

English for Proficiency in Competitive Examinations

COURSE CODE: B21EG02SE

Undergraduate Programme in English
Skill Enhancement Course
Self Learning Material



SREENARAYANAGURU
OPEN UNIVERSITY

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The State University for Education, Training and Research in Blended Format, Kerala

SREENARAYANAGURU OPEN UNIVERSITY

Vision

To increase access of potential learners of all categories to higher education, research and training, and ensure equity through delivery of high quality processes and outcomes fostering inclusive educational empowerment for social advancement.

Mission

To be benchmarked as a model for conservation and dissemination of knowledge and skill on blended and virtual mode in education, training and research for normal, continuing, and adult learners.

Pathway

Access and Quality define Equity.

English for Proficiency in Competitive Examinations

Course Code: B21EG02SE

Semester - V

Skill Enhancement Course Undergraduate Programme English Language and Literature Self Learning Material (With Model Question Paper Sets)



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ENGLISH FOR PROFICIENCY IN COMPETITIVE EXAMINATIONS

Course Code: B21EG02SE

Semester- V

Skill Enhancement Course

BA English Language and Literature

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Edition:
January 2025

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ISBN 978-81-982096-5-8



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MESSAGE FROM VICE CHANCELLOR

Dear learner,

I extend my heartfelt greetings and profound enthusiasm as I warmly welcome you to Sreenarayanaguru Open University. Established in September 2020 as a state-led endeavour to promote higher education through open and distance learning modes, our institution was shaped by the guiding principle that access and quality are the cornerstones of equity. We have firmly resolved to uphold the highest standards of education, setting the benchmark and charting the course.

The courses offered by the Sreenarayanaguru Open University aim to strike a quality balance, ensuring students are equipped for both personal growth and professional excellence. The University embraces the widely acclaimed "blended format," a practical framework that harmoniously integrates Self-Learning Materials, Classroom Counseling, and Virtual modes, fostering a dynamic and enriching experience for both learners and instructors.

The university aims to offer you an engaging and thought-provoking educational journey. The undergraduate programme in English Language and Literature has been designed to be on par with the high-quality academic programmes offered at state universities throughout the country. Skill Enhancement Courses are included in the undergraduate curriculum to equip learners with discipline-specific skills. This initiative by the University aims to offer learners fresh exposure to dynamic content within their field of study. The course structure has been developed to align with similar programmes offered by leading institutions of skill training. The Self-Learning Material has been meticulously crafted, incorporating relevant examples to facilitate better comprehension.

Rest assured, the university's student support services will be at your disposal throughout your academic journey, readily available to address any concerns or grievances you may encounter. We encourage you to reach out to us freely regarding any matter about your academic programme. It is our sincere wish that you achieve the utmost success.



Regards,
Dr. Jagathy Raj V. P.

01-01-2025

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BLOCK - 01

Introduction



Competitive Exams : Types, Skills and English Proficiency

Learning Outcomes

Upon the completion of the unit, learners will be able to:

- ▶ identify and classify competitive exams
- ▶ analyse skills tested in competitive exams
- ▶ select suitable exams strategically
- ▶ demonstrate awareness of global and national exams
- ▶ develop English proficiency for exam success

Prerequisites

English is the third most widely spoken language globally and serves as an official language in over fifty countries. In India, English is recognised as an associate official language in the Constitution, playing a significant role in administrative processes, fostering unity among diverse linguistic groups, and facilitating communication. In our daily lives, English acts as a tool to express ideas clearly and efficiently. Proficiency in English improves our ability to communicate effectively with both fellow Indians and individuals from other countries. Its importance in education cannot be overstated, as mastering English significantly enhances one's academic performance and career prospects.

The role of English in competitive exams, both at the national and international levels, is of utmost importance. A majority of competitive exams are conducted in English, making language proficiency crucial for success. Being proficient in English allows candidates to approach these exams with confidence, comprehend questions, and provide well-structured answers. To perform well in such exams, candidates must adopt a systematic approach to language learning, focusing on expanding their vocabulary, improving grammar, and refining their language skills. English papers in competitive exams assess a candidate's ability to apply language skills in critical thinking, problem-solving, mental agility, and effective decision-making. A broad vocabulary is essential for artic-

ulating complex ideas and demonstrating advanced communication skills, which is why English is an integral part of competitive examinations.

Many students fail competitive exams due to a lack of proper planning, while others, despite having a plan, struggle with execution. To address these challenges, it is essential to develop a clear timetable and stick to it. The first step in improving English proficiency is identifying gaps in language skills. To build a robust vocabulary, it is highly recommended to read quality English newspapers, such as *The Hindu*. The next step involves understanding and mastering grammar and its rules. Although many students use English daily, they often struggle with grammar and punctuation during exams, which can hinder performance. The third level of preparation is familiarising oneself with the specific concepts and formats of competitive exams. Each exam has its structure, and practising previous years' question papers can provide valuable insight. Avoiding rote memorisation is crucial in this process. Finally, the last step is self-evaluation. Regular self-assessment helps learners gauge their proficiency level, identify areas for improvement, and refine their time management skills.

Keywords

Competitive Exams, Skills Assessment, Exam Selection, English Proficiency, Global and National Exams

1.1.1 Discussion

In today's interconnected world, the ability to use English proficiently has become indispensable, particularly for those preparing for competitive exams. English is not just a language; it is a tool that empowers individuals to communicate complex ideas effectively, both in professional and personal settings. A strong vocabulary and command of grammar enable candidates to articulate their thoughts clearly, even when dealing with intricate concepts. This becomes especially critical in competitive exams where analytical, reading, writing, and verbal communication skills are rigorously tested.

English proficiency holds immense signifi-

cance in competitive exams because it serves as a bridge for expressing ideas that might otherwise be challenging to convey, even in one's native language. It is not only about fluency but also about precision, clarity, and the ability to adapt to diverse contexts. From job-oriented assessments to academic entrance tests and immigration requirements, the English language plays a pivotal role in determining success.

1.1.1.1 Why English Matters in Competitive Exams?

As the global lingua franca, English facilitates communication across countries, cultures, and professional domains. It is widely recognised as the medium of instruction, diplomacy,





trade, and media. Competitive exams leverage this global utility of English, making it a central component of their evaluation process. Candidates are evaluated on various facets of the language, including grammar, vocabulary, reading comprehension, writing skills, and verbal ability. These exams often divide the English section into two primary categories: vocabulary and grammar.

The vocabulary segment typically includes synonyms and antonyms, homonyms, idioms, phrases, cloze tests, and one-word substitutions. The grammar segment covers topics like active and passive voice, reported speech, conjunctions, prepositions, and tenses. Mastering these areas requires a systematic and well-structured approach to learning.

1.1.1.2 Learning Plan for English in Competitive Exams

Success in competitive exams often hinges on meticulous planning and execution. Many students fail due to either a lack of planning or an inability to follow through with their plans. To address these challenges:

1. **Set a Timetable:** Develop a realistic and consistent schedule for studying English.
2. **Expand Your Vocabulary:** Build a substantial vocabulary by reading quality English newspapers like *The Hindu* or similar publications.
3. **Master Grammar Rules:** Familiarise yourself with the rules of grammar and practice their application in writing and speaking.
4. **Understand Exam Concepts:** Analyse the specific patterns and requirements of the exam by practising question papers from previous years.
5. **Avoid Rote Learning:** Focus on understanding concepts rather than memorising them.
6. **Self-Evaluate:** Regularly assess your proficiency to identify gaps and address them through targeted practice.

1.1.1.3 The Role of English in Career and Education

English proficiency significantly enhances career prospects. It is not only the language of international communication but also a key to accessing global opportunities. Proficiency in English broadens job options and increases employability in fields that require effective communication and analytical skills. In education, English is the medium of instruction worldwide, helping students grasp complex subjects and participate in global academic discourse.

