

背景：2019 版本官方指南对 SC 部分的介绍比以前版本有了很大的丰富，建议大家好好阅读，大仙已加粗体重要信息并做点评。

## 9.0 Sentence Correction

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Sentence correction questions appear in the Verbal section of the GMAT® exam. The Verbal section uses multiple-choice questions to measure your ability to read and comprehend written material, to reason and evaluate arguments, and to correct written material to express ideas effectively in standard written English. Because the Verbal section includes passages from several different content areas, you may be generally familiar with some of the material; however, neither the passages nor the questions assume detailed knowledge of the topics discussed. Sentence correction questions are intermingled with critical reasoning and reading comprehension questions throughout the Verbal section of the test. You will have 65 minutes to complete the Verbal section or about 1¼ minutes to answer each question.

Sentence correction questions present a statement in which words are underlined. **The questions ask you to select the best expression of the idea or relationship described in the underlined section from the answer options. The first answer choice always repeats the original phrasing, whereas the other four provide alternatives. In some cases, the original phrasing is the best choice. In other cases, the underlined section has obvious or subtle errors that require correction.** These questions require you to be familiar with the **stylistic conventions and grammatical rules of standard written English and to demonstrate your ability to improve incorrect or ineffective expressions.** Sentence correction questions may include **English-language idioms, which are standard constructions not derived from the most basic rules of grammar and vocabulary, but idioms**



are not intended to measure any specialized knowledge of colloquialisms or regionalisms.

You should begin these questions by reading the sentence carefully. Note whether there are any obvious grammatical errors as you read the underlined section. Then read the five answer choices carefully. If there was a subtle error you did not recognize the first time you read the sentence, it may become apparent after you have read the answer choices. If the error is still unclear, see whether you can eliminate some of the answers as being incorrect. Remember that in some cases, the original selection may be the best answer.

## 9.1 Some Comments About How It Works

Sentence Correction questions require a good understanding of how the conventions of standard written English can be used for effective communication. **However, that understanding does not have to come from extensive explicit training in grammar and usage or from knowledge of specialized linguistic terminology. Many people may have the needed insights without being able to explain them in technical terms. Analogously, without knowing the scientific name of baker's yeast or the chemistry of the Maillard reaction, a talented baker or food critic may be able to tell whether a loaf of bread was properly prepared.** (此次老头幽默地做了一个类比) This is not to say that explicit training in grammar and usage is unhelpful. As an adjunct to critical reading and writing experience, it can be a useful approach to developing insights into good written communication. It is good to be cautious, though; books and websites offering advice about how to write may occasionally stipulate outmoded or idiosyncratic rules that are not generally followed in effective professional writing.

The problems posed in Sentence Correction take a different approach and fall within a different domain from those in the other Verbal Section types. But like those other types, they test skills of critical reasoning, problem solving, and reading comprehension. Sentence Correction tasks can be aptly thought of as requiring detective work. A key part of this work consists in understanding the differences among formulations offered in the answer choices and in seeing that some do not make sense when they are plugged into the larger sentence. In this way, the Sentence Correction questions pose some of the most refined and closely targeted reading



comprehension tasks in the GMAT exam. To see why certain wordings do not work, you will need to use critical analysis, forming hypotheses about what the writer is trying to express and being ready to revise the hypotheses as you read through the answer choices.

The more difficult questions are not essentially designed to test for knowledge of rules or facts that are harder to learn or that require more technical training. Difficulty often stems from complexity and subtlety among the interconnected parts of the sentence and involves critical application of principles that all astute users of English should understand. Sentence Correction tasks are puzzles of a sort, but they are not merely arbitrarily contrived. Typically, the incorrect answer choices represent flaws that even an experienced writer might introduce by temporarily losing track of the structure of a sentence or by accidentally moving a piece of text to an unintended position.

(老头首次交代了难度的来源, 试题设计的思维, 明确了错误点来自真实的写作)

Sometimes you may be able to think of a wording that works better than any of the options presented, but the task is to find the most effective of the available choices within the parameters of the problem posed. In writing, there are almost always tradeoffs. For example, conciseness is sometimes the enemy of precision and adequate specificity. Certain types of redundancy can be annoying and can make the writer seem inept, but other types of repetition and paraphrasing can improve readability and comprehension. Language serves many purposes, not all of which are cooperative or directly informative. (非常好, 写作往往是妥协的结果, 很好的呼应了我上课说的正确选项往往是一个折中解) In sincere straightforwardly informative writing—although not in all advertising, entertainment, and poetry—one should minimize ambiguity, yet in the end every sentence is at least somewhat open to multiple interpretations. Because one can never absolutely eliminate the risk of unintended

interpretations, Sentence Correction answers should minimize (非常关键的字) that risk relative to the context, setting, and ordinary assumptions about the intent of the writer. It is safe to assume that any GMAT Sentence Correction sentence you encounter will be intended to sincerely inform, instruct, or inquire, rather than to parody bad writing, confuse the reader, or provoke laughter, outrage, or derision.



You will not be expected to take sides in contentious controversies about grammar, usage, or style or to apply rules that are widely regarded as highly pedantic or outdated. A few of these are mentioned in the discussions of the specific categories that follow.

下面就是供语法盲们启蒙的部分了，以前的版本也有，但这个版本比较认真详细。

## 9.2 The Eight Sentence Correction Categories

在这八类老头给出的考点里面，老头进行了三个步骤：

1 科普，并给出了并以前的版本耐心详细得多的解释，有助于语法盲们很快地了解了什么是什么，什么是老头认为错的。

2 给出了一些高级结论



### 3 阐明了什么是它不会考的，也就是大仙常说的别自作多情的点

The problems to be solved in Sentence Correction questions are classified into **eight grammar and usage categories**. Each incorrect answer choice contains a flaw in at least one of these categories, and some span two or more categories. Each test contains questions representing a wide range of different types of problems. In the answer explanations in section 9.9, **the categories shown in the heading for each question are the most salient, but many of the questions contain problems in other categories as well.**

(每题有主力考点非主力考点) Although these eight categories represent the full range of Sentence Correction problems, the discussions within each category below are not exhaustive and are not intended as a comprehensive guide to English grammar and usage. For each category, the discussion aims to provide a general understanding of the kinds of reasoning that may be involved in solving Sentence Correction problems of that type.

#### Agreement

Effective verbal communication requires clarity about how the elements of a sentence relate to one another. The conventions of agreement help maintain such clarity; constructions that violate these conventions can be confusing or even nonsensical. **There are two types of agreement: subject-verb agreement and agreement of terms that have the same referent.**

**(主谓一致) Subject-verb agreement:** Singular subjects take singular verbs, whereas plural subjects take plural verbs. Standard contemporary English makes few distinctions in verb form among persons and numbers, but most English verbs do have a distinct present-tense form for third person singular, and *to be* has distinctive forms for first person singular (*am, was*).

*Examples:*

Correct: “I **walk** to the store.”

Incorrect: “I **walks** to the store.”



Correct: “Each of the circuits **has** its own switch.”

Incorrect: “Each of the circuits **have** its own switch.”

Correct: “The masses **have** spoken.”

Incorrect: “The masses **has** spoken.”

**(指代的前后一致) Agreement between terms that have the same referent :**

A pronoun that stands for another element in the discourse—a noun, a noun phrase, or another pronoun—must agree with its antecedent in person, number, and gender. Where a noun or noun phrase has the same referent as another noun or noun phrase, the two terms should agree in number.

*Examples:*

Correct: “When **you** dream, **you** are usually asleep.”

Incorrect: “When **one** dreams, **you** are usually asleep.”

The incorrect version is by no means ungrammatical, but it is puzzling and appears not to be intended to mean what it literally says. Thus, it is also a matter of logical predication and rhetorical construction, categories that are discussed under those headings below.

Correct: “I threw away the banana and the mango because **they were** both spoiled.”

Incorrect: “I threw away the banana and the mango because **it was** both spoiled.”

Correct: “The engineers are **friends** of mine.”

