

Comparisons

Basics

Comparisons

- The concept of comparisons pertains to comparison between two or more parts of a sentence.
- Certain words and phrases hint at the presence of a framework of comparison.
Examples:
 - like, unlike
 - more/less/faster than
 - different from
 - as (adjective) as, etc
- The parts of the sentence that are being compared must be carefully identified.
- The parts being compared should be structurally and logically parallel.
 - And meaning-wise, comparable!

Logical Parallelism

- Comparisons must be logically parallel. Only those elements that are similar (and therefore, logically comparable) must be compared.
 - *Elizabeth I's reign, like her father, has been the research interest of many scholars.*
 - “Elizabeth I's reign” cannot be compared to “her father.” The word 'reign' need not be repeated.
So,
 - *Elizabeth I's reign, **like her father's**, has been the research interest of many scholars.*
- Or
- *Elizabeth I's reign, **like that of her father**, has been the research interest of many scholars.*

Logical Parallelism

- Correct the following sentence:

- *Stella's performance, synonymous with grace and elegance, was as enthralling as her more experienced competitor.*

- “as enthralling as” is used for comparison here. “Stella's performance” is not parallel with “her more experienced competitor”. While the word “performance” need not be repeated, correct comparison must be conserved.

- *Stella's performance, synonymous with grace and elegance, was as enthralling as her more experienced **competitor's**.*

Or

- *Stella's performance, synonymous with grace and elegance, was as enthralling **as that of** her more experienced competitor.*

Structural Parallelism

- Comparisons must be structurally parallel.
- Grammatical structures that are similar (and therefore, structurally comparable) must be compared.
- Correct the following sentence:
 - *Members of the club like to visit places of historical significance more than engaging in adventure sports.*
 - While “to visit” is an infinitive, “engaging” is a gerund. The two should be made parallel. Using one verb “like” is sufficient.
 - *Members of the club like **visiting** places of historical significance more than **engaging** in adventure sports.*

Omitting Words

- Certain words in the second part of a comparison can be omitted. For instance, when possessive nouns are used.
- Provided that the combination makes logical sense, the noun that possesses can be singular or plural, regardless of whether the (implied) noun that is possessed is singular or plural.
 - *Laura's house is more beautiful than Jane's.*
 - *Laura's house is more beautiful than the Lawsons'.*
 - *Laura's children are younger than Jane's.*
 - *Laura's children are younger than the Lawsons'.*
 - The noun that possesses can be singular (Jane) or plural (the Lawsons). The (implied) noun that is possessed can be singular (house) or plural (children).

Omitting Words

- Generally, when doing so doesn't lead to ambiguity, units, verbs, or whole clauses can be omitted from the second part of a comparison.
 - *The first tank has a capacity of 500 gallons while the second has a capacity of 1000 [gallons].*
 - *I paint better than Sam does [paint].*
 - *The old women danced as skillfully as [they danced] when they were younger.*

Omitting Words

- Only when there is a need to remove ambiguity should words not be omitted or appropriate helping verbs (such as 'be', 'do' , 'have') be added.

- *Nina likes mangoes more than she does bananas.*

- It is clear that “bananas’ is the object. Omitting “she does” will not make the sentence ambiguous. Thus,

- *Nina likes mangoes more than bananas.*

- *Nina loves Rita more than Sita.*

- The sentence is ambiguous. Helping verbs are needed to resolve this ambiguity.

- *Nina loves Rita more than Sita does.*

Or

- *Nina loves Rita more than she does Sita.*

Omitting Words

- Keep in mind that the presence of an unnecessary helping verb in the second part of a comparison does not make the sentence incorrect.