1.1.1.4 Achieving English Proficiency in Exams

To excel in competitive exams, adopt strategies such as consistent practice, listening to English podcasts, watching English-language media without subtitles, and using test-specific materials. Additionally, understanding the structure of the test, creating flashcards for vocabulary, and engaging in active reading can significantly improve your skills. Techniques like mind mapping and the Feynman technique can further enhance comprehension and retention.

1.1.1.5 Challenges and Rewards

While achieving English proficiency requires dedication, it is not an insurmountable task. Language skills can be cultivated through hard work and perseverance. Although English proficiency alone does not guarantee success, it is a critical component that complements other skills and knowledge areas, making it a valuable asset in the journey toward achieving one's goals.

By mastering English, you not only prepare for competitive exams but also equip yourself with a skill that opens doors to diverse oppor-

tunities, fostering both personal and professional growth.

1.1.2 Types of Competitive Exams

Competitive exams in India are broadly categorised into three levels:

1. **General Examinations:** These are standardised exams conducted by various boards across the country to assess foundational knowledge and skills.
2. **Entrance Examinations:** These are held to secure admissions into premier institutions, universities, or colleges of a candidate's choice.
3. **Recruitment Examinations:** These are specifically designed to select candidates for various professional careers in the government and private sectors.

1.1.2.1 Notable Competitive Exams in India

1. **Civil Services Examination (CSE)**
 - ▶ Conducting Body: Union Public Service Commission (UPSC).
 - ▶ Eligibility: Bachelor's degree in any discipline.
 - ▶ Purpose: Recruitment into prestigious government services like IAS, IPS, and IFS.
 - ▶ More Information: [Civil Services Examination](#).
2. **Indian Economic Service (IES) and Indian Statistical Service (ISS) Examinations**
 - ▶ Conducting Body: UPSC.
 - ▶ Eligibility: Bachelor's degree in



Economics, Statistics, or related fields.

- ▶ Purpose: Recruitment for economic and statistical analysis roles.
- ▶ More Information: [IES & ISS](#).

3. Combined Defence Services Examination (CDSE)

- ▶ Conducting Body: UPSC.
- ▶ Eligibility: Bachelor's degree in any discipline; specific requirements for technical branches.
- ▶ Purpose: Entry into the Indian Armed Forces (Army, Navy, Air Force).
- ▶ More Information: [CDSE](#).

4. National Defence Academy (NDA) and Naval Academy Examination

- ▶ Conducting Body: UPSC.
- ▶ Eligibility: Bachelor's degree in Physics, Chemistry, or Mathematics.
- ▶ Purpose: Entry into NDA and Naval Academy.
- ▶ More Information: [NDA/NA Exam](#).

5. Combined Medical Services Examination (CMS)

- ▶ Conducting Body: UPSC.
- ▶ Eligibility: MBBS degree holders.
- ▶ Purpose: Recruitment for medical officer roles in government services.
- ▶ More Information: [CMS](#).

6. Engineering Services Examination (ESE)

tion (ESE)

- ▶ Conducting Body: UPSC.
- ▶ Eligibility: Bachelor's degree in Engineering.
- ▶ Purpose: Recruitment into engineering positions in government departments.
- ▶ More Information: [ESE](#).

7. Staff Selection Commission (SSC) Exams

- ▶ Conducting Body: Staff Selection Commission (SSC).
- ▶ Eligibility: Bachelor's degree in various disciplines.
- ▶ Purpose: Recruitment for multiple government cadres.
- ▶ More Information: [SSC](#).

8. Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Services Board Exams

- ▶ Conducting Body: RBI.
- ▶ Eligibility: Bachelor's degree in any discipline.
- ▶ Purpose: Recruitment into banking and finance roles.
- ▶ More Information: [RBI Exams](#).

9. National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) Exams

- ▶ Conducting Body: NABARD.
- ▶ Eligibility: Bachelor's degree in any discipline.
- ▶ Purpose: Recruitment for development officers and other roles.
- ▶ More Information: [NABARD](#).

10. Graduate Aptitude Test in Engineering (GATE)

- ▶ Conducting Body: IITs and IISc.
- ▶ Eligibility: Bachelor's degree in Engineering or related fields.
- ▶ Purpose: Admission to postgraduate programs and PSU recruitment.
- ▶ More Information: [GATE](#).

11. Common Entrance Examination for Design (CEED)

- ▶ Conducting Body: IIT Bombay.
- ▶ Eligibility: Graduates in BE/B.Tech/B.Arch.
- ▶ Purpose: Admission to design programs.
- ▶ More Information: [CEED](#).

12. National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT) Entrance Exam

- ▶ Conducting Body: NIFT.
- ▶ Eligibility: B.F.Tech or equivalent in engineering fields.
- ▶ Purpose: Admission to fashion and design programs.
- ▶ More Information: [NIFT](#).

13. Xavier Aptitude Test (XAT)

- ▶ Conducting Body: XLRI Jamshedpur.
- ▶ Eligibility: Bachelor's degree from a recognised university.
- ▶ Purpose: Admission to MBA and management programs.
- ▶ More Information: [XAT](#).

1.1.2.2 Popular Government Exams

Some of the most sought-after government exams include:

- ▶ UPSC Civil Services Examination.

tion.

- ▶ IBPS PO Exam.
- ▶ SBI PO Exam.
- ▶ SSC CGL Exam.
- ▶ RBI Grade B Examination.
- ▶ RRB JE SSE Examination.
- ▶ IBPS SO Exam.

1.1.2.3 Competitive Exams After Class 12

For students who have completed their higher secondary education, notable exams include:

- ▶ **Engineering:** JEE Main, JEE Advanced, BITSAT.
- ▶ **Medical:** NEET.
- ▶ **Defence:** NDA, Indian Navy B.Tech Entry Scheme.
- ▶ **Maritime:** Indian Maritime University Common Entrance Test.

These exams serve as stepping stones for candidates to pursue higher education or professional careers in their desired fields. Familiarising oneself with the eligibility criteria, syllabus, and structure of these exams is essential for effective preparation and success.

1.1.3 Skills Tested in Competitive Exams

Success in competitive examinations requires more than just technical knowledge; it also demands mastery of non-technical skills, often referred to as soft skills. Both private and government sectors use these exams to evaluate how well candidates can perform in the workplace.

This highlights the essential skills needed to excel in competitive exams and offers practi-



cal strategies to enhance them.

Core Skills for Competitive Exams:

1. Verbal Ability
2. Problem-Solving
3. Data Interpretation
4. Quantitative Ability
5. Communication Skills
6. Logical Reasoning
7. Time Management
8. Intrapersonal Skills
9. Creativity
10. Emotional Intelligence (EQ)

1. Verbal Ability

Verbal ability measures a person's proficiency in understanding and constructing language. This skill is evaluated through questions on grammar, antonyms, synonyms, analogies, and more. A strong command of verbal-linguistic intelligence - including comprehension, grammar, phonology, and problem-solving - is crucial for success.

Tips to Improve Verbal Ability:

- ▶ **Read Extensively:** Engage with diverse texts to expand vocabulary and familiarise yourself with varied sentence structures and genres.
- ▶ **Keep a Journal:** Document new words, expressions, and strategies for future reference. Adopt the "a new word a day" approach.
- ▶ **Be an Active Learner:** Watch movies, read novels, and engage with content that interests you. Turn day-to-day experiences

into learning opportunities.

- ▶ **Play Word Games:** Games like Scrabble and crossword puzzles can improve vocabulary and problem-solving.
- ▶ **Focus on Grammar:** Identify common mistakes, such as tense errors and homophone confusion, and seek feedback to improve.

2. Problem-Solving

Problem-solving involves identifying issues, determining solutions, and executing them effectively. Competitive exams test this ability through carefully crafted questions.

Tips to Improve Problem-Solving:

- ▶ Practise solving specific types of questions regularly.
- ▶ Increase speed and accuracy.
- ▶ Understand common terminologies and question patterns.
- ▶ Use mock tests to familiarise yourself with exam formats.