Incorrect: “The engineers are **a friend** of mine.”

Almost all educated users of English have internalized the conventions of agreement, yet we all occasionally make mistakes of this sort by accident or because we lose track of the structure of our wording. Keep in mind that as you evaluate different wording choices, context is vitally important. We can see immediately that an entire clause consisting of the words “You is working” would be incorrect. On the other hand, that same sequence of words is correct in the following sentence: “The team member



who used to assist you is working on a different project now.” This is easy to see, but doing so depends on recognizing that the subject of *is* is not *you* but rather the entire noun phrase preceding the verb. This recognition may be either intuitive or based on explicit analysis.

Similarly, no one would seriously claim that the plural *they* should stand for the singular noun *proposal*, but one might more easily overlook the failure of agreement in the following sentence: “From among the six submitted proposals, they chose number four, believing that they could be more easily implemented than the other five.” Many readers may see the problem quickly, but in doing so they are noting some complex features of the sentence structure. In principle, *they* could refer to the six proposals or to those who chose from among them, but neither of those tentative interpretations makes sense. Here the reasoning overlaps with that involved in the category of logical predication. The choosers are not the sorts of things that could be implemented, and the comparative phrase *than the other five* rules out the hypothesis that the antecedent of *they* is the plural *six submitted proposals*. Changing *they* to *it* resolves the discrepancy by using a pronoun that clearly has the singular noun phrase *number four* as its antecedent.

Some complicating factors to consider (一些高级的特殊情况, 语法盲们暂时不看了, 免得吓死自己) :

When analyzing potential agreement issues in Sentence Correction, keep in mind that not **all cases conform obviously and straightforwardly to the most basic rules of agreement**. Here are a few special considerations. These are not intended to be exhaustive.

*Quantities and quantifying phrases:* In some cases, formally plural quantities may take plural verbs, and in other cases they are construed as singular. For example, “Six dollars were withdrawn from the box, one at a time” is correct, but so is “Six dollars is a high price for that.”

Quantifying phrases (such as *a number of* and *a percentage of*) often function as subject modifiers in what could appear to be a subject position. In such cases, they are treated similarly to numbers. “A large proportion of the trees are flowering” is essentially like “Three of the trees are flowering.” In other cases, similar phrases function as subjects. Consider, for example, the following correct phrases: “a small



percentage of our profits is reinvested” and “a small percentage of our employees oppose the new plan.”

As a pronoun, *each* is singular, distributing individually to the members of the set or collection referred to, as illustrated in “Each of the circuits has its own switch.” When *each* is used as an adjective before a noun, the noun is singular (“Each machine has been inspected”), but in the predicate position *each* modifies the entire plural collection (“The machines have each been inspected”).

*Plurals that appear singular:* All English users are aware that for some words the plural is the same as the singular (*sheep* and *deer*, for example), but there are subtle cases, as when a formally singular noun referring to a group or culture is construed as plural. No simple rule governs the use of such terms; one can say, for example, “the British are” or “the Inuit are” but not “the German are” or “the Cuban are.” *Police* is plural, but many similar group words, such as *navy*, are typically construed as singular.

*Collective nouns construed as singular or plural:* Many nouns referring to groups of people or collections of things have a singular form (team, choir, platoon, crew, assembly, for example). In some editorial styles—and especially in British usage—these can sometimes be construed as plural. This occurs where the writer’s intention is to distribute the predicate to the individual members of the group rather than to refer to the group as a single abstract entity. Thus, one may say “the staff are working in small groups” but also “the staff is larger than it used to be.”

*Plurals construed as singular:* Some formally plural nouns, such as *news*, are construed as singular in normal usage. A title that has a plural form (such as *The Grapes of Wrath*) takes a singular verb if it refers to a single work, and some names of organizations or political entities may be construed as singular even though they have a plural form. For example, the phrase *the Cayman Islands* may be singular when referring to the country as a political entity and plural when referring to the islands as multiple pieces of land.

***Singular verbs that could appear plural:*** For most English verbs (with the notable exception of *to be*), the infinitive is the same as the present plural, and the present subjunctive for all persons is the same as the



infinitive. Furthermore, the singular past subjunctive is the same as the plural. Thus, there is a risk that at first glance a correct verb form used with a singular subject may appear plural. “The researcher suspend further testing” and “I were you” would be incorrect as complete sentences, but in the following sentences they are in the subjunctive mood and are correct: “We considered it imperative that the researcher suspend further testing.” “I wouldn’ t do that if I were you.” As a complete sentence, “The mayor attend the hearings” would be incorrect, but in the sentence, “In none of these cases will either the councilor or the mayor attend the hearings,” the verb form is correct; it is an infinitive preceded by the auxiliary verb *will*.

**这段其实就是要告诉你，要结合 context 看动词形式，不要只看一两个字就下判断**

**Some issues that are not tested:**

The following are a few examples of issues that are outside the scope of the agreement-related Sentence Correction questions.

Especially in informal discourse, the plural pronoun *they* and related forms *them*, *their*, and *theirs* are sometimes used as nonspecific, genderless ways of referring to a singular person. Consider, for example, “Somebody left their notebook on the conference room table.” The reasoning surrounding such usage and the alternatives (*he*, *she*, *she or he*, *she/he*) is complex and evolving. You should not expect to see questions that require you to judge which usage is preferable.

Although you should be able to recognize commonly used irregular plurals or special classes of plurals (such as *phenomena*, *cacti*, *genera*), you will not be asked to correct an improper plural spelling. For example, you will not be asked to correct “the genuses are” to “the genera are.”

You will also not be expected to know whether certain highly technical terms or local organization names take singular or plural verbs and pronouns unless the context makes it clear whether they are singular or plural. For example, those who are very familiar with the Centers for Disease Control (a U.S. government organization) will know that it is normally referred to in the singular, but others would not be able to determine this merely from seeing the name.



## Diction

Sentences that are structurally well formed can still be confusing, or can make the writer seem inept, if the words are not chosen appropriately and effectively. Effective diction involves using the right part of speech and observing other conventions regarding which words to use in which contexts. Word choices involving agreement and verb form may also be thought of partly as matters of diction, but they are treated separately under the Agreement and Verb Form headings. The diction issues you may encounter in Sentence Correction are too many and varied to list here, but here are a few salient categories into which risks of ineffective diction may fall:

*Parts of speech:* Even accomplished writers sometimes accidentally use an inappropriate part of speech, such as an adjective where an adverb is needed or a preposition where a conjunction is needed.

*Examples:*

Correct: “I could **easily** tell that the cat was friendly.”

Incorrect: “I could **easy** tell that the cat was friendly.”

Correct: “The concerto was **beautiful**.”

Incorrect: “The concerto was **beautifully**.”

*Pronoun cases:* Pronouns should be in the right case. A writer might compromise clarity by using a subject form of a pronoun as an object or vice versa or a reflexive pronoun in a nonreflexive context.

*Examples:*

Correct: “**She** and her friend were walking in the park.”

Incorrect: “**Her** and her friend were walking in the park.”

Correct: “We sent an email to **them**.”

Incorrect: “We sent an email to **they**.”



Correct: "I gave **him** a good performance rating."

Incorrect: "I gave **himself** a good performance rating."

*Counting and quantifying:* Although the conventions for quantification of mass nouns and count nouns have some subtle complexities, keep in mind the general rule that mass nouns are quantified by an amount, whereas count nouns are quantified by numbers or by words (such as *many*) that indicate multiple units. Except in certain technical mathematical contexts, *less* and *least* are typically reserved for comparisons of amount or degree, whereas *fewer* and *fewest* express comparisons of number. However, *more* and *most* are used for both comparisons of number and comparisons of degree. *Both* is appropriate only in referring to two entities or qualities.

*Examples:*

Correct: "We bought only a **small amount of** rice." "She wished me **much** happiness."

Incorrect: "We bought only **a few** rice." "She wished me **many** happinesses."

Correct: "**Fewer** deliveries arrived today than yesterday."