- *Kate feels that roses are more beautiful than lilies.*

- correct

- *Kate feels that roses are more beautiful than lilies are.*

- also correct

Comparative and Superlative Forms

- The Comparative Form of an adjective or an adverb is used when comparing two things while the Superlative Form is used when comparing more than two things.
- For the regular Comparative Forms, add the suffix *-er* to or, 'more'/'less' before the adjective/adverb.
- For the regular Superlative Forms, add the suffix *-est* to or, 'most'/'least' before the adjective/adverb.
- Irregular forms need to be kept in mind. Some examples of such forms are:
 - good/better/best
 - bad/worse/worst
 - far/farther(or further)/farthest(or furthest)

Comparative and Superlative Forms

○ Fill in the blanks.

○ *Rose is the _____ inquisitive among the five sisters. (more/most)*

○ Comparison among five girls – Superlative Form

○ *Rose is the most inquisitive among the five sisters.*

○ *Rose is _____ inquisitive than her younger sister. (more/most)*

○ Comparison between two girls – Comparative Form

○ *Rose is more inquisitive than her younger sister.*

○ *Rose appears to be _____ than her older sister but isn't so. (tall/taller/tallest)*

○ Comparison between two girls – Comparative Form

○ *Rose appears to be taller than her older sister but isn't so.*

Comparative and Superlative Forms

- The suffix *-er* must not be added for comparison to an adverb ending in *-ly*. Instead, the word 'more' must be added before the adverb.

- *This little girl draws neatly; she draws neater than her brother.*

- Incorrect. Here we are comparing 'action of drawing'. So we need comparative form of “neatly”.

- *This little girl draws neatly; she draws more neatly than her brother.*

Or

- *The little girl draws neatly; her drawings are neater than those of her brother.*

- Here, we are comparing 'drawings' and not 'the action of drawing'.

Comparative and Superlative Forms – Some Special Adverbs

- There are a number of adverbs that do not end in -ly. For these, -er is added to get the comparative form.
- *Jim's exams will finish soon; his exams will finish sooner than Tom's.*
 - “sooner” is an adverb here. The comparison is alright.

Using 'Than' for Comparisons

- The use of 'than' is necessary with a comparative form. It is not enough to imply a comparison using 'than'- the explicit use of 'than' is required.
- *Mike will be given greater responsibilities over last year.*
 - The use of 'than' with a comparative form is essential.
- *Mike will be given **greater** responsibilities **than** over last year.*

Special Cases

'Like' v/s 'As'

- 'Like' is a preposition and so must be followed by a noun, a pronoun, or a noun phrase. It can also be followed by gerunds (*-ing* forms of verbs that function as nouns). It must never be followed by a clause (contains a working verb) or a prepositional phrase.
- 'Like' is often used in speech to compare clauses but such usage is incorrect.
- 'As' is generally followed by a clause (and thus, an action).
- In simple words...
 - 'Like' is used for comparing nouns.
 - 'As' is used for comparing actions.

'Like' v/s 'As' - Examples

- _____ *her grandfather did, Kate possessed a keen eye for observation.*
 - “her grandfather did” is a clause (“did” is the working verb). So, “As” should be used to compare the two clauses- “Kate possessed a keen eye for observation” and “her grandfather did”.
- As *her grandfather did, Kate possessed a keen eye for observation.*
- _____ *her grandfather, Kate possessed a keen eye for observation.*
 - Since “her grandfather” is a noun phrase, “like” should be used with it. “Like her grandfather” indicates comparison between the two nouns “Kate” and “her grandfather”.
- Like *her grandfather, Kate possessed a keen eye for observation.*
- **Note:** There is no difference in meaning in the two sentences.

'Like' v/s 'As' – Example with Gerund

- Correct the following sentence:

- *Painting, as writing, has the potential to reveal an artist's ideological beliefs.*

- “as” is used for comparing nouns; “writing” is a gerund (and thus, a noun) and therefore, “like” must be used for the comparison.

- *Painting, like writing, has the potential to reveal an artist's ideological beliefs.*

Like

- 'Like' means 'similar to'.
- A noun or a verb can be modified by a prepositional phrase containing 'like'.
- 'Like' should be followed by a noun or a pronoun.
- A slight change in meaning can occur if the position of the 'like'-phrase is changed.
- Examples:
 - *Like Juliet, Jenn acted in the play.*
 - *Jenn acted like Juliet in the play.*

Like

- A comparison made using 'like' is not always literal. It can be metaphorical.
- *She raged like the storm.*
 - This implies that the intensity of her anger was comparable to the intensity of a storm.

