

Sentence Correction

1. Strategy

1.1. Modifiers

The GMAT usually deals with modifying phrases. A modifying phrase **must** be as close as possible to the thing or person it modifies.

"*mod*, subj/obj ..." or "subj/obj, *mod*, ...". Note that subj/obj could be noun, pronoun, phrase, etc. Pretty easy, but that's all!

Practice identifying modifiers with articles, books, etc for easy points on the GMAT.

1.2. Idioms

They are just the way they are. Try to recognize them and see what sounds best. Voicelessly read it in your brain, that is, pretend you're actually reading: move your lips.

Don't forget to read the full final answer back to yourself.

Don't worry about correcting the non-underlined portion no matter how awkward it sounds.

Some examples:

Prefer sth over sth

Dispute over sth

However much you may dislike this... (this is valid structure)

Wrong: "the fact that... may..." (fact and may don't go together!)

Use **between** when presenting **2** options, things, people, groups.. But **among** for **more than 2**.

in contrast to, similar to

contrast sth with sth else.

compare sth to sth.

double sth/some number (as opposed to "double of")

When indicates a period of time; **if** indicates a condition.

The **ability to** do sth, not for doing sth.

Depends on whether not "if".

means to is correct apparently! (arts as a means to greater life quality)

Distinguish between sth **and** sth else. Or you can **distinguish** sth **from** sth else. I **distinguished myself** as a dedicated coder!

Just as x, **so** y; e.g. Just as reading Shakespeare is painful, so listening to too modern music!

"Require of someone that something" is correct. "Require of someone to do sth" is incorrect. E.g. Laws require of employers that pay be the same.

This is a good **pay for a job**. Not good pay **in** a job.

Claim to...

such as means for example

as could be used as **for instance**. Therefore, **as** could be followed by things other than just nouns.

If sth, then sth **can will...** (note that "can" cannot be used instead of "will")

X has **half the chance that** Y has.

Think of X as Y (not "to be" as in, think of X to be Y.)

concerned for (worries about) vs. concerned with (related to)

Clause1 and as such, Clause2 = clause1, and as clause1, clause2.

Until vs **as long as**. Until is only for time, as long as shows one action will continue as long as some

condition is true.

The pen is 2 dollars is **incorrect**. It should say "the pen costs 2 dollars"

for all means **despite**.

You can heat water **enough to** bring it to a boil.

It was **so** cold **that** I couldn't breathe. The baby cried **so** loud **that** I couldn't hear anything.

1.3. Parallelism

A parallel, created either by listing a series of things or comparing or contrasting different things, needs to express the pieces of the parallel in the same grammatical form.

Lists, as well as structures like *between...and* and *fewer...than* usually indicate parallelism.

The shortest option is preferred unless it is incorrect.

When the sentence is confusing, use the "fixed", non-underlined portion to work out what the underlined portion should be.

Parallels usually are not nested, that is, a parallel structure does not include other clauses.

1.4. Comparisons

They mark a type of parallelism required in the objects, people, or whatever that are being compared.

They usually involve terms such as *like*, *unlike*, *similar to*, and *in contrast to*.

Use **like** when you want to focus on two nouns;

Use **as** when you want to focus on two nouns doing two actions.

1.5. Verb Tense

Try and see what sounds best.

In comparisons, tense remains the same.

Conditional clauses:

Type I: If sth happens, then sth will happen. (note **can** cannot replace "will")

Type II: If sth happened, then sth would happen.

Type III: If sth had happened, then sth would have happened.

1.6. Subject-Verb Agreement

Guessing is formally not a good way to answer questions. ("formally" is modifying the statement "guessing is not a good way...")

Guessing is not a formally good way to answer questions. ("formally" is modifying the "good way")

Not only do subjects need to agree with their verbs, but they need to agree with their

objects as well. Therefore, it is wrong to say *the students have a pencil*; rather you should say *the students have pencils*.

In a sentence, no matter how long or how "run-on" it may be, the verbs, unless they appear in modifying phrases, should all match the original subject of the sentence. In sentences involving *there are/is* the subject usually follows the verb. (e.g. There is one subject in this sentence.)

"sth or sth" is singular. E.g. Sahand or Sina is going to pick you up.
"sths or sths" is plural. E.g. Numbers or symbols are both easy to deal with.
"sth and sth" is plural (Sahand and Sina are brothers)

1.7. Pronouns

The GMAT usually tests pronouns in two ways:

1. a pronoun is used incorrectly when the **sentence doesn't make clear** what or who the pronoun refers to
2. when the sentence uses the wrong pronoun for the situation

That is a pronoun to be used only for things. **Who** should be used for people. **Whom** should be used if it replaces a direct or indirect object or an object of a preposition. **Which** with choice or definition or restriction of antecedent.

A single pronoun can only refer to a noun, not a noun and a verb.

Whenever a pronoun has more than one possible antecedent, it is used incorrectly.

In GMAT, pronouns **always** refer to a noun, **never** a sentence.

Also, you **always** check for the **antecedent** of a pronoun as soon as you see one. If it's unclear the sentence is incorrect.

1.8. Expression

Whenever possible, eliminate unnecessary wordiness and passive constructions. An **active** sentence or phrase starts with the subject and then moves to the verb and the object.

"It was fashionable to live in Paris" is better than "to live in Paris was fashionable"