How does the “WHICH” modifier work?

The “WHICH” modifier:

- 1) It must modify a NOUN.
- 2) This noun should precede the comma. (Sometimes you can have a small intervening construction... that’s the main theme today).

If 2 parallel constructions take different idioms, then BOTH idioms MUST ACTUALLY APPEAR.

For instance: X is either bigger or smaller than Y. (acceptable)

The reason 1st is OK is that both Bigger or smaller work with THAN.
... bigger than Y or smaller than Y.

X is greater or equal to Y (incorrect).

This is incorrect, because the requisite idioms are “greater THAN” and “equal TO”

You need both: X is greater than or equal to Y.

If you said bigger or larger (then this is redundant)

April 26, 2012:

SC: Modifier Workshop

Being is sometimes correct in GMAT but NOT in a MODIFIER! - Try not to start Modifiers as a BEING. You CAN use being as a VERB. This person is BEING videotaped...

The 151 member governments of the World Bank are expected to increase the bank’s funding by \$175 billion, though some United States legislators cite an obstacle to congressional passage being the concern that the bank’s loans will help foreign producers compete with American business.

B) a concern as an obstacle to congressional passage (A concern)

D) the concern, an obstacle to congressional passage (The concern)

In this case it should be THE concern because it is a particular concern (therefore use The) A is used for general.

E) as an obstacle for Congress to pass it the concern.
(This is obviously wrong, but how?) The pronoun IT should stand for a NOUN. If there is such a noun, it has to match in terms of singular/plural.

C) as an obstacle to congressional passage the concern
(Might be the answer)

What is the issue when MODIFIERS ARE PUSED AROUND to various locations? → Meaning changes, clarity

What we want is modifiers are near what they are modifying (for instance, the concern besides that clause...)

116) Galileo did not invent the telescope, but on hearing, in 1609, that such an optical instrument had been made, he quickly built his own device from an organ pipe and spectacle lenses.

- A. Galileo did not invent the telescope, but on hearing, in 1609, that such an optical instrument had been made, he ...
- B. Galileo had not invented the telescope, but when he heard, in 1609, of such an optical instrument having been made,...
- C. Galileo, even though he had not invented the telescope, on hearing, in 1609, that such an optical instrument had been made, he...
- D. Even though Galileo did not invent the telescope, on hearing, in 1609, that such an optical instrument had been made,...
- E. Even though Galileo did not invent the telescope, but when he heard, in 1609, of such an optical instrument being made, he...

Stuff is being shoved around the sentence... Where should things go? "On hearing.." / "when he heard..." / etc. → What does this modify? This should modify the sentence describing Galileo's invention of a device. Therefore this should be attached to THAT. "In 1609" → Should be attached to "hearing" -

BUT & AND are like Walls. So in A B & E, the yellow thing has to be modifying what comes after it because the BUT is there BLOCKING it from modifying anything else. - The Yellow thing must modify the sentence that comes after it and that's what we want it to do!

The problem with C & D is that we don't know what it is modifying. We know in terms of common sense, but placement does not convey clearly. i.e. it should like in C, that he heard that did not invent the telescope....

When things are moved around, think about which choice:

- 1) Places them where they are supposed to be placed
- 2) Doesn't place them in locations with more than one interpretation.

The problem with B is that it doesn't have a sentence. It doesn't have a SUBJECT (missing HE after made,).

i.e. When I heard the news, I became sad. (Correct).

When I heard the news, became sad (This is obviously wrong- no Subject)

E is not a sentence either!

i.e. I left home early, but I still got to the show late.

Even though I left home early, I still got to the show late (also OK)

Even though I left home early, but I still got to the show late. (NOT A SENTENCE - Can't have 2 of these connectors)

Even though, But → Wrong? Look into this.

When drafting the Declaration of Sentiments that was adopted at the Seneca Falls Women's Rights Conventions in 1848, included in it by the author, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, was a call for female enfranchisement.

E) When Elizabeth Cady Stanton drafted the Declaration of Sentiments that was adopted at the Seneca Falls Women's Rights Convention in 1848, she included in it a call for female enfranchisement.

A bunch of stuff is shoved around everywhere. Where are the modifiers?
What SHOULD they modify?