3. Data Interpretation

Data interpretation evaluates a candidate's ability to analyse and extract meaningful insights from data presented in various forms, such as graphs, charts, and tables.

Tips to Improve Data Interpretation:

- ▶ Analyse data thoroughly before concluding.
- ▶ Dedicate time to practice interpreting different question formats.
- ▶ Learn to filter and prioritise rele-

vant information.

4. Quantitative Ability

Quantitative aptitude assesses numerical and analytical skills. Questions often include calculations, reasoning, and arithmetic aptitude.

Common Topics in Quantitative Ability:

- ▶ Percentages
- ▶ Profit and Loss
- ▶ Simple and Compound Interest
- ▶ Number Series
- ▶ Age Problems

Tips to Improve:

- ▶ Memorise formulas and short-cuts.
- ▶ Practice calculations to increase speed and accuracy.

5. Communication Skills

Effective communication is critical in competitive exams, especially for sections that test reading, writing, listening, and speaking abilities. The seven C's of communication - clarity, correctness, conciseness, courtesy, concreteness, consideration, and completeness - are essential for success.

6. Logical Reasoning

Logical reasoning is a process of thinking by completely understanding the meaning of the given terminology and working it out logically by inferring the conclusion. We can find logical reasoning-type questions in competitive examinations to analyse the question logically and conclude by providing a correct answer. Logical reasons measure the non-verbal ability of the candidate. Logical reasoning questions can only be answered effectively if one's

proficiency in English is good. One should be able to read the question and understand it to identify the answer. Through logical reasoning, one should be able to extract rules, analogies, and structures to find the answer.

Different types of logical reasoning

- a. Deductive reasoning
- b. Inductive reasoning
- c. Abductive reasoning

a. Deductive reasoning

Deductive reasoning is a process of reasoning where you logically observe and deduct the statement which does not support or prove the theory or hypothesis. This type of reasoning does not provide new information but helps to arrange the facts. A sample question is given below.

For example, which of the following is not a shrub?

Tulsi
Rose
Neem
Sunflower

Ans: Neem

b. Inductive reasoning

Inductive reasoning is a process of reasoning where we keenly observe for general conclusions or theories. We will be looking for patterns and trends that lead to general conclusions. You will have to assume the answer. Hence, we will have to conclude by being uncertain about the answer, but it could likely be the result. Psychometric tests are conducted to test the level of creativity and logical skills. They are also known as abstract tests. A sample test is given below.

E.g.:



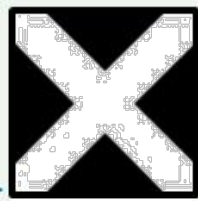


Which of the shapes below continues the sequence:



Fig 1.1.1 Source: <https://www.jobtestprep.co.uk/free-inductive-reasoning-examples>

Ans:



c. Abductive reasoning

Abductive reasoning is a process of reasoning where you abduct logical reasoning and end up merely giving a guess. You are not sure about the answer. We assume that the most probable answer will be the valid one.

For example, while giving competitive exams, there will be a lot of challenging questions, and the test takers cannot skip any of them. So, the test taker ends up in guesswork.

7. Time Management

Time management is vital for both preparation and exam performance. Effective time management reduces stress and improves efficiency.

Tips to Improve Time Management:

- ▶ Create a study plan with clear priorities and deadlines.
- ▶ Use mock tests to practise pacing during exams.
- ▶ Avoid procrastination and focus on consistent study habits.

8. Intrapersonal Skills

Intrapersonal skills involve self-awareness and emotional regulation. These skills are crucial for handling stress, maintaining motivation, and achieving goals.

Key Intrapersonal Skills:

- ▶ **Self-esteem:** Develop confi-

dence in your abilities while avoiding arrogance.

- ▶ **Resilience:** Learn to bounce back from failures and setbacks.
- ▶ **Self-confidence:** Trust your preparation and skills.
- ▶ **Persistence:** Stay determined despite challenges.

9. Creativity

Creativity enables problem-solving and innovative thinking. It helps candidates approach questions from new perspectives.

Types of Creativity:

- a. **Combinational Creativity:** Combining existing ideas to form new solutions.
- b. **Exploratory Creativity:** Exploring and organising concepts in innovative ways.
- c. **Transformational Creativity:** Transforming ideas into actionable solutions.

10. Emotional Intelligence (EQ)

Emotional intelligence is the ability to manage emotions effectively, a critical skill for navigating the stress and pressure of competitive exams.

Tips to improve EQ:

- ▶ Develop self-awareness to understand your emotional triggers.
- ▶ Practise stress management techniques like meditation or deep breathing.
- ▶ Cultivate empathy and interpersonal skills to build better relationships.

By focusing on these skills, candidates can improve their performance and approach competitive exams with confidence and competence.

1.1.4 Which Exam For What Purpose?

Competitive exams are conducted to evaluate a wide range of skills and competencies among candidates, including their knowledge, language abilities, aptitude, and more. These exams are meticulously designed to cater to specific objectives, and individuals need to understand the purpose behind taking such tests.

For some candidates, the primary goal might be to secure a job in a desired field, which often requires excelling in exams that test domain-specific knowledge and skills. Others might aim to gain admission to prestigious educational institutions, where exams evaluate academic aptitude, problem-solving abilities, and readiness for advanced studies.

In other cases, competitive exams serve as a gateway for individuals seeking to immigrate to another country, where demonstrating proficiency in the destination country's language is often mandatory. English language proficiency, in particular, has become a cornerstone for many of these exams, as it is a global medium of communication. Tests like IELTS, TOEFL, and OET assess a candidate's ability to use English effectively in professional, academic, or everyday settings.

Regardless of the specific objective - whether securing a career opportunity, academic placement, or migration prospects - competitive exams act as a benchmark to evaluate whether individuals possess the necessary skills and qualifications. Understanding the purpose of



the exam and its requirements can significantly improve a candidate's preparation and chances of success, making it a critical step in achieving their goals.

1.1.4.1 How to Choose the Exam?

Selecting the right exam is a crucial decision that requires clarity of purpose and determination. Unfortunately, many candidates today lack a clear purpose in life, which leads to confusion when it comes to choosing the right path. Here are some tips:

1. Have a Strong Determination

The first and foremost principle in choosing an exam is having a clear vision for the future. Without a solid goal, it is easy to make decisions based on societal expectations or myths.

For example, many students preparing for entrance exams lack genuine ambition and simply follow conventional advice, such as:

- ▶ “If you score high marks, go for medicine.”
- ▶ “If your grades are lower, choose engineering.”

This approach often leads to dissatisfaction and missed opportunities. Instead, focus on understanding what you truly want to achieve.

2. Focus on One Exam at a Time

Most competitive exams are conducted once or twice a year. Trying to prepare for multiple exams simultaneously can dilute your focus and hinder your performance. Instead, select one exam that aligns closely with your career aspirations and dedicate yourself entirely to its preparation.

3. Follow Your Passion

Another essential principle is to align your choices with your passions and interests. Pursuing a field you are genuinely passionate about not only increases your chances of success but also ensures long-term satisfaction in your career.

4. Consider Specialised Exams

Different exams cater to specific goals, professions, and destinations. Your choice of exam should reflect your aspirations.

▶ For Studying or Working Abroad:

If you wish to study or work in another country, you will likely need to take English proficiency tests. For example:

- **IELTS-Academic, TOEFL, or CAEL:** Required for admission to foreign universities and colleges.
- **OET (Occupational English Test):** Specifically designed for medical professionals. It helps build confidence in using medical terminology in real-world settings.

Each test has its unique focus and requirements, and your choice should depend on your destination and career objectives.

5. Plan Based on Your Career Goals

Some exams are tailored to specific professions, industries, or academic fields. Research the options available and select exams that align with your ambitions. For example:

- ▶ If you aspire to pursue a medical career, consider taking exams like NEET or OET.
- ▶ For engineering or technology,

exams like JEE or GRE might be suitable.