Incorrect: "**Less** deliveries arrived today than yesterday."

Correct: "**All five of the** trees in the garden need pruning."

Incorrect: "**Both of the five** trees in the garden need pruning."

*Prepositions:* Subtle differences of relationship are often expressed by different prepositions that function similarly to one another. Consider, for example, in/into/within, to/toward, on/onto/above, through/throughout, beside/besides, beside/along/against, and on/over/above.

*Examples:*

Correct: "We were standing **beside** the river."

Incorrect: "We were standing **besides** the river."



The incorrect version can also be thought of as displaying a problem of logical predication in that it appears to say illogically that the river was also standing.

Correct: “The editor was sitting **in** his office all afternoon.”

Incorrect: “The editor was sitting **into** his office all afternoon.”

Word choices that are inherently very simple and obvious can become a little more difficult in complex settings, and a Sentence Correction answer choice that appears appropriate on its own may not work when plugged into the larger sentence. In isolation, “distributed throughout” is recognizable as a standard phrase, but in the following sentence it does not make sense: “The computers were distributed throughout the generosity of a group of donors.” Replacing *throughout* with *through* solves the problem. The issue here is a matter not only of diction but also of logical predication: the wording causes the sentence to make an illogical claim about the computers.

“We were confident” is fine as a freestanding sentence, but it is nonsense in the following context: “The lawyer who consulted with we were confident that we could negotiate a settlement.” This displays combined problems of diction (*with we*), agreement (the plural *were* with the singular subject *lawyer*), and grammatical construction. “Us was confident” is strange out of context, but substituting *us was* for the offending part of the sentence solves the problem: “The lawyer who consulted with us was confident that we could negotiate a settlement.”

#### Some complicating factors to consider:

The following are only a few examples of the types of subtleties and complexities that may be involved in deciding what words are appropriate.

*Potentially misleading grammatical constructions:* In some contexts, a verb might superficially appear to require an adverb in the predicate position when in fact a predicate adjective is appropriate. For example, it is correct to say “the surface feels rough” rather than “the surface feels roughly.” “The animal does not smell well” means something very different from “the animal does not smell good.” Both can be correct depending on what the writer wants to convey.



Words ending in *ing* that are derived from verbs (such as *going*, *assessing*, and *hurting*) can often be either gerunds or participles. Generally, in carefully crafted formal writing, a pronoun or noun that modifies a gerund will be possessive (“The schedule depends on our receiving the materials on time,” not “depends on us receiving”). However, in similar constructions the *ing* word is intended as a participle with the noun or pronoun as its subject. This can be seen in the following two examples: (1) “I was concerned about my friend’s lying on the ground.” Here the focus of the concern is on the situation the friend was in. (2) “I was concerned about my friend lying on the ground.” In this case, the writer may intend the focus to be explicitly on the friend who was in that situation.

*Words with multiple functions:* In English, almost any noun can function as an adjective. Nouns that function also as verbs are well known (as in “she chaired the meeting” or “he tabled the motion”), but words that are not normally used as verbs can also be pressed into special service as verbs on an ad hoc basis. One could say, for example, “She plans to greenhouse her tender plants when the weather turns cold.” Some words regularly function as both adjectives and adverbs. One can say, for example, both “This is a hard job” and “We are working hard.” Likewise, *fast* is used correctly as both adjective and adverb in the following sentence: “This is not usually a fast train, but it is moving fast at this moment.”

*Considerations in applying between and among:* *Among* is generally not appropriate for relationships that involve only two entities. It is standard to say “the distance between my house and yours,” not “the distance among my house and yours.” *Among* is usually needed instead of *between* for relationships involving more than two entities, but there are exceptions. *Between* is sometimes the more accurate preposition to use where the relationship holds, independently, between each member of the group and some other member. Thus, for example, it would be appropriate to say, “In planning your trip to the five destinations, consider the distances between cities and the driving conditions you may encounter.”

#### Some issues that are not tested:

The following are a few examples of issues that are outside the scope of the diction-related Sentence Correction questions.



*Which/that*: Some American publishers have adopted the convention that *which*, used as a relative pronoun, should always be nonrestrictive and should be replaced with *that* in restrictive contexts (as in “laws which have been repealed are no longer enforced” versus “laws that have been repealed are no longer enforced”). You should not expect to see questions for which the deciding factor is merely whether the writer adheres to this convention.

*Object words with to be*: Some usage advisors prescribe the use of nominative (subject) pronouns in both the subject position and the object position with the verb *to be*. According to this convention, “If I were her, I would be happy to accept the job” is incorrect; it should be “If I were she, I would be happy to accept the job.” In some contexts, this latter form of expression could seem annoyingly stilted and pedantic and thus could violate other standards of effective expression. You should not expect to see questions for which the deciding factor is merely whether the writer adheres to this convention.

*Slang, archaic diction, and words that are distinctively regional or limited to certain subsets of English*: You will not be expected, for example, to correct *thou* or *you-all* to *you*, to understand that *skint* could be paraphrased as *lacking resources*, to judge whether *mickle* is a synonym of *muckle* or whether either of these should be paraphrased with *large*, or to understand that *give* (a test) in some usages is synonymous with *take* (a test) in others.

*Variant forms and spellings*: You will not be asked to choose between variant forms that have the same function and meaning. Some examples of such variant pairs are: *whilst/while*, *toward/towards*, *until/till*, and *outward/outwards*.

## Grammatical Construction

Many issues of agreement, verb form, parallelism, diction, and idiom can be described as matters of grammar, but those categories by no means cover the full range of grammar-related tasks in Sentence Correction. The Grammatical Construction category concerns issues of grammar that are not treated elsewhere in this classification scheme. For the most part, these are matters of syntax—the ways in which the elements of a sentence are arranged. Effective communication depends on shared understandings



between the writer and reader about how the relative positions of words and phrases help convey meaning. A series of words and punctuation marks that does not follow predictable conventions of syntax can be puzzling, annoying, or even incomprehensible. Here are a few major principles guiding effective grammatical construction:

*Complete structure:* In English, a well-formed sentence or independent clause needs **both a subject and a predicate containing a main verb.**

*Examples:*

Correct: “The shipping **company promised that** the package would be delivered on time.”

Incorrect: “The shipping **company that** the package would be delivered on time.”

Here the main subject, *the shipping company*, has no verb; the only verb phrase, *would be delivered*, has *the package* as its subject and is embedded in the clause beginning with *that*.

Correct: “**In any case, the contract is acceptable.**”

Incorrect: “**In any case is acceptable.**” In this incorrect example, there is no discernible subject.

Correct: “**Rushing to defend its nest, the swan pecked at the intruder.**”

Incorrect: “**Rushing to defend its nest. The swan pecked at the intruder.**”

The first part of this incorrect example represents a stereotypical variety of incompletely formed sentence known as a sentence fragment. Sentence fragments are punctuated as sentences but are grammatically incomplete and often seem to be left stranded from a preceding or following sentence.

*Clear and correct linkages and punctuation:* For clarity of meaning, the elements of a sentence need to be linked to, and separated from, one another with standard punctuation and with appropriate links such as conjunctions and relative pronouns.



*Examples:*

Correct: “The cupboard contained two boxes of tea, a bag of rice, and a jar of pickles.”

Incorrect: “The cupboard contained two boxes of tea a bag of rice, and contained a jar of pickles.”

In this case, the structure is both ungrammatical and confusingly nonparallel. Issues of the latter type are discussed under the Parallelism heading below.

Correct: “The weather yesterday was hot, and there were thunderstorms in the evening.”

Incorrect: “The weather yesterday was hot there were thunderstorms in the evening.”

Correct: “We should cancel the cricket match; the rain will continue all afternoon.”

Incorrect: “We should cancel the cricket match the rain will continue, all afternoon.”

*Proper ordering of words and phrases:* A sentence whose components do not follow standard conventions for English governing the sequence of parts can be confusing and can make the writer appear unfamiliar with the language.

*Examples:*

Correct: “The director’ s name is Juan.”

