

10.2. Between Vs Among

Usage of *between*

1. We should use *between* when we are talking about two distinct, and *discrete* items. For example, we can say: *He had to choose between cycling and swimming*, because *cycling* and *swimming* are two *distinct* and *discrete* items.
2. As discussed in *idioms* (section 9.1), when *between* is used, the correct idiomatic usage is: *between X and Y*. All other usages such as *between X with Y* etc. are incorrect.

A sentence based on official question (*One of the primary distinctions...*):

One of the distinctions between the form of a robot with that of android is that a robot can, but does not necessarily have to, be in the form of a human, but an android is always in the form of a human.

Analysis: In the above sentence, the usage of *between* is incorrect, because it uses the construct: *between X with Y*. As noted above, the correct construct is *Between X and Y*. So, the correct sentence is:

One of the distinctions between the form of a robot and that of android is that a robot can, but does not necessarily have to, be in the form of a human, but an android is always in the form of a human.

Usage of *among*

We should use *among* when we are talking about more than two items. These can be:

- a. Items that are *distinct* and *discrete*. For example, we could say: *He had to choose among cycling, hiking, and swimming*, because *cycling*, *hiking* and *swimming* are *more than two* distinct and discrete items or
- b. Items that *aren't* distinct items or individuals. *among* is used when the connections are more *collective*. There are numerous instances when OG uses *among* in such scenarios. For example, *..among pugnacious states of the Greek world* (#60, OG-13), *among the 900 or so species of the world's social wasps* (#102, OG-13), *among the objects found in the excavated temple* (#109, OG-13) or *..fatigue among shift workers..* (#134, OG-13).

A sentence based on official question (*In archaeology, there must be a balance between explanation of the value...*):

While preparing for her High school exams, Maria judiciously maintained balance between the time she spent on charity work, long hours of study, and intermediate breaks for entertainment.

Analysis: In the above sentence, we are talking about more than two distinct and discrete items: *the time she spent on charity work, long hours of study, and intermediate breaks for entertainment*. Hence, *among* is the right usage (and not *between*). So, the correct answer is:

While preparing for her High school exams, Maria judiciously maintained balance among the time she spent on charity work, long hours of study, and intermediate breaks for entertainment.