- If you are targeting business or management, GMAT or CAT could be your focus.

Choosing the right exam is about more than just meeting eligibility criteria; it is about paving the way to a fulfilling career. Understand your goals, follow your passions, and select exams that align with your aspirations. A well-thought-out choice can make all the difference in achieving your dreams.

1.1.5 Relevance of Competitive Exams and English Proficiency

Competitive exams are integral to modern education and career advancement, often serving as a gateway to academic, professional, and personal growth. English proficiency plays a critical role in these examinations, as English is frequently used as the primary medium for questions, instructions, and communication. This section explains the significance of competitive exams, the role of English proficiency in them, and strategies to excel in this domain.

1.1.5.1 Importance of Competitive Exams

Competitive exams evaluate a candidate's knowledge, aptitude, and skills to determine their suitability for specific academic courses, scholarships, or job positions. Key reasons for their importance include:

- **Standardised Assessment:** They provide a uniform platform to assess candidates from diverse educational and cultural backgrounds.
- **Merit-Based Selection:** These exams ensure fair opportunities by prioritising merit over other

factors.

- **Skill Development:** Preparing for competitive exams fosters discipline, problem-solving skills, and time management.
- **Global Opportunities:** Success in exams like GRE, TOEFL, IELTS, and GMAT enables candidates to study or work abroad.

Examples include:

- **Academic:** NEET, JEE, GATE, GRE, SAT.
- **Professional:** UPSC, SSC, IBPS, CAT, GMAT.
- **Language Proficiency:** TOEFL, IELTS, PTE.

1.1.5.2 Role of English Proficiency in Competitive Exams

English proficiency is vital in most competitive exams, particularly for international and national assessments. Its relevance spans across:

a) Medium of Communication

- Instructions:** Exam guidelines and question papers are primarily written in English.
- Essays and Descriptive Questions:** Many exams test written communication through essay writing or descriptive questions.

b) Sections Testing Language Skills

- Reading Comprehension:** Candidates analyse passages and answer related questions.
- Verbal Reasoning:** This tests logical understanding through language.



- c. Grammar and Vocabulary:** Exams often include questions on sentence structure, synonyms, antonyms, and idiomatic usage.

c) Global Acceptance

Proficiency in English is non-negotiable for exams like the GRE, TOEFL, or IELTS. It demonstrates a candidate's ability to function effectively in an English-speaking academic or professional environment.

d) Competitive Edge

A superior command of English helps candidates stand out in group discussions, interviews, and written assessments.

1.1.5.3 Strategies to Improve English Proficiency for Competitive Exams

a) Reading Comprehension

- ▶ Practice reading varied materials: newspapers, journals, novels, and academic texts.
- ▶ Focus on understanding the main ideas, arguments, and inferences.
- ▶ Develop speed reading without compromising comprehension.

b) Vocabulary Building

- ▶ Learn 5-10 new words daily, including their meanings, usage, synonyms, and antonyms.
- ▶ Use flashcards and vocabulary-building apps for reinforcement.
- ▶ Regularly review and apply new words in writing or speaking.

c) Grammar Mastery

- ▶ Study foundational grammar topics: tenses, articles, prepositions, conjunctions, and sentence

structure.

- ▶ Solve grammar-based practice questions and review explanations for errors.

d) Writing Skills

- ▶ Practice essay writing on diverse topics to develop coherence and structure.
- ▶ Focus on clarity, conciseness, and grammatical accuracy.
- ▶ Review and edit written work to identify areas for improvement.

e) Listening and Speaking Skills

- ▶ Watch English news channels, podcasts, and lectures to improve listening comprehension.
- ▶ Engage in conversations with proficient English speakers or join language practice groups.
- ▶ Record yourself speaking and analyse fluency, pronunciation, and grammar.

1.1.5.4 Preparation Tips for Competitive Exams Requiring English Proficiency:

a) Understand Exam Patterns

- ▶ Study the structure, syllabus, and weightage of English sections in the exam.
- ▶ Familiarise yourself with question types like multiple-choice, fill-in-the-blanks, and essay writing.

b) Practice Mock Tests

- ▶ Take timed practice tests to simulate real exam conditions.
- ▶ Analyse performance to identify strengths and weaknesses.

c) Focus on Time Management

- ▶ Allocate specific time slots for reading, writing, and vocabulary practice.
- ▶ Learn to balance speed and accuracy during exams.

d) Use Quality Study Material

- ▶ Refer to trusted books, online resources, and coaching modules designed for specific exams.

e) Stay Consistent

- ▶ Dedicate time daily for English practice.
- ▶ Track progress and adjust strategies as needed.

1.1.5.5 Benefits of English Proficiency Beyond Competitive Exams

English proficiency extends far beyond the realm of competitive exams, offering numerous advantages:

- ▶ **Career Opportunities:** English fluency opens doors to global job markets.
- ▶ **Academic Success:** Effective comprehension and communication enhance learning outcomes.
- ▶ **Networking:** It facilitates connections in multicultural and international environments.
- ▶ **Personal Growth:** Mastery of English boosts confidence and self-expression.

The relevance of competitive exams and English proficiency is undeniable in today's competitive world. Mastering English not only ensures success in such exams but also enhances professional, academic, and personal prospects. By adopting structured strategies

and consistent effort, candidates can achieve proficiency, giving them a decisive edge in their pursuits.

1.1.6 Competitive Exams in India

Competitive exams in India play a crucial role in shaping the academic, professional, and personal lives of millions of aspirants. These exams are conducted to select candidates for various academic programmes, government jobs, and professional roles. This section provides an in-depth understanding of competitive exams in India, their significance, categories, and preparation strategies.

1.1.6.1 Importance of Competitive Exams in India

Competitive exams serve as a benchmark for assessing an individual's knowledge, skills, and aptitude. They are vital for:

- ▶ **Merit-Based Selection:** Ensures fairness and transparency in recruitment and admissions.
- ▶ **Career Advancement:** Opens doors to prestigious government and private sector jobs.
- ▶ **Skill Assessment:** Tests problem-solving abilities, critical thinking, and subject-specific expertise.
- ▶ **National and Global Opportunities:** Provides access to academic institutions and jobs in India and abroad.

1.1.6.2 Categories of Competitive Exams

Competitive exams in India can be broadly classified into academic, government job-oriented, and professional certifications.



a) Academic Competitive Exams

These exams help students gain admission to top educational institutions.

- ▶ **Engineering:** JEE Main, JEE Advanced, BITSAT, VITEEE
- ▶ **Medical:** NEET UG, AIIMS, JIPMER
- ▶ **Management:** CAT, MAT, XAT, NMAT
- ▶ **Law:** CLAT, AILET, LSAT-India
- ▶ **Study Abroad:** GRE, GMAT, SAT

b) Government Job Exams

These exams are gateways to lucrative careers in government sectors.

- ▶ **Civil Services:** UPSC CSE (IAS, IPS, IFS)
- ▶ **Banking and Finance:** IBPS PO, SBI PO, RBI Grade B
- ▶ **Railways:** RRB NTPC, RRB Group D
- ▶ **Defence:** NDA, CDS, AFCAT
- ▶ **Teaching:** CTET, UGC NET, TET
- ▶ **Public Sector Units (PSUs):** GATE for PSUs like ONGC, IOCL

c) Professional Certifications

These exams certify expertise in specific fields.

- ▶ **Chartered Accountancy:** CA Foundation, CA Intermediate, CA Final
- ▶ **Company Secretary:** CS Foundation, CS Executive
- ▶ **Actuarial Science:** ACET
- ▶ **Information Technology:** Mic-

rosoft, Cisco, AWS certifications

1.1.6.3 Structure and Pattern of Competitive Exams

Competitive exams in India usually follow a structured pattern:

- ▶ **Objective-Type Questions:** Multiple-choice questions (MCQs) with one correct answer.
- ▶ **Descriptive Sections:** Essays, case studies, and analytical writing for higher-level exams.
- ▶ **Interview or Group Discussion:** Personality assessment through personal interaction.
- ▶ **Skill-Based Tests:** Practical exams for technical and creative fields.