Incorrect: “Is Juan, the director’ s name.”

Correct: “The geranium has outgrown its pot and will need to be transplanted to a larger container.”

Incorrect: “Outgrown its pot to a larger container and the geranium will need to be transplanted.”

Correct: “Please call me tomorrow to discuss the contract.”



Incorrect: “To discuss me please the contract tomorrow call.”

This is an extreme case of obviously ungrammatical word arrangement. Incoherent word sequences such as this are sometimes described as “word salad.” To the extent that this example makes any sense, it also appears illogically to be asking someone to telephone a contract and thus displays a problem of logical predication (discussed later under that heading).

To see how an answer choice affects a sentence’s grammatical construction, you may need to analyze the relationship between widely separated parts. Consider the sentence, “If you clean the filter before it becomes so clogged that it impedes the flow can prevent costly repairs in the long run.” It is important to see that the main verb phrase is *can prevent*; the intervening verbs are embedded in the clause modifying *clean the filter*. The opening phrase, *if you clean . . .* is not grammatically structured to function as a subject, but if that phrase is replaced with *cleaning*, the sentence becomes well-formed and makes sense: “Cleaning the filter before it becomes so clogged that it impedes the flow can prevent costly repairs in the long run.” The problem with *if you clean* involves both grammatical construction and verb form (discussed later under that heading).

Consider also the following ungrammatical sentence: “The headphones provided with the audio player that **although she bought them last year, they never worked.**” The phrase “she bought last year never worked” would be ungrammatical in isolation, but if substituted for the boldface phrase, it makes the sentence grammatically correct: “The headphones provided with the audio player that **she bought last year never worked.**” The crucial relationship here is between the opening words (*the headphones*) and the final phrase of the sentence.

Some complicating factors to consider:

*Idiomatic constructions:* Some idiomatic wording formats, especially those that use parallel structure to express comparisons, are widely treated as well-formed sentences even though they do not follow the basic conventions of grammatical construction. Some examples are: “The greater the thread count, the higher the price.” “Better a small nutritious meal than a large unwholesome one.” “Here today, gone tomorrow.” (约定俗成的东西, 不按常规语法来)



*Inverted structures:* In contemporary English, standard sentence structure puts subjects ahead of their verbs, but there are many exceptions for special purposes, including some quotations, negative constructions, and questions. Each of the following is readily recognizable as a well-formed sentence: “ ‘Tell me about it,’ said his uncle. ” “Were you at the meeting?” “In neither case could I find the needed information. ”

*Elliptical constructions:* In informal contexts and in many formal contexts where economy of words and smoothness of flow are key considerations, **certain sentence elements may be omitted when the writer’s intent is entirely clear without them.** For example, *that* is often omitted at the start of a relative clause, as in “The film I saw last night was boring” or “I was afraid they might be angry.” It is also often considered acceptable to omit infinitive verbs in some cases to avoid awkward repetition, with the preposition *to* left dangling, as in “I reviewed the report even though I didn’t want to.”

Some issues that are not tested:

The following are a few examples of issues that are outside the scope of the grammatical-construction-related Sentence Correction questions.

*Fragments that function as complete sentences in special contexts:* A group of words that has no subject or no verb can sometimes stand as a well-formed sentence. “No” can be a complete sentence in answer to a stated or hypothetical question, as can “The one on the left.” Similarly, a clause beginning with a conjunction and not followed by any other clause can sometimes be an acceptable sentence, as, for example, “Because the delivery was late.” Exclamations such as “Not again!” are also complete and well formed in special contexts. You should not expect to see a Sentence Correction question that appears likely to be drawn from a context in which it is intended to function in any of these ways or as a headline, title, or line of poetry.

*Punctuation as editorial style:* You will need to judge issues of punctuation only insofar as they involve standard conventions that make a difference for the meaning and coherence of the sentence. Beyond the basic grammatical principles, some punctuation conventions vary by region or academic discipline, are matters of pure style, or are determined by publishers or editors for their own purposes. You will not need to judge,



for example, whether a comma should be inside or outside a closing quotation mark, whether emphasis should be indicated by italics, or whether an apostrophe should be inserted before the *s* in a plural non-word such as *IOUs/IOU' s* or *1980s/1980' s*.

## Idiom (固定搭配)

Idioms are standard forms of expression that consist of ordinary words but whose uses cannot be inferred from the meanings of their component parts or the basic conventions of grammar and usage. There is ultimately no logical reason why English speakers say “on average” rather than “at average” or “depending on” rather than “depending from.” This is simply how we do things. **Thus, knowing idiomatic constructions is rather like knowing vocabulary words. Accidentally using the wrong combination of words in an idiomatic construction or structuring a phrase in an unidiomatic way can make it difficult for readers to discern the writer' s intended meaning. Here are a few major categories of idiomatic wording issues that you may encounter in Sentence Correction:**

*Prepositions with abstract concepts:* For abstract concepts, there is no top, bottom, inside, or outside, yet with these we often use the same prepositions that denote spatial relationships between concrete objects. There are some patterns, but for the most part knowing which preposition to use with which abstract noun or verb depends on familiarity. The idiomatic pairings of prepositions with abstract concepts are far too many and varied to list here. A few illustrations are: *in* love, different *from* (also different *to* in British usage), *in* a while, *on* guard, *at* work.

*Examples:*

Correct: “**With regard to** your party invitation, I may not be able to go, because I will be **on call** at the clinic that evening.”

Incorrect: “**On regard with** your party invitation, I may not be able to go, because I will be **in call** at the clinic that evening.”

Correct: “The cost of the repairs will **depend on** what clever solutions the contractors **come up with**.”

Incorrect: “The cost of the repairs will **depend from** what clever solutions the contractors **come out through**.”



*Correlatives*: Certain standard correlative structures provide economical ways of expressing relationships between concepts. For example, it can be more efficient to say “Neither she nor he is going” than to say “He is not going, and she is also not going.” However, if such structures are not skillfully handled in accordance with standard conventions, they can be puzzling and misleading. Other examples of such idiomatic correlative structures are *as . . . as*, *more/less/greater/smaller/etc. . . . than*, and *not only . . . but also*.

*Examples*:

Correct: “**Neither** the pomegranates **nor** the melons have arrived yet from the vendor.”

Incorrect: “**Neither** the pomegranates have arrived yet **neither** the melons from the vendor.”

Correct: “She was almost **as** sure that if we installed this system it would fail **as** that we would need some such system.”

Incorrect: “She was almost **as** sure that if we installed this system it would fail **than** that we would need some such system.”

Correct: “The prolonged drought is stressing **not only** the rabbits **but also** the wallabies.”

Incorrect: “The prolonged drought is stressing the rabbits, **not** the wallabies **just only**.”

*Verb phrases*: Many combinations of verbs with adverbs or prepositions, or with both adverbs and prepositions, have conventional meanings that do not follow directly from the meanings of their component parts. These include such phrases as *give up*, *give up on*, *come through with*, *come up*, *come up with*, *come down with*, *do without*, *have at*, *get over*, *get on with*, *go through*, *go through with*, and *get through with*. Similarly, there are many idiomatic combinations of verb and object, such as *have had it*, *make waves*, *make one’s mark*, and *put one’s finger on*.

*Examples*:

Correct: “The investigator has **given up on** determining what **happened to** the missing funds.”



Incorrect: “The investigator has **given through over** determining what **happened on** the missing funds.”

Correct: “When they checked the patient’s temperature, it **turned out** that he was **running a fever.**”

Incorrect: “When they checked the patient’s temperature, it **veered off** that he was **doing a fever.**”

*Pronouns with no reference:* English requires stated subjects in most sentences with active verb forms. Where there is no real subject, one uses specific referentless placeholder pronouns: *it* and *there*.

*Examples:*

Correct: “**It was raining** yesterday.”

Incorrect: “**They were raining** yesterday.”

Correct: “**There are** several reasons to prefer this theory over the proposed alternative.”