Unlike

- On the GMAT, the use of 'unlike' is common.
- Parallelism must be ensured when 'unlike' is used.
- Provided there appears no ambiguity, 'unlike' can be used at the end of a sentence.
- Generally, the noun that follows 'unlike' is compared to the subject of the sentence.
- Please find examples on the next slide.

Unlike

- Correct the following sentence:

- *Non-renewable sources of energy will gradually get depleted owing to indiscriminate use, unlike inexhaustible renewable sources of energy.*

- A noun, comparable to the noun “Non-renewable sources of energy”, should follow “unlike”.

- ***Non-renewable sources of energy will gradually get depleted owing to indiscriminate use, unlike renewable sources of energy, which are inexhaustible.***

As

- Depending on the context, 'as' can be either a conjunction or a preposition.
- When a conjunction, 'as' appears with a clause. It can be used to indicate duration, causation, or comparison.
- Examples:
 - *As Jack saw the photographs, he relived old times.*
 - (duration; meaning of 'as' here: 'while'/'during')
 - *There is no need for an explanation, as the facts are well-known to you.*
 - (causation; meaning of 'as' here: 'since'/'because')
 - *You should speak as you have been taught to.*
 - (comparison; meaning of 'as' here: 'in the same way')

As

- When 'as' is used for comparison (to mean 'in the same way'), 'just', 'so', or 'so too' may be used with it.
- Examples:
 - *Just as the factory workers were protesting yesterday, the farmers are protesting today.*
 - *Just as the factory workers were protesting yesterday, so too are they protesting today.*
 - Both the sentences are correct.

As

- When 'as' is used for comparison, it can appear with a phrase, rather than a clause.
- Example:
 - *As on previous occasions, the builder did not keep his commitment.*
 - “on previous occasions” is a phrase here.
 - The sentence is correct.

As

- When a preposition, 'as' appears with a noun or a noun phrase. It can be used to indicate function, equation, or stage.
 - Important: In any prepositional use (or otherwise), 'as' does not mean 'similar to'.
- Examples:
 - *As the President of the Board, she has the right to take the final decision.*
 - (function; 'as' used for the meaning 'in the role of')
 - *She thinks of him as a father figure.*
 - (equation; meaning here: 'for her, he is a father figure')
 - *As a child, Shawn loved fairy tales.*
 - (stage; meaning here: 'when Shawn was')

As

- Indicate the difference in meaning:

A. Bret will enter the scene like a warrior.

B. Bret will enter the scene as a warrior.

- In A, the meaning is that the entry will be in the manner of a warrior (gait, etc).
- In B, the meaning is that the entry will be in the attire of a warrior.

A. Brendon will dress up as a sailor might.

B. Brendon will dress up as sailors do.

- In A, the use of the word “might” indicates a degree of tentativeness. Thus, the suggestion is of dressing up as a hypothetical sailor.
- In B, the use of the word “do” indicates definitiveness. Thus, the suggestion is of dressing up like actual sailors.
 - The difference in meaning is subtle.

As...as

- The structure 'as...as...' is used for the purpose of comparison. The first 'as' is followed by an adjective or an adverb. The second 'as' is followed by a noun, a phrase, or even an entire clause.
- Correct the following sentence:
 - *The flowers in Joseph's garden are beautiful as the flowers in Michael's garden.*
 - 'As...as...' is used for comparison.
 - *The flowers in Joseph's garden are **as beautiful as** the flowers in Michael's garden.*

Like Vs Such As

A frequently tested concept on the GMAT.