Common Sections in Exams

- ▶ **Quantitative Aptitude:** Arithmetic, algebra, geometry, and data interpretation.
- ▶ **Logical Reasoning:** Puzzles, patterns, and deductive reasoning.
- ▶ **English Language:** Grammar, vocabulary, reading comprehension.
- ▶ **General Knowledge:** Current affairs, history, geography, and polity.
- ▶ **Technical Subjects:** Domain specific knowledge based on the role or course.

1.1.6.4 Strategies for Success in Competitive Exams

a) Understand the Exam

- ▶ Analyse the syllabus, exam pat-

tern, and weightage of sections.

- ▶ Review previous years' question papers and mock tests.

b) Time Management

- ▶ Create a realistic study schedule with daily and weekly goals.
- ▶ Allocate more time to weaker subjects or sections.

c) Effective Study Techniques

- ▶ Use quality study materials and resources.
- ▶ Focus on conceptual understanding rather than rote learning.
- ▶ Take notes for quick revision.

d) Practice Regularly

- ▶ Solve practice papers and simulate real exam conditions.
- ▶ Use online platforms for sectional and full-length mock tests.

e) Stay Updated

- ▶ Read newspapers and follow reliable news sources for current affairs.
- ▶ Use apps and websites for daily updates and quizzes.

f) Mental and Physical Well-being

- ▶ Take regular breaks and ensure a balanced lifestyle.
- ▶ Practice meditation or exercise to reduce stress and enhance focus.

1.1.6.5 Popular Competitive Exams and Tips for Preparation

a) UPSC Civil Services Examination

- ▶ **Purpose:** Recruitment for IAS,

IPS, IFS, and other administrative roles.

- ▶ **Tips:** Focus on NCERT books and current affairs, and practise writing answers.

b) JEE Main and Advanced

- ▶ **Purpose:** Admission to IITs, NITs, and other engineering colleges.
- ▶ **Tips:** Strengthen concepts in physics, chemistry, and mathematics; solve mock tests.

c) NEET UG

- ▶ **Purpose:** Admission to MBBS and BDS courses.
- ▶ **Tips:** Concentrate on NCERT biology and practice chemistry and physics numerical.

d) CAT (Common Admission Test)

- ▶ **Purpose:** Entry into IIMs and top management schools.
- ▶ **Tips:** Enhance verbal ability, logical reasoning, and quantitative skills.

e) Banking Exams (IBPS PO, SBI PO)

- ▶ **Purpose:** Recruitment for probationary officers and clerks in banks.
- ▶ **Tips:** Practise quantitative aptitude reasoning and improve general awareness.

1.1.6.6 Challenges Faced by Aspirants

a) Competition

The vast number of applicants creates intense competition.

b) Lack of Resources



Not all aspirants have access to quality study materials or coaching.

c) Pressure and Stress

High expectations can lead to anxiety and burnout.

d) Time Constraints

Balancing studies with other responsibilities can be challenging.

1.1.6.7 Role of Technology in Competitive Exam Preparation

- ▶ **Online Classes and Tutorials:** Platforms like Unacademy, BYJU'S, and Khan Academy.
- ▶ **Mock Tests and Quizzes:** These are available on apps and websites like Testbook and Gradeup.
- ▶ **E-books and Digital Notes:** Easily accessible for efficient preparation.
- ▶ **AI-Based Learning:** Personalised learning experiences based on performance analysis.

Competitive exams in India test knowledge, perseverance, discipline, and strategic planning. With the right resources, effective strategies, and consistent efforts, aspirants can achieve success and secure their desired goals. These exams are stepping stones to a brighter future, offering opportunities for personal and professional growth.

1.1.7 International Competitive Exams

International competitive exams open gateways to global education and career opportunities. These exams assess academic knowledge, professional expertise, and English language proficiency, catering to students, profession-

als, and job seekers worldwide. This section provides an in-depth understanding of various international competitive exams, their significance, and preparation strategies.

1.1.7.1 Importance of International Competitive Exams

International competitive exams are essential for:

- ▶ **Higher Education:** Admission to prestigious universities and colleges worldwide.
- ▶ **Career Advancement:** Qualification for global job opportunities in various sectors.
- ▶ **Professional Certification:** Validation of skills and expertise in specific fields.
- ▶ **Language Proficiency:** Demonstrating English language skills in academic and professional settings.
- ▶ **Personal Growth:** Building confidence and enhancing global competitiveness.

1.1.7.2 Categories of International Competitive Exams

These exams can be broadly classified into academic, professional, and language proficiency tests.

a) Academic Competitive Exams

These exams evaluate students' aptitude and subject knowledge for higher education.

- ▶ **Undergraduate Programs:**
 - SAT (Scholastic Assessment Test)
 - ACT (American College Testing)
- ▶ **Postgraduate Programs:**

- GRE (Graduate Record Examination)
- GMAT (Graduate Management Admission Test)
- LSAT (Law School Admission Test)
- MCAT (Medical College Admission Test)

b) Professional Certification Exams

These tests certify individuals' skills and expertise in specific domains.

► **IT and Software:**

- Microsoft Certified Solutions Expert (MCSE)
- Cisco Certified Network Associate (CCNA)
- AWS Certified Solutions Architect

► **Finance and Accounting:**

- CFA (Chartered Financial Analyst)
- ACCA (Association of Chartered Certified Accountants)

► **Project Management:**

- PMP (Project Management Professional)
- PRINCE2 (Projects in Controlled Environments)

c) Language Proficiency Tests

These exams evaluate proficiency in English and other languages.

► **English Proficiency:**

- TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language)
- IELTS (International English Language Testing System)
- PTE (Pearson Test of English)

► **Other Languages:**

- DELF/DALF (French)
- Goethe-Zertifikat (German)
- JLPT (Japanese Language Proficiency Test)

1.1.7.3 Popular International Competitive Exams

a) GRE (Graduate Record Examination)

- **Purpose:** Admission to graduate programs.
- **Structure:** Analytical Writing, Verbal Reasoning, and Quantitative Reasoning.
- **Preparation Tips:**
 - Focus on building vocabulary and critical thinking skills.
 - Practice problem-solving and data interpretation.

b) GMAT (Graduate Management Admission Test)

- **Purpose:** Admission to business schools.
- **Structure:** Analytical Writing, Integrated Reasoning, Quantitative, and Verbal sections.
- **Preparation Tips:**
 - Develop logical reasoning and quantitative analysis skills.
 - Familiarise yourself with business-related case studies.

c) IELTS and TOEFL

- **Purpose:** Demonstrate English language proficiency for academic or professional purposes.
- **Structure:** Listening, Reading, Writing, and Speaking sections.
- **Preparation Tips:**
 - Engage in regular reading, writing, and conversational practice.



- Take mock tests to improve time management and accuracy.

d) SAT (Scholastic Assessment Test)

- ▶ **Purpose:** Undergraduate admissions in U.S. colleges.
- ▶ **Structure:** Evidence-Based Reading and Writing, Math, and an optional Essay.
- ▶ **Preparation Tips:**
 - Strengthen foundational skills in mathematics and critical reading.
 - Practice with sample questions and full-length tests.

e) CFA (Chartered Financial Analyst)

- ▶ **Purpose:** Certification in investment and financial management.
- ▶ **Structure:** Three levels covering ethics, economics, and portfolio management.
- ▶ **Preparation Tips:**
 - Build a strong understanding of financial concepts.
 - Dedicate consistent time for practice and revision.

1.1.7.4 Strategies for Preparation

a) Understand the Exam Pattern

- ▶ Familiarise yourself with the syllabus and question types.
- ▶ Analyse previous years' papers and exam trends.

b) Plan a Study Schedule

- ▶ Allocate specific time slots for each section.
- ▶ Incorporate breaks and regular revisions into the schedule.

c) Use Quality Resources

- ▶ Invest in reputed study materials

and online courses.