Incorrect: “**Several reasons are** to prefer this theory over the proposed alternative.”

*Compound modifiers:* Some adverbs and adjectives are idiomatically built out of multiple words. A few examples are: *all in all*, *by and by*, *by and large*, *on the whole*, *through and through*, *on the up and up*, and *on the other hand* (sometimes, but not always, correlated with *on the one hand*).

*Examples:*

Correct: “She listened to the radio **off and on** throughout the day.”

Incorrect: “She listened to the radio **off but again on** throughout the day.”

Correct: “You wondered whether anyone would mention you at the meeting; **in fact**, two people **did so.**”

Incorrect: “You wondered whether anyone would mention you at the meeting; **in the fact**, two people **did thus and so.**”



Idiom-related problems do not always involve identifying malformed idioms. Sometimes the crucial insight may involve determining which of multiple idiomatic meanings is intended or whether a phrase should be treated as an idiom or a non-idiom. The meaning of the sentence “She asked for information **on** purpose of the order I had submitted” is unclear. However, a plausible hypothesis is that the writer meant to say “information *on* the purpose,” with *on* serving as an informal equivalent of *regarding*. On that reading, the apparent use of the idiom *on purpose* results from an accidental juxtaposition of the two words. Substituting a phrase such as *regarding the* for the boldface word *on* can turn this into a meaningful, well-formed sentence: “She asked for information **regarding the** purpose of the order I had submitted.”

In the following sentence, *as long as* could appear at first glance to refer to a length of time: “We should be able to restart our assembly line tomorrow **as long as receiving** the replacement parts today.” However, on that interpretation the temporal relationship does not make sense. The sentence can be made coherent by replacing *receiving* with *we receive*, but doing so requires reinterpreting the phrase *as long as* so that it functions as an idiom equivalent to *provided that*. The sentence then becomes “We should be able to restart our assembly line tomorrow **as long as we receive** the replacement parts today.”

### Some complicating factors to consider:

Here are just a few of the many subtleties that one may encounter in judging whether idiomatic usages are correct and effective:

Similar phrases often have very different idiomatic uses and meanings; consider, for example, *come through with*, *come down with*, and *come up with*. Some idiomatic preposition-plus-noun phrases have alternate forms. For example, it is correct to say either “with regard to” or “in regard to.” Many idiomatic phrases have multiple meanings, which are not always similar. For example, *come out with* in some contexts means *express* and in others *publish* or *begin marketing*.

**(可能有省略) For many idiomatic expressions, there are special exceptions to the standard forms. For example, *not only . . . but* phrases are standardly completed with *also*, but there are special cases in which *also* is unnecessary or misleading. This can be seen in the following sentence: “Surprisingly, the endangered species was found not only at the lowest**



elevations but throughout the entire valley.” If the lowest elevations referred to are in the valley, *but also* would misleadingly seem to indicate that the entire valley was a separate category rather than a more general category encompassing the lower elevations.

(很重要, 单个也可以用, 在不同语境下) Words that form standard pairs, such as *neither* and *nor*, often have other meanings and uses as well. In some contexts, *neither* or *nor* might appear at first glance to need the other term. However, *neither* often occurs as an adjective (as in “neither book has been opened”), a pronoun (as in “neither of them has been opened”), or a freestanding clause negator (as in “My supervisor is not fond of filing reports, but neither am I”). Similarly, *nor* can occur without *neither* (as in “None of the strata in the escarpment were fractured in the earthquake, nor were any of the exposed formations displaced”).

Some issues that are not tested:

GMAT Sentence Correction questions neither assess nor presuppose knowledge of obsolete forms of idiomatic expression, highly specialized technical jargon, distinctive dialect constructions, or slang idioms that have not become standard forms of expression.

## Logical Predication

非常好, 这个版本把 LP 的范畴说得很详细。相比之下, 大仙的体系里面对 LP 的定义域要更狭窄一些。

Correct grammar is by no means the only type of structural relationship that matters for effective communication. **Logical relationships among sentence elements are also crucial. A writer may accidentally structure a completely grammatical sentence in a way that has unintended meanings or implications. Issues of logical predication intersect with all the other categories discussed here and are involved in many of the Sentence Correction questions.** Here are a few ways in which they may occur:



*Position and scope of modifiers:* Modifiers should be positioned so it is clear what word or words they are meant to modify. If modifiers are not positioned clearly, they can cause illogical references or comparisons or otherwise distort the meaning of the sentence.

*Examples:*

Correct: “I put **the cake that I baked** by the door.”

Incorrect: “I put the cake by **the door that I baked**.”

Although the better-worded version contains the potentially ambiguous phrase *I baked by the door*, the meaning is made clear by the fact that *put the cake* requires completion by an indication of where or how the cake was put. Therefore, *by the door* binds to the verb *put*.

Correct: “**Concerned that the snake might be venomous**, the workers left it in the crate untouched.”

Incorrect: “**Concerned that it might be venomous**, the snake was left untouched by **the workers in the crate**.”

*Pronoun-antecedent relationships:* A misplaced pronoun can bind to the wrong noun, pronoun, or noun phrase and thus create an unintended meaning.

*Examples:*

Correct: “The baker informed the customers **that the cakes were moldy** and would have to be discarded.”

Incorrect: “The baker informed **the customers that they were moldy** and the cakes would have to be discarded.”

Correct: “**After reviewing** the report from the consultants, **the company** may consider changing the logo.”

Incorrect: “**After it has reviewed** the report from the consultants, **the logo** may be considered for changing by the company.”

*Compatibility of concepts:* Careless wording can cause a predicate to say something inconsistent with the nature of the subject and vice versa.



*Examples:*

Correct: “The **three types** of wildlife most often seen in the park are sparrows, mallards, and squirrels, **in that order.**”

Incorrect: “The **single** most often **type** of wildlife seen in the park is the sparrow, the mallard, and the squirrel, **in that order.**”

Correct: “Stock prices **rose** abruptly today **to an all-time high.**”

Incorrect: “Stock prices **dropped** abruptly today **to an all-time high.**”

*Ellipses and extraneous elements:* Omission of a crucial word or phrase or inclusion of an extraneous element can shift the subject to an unintended element while leaving the sentence grammatically well formed. Accidents of this sort can also make an unintended noun or pronoun the subject or object of a verb.

*Examples:*

Correct: “Work on the stadium renovations **is temporarily** at a standstill.”

Incorrect: “Work on the stadium renovations **is temporarily** a standstill.”

Here the omission of *at* causes the sentence to make an illogical claim about the work (that it is a standstill).

Correct: “**The car was traveling** slowly along the highway.”

Incorrect: “**The car’ s speed was traveling** slowly along the highway.”

The redundant reference to speed causes this sentence to say, absurdly, that the speed was traveling along the highway.

*Reversed relationships:* An unintended meaning can result from accidentally or misguidedly reversing a relationship between sentence elements.

*Examples:*



Correct: “Last week’ s unusually high sales of electric fans can almost certainly be **blamed on** the unseasonably hot weather.”

Incorrect: “Last week’ s unusually high sales of electric fans can almost certainly be **blamed for** the unseasonably hot weather.”

This also involves an issue of idiomatic usage of prepositions (discussed under the Idiom category above).

Correct: “**Forecasters said the cold front** will move through the region tomorrow.”

Incorrect: “**Forecasters, said the cold front,** will move through the region tomorrow.”

*Ambiguous words and phrases:* Writers should be cautious in using words or phrases that have multiple standard meanings. Often the context makes it clear which meaning is intended, but sometimes it does not.

Paraphrasing to rule out unwanted meanings can sometimes require adding words or increasing the structural complexity of a sentence.

*Examples:*

Correct: “She has studied Greek and **speaks** that language **in addition to** Gujarati.”

Incorrect: “She has studied Greek and **speaks it as well as** Gujarati.”

*As well as* is an entirely acceptable equivalent of *and also* or *in addition to*, but it can be an unfortunate choice of words for a context in which *well* makes perfect sense as an evaluative judgment. Since there is no firm basis for deciding which way the latter version is intended, an alternate correct version could be “She has studied Greek and speaks it as well as she speaks Gujarati.”