- 'Like' is used for comparing nouns.
- 'Such as' is used for giving examples.
 - In speech, we often use 'like' for giving examples; however, the usage is incorrect.
 - The GMAT frequently tests the difference between 'like' and 'such as'.
 - In most such cases, 'such as' wins.
- *Organisms like lizard and chameleon belong to the same reptile family.*
 - Incorrect. "lizard" and "chameleon" serve as examples in the sentence.
- *Organisms such as lizard and chameleon belong to the same reptile family.*

Like Vs Such As

- *Jack enjoys playing board games like/such as monopoly.*
 - “board games” sufficiently identifies the types of games. “monopoly” serves as an example. So, “such as” is the correct usage.
- *Jack enjoys playing board games such as monopoly.*
- *Jack enjoys playing board games like monopoly.*
 - The two sentences lead to different meanings; grammatically, they each are correct.
 - The first sentence means that Jack enjoys board games an example of which is monopoly.
 - The second sentence means that Jack enjoys board games that are similar to monopoly (thus, he may not enjoy all board games).

Comparisons Using Numbers

- In order to relate quantities by multiplication, 'times' plus 'as...as...' can be used.
- Correct the following sentence:
 - *The red building is four times taller than the yellow one.*
 - Incorrect
 - *The red building is four times **as tall as** the yellow one.*
 - Correct

Comparisons Using Numbers

- In order to indicate direct multiplication, 'times' (or twice/thrice) should be used without 'as' or 'than'.
 - *The admission fee is \$100, **twice the fee** five years ago.*
- Correct the following sentence:
 - *The sales this month amounted to \$10,000, **four times than the sales last month.***
 - *The sales this month amounted to \$10,000, **four times the sales last month.***

Comparisons Using Numbers

- In order to relate two quantities by addition or subtraction, one must use 'more than' or 'less than'.
- Correct the following sentence:
 - *Stephano's sister is seven years as old as Stephano.*
 - *Stephano's sister is **seven years older than** Stephano.*

Comparisons Using Numbers

- The words 'more' and 'less' can be used with much flexibility. They can be used as nouns, pronouns, adjectives, or adverbs.
- Examples:
 - *I own less than him.*
 - 'less' is a noun/pronoun here.
 - *I own less land than I did earlier.*
 - 'less' is an adjective here.
 - *I practice less than what is desirable.*
 - 'less' is an adverb here.

Comparisons Using Numbers

- When making numerical comparisons, one must use 'high' and 'low', plus 'higher' and 'lower' only as adjectives.
- Correct the following sentence:
 - *The lawyer charged lower than what he usually does.*
 - In the given sentence, “lower” is modifying the verb “charged” and is therefore, used as an adverb. For numerical comparisons, it can only be used as an adjective.
 - *The lawyer charged less than what he usually does.*

Other Comparison Constructions

- Placing 'more' and 'less' correctly is important. Ensure that no ambiguity is involved, especially in cases in which 'more' is placed before an adjective plus a noun.
- Correct the following sentence:
 - *He writes more beautiful poetry than before.*
 - There is ambiguity regarding whether he writes a greater quantity of beautiful poetry or he writes poetry that is more beautiful.
 - *He writes poetry that is more beautiful than before.*
- Or
- *He writes poetry more beautiful than before.*

Other Comparison Constructions

- On the GMAT, some verbs, such as 'exceed' or 'surpass', are used for indicating comparisons. The items that are compared should be parallel. For instance, in the construction 'X exceeds Y', the subject X and the object Y must be parallel.
- Correct the following sentence:
 - *The occurrence of the phenomenon in the East exceeds the West.*
 - The “occurrence” cannot exceed the West. The noun “occurrence” should be repeated or the pronoun “that” should be used. The preposition “in” must be repeated.
 - *The occurrence of the phenomenon in the East exceeds its occurrence in the West.*

Or

The occurrence of the phenomenon in the East exceeds that in the West.

Other Comparison Constructions

- 'In addition to' can be used at the beginning of a sentence to add another example to the subject or to another noun in the sentence (for instance, the object of the verb).
- Examples:
 - *In addition to property, credibility is at risk.*
 - *In addition to the tuition fee, a student needs money for one's living expenses.*

thank you



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