- ▶ Access official practice tests and guides.

d) Join Study Groups or Forums

- ▶ Collaborate with peers to exchange ideas and strategies.
- ▶ Participate in discussion forums for expert advice.

e) Take Mock Tests

- ▶ Simulate real exam conditions to build confidence.
- ▶ Identify and work on weak areas based on test performance.

f) Focus on Time Management

- Practice solving questions within the given time frame.
- Learn to prioritise tasks based on difficulty and mark allocation.

1.1.7.5 Challenges Faced by Aspirants

a) High Competition

- ▶ Global participation increases the level of competition.

b) Cost of Exams

- ▶ Registration fees and preparation costs can be significant.

c) Stress and Pressure

- ▶ Balancing preparation with other responsibilities can be overwhelming.

d) Access to Resources

- ▶ Limited availability of quality resources in certain regions.

1.1.7.6 Role of Technology in Preparation

- ▶ **Online Platforms:** Websites like

Khan Academy, Coursera, and edX offer preparation courses.

- ▶ **Mobile Apps:** Apps like Magoosh, Duolingo, and Quizlet enhance learning on the go.
- ▶ **Virtual Tutors:** AI-based platforms provide personalised feedback and coaching.
- ▶ **Webinars and Workshops:** Live sessions with experts for guidance and tips.

International competitive exams are gateways to unparalleled educational and professional opportunities. Success in these exams requires a blend of dedication, strategic planning, and access to quality resources. Aspirants must stay focused, adapt to evolving trends, and leverage technology to achieve their goals. With the right mindset and preparation, these exams can pave the way for global success and recognition.

Recap

- ▶ Types of Competitive Exams
- ▶ Skills Tested in Competitive Exams.
- ▶ Purpose of Competitive Exams
- ▶ Choosing the Right Competitive Exam
- ▶ Preparation for Competitive Exams
- ▶ Significance of Competitive Exams
- ▶ English Proficiency in Exams
- ▶ Skill Development Through Preparation
- ▶ Improving English Proficiency
- ▶ Structured Preparation Strategies
- ▶ Career and Academic Growth
- ▶ Competitive Exams in India
- ▶ International Competitive Exams
- ▶ Technological Advancements in Exam Preparation



Objective Questions

1. What is the exam for recruitment into India's civil services?
2. Which exam is required for entry into the Indian Armed Forces?
3. Which exam is for admission to postgraduate engineering programs?
4. What is the exam for admission to medical programs in India?
5. Which competitive exam is designed for admission to create programs?
6. Which exam is required for English proficiency when studying abroad?
7. What is the recruitment exam for the Reserve Bank of India?
8. Which exam is specifically for admission to fashion and design programs?
9. Which type of reasoning is used to deduce conclusions from a set of premises?
10. Which type of reasoning involves looking for general patterns and conclusions?
11. What do competitive exams primarily evaluate?
12. Which exam tests English proficiency for academic purposes?
13. What skill is essential for excelling in competitive exams?
14. Which competitive exam is conducted for engineering admissions in India?
15. What is the primary purpose of professional certification exams?
16. Which language proficiency test is required for study in English-speaking countries?
17. What types of questions are common in competitive exams?
18. Which exam assesses logical reasoning and verbal ability for management studies?
19. What strategy improves English proficiency for competitive exams?
20. Which exam is associated with Indian civil services recruitment?

Answers

1. UPSC
2. NDA
3. GATE
4. NEET
5. CEED
6. IELTS
7. RBI Exam
8. NIFT

9. Deductive
10. Inductive
11. Knowledge
12. TOEFL
13. Time-management
14. JEE
15. Expertise
16. IELTS
17. MCQs
18. GMA.
19. Practice
20. UPSC

Assignments

1. Discuss the different types of competitive exams and the specific skills they assess. How do these skills contribute to the overall evaluation of candidates?
2. Explain the purpose of various competitive exams (academic, professional, and government job-oriented). Provide examples of exams suited for different career goals and educational paths.
3. Analyse the significance of English proficiency in competitive exams. How does it impact a candidate's performance, particularly in international and national assessments?
4. Evaluate the importance of competitive exams in India. How do these exams serve as gateways to academic success, professional growth, and career advancement?
5. Compare and contrast popular international competitive exams (e.g., GRE, TOEFL, SAT) with their Indian counterparts (e.g., JEE, NEET, UPSC). How should a candidate choose the appropriate exam based on their career aspirations and academic goals?



Suggested Reading

1. Sharma, R. S. Mastering English for Competitive Exams. New Delhi: Prentice Hall, 2018.
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3. Kumar, Arun. Cracking Competitive Exams: Time Management and Study Skills. Jaipur: Gyan Publishing House, 2020.
4. Chopra, Aarti. Achieving Success in Competitive Examinations: A Comprehensive Study of Key Skills. Mumbai: Oxford University Press, 2019.
5. Jain, P. K., and Neelam Arora. English Proficiency for Competitive Exams: Vocabulary and Grammar Mastery. Chandigarh: Orient BlackSwan, 2021.



Question Types and Task Formats

Learning Outcomes

Upon the completion of this unit, the learner will be able to:

- demonstrate problem-solving using a single skill or concept effectively
- apply multiple skills to solve complex, multifaceted problems accurately
- identify correct answers in multiple-choice or true/false questions
- provide detailed, structured responses showing a comprehensive understanding of topics

Prerequisites

Have you ever wondered how different types of questions in exams challenge your skills in unique ways? From solving a straightforward problem to connecting multiple concepts or analysing patterns, each question type tests something different. In this unit, we are going to break down the key types of questions - individual tasks, integrated tasks, objective questions, descriptive questions, and reasoning - and explore strategies to tackle them effectively for exam success.

Key Concepts

Exam questions, Question types, Skills Challenge, Connecting concepts, Analysing patterns, Individual tasks, Integrated tasks



1.2.1 Types of Questions Asked in Competitive Exams

In competitive examinations, candidates are tested on a wide range of skills, and understanding the different types of questions that can appear is crucial for effective preparation. Each type of question is designed to assess specific abilities, from basic knowledge recall to complex problem-solving and critical thinking. Knowing the formats of these questions allows candidates to develop appropriate strategies, manage time effectively, and improve their chances of success.

Competitive exams often feature a variety of question types, including individual tasks, integrated tasks, objective questions, descriptive questions, and cloze tests. Each of these question types evaluates different skills, so candidates need to approach them with the right mindset and techniques. Below is a brief list of the most common question types encountered in competitive exams.

1. Objective Questions

Objective questions are the most widely used format in competitive exams. They aim to test factual knowledge, problem-solving skills, and reasoning abilities.

a) Multiple Choice Questions (MCQs)

- **Format:** A question followed by multiple answer options, typically with one correct answer.

- **Examples:**

- What is the capital of France?
 - a) Berlin
 - b) Paris
 - c) Madrid
 - d) Rome

- **Skills Tested:**

- Recall of factual information.

- Analytical thinking to eliminate incorrect options.

- **Preparation Tips:**

- Focus on conceptual clarity.
- Practice mock tests and previous papers.
- Learn shortcuts for solving numerical MCQs efficiently.

b) True or False

- **Format:** Candidates must determine the correctness of a given statement.

- **Examples:**

- *The Earth is the fourth planet from the Sun.* (True/False)

- **Skills Tested:**

- Understanding of general knowledge and core concepts.

c) Matching Type Questions

- **Format:** Match items in one column to their corresponding items in another.

- **Examples:**

- Match the following:
 - Column A: Countries
 - Column B: Capitals
 - A) Germany - i) Madrid
 - B) Spain - ii) Berlin
 - (Answer: A - ii, B - i)

d) Fill in the Blanks

- **Format:** Candidates complete a sentence with the correct word(s).