Correct: “Although visitors **are not permitted to** enter the loading docks, they **might** occasionally wander into the area.”

Incorrect: “Although visitors **may not** enter the loading docks, they **may** occasionally wander into the area.”



Here again, there is no firm basis for deciding which way the latter version is intended. In the incorrect version, both occurrences of *may* could mean either *are permitted to* or *might*.

Few incorrect answers in actual Sentence Correction questions will be as easy to dismiss as the most obvious of these illustrative examples. Most logical predication decisions will require careful analysis of the relationships between the answer choice and the nonunderlined portions of the sentence. Be alert for all types of problematic relationships among sentence parts, not just for stereotypical dangling modifiers.

### Some complicating factors to consider:

Given that all Sentence Correction questions are presented out of context, there may be no basis for certainty about which of several possible interpretations the writer intended to convey. You will not be given multiple equally good versions of a sentence and asked to guess which one accurately represents the writer's true intention. In principle, almost any illogically constructed sentence could be intended to convey a bizarre meaning. One could hypothesize that the writer of the first example under *Position and scope of modifiers* really did intend to say that she or he had baked the door. Even on that hypothesis, the most reasonable judgment for Sentence Correction purposes would be that the sentence is poorly constructed. A careful writer who wants to convey a straightforward message should make it clear that the unusual meaning is the intended one instead of leading the reader to believe that she or he is ineptly trying to convey the more plausible meaning.

### Some issues that are not tested:

Occasionally, you may find a poorly worded version of a sentence amusing. However, you should not expect to see Sentence Correction sentences that can be most charitably interpreted as jokes. Among the answer choices, there will always be a serious way of resolving ambiguities and illogical meanings.

## Parallelism (这一节写得比较垃圾, 不用较真)

Words or phrases that have similar roles in a sentence should be treated in ways that make the similarity clear. This often requires ensuring that parallel clauses have parallel structure, that verbs having the same



function are in the same form, and that elements within the scope of a modifier all relate to the modifier in the same way. Here are some major categories in which parallelism can be an issue:

*Elements of a series:* Where the elements of a series all have the same role or function, they should be in parallel form.

*Examples:*

Correct: “I **ate** supper, **went** for a walk, and then **visited** some friends.”

Incorrect: “I **ate** supper, then **walking**, and then **visitation** of some friends.”

Correct: “She tackled the problem **calmly**, **efficiently**, and **analytically**.”

Incorrect: “She tackled the problem **calmly**, **by being efficient** in **tackling it**, and **was analytic**.”

In both these examples, the nonparallel version is also awkward and wordy. Problems of these types are further discussed under the category of rhetorical construction.

*Correlations and comparisons:* The sides of a correlative structure often need parallel treatment to make the relationship clear and accurate.

*Examples:*

Correct: “We are neither **planning to** hire any new developers nor **trying to** find ways to reduce the workloads of the current staff.”

Incorrect: “We are planning neither **to hire** any new developers nor **attempts at finding ways to** reduce workloads of the current staff.”

Correct: “We were impressed not only **by the** beauty of the inlets and beaches but also **by the** diversity of the plant life.”

Incorrect: “We were impressed not only **by the** beauty of the inlets and beaches but also **the diversity** of the plant life **impressed us**.”



*Issues of scope and repetition of elements:* To determine what elements of a sentence should be made parallel to each other, it is sometimes necessary to determine how much of the wording should fall within the scope of a verb, preposition, or modifier. The scope may determine which elements need to be in parallel form and whether certain elements need to be repeated. Issues of this type overlap with those illustrated above.

*Examples:*

Correct: “He mended the torn fabric with **a needle and thread.**”

Incorrect: “He **mended** the torn fabric **with a needle** and **mended it with thread.**”

Assuming that the needle and thread were used together as a unit, the repetition of *with* misrepresents the relationship. In the correct version, the parallelism is between the two nouns, which are both within the scope of *mended with*. In the incorrect version, the parallelism is between the two verb phrases *mended with . . .* and *mended with . . .*

Correct: “He **punched holes** in the decoration **with a needle** and **tied it to the lamp with thread.**”

Incorrect: “He **punched holes** in and **tied** the decoration to the lamp with **a needle and thread.**”

Correct: “The house that was **on fire** was **on the list** of historically significant buildings.”

Incorrect: “The house was **on fire and the list** of historically significant buildings.”

*On* functions so differently in the two phrases that it makes no sense to subsume both the fire and the list under a single occurrence of the preposition. Therefore, we need the repetition of *on*.

Correct: “The mixture contains **dates, raisins, and figs.**”

Incorrect: “The mixture **contains** dates, **contains** raisins, and **contains** figs.”



The correct version has a parallelism among the three objects of the verb *contains*. In the incorrect version, the verb is awkwardly repeated, creating an unnecessary parallelism among three verb phrases. This also displays a problem of rhetorical construction.

*Corresponding series*: Where the elements of one series are supposed to correspond to those of another series, the order of elements in each series should parallel the order of elements in the other. This parallelism can help prevent confusion about how the two series relate to each other without using cumbersome repetition.

*Example*:

Correct: “Last week we had four meetings, of which the **first, second, and third** were on **Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday** and the last on Friday.”

Incorrect: “Last week we had four meetings, of which the last was on Friday, with the **first, second, and third** being on **Thursday, Tuesday, and Wednesday**.”

*Grammatical considerations*: Some requirements of parallelism, including some of those illustrated above, are also requirements of grammatical construction.

*Examples*:

Correct: “If the **warranty has expired**, we will have to pay for the repairs.”

Incorrect: “If **the warranty has expired**, **our paying** for the repairs.”

In the correct version, the two sides of the conditional are parallel in that each is a complete clause with a subject and predicate.

Correct: “**The shipping delays** and **the two-day closure** have caused a backlog of orders.”

Incorrect: “**The shipping delays** and **we were closed** for two days have caused a backlog of orders.”



To function properly as subjects of *have caused*, both of the stated causes need to be in the form of noun phrases.

### Some complicating factors to consider:

Problems of idiomatic structure and of logical predication sometimes involve parallelism as well. The following sentence displays all three: “Not only the CEO, and also the executive vice president’s proposed policies, have been distributed to the relevant people in middle management.” In presenting a faulty parallelism between the *not only* term and the *and also* term, it appears illogically to claim that the CEO has been distributed. It also falls short of the clarity that could be achieved with a more standardly idiomatic *not only . . . but also* structure.

Agreement, as discussed under that heading above, represents a special kind of parallelism. For example, where a singular noun and a pronoun refer to the same thing, the two terms should be parallel in both being singular, and when a verb has a plural subject, the two should be parallel in both being plural. However, in the Sentence Correction classification scheme, agreement is treated as a distinct category. Thus, agreement-related answer explanations in section 9.9 of this book will not automatically carry the parallelism label as well.

### Some issues that are not tested:

Sentence Correction questions do not require decisions about purely aesthetic or decorative types of parallelism. For example, you will not be asked to decide whether a rhymed pair such as *highways and byways* would be preferable to another phrase that is equivalent in meaning and function.

## Rhetorical Construction

A sentence that is grammatically and idiomatically correct and conforms to good standards of parallelism and logical predication **may still be unclear or annoying or may appear ineptly written. Rhetorical construction problems arise in many ways, including the following.**

(句意重复呗) *Economy of wording*: Superfluous words or unneeded punctuation, pointless redundancies, or convoluted structures that do not



enhance precision and adequacy of detail can make a sentence confusing or simply annoying.

*Examples:*

Correct: “Bananas are almost always harvested green and allowed to ripen in transit or on supermarket shelves.”

Incorrect: “With regard to the ways in which people harvest bananas, people almost always harvest such fruits—fruits of the banana variety—in a green condition, and since the thus-harvested bananas have a low ripeness level, people allow these unripe future-delectable-golden morsels to do their ripening while traveling ensconced in cargo devices after harvest, or even when, after transit, they have landed serenely on supermarket shelves.”