Base sentence: The dog fell (that's no modifiers)

If you say... -- The dog that we adopted at the shelter on Tuesday fell down the stairs onto the floor.

The original sentence, - When drafting... should be next to Elizabeth.
Modifiers should be close to what they are modifying.

Be able to modifiers and entire clauses.

Tired from a full day's work, I still had to feed the baby. (Right)

Tired from a full day's work, the baby still needed to be fed. (Wrong)

Even though I was tired from a full day's work, I still needed to feed the baby.

Even though I was tired from a full day's work, the baby still needed to be fed. (This is fine)

(Tired from a full day's work) is a modifier.

D is not a sentence!

A call... + modifier + modifier. (THERE IS NO VERB)

C has meaning issue. It sounds like Elizabeth did not include the call in it. It also says WHEN, when you say When X, Y (it must be TRUE).

If you say "When X,Y" it must be actually true that "y" when "x".

C) When the draft was adopted, a call was/had been included... (This does not make sense!)

E) Is good because when E.C.S. drafted the declaration, she included the call (this means she did it when she drafted it.) That's exactly when she did that.

39. Taste buds are onion-shaped structures with between 50 and 100 taste cells, each of them has fingerlike projections poking through the opening located at the top of the taste bud called the taste pore.

Modifier placement is Relative! -

The issue is NOT "where is the absolutely correct place to put the modifiers" - The issue is "which choice does the BEST JOB of placing the modifiers correctly and clearly?"

"Each of WHICH" - - You can't use "which" without a verb. (Same goes for each of WHICH"... etc.)

Watch out for RUN-ON Sentences...

I have one brother, he is a sales manager. (RUN-ON Sentence)

Both are complete sentences, (Independent clauses)

I have one brother, who is a sales manager. (Correct)

I have one brother. He is a sales manager. (Correct)

Tastes buds are, each of them has X. (That's a run on sentence).

Taste buds ar xyz. Each o them has X (This is OK)

Taste buds are xyz, each of which has X (this is OK) - Which is like WHO.

The END

Thursday with Ron - May 10, 2012

Modifier Workshop 2

A study of food resources in the North Pacific between 1989 and 1996 revealed that creatures of the seabed were suffering from dwindling food supplies, possibly resulting from increasing sea surface temperatures during the same period.

- A) that creatures of the seabed were suffering from dwindling food supplies, possibly resulting from increasing
- B) B) that creatures of the seabed were suffering because food supplies were dwindling, possibly as a result of an increase in ...

You have to know what the study revealed. -

Two Correct Sentences:

The crime map indicates that violent crime is increasing at various locations in the city.

The crime map indicates the locations of various violent crimes in the city over the last couple of months.

First sentence talks about increase in crime. 2nd one talks about the location. The focus is on different things.

Suffering from “Dwindling food supplies” (Noun).

Suffering because - food supplies were dwindling. (Dwindling)

Were the creature actually suffering FROM SUPPLIES? NO

Were they suffering because of the decrease in supplies- YES

Takeway - If you see a distinction between a NOUN and a WHOLE CLAUSE. Ask yourself, if we are just talking about the Noun or are we talking about the WHOLE CLAUSE. You can't memorize this, you have to know what the sentence is talking about. WHAT IS THE MESSAGE? Are we talking about the noun or the whole clause?

Example: Historical data show that many men were unemployed during the Great Depression. (Correct)

Historical data show many men who were unemployed during the Great depression. (This is wrong, data CANT show men).

These old pictures show many men who were unemployed during the Great Depression. (Correct).

These old pictures show that many men were unemployed during the Great Depression. (This is wrong because pictures can't show unemployment).

Difference between “increasing” and “increase in”

“Increasing NOUN” is the NOUN

“AN INCREASE (in the noun)” is the INCREASE, not the noun

Political situations in the Middle EAST have caused an increase in gas prices. (CORRECT)

Political situations in the Middle East have caused increasing gas prices. The increase in gas prices is taking up a larger and larger portion of the average American family’s budget. (WRONG)

Increasing gas prices are taking up a larger and larger portion of the average American family’s budget. (CORRECT)

In the first sentence, it is ok to say Political situation has caused Increase in gas prices but it is not ok to say political situation has caused PRICES.

** If you have “prep phrase + comma + sentence” Then that prep phrase should describe the ENTIRE IDEA of the sentence. i.e.

In Louisiana hurricanes are said to be a manifestation of God’s anger.
Hurricanes in Louisiana are said to be a manifestation of God’s anger.

These two sentences have different meanings. In the second one it means that it only refers to Hurricanes in Louisiana (hurricanes specifically in Louisiana but Hurricanes in other states may not be).
BUT

The first sentence means that people in Louisiana say that Hurricanes in GENERAL are a manifestation of God’s anger. So these two sentences mean totally different things. So the prep phrase can change the whole meaning of the sentence.

“The NOUN (that) SUBJ VERB”:

The ball (that) I hit....

The book (that) I read

The test (that) I took...

I did these actions to these objects. 1) I hit the ball. 2) I read the book. 3) I took the test. → The Noun is basically the object.

The last day they are scheduled to collect, ... (means you are collecting days!!) WRONG

Their last scheduled day in order to collect, ... (This is correct)

(This is for severance package question). --- THE END

“Based on” OG Problems
“Due to” OG Problems
“Including” OG Problems

Thursday with Ron - March 1, 2012
Use of “AND”

A truck crashed in front of me on the freeway, and I was late to work.
(According to his sentence, I was late for some reason OTHER than the truck crash.)

“AND” creates a parallel structure between elements that are:
*Presume to be independent (unless they are in sequence)
*Equal in priority/importance

I like apples, grapes, and bananas. (comparable level of enjoyment)
We ate dinner, saw a show, and (then) went to a club. (Three SEQUENTIAL events - still pretty much independent with equal priority)

Here are 2 common ways in which to indicate cause and effect:
A truck crashed in front of me on the freeway, making me late to work.
One of the important roles of COMMA - ING is to signify a proximate or causal relationship between the main clause and the modifier.
A truck crashed in front of me on the freeway, and I was thus late to work. (this implies truck crash caused me to be late).

Alone, “AND” implies relative independence.
However, you can pair “and” with other connectors, such as the ones above, to signify this kind of relationship.

October 25, 2012:
SC: Overall Sentence Structure Issues

Although ice particles in the upper atmosphere benefit Earth in that they reflect and absorb solar radiation, acting as a global thermostat and thus keeping Earth from either burning up or freezing over, they also accelerate the destruction of the ozone layer by reacting with chlorofluorocarbons.

- A) acting as a global thermostat and thus keeping earth from either burning up or freezing over, they also accelerate
- B) acting as a global thermostat and thus keeping Earth either from burning up or freezing over, while also accelerating
- C) act as a global thermostat and thus keep Earth from either burning up or freezing over, while also accelerating
- D) they act as a global thermostat that thus keeps Earth either from burning up or freezing over, even though it also accelerates
- E) they act as a global thermostat to thus keep Earth from either burning up or freezing over, but they also accelerate

What's in this split?

***Modifier (= neither subject nor verb)**

***Verb**

***Subject + Verb**

How we do RESOLVE a split like this?

What happens if a modifier is replaced by a subject _+ verb, or by a verb

Consider:

My friend lives in Texas. ---→ Complete Sentence

My friend, who lives in Texas. → NOT A COMPLETE SENTENCE (modifier)

If modifiers (which can be eliminated) are replaced by elements that can't be eliminated, consider the effect on the overall structure of the sentence.

Look out for run-ons and fragments.

My friend is a sales manager who lives in Texas. → Complete Sentence

My friend is a sales manager lives in Texas → Run-ON (2 verbs)

Remember how "although" works

Although I left home early, I still got to work late.

(underlined should be complete sentence)

Although creates a contrast, so consider the meaning with the sentence with although. → Although I left home early, I still got to work late.

"With" is just a preposition - it should be followed by a noun (possibly with modifiers). - With three children at home, Rachel doesn't have much time for hobbies. - Three small children at home (noun + modifier)

December 6, 2012:

SC: More on Overall Sentence Structure Issues

Constructed at least as early as the Sui dynasty (A.D. 581-618), the Altar of Heaven is the oldest known altar used in Chinese state religious practice, more than 1,000 years older than a similar one in Beijing, it is the only altar found so far that predates the Qing Dynasty (A.D. 1644-1912).

A is a RUN ON sentence, - two complete sentences. Two subjects & verbs.