- **Examples:**

- *The Taj Mahal is located in -----.* (Answer: Agra)

2. Descriptive Questions

Descriptive questions require candidates to

write detailed answers to demonstrate their understanding of a subject.

a) Essay Writing

- ▶ **Format:** A topic is provided, and candidates must write an essay.
- ▶ **Skills Tested:**
 - Articulation of ideas.
 - Critical thinking and organisation.
- ▶ **Preparation Tips:**
 - Practice writing essays on diverse topics.
 - Focus on structure: Introduction, Body, and Conclusion.

b) Letter Writing

- ▶ **Format:** Candidates are tasked with writing formal or informal letters.
- ▶ **Examples:**
 - Write a letter to the editor about environmental pollution.

c) Analytical Writing

- ▶ **Format:** Provide an analysis of a given topic or scenario.
- ▶ **Examples:**
 - Analyse the impact of globalisation on local economies.

3. Reasoning Questions

Reasoning questions assess logical and analytical thinking abilities.

a) Verbal Reasoning

- ▶ **Format:** Questions involve word-based problems.
- ▶ **Examples:**
 - Find the odd one out: Dog, Cat, Fish, Car.

b) Non-Verbal Reasoning

- ▶ **Format:** Includes pattern recognition, image-based questions, and puzzles.
- ▶ **Examples:**
 - Identify the next shape in a sequence.

c) Logical Reasoning

- ▶ **Format:** Involves solving syllogisms, puzzles, and coding-decoding.
- ▶ **Examples:**
 - *All cats are animals. All animals are mammals. Therefore, all cats are mammals. (True/False)*

4. Cloze Tests

Cloze tests involve filling in blanks within a passage testing comprehension and language skills.

▶ **Format:**

A passage is provided with several missing words that candidates must fill in.

▶ **Example:**

- Complete the passage:
 - "Global warming is a result of increased ____ emissions into the ____."
 - (Answer: carbon, atmosphere)

Skills Tested:

- ▶ Vocabulary.
- ▶ Reading comprehension.
- ▶ Grammar.

5. Subjective Questions

These questions assess in-depth knowledge of a subject area.

a) Problem-Solving Questions



- **Format:** Solve numerical or theoretical problems.

- **Examples:**

- Calculate the compound interest for a principal amount of \$10,000 at an annual rate of 5% for 3 years.

b) Case Studies

- **Format:** Analyze a given case and provide solutions or interpretations.

- **Examples:**

- A company faces declining sales. Analyse the reasons and suggest strategies.

6. Integrated Tasks

Integrated tasks combine multiple skills or domains in a single question.

Examples:

1. Read a passage and summarise it in your own words.
2. Analyse data from a chart and answer related questions.

7. Data Interpretation Questions

These questions assess the ability to interpret and analyse data presented in various formats.

a) Charts and Graphs

- **Format:** Questions based on bar graphs, pie charts, or line graphs.

- **Examples:**

- Analyze the following chart showing company sales over five years and answer the questions.

b) Tables

- **Format:** Data is presented in tabular form.

- **Examples:**

- If Company A has 200 employees and Company B has 300,

calculate the ratio of employees.

8. Critical Thinking Questions

These questions require evaluation and synthesis of information to form conclusions.

Examples:

1. What are the implications of increased automation on employment?
2. Evaluate the pros and cons of social media in education.

1.2.2 Individual Tasks and Integrated Tasks

1.2.2.1 Individual Tasks

Competitive exams employ various question formats to test candidates' cognitive abilities, problem-solving skills, language proficiency, and subject knowledge. Among the many formats, individual tasks and integrated tasks are two key types that appear across different exams.

Individual tasks are questions or problems designed to test a single, specific skill or area of knowledge. Unlike integrated tasks, which combine multiple skills or sources of information, individual tasks stand alone and are independent of other questions in the exam. Each task provides a focused and targeted way to evaluate a candidate's proficiency in a particular domain.

Individual tasks are defined as standalone questions that are self-contained and do not rely on any external material or linked questions. Their purpose is to assess the candidate's ability to address specific challenges in isolation. For example, an individual task may focus solely on solving a math problem, identifying a grammatical error, or answering a

reasoning question without requiring context from any other part of the exam.

Key Features of Individual Tasks

1. Specificity

One of the defining characteristics of individual tasks is their specificity. Each question is designed to target a distinct skill or knowledge area. For example:

- ▶ In quantitative aptitude, a task might involve solving an equation or interpreting numerical data.
- ▶ In language proficiency, a task could require identifying errors in sentence structure or choosing the correct word for a blank. This focus allows examiners to measure the candidate's mastery of precise concepts or skills.

2. Self-Contained Nature

Individual tasks are self-contained, meaning all the information needed to answer them is included within the question itself. They do not depend on external resources, such as additional passages, tables, or linked questions. This independence ensures that the task evaluates the candidate's ability to respond to a clear, isolated challenge.

3. Direct Approach

The format of individual tasks is typically straightforward to understand. The instructions are clear, and the candidate is expected to provide a concise and focused response.

For example:

- ▶ *Solve for x in the equation: $2x + 5 = 15$.*
- ▶ *Identify the error in the following sentence: The in-*

formations are accurate.
The direct nature of these tasks ensures that candidates can quickly grasp what is required and apply their skills to solve the problem.

Examples of Individual Tasks in Competitive Exams

a) Objective Type Questions

1. Multiple Choice Questions (MCQs)

- ▶ Test knowledge or aptitude with predefined options.
- ▶ Example:
 - *What is the square root of 144?*
 - a) 10
 - b) 12
 - c) 14
 - d) 16

▶ **How to Prepare:**

- Focus on accuracy and speed.
- Practice solving MCQs daily to improve familiarity with different formats.

2. True or False

- ▶ Evaluate logical understanding or factual correctness.
- ▶ Example: *The capital of Japan is Beijing.*
 - True / False

b) Numerical Ability Questions

- ▶ Focus on arithmetic, algebra, or data interpretation.
- ▶ Example: *If 15% of a number is 45, what is the number?*

c) Language-based Tasks

1. Fill in the Blanks



- ▶ Test grammar and vocabulary.
- ▶ Example: *She is ----- intelligent to make such a mistake.*
 - Options: a) too, b) so, c) very, d) enough

2. Sentence Correction

- ▶ Assess grammatical proficiency.
- ▶ Example: Identify the error in the sentence: *He do not like apples.*
 - Options: a) He, b) do, c) not, d) like apples

3. Vocabulary Questions

- ▶ Example: Choose the synonym of “elaborate.”
 - Options: a) simple, b) detailed, c) concise, d) narrow

d) Logical Reasoning Questions

- Test critical thinking and problem-solving.
- Example: *Find the odd one out: 2, 4, 8, 10, 16.*

f) General Knowledge

- Who is known as the Father of the Indian Constitution?

Advantages of Individual Tasks

1. Precision in Assessment

Individual tasks provide a clear and focused way to evaluate specific skills without ambiguity.

2. Ease of Preparation

Since the questions are self-contained, candidates can practice similar types of questions independently and develop expertise in targeted areas.

3. Versatility Across Subjects

These tasks are adaptable to various disciplines, making them a universal tool for evaluating knowledge and skills in competitive exams.

Strategies to Tackle Individual Tasks

1. Understand the Question Thoroughly

Read the question carefully to grasp what is being asked. Misinterpretation can lead to errors even in straightforward tasks.

2. Practise Regularly

Regular practice of standalone problems enhances accuracy and speed, which are crucial for competitive exams.

3. Focus on Strengthening Core Skills

Since these tasks assess specific skills, it is essential to build a strong foundation in areas like mathematics, grammar, reasoning, or general knowledge.

4. Time Management

Individual tasks are usually less time-consuming than integrated tasks. Allocate sufficient time to solve them accurately, but avoid overthinking.

Five Individual Task Exercises

1. Math Problem

Task: Solve for x in the equation: $5x - 7 = 18$.

2. Fill in the Blank

Task: Select the correct option to complete the sentence:
She ----- enjoys reading novels in her free time.