Correct: “We will carefully review your memo and let you know whether we are interested in the solutions you propose.”

Incorrect: “We will ‘review’ —i. e., carefully scrutinize—your memo submitted, letting you know, vis-à-vis the memo’s contained proposal details, whether there is interest, on our part, or not, in those.”

*Precision and adequacy of detail:* Wording that is too vague, sparse, indeterminate, or incomplete can fail to effectively communicate the intended message. Precision often requires the inclusion of details and qualifying phrases. How much specificity and qualification are required depends on the purpose of the communication. Scientific and legal contexts, for example, often require far more precision than do casual communications between friends.

*Examples:*

Correct: “In medical diagnosis, influenza can be understood as an acute respiratory infection caused by any of the influenza viruses.”

Incorrect: “In medical diagnosis, influenza can be understood as when a virus affects you.”

Correct: “The contractor shall deliver the completed materials, as defined in Section 5 of this agreement, no later than the thirtieth



calendar day after the date on which the signed and ratified contract is distributed to the contracting parties.”

Incorrect: “The contractor shall finish taking the actions for relevant agreement sections in a month of distribution and related events.”

The latter version of this sentence is indisputably badly constructed and very vague. The judgment that the former version is acceptable is based on the adequacy of the wording for the apparently intended purpose, but there is no way to tell, without background information, whether it refers to the right agreement section or delivery deadline.

*Active and passive voice:* The better-worded version of the “banana” sentence above uses passive verbs (*are harvested and [are] allowed*). **Passive voice is a means of bringing the object of a verb into the subject position. It can sometimes be more straightforward and economical than active voice where the cause of an effect is unknown or irrelevant.** However, passive-voice constructions are often objectionably vague, awkward, or indirect. (说了特么等于没说)

*Examples:*

Correct: “We **had** lunch in the hotel and then **spent** the afternoon **looking** at paintings and sculptures in the museum.”

Incorrect: “Lunch **was had** in the hotel **by** us before the afternoon **was spent** in the museum where there were paintings and sculptures **being looked at**.”

Correct: “The fruits **are left** to dry for two weeks and then **collected, sorted, and packaged** for shipment.”

Incorrect: “**Relevant people leave** the fruits to dry for two weeks, and then **people, devices, and systems collect** and sort them and package them before **someone or something ships** them.”

*Other types of awkwardness and inelegance:* Problems of rhetorical construction take many different forms, some of which do not fall neatly into standard categories.

*Examples:*



Correct: “As expected, she did the job very well.”

Incorrect: “Expectedly, the goodness of her doing the job was considerable.”

Correct: “She hoped that humans would be able to explore some of the planets in other solar systems.”

Incorrect: “Her hope was for other solar systems’ planets’ possible human exploration.”

### Some complicating factors to consider:

Because rhetorical construction is one of the points tested in Sentence Correction, some people might be tempted to guess that shorter answer choices are a safer bet than longer ones. Wordiness is a stereotypical feature of some inelegant writing, and teachers and writing coaches often emphasize conciseness as a goal. Conversely, some might guess that a longer version or one with more qualifiers and caveats is more likely correct. No such guessing strategy is justified. Sentence Correction questions are designed to represent a wide range of issues. Highly professional expert question writers and test assemblers would be extremely unlikely to create predictable patterns that could be exploited in guessing. There is simply no substitute for careful analysis and understanding of the content of each question and answer choice.

### Some issues that are not tested:

Sentence Correction questions do not require judgments about rhetorical appropriateness that depend on knowledge of highly technical or specialized vocabulary or syntax. Similarly, you should not expect to see questions for which the deciding factor is merely whether the writer uses jargon or buzzwords. For example, you would not be asked to determine whether *contact* might be preferable to *reach out to*—or whether *sunsetting* might be an effective substitute for *phasing out*—in a sentence such as: “I will reach out to various stakeholders to leverage decisions about the timeframe for phasing out the product.”

## Verb Form



Verbs should be in the right tenses and moods and should have the right relationships to other verbs. (很精炼了) Uses of infinitives and participles should follow standard conventions so that the intended meanings are clear. Some of the problems posed in Sentence Correction questions involve choices among verb tenses, but many are concerned with other verb-form issues. Here are some categories in which verb-form problems may occur:

*Temporal relationships:* Because Sentence Correction questions are presented without any context, it is sometimes impossible to tell when they were written or whether the events they refer to were in the past, present, or future from the writer's point of view. **Therefore, to the extent that verb tenses are at issue, they are often a matter of internal coherence of the parts of the sentence.**

*Examples:*

Correct: "Chili peppers **belong** to the Solanaceae family of flowering plants."

Incorrect: "Chili peppers **are belonging** to the Solanaceae family of flowering plants."

The present progressive form is used unidiomatically in the incorrect version. That form indicates that the event or condition referred to is ongoing at the time of writing and may not continue. The simple present form *belong* is coherent with the permanence and timelessness of the stated fact.

Correct: "I am looking forward to my stay in Tianjin, a city that I **have never visited** before."

Incorrect: "I am looking forward to my stay in Tianjin, a city that I **will never visited** before."

In the correct version, the present perfect form *have never visited* effectively describes the writer's relationship to unspecified times in the past. In the incorrect version, the future form *will* is incompatible with the past-looking perspective indicated by *before* and *visited*.

Correct: "When the researcher **begins** the next phase of the experiment, she **will have been working** on the experiment for six weeks."



Incorrect: “When the researcher **will begin** the next phase of the experiment, she **had been working** on the experiment for six weeks.”

The simple present, as used in the correct version, is the appropriate way in English to express a future event on which another future event is predicated. One could similarly use the present perfect *has begun*, which would have a slightly different nuance of meaning. In the incorrect version, *when . . . will begin* is unidiomatic, and the past perfect *had been working* makes no sense in this future context.

Correct: “When I **arrived** at the office, my colleagues **had** already **left**.”

Incorrect: “When I **arrived** at the office, my colleagues **will** already **have been leaving**.”

In the correct version, the past perfect form *had left* clearly indicates that the action of leaving was already completed at the past time referred to by the simple past form *arrived*. In the incorrect version, the future perfect progressive form makes no sense in relation to the overall past setting established by the verb *arrived*.

*Conditionals and subjunctives:* Conditional verb forms referring to conjectural or counterfactual events are typically created with the auxiliary *would*. *Would* constructions often require the antecedent (the “if” clause) to be in subjunctive form, but subjunctives have other purposes as well. Although English uses subjunctives less commonly than do some other languages, such forms are sometimes needed to clarify the meaning of a sentence. They appear in prescriptive and conjectural contexts and make no commitment to whether an action will occur. Consider the difference between the following two sentences: “It is important that he eats high-calorie meals.” “It is important that he eat high-calorie meals.” The former presupposes that the person actually does eat such meals, and it says that the fact that he does so is important. Using the subjunctive form, the latter prescribes his eating high-calorie meals but makes no commitment to whether he actually does so. For some persons and tenses, the subjunctive is indistinguishable from the past or some other indicative forms.

*Examples:*

Correct: “If the piano **needed** tuning, I would pay to have that done, but I don’ t believe it needs tuning.”



博森 GMAT 教育中心 | 400-728-0020

网 址 : [www.igmat.net](http://www.igmat.net)

E-MAIL: [service@igmat.cn](mailto:service@igmat.cn)

上海静安区南京西路 580 号仲益大厦 40 层 4003 室



Incorrect: “When the piano **will need** tuning, I would pay to have that done, but I don’ t believe it needs tuning.”

Correct: “**Were the piano** out of tune, I **would pay** to have it tuned.”

Incorrect: “**The piano be** out of tune, I **pay** to have it tuned.”

Correct: “If the piano **is** out of tune, I **will pay** to have it tuned.”

Incorrect: “If the piano **were** out of tune, I **am going to pay** to have it tuned.”