Options: a) rarely, b) usually, c) seldom, d) occasionally

3. Error Detection

Task: Identify the grammatical error in the sentence:

“The teacher were happy with the students' performance.”

4. Logical Reasoning

Task: What comes next in the sequence: 3, 6, 12, 24, ____?

5. General Knowledge

Task: Who was the first President of the United States?

Options: a) Abraham Lincoln, b) George Washington, c) Thomas Jefferson,
d) John Adams

1.2.2.2 Integrated Tasks

Integrated tasks are designed to evaluate a candidate's ability to use multiple skills or knowledge areas simultaneously. Unlike individual tasks, which focus on a single skill, integrated tasks combine different domains or require the analysis and synthesis of information from diverse sources. They aim to assess a candidate's capability to think critically, process information, and apply knowledge in a multifaceted way.

Integrated tasks are questions or problems that involve the use of two or more skills or subjects. For example, a task might require reading a passage, analysing its content, and then writing a response based on the information provided. Alternatively, it could involve listening to an audio clip and correlating it with a visual chart to answer a question. These tasks evaluate not only the candidate's proficiency in individual skills but also their ability to integrate and apply these skills cohesively.

Key Features of Integrated Tasks

1. Interdisciplinary Nature

Integrated tasks often blend elements from various domains. For example:

A task may involve reading a scientific article

and responding to questions that test comprehension, reasoning, and writing skills.

In a language proficiency exam, candidates might be required to listen to a lecture and summarise the key points in writing. This interdisciplinary nature ensures that candidates can effectively apply their knowledge in real-world scenarios, where challenges are rarely confined to a single domain.

2. Higher Complexity

Integrated tasks tend to be more complex than individual tasks, as they demand higher-order thinking skills such as analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. Candidates must not only understand the information presented but also critically examine it and draw conclusions. For example, analysing trends from a graph while correlating it with text data requires both numerical and linguistic reasoning.

3. Multi-Step Process

Solving integrated tasks often involves multiple stages. For example:

- ▶ First, the candidate might need to interpret data from a chart.
- ▶ Next, they might synthesise that data with additional textual information.



- ▶ Finally, they would formulate a written response or solve a problem based on the combined analysis. This multi-step process challenges candidates to approach problems methodically and holistically.

Examples of Integrated Tasks in Competitive Exams

a) Reading + Writing Tasks

1. Summarisation:

- ▶ Example: Read a passage and summarise it in 150 words.
- ▶ Tested in: TOEFL, IELTS.
- ▶ **How to Prepare:**
 - Develop reading comprehension skills.
 - Practise paraphrasing and summarising.

2. Critical Analysis:

- ▶ Example: Read a paragraph and identify the author's main argument.

b) Listening + Writing Tasks

- ▶ Example: Listen to an audio clip about climate change and write an essay summarising the key points.
- ▶ Tested in TOEFL and academic exams.
- ▶ **How to Prepare:**
 - Practise listening to academic lectures or podcasts.
 - Improve note-taking skills.

c) Data Interpretation Tasks

1. Reading Charts and Graphs:

- ▶ Example: Analyse the following bar graph and answer questions about trends over time.

2. Cross-Referencing Data:

- ▶ Combine two data sets to draw conclusions.
- ▶ Tested in: UPSC, CAT, and GMAT.

How to Prepare:

- ▶ Familiarise yourself with various chart types (bar, pie, line).
- ▶ Practise analysing data for trends and patterns.

d) Problem-Solving Tasks with Contextual Elements

- ▶ Example: A company wants to reduce costs by 10% while increasing productivity by 15%. Propose a solution using the given data.

Tested in: Management and analytical exams like CAT, and GRE.

e) Banking and Financial Sector Exams

- ▶ Analysing a numerical dataset and correlating it with a textual report to answer questions.
- ▶ Interpreting trends from charts and graphs to evaluate economic conditions.

f) Management and Business Exams (e.g., CAT, GMAT)

- ▶ Solving case studies that require understanding textual information, numerical data, and applying logical reasoning.

g) Civil Services Exams (e.g., UPSC)

- ▶ Writing essays based on current affairs articles and statistical data.
- ▶ Combining knowledge of history, geography, and economics to address multidisciplinary problems.

h) Integrated Language Tasks

- ▶ Example:

- **Task:** Write a persuasive letter based on a given situation.
- **Input:** Details about the situation are provided in a paragraph or chart.

Advantages of Integrated Tasks

1. Real-World Relevance

Integrated tasks simulate real-life scenarios where multiple skills must be applied simultaneously, such as analysing market trends while preparing a business report.

2. Comprehensive Assessment

These tasks provide a holistic evaluation of a candidate's abilities, offering insights into their critical thinking, problem-solving, and communication skills.

3. Encourages Critical Thinking

By requiring candidates to synthesise and evaluate information, integrated tasks promote deeper understanding and intellectual rigour.

Strategies to Master Integrated Tasks

1. Develop Multitasking Skills:

Practice integrating multiple skills like reading, listening, and writing simultaneously.

2. Practise Comprehensive Exercises:

Solve practice questions that combine data analysis, reading comprehension, and reasoning.

3. Focus on Logical Flow:

Ensure that your answers follow a structured and logical progression.

4. Break Down the Task

Approach integrated tasks in stages. For example, first focus on understanding the text or audio, then move to analysing data or writing a response.

5. Develop Analytical Skills

Enhance your ability to synthesise information from different sources by practising with case studies, research articles, and data interpretation exercises.

6. Time Management

Allocate sufficient time to each stage of the task without spending too long on any single aspect.

7. Use Technology:

Utilise tools like Khan Academy or official TOEFL/IELTS preparation apps to practice integrated questions.

Here are five integrated tasks presented in a column format for practice:

Integrated Tasks Exercises

1. Reading + Writing

Task: Read a short paragraph about the benefits of exercise and write one sentence summarising its main idea.

Skills Tested: Reading comprehension, summarisation, and paraphrasing.

2. Listening + Writing

Task: Listen to a 2-minute audio clip on healthy eating tips and list three key



points mentioned.

Skills Tested: Listening comprehension, critical thinking, and written communication.

3. **Data Interpretation**

Task: Look at a bar chart showing sales of fruits over four months and answer: Which fruit had the highest sales in December?

Skills Tested: Numerical analysis and trend interpretation.

4. **Problem-Solving**

Task: A student has 5 hours to study for two exams. Suggest a schedule using the provided study requirements.

Skills Tested: Logical reasoning, data interpretation, and problem-solving.

5. **Cross-Referencing**

Task: Read a description of a city's population growth and compare it to a graph. Identify which year showed the fastest growth rate.

Skills Tested: Data correlation and analytical reasoning.

These exercises focus on combining basic skills for practical application.

1.2.3 Different Types of Questions

1.2.3.1 Objective Questions

Objective questions are a fundamental component of competitive exams, designed to assess a candidate's ability to recall facts, apply knowledge, and make quick decisions. These questions have specific and unambiguous answers, making them an effective way to evaluate knowledge across a broad range of topics. Objective questions are a crucial part of competitive exams, especially those assessing English language proficiency. These questions are designed to have a clear and specific answer, allowing examiners to evaluate a candidate's knowledge and skills objectively. They are highly structured, enabling efficient scoring and minimising ambiguity.

Types of Objective Questions in English Language Exams

1. Multiple Choice Questions (MCQs)

Multiple Choice Questions are a common format in English language exams. They present a question or statement with several answer options, typically ranging from three to five choices. Candidates must select the most accurate answer.

► Example:

Identify the synonym of the word “abundant”:

- a) Scarce
- b) Plentiful
- c) Rare
- d) Insufficient

► MCQs in English test vocabulary, grammar, comprehension, and reasoning skills. They often include distractors (plausible but

incorrect answers) to challenge the depth of the candidate's understanding.

2. True or False Questions

In this format, candidates determine whether a statement