*Auxiliary verbs:* English uses auxiliary verbs for many purposes, some of which are mentioned in the discussions of temporal relationships and conditionals above. For effective communication, the use of auxiliary verbs should conform to standard conventions.

*Examples:*

Correct: “**Does the professor teach** that course often?”

Incorrect: “**Teaches** the professor that course often?”

In contemporary English, interrogative forms of most verbs are created using appropriate forms of the auxiliary verb *to do*. The simple inversion of subject and verb seen in the incorrect version is an obsolete form.

Correct: “We **cannot** find the website you recommended.”

Incorrect: “We **do not can** find the website you recommended.”

*Can* is a modal verb whose negative and interrogative forms are not created with *do*. Furthermore, *can* is one of a few verbs that have no infinitive form; its infinitive is expressed by a phrase such as *to be able*.

Correct: “The new book **might** turn out **to be** a best seller.”

Incorrect: “The new book **might will** turn out **being** a best seller.”

*Treatment of participles, gerunds, and infinitives:* Present participles (such as *finding* and *taking*) are used with the verb *to be* to express progressive verb forms (*is finding*, *had been taking*). They also function as modifiers in phrases such as “he bought the book, hoping he would like



it” and as nouns in phrases such as “his buying the book was unexpected.” When used as nouns, they are known as gerunds. Past participles (such as *found* and *taken*) are used with the verb *to have* to express perfect verb forms (*has found*, *will have taken*). They also function as adjectives in phrases such as “the book published last year” and “the plant is withered.” The infinitive form is used for verbs that are modified by other verbs. With some modifying verbs, the infinitive must be preceded by *to*. With other verbs (certain modal and auxiliary verbs) it must not. With yet others (such as *help*, *go*, and *need*) it can be used either with or without *to*. Infinitives can be treated as nouns, serving as subjects or objects of verbs, as in “to laugh at one’s own mistakes can be therapeutic.”

*Examples:*

Correct: “**Having** nowhere else to go, I **wandered** through the airport all day.”

Incorrect: “**My having** nowhere else to go **wandered** through the airport all day.”

In that the incorrect version makes *having* the subject of *wandered*, it also exemplifies a problem of logical predication (discussed under that heading above).

Correct: “**Widely disliked**, the software went unused.”

Incorrect: “**To have widely disliked it**, the software went unused.”

Like the one above, this example contains a problem of both verb form and logical predication.

Correct: “You **must make** the reservation at least two days in advance.”

Incorrect: “You **must to make** the reservation at least two days in advance.”

Correct: “My colleague **went to find** another microphone.”

Incorrect: “My colleague **went find** another microphone.”



Although such expressions as *go find* and *go get* are standard, they are unidiomatic in affirmative past tenses, which require the preposition *to* with the infinitive (“went to find”).

Some complicating factors to consider:

English verb forms and surrounding idiomatic wording conventions have many peculiarities and nuances. The following are reminders of just a few such complications.

It is important to keep in mind that the subtleties of how English tenses are used cannot always be inferred from the names of the tenses. For example, in some other European languages, actions that are currently occurring are indicated by the simple present tense. English typically uses the present progressive form for that purpose, as in “The dog is barking” or “The car is running.” The simple present tense in English is typically reserved instead for events and conditions that occur at indefinite or unspecified times or that recur, as in “Dogs bark for various reasons” or “The car runs on unleaded fuel.”

“Going to (do or happen)” is a standard way of expressing the future tense, but unlike in French, there is no parallel form “coming from (doing or happening).” To indicate that an action was recently completed, English uses the idiom *has/have/had just*, as in “I had just finished composing the email.”

The preposition *to* has many different uses in combination with verbs. These differences can sometimes lead to ambiguous constructions and potential confusion. Stereotypically, *to* before a verb is thought of as an infinitive marker, but it can also indicate purpose or intention. Thus, for example, “I need your truck to haul the boxes” is indeterminate between two meanings. More precise expressions of these could be “I need your truck so that I can haul the boxes” and “It is essential for me that your truck haul the boxes.” The latter may seem very formal but could be appropriate where precision is needed. *To* with a verb can also be prescriptive, as in “The borrower is to pay a fine if the materials are not returned by the due date,” or simply predictive, as in “The visitors are to arrive soon.” It can even express a past tense in a construction such as “but I was never to see him again” or “she was the last one to leave the building.” (提高一下文化吧, 尤其那些一看到 to 光知道表示将来的人)



*Shall* also has multiple meanings. As a simple future-tense indicator, it is an alternative to *will* for first person verbs (“I shall tell you about it tomorrow”). However, it can also be used prescriptively, similarly to *must*, as in “The borrower shall pay a fine if the materials are not returned by the due date.”

#### Some issues that are not tested:

You may hear that some usage advisors object to placing anything between *to* and an infinitive verb, as in “to finally reach the destination.” You should not expect to see Sentence Correction questions for which the deciding factor is merely whether the writer follows this advice. However, you might encounter a sentence that is awkward and unclear because too many words—or words that would go better elsewhere—are crammed in between the preposition and the verb. This occurs in the following sentence: “I try to remember to scrupulously every day before I leave work log off my computer.” This is an issue of general unclarity and inelegance falling under the heading of rhetorical construction, and not a mere case of “split infinitive.”

## 9.3 Study Suggestions

There are two basic ways you can study for sentence correction questions:

- **Read material that reflects standard usage.**

One way to gain familiarity with the basic conventions of standard written English is simply to read. Suitable material will usually be found in good magazines and nonfiction books, editorials in outstanding newspapers, and the collections of essays used by many college and university writing courses.

- **Review basic rules of grammar and practice with writing exercises.**  
(这就是大仙说的协同效应啊)

Begin by reviewing the grammar rules laid out in this chapter. Then, if you have school assignments (such as essays and research papers) that have been carefully evaluated for grammatical errors, it may be helpful to review the comments and corrections.



## 9.4 What Is Measured

Sentence correction questions test three broad aspects of language proficiency:

- **Correct expression**

A correct sentence is grammatically and structurally sound. It conforms to all the rules of standard written English, including **noun - verb agreement, noun - pronoun agreement, pronoun consistency, pronoun case, and verb tense sequence. A correct sentence will not have dangling, misplaced, or improperly formed modifiers; unidiomatic or inconsistent expressions; or faults in parallel construction.** (把考点又复习了一遍)

- **Effective expression**

An effective sentence expresses an idea or relationship clearly and concisely as well as grammatically. This does not mean that the choice with the fewest and simplest words is necessarily the best answer. It means that there are no superfluous words or needlessly complicated expressions in the best choice.

- **Proper diction**

An effective sentence also uses proper diction. (Diction refers to the standard dictionary meanings of words and the appropriateness of words in context.) In evaluating the diction of a sentence, you must be able to recognize whether the words are well chosen, accurate, and suitable for the context.

## 9.5 Test-Taking Strategies

**(大仙点评：纯特么站着说话腰不痛，按老头建议这么整一个题搞下来黄花菜都凉了。)**

1. Read the entire sentence carefully.



Try to understand the specific idea or relationship that the sentence should express.

2. Evaluate the underlined passage for errors and possible corrections before reading the answer choices.

This strategy will help you discriminate among the answer choices. Remember, in some cases the underlined passage is correct.

3. Read each answer choice carefully.

The first answer choice always repeats the underlined portion of the original sentence. Choose this answer if you think that the sentence is best as originally written, but do so *only after* examining all the other choices.

4. Try to determine how to correct what you consider to be wrong with the original sentence.

Some of the answer choices may change things that are not wrong, whereas others may not change everything that is wrong.

5. Make sure that you evaluate the sentence and the choices thoroughly.

Pay attention to general clarity, grammatical and idiomatic usage, economy and precision of language, and appropriateness of diction.

6. Read the whole sentence, substituting the choice that you prefer for the underlined passage.

A choice may be wrong because it does not fit grammatically or structurally with the rest of the sentence. Remember that some sentences will require no correction. When the given sentence requires no correction, choose the first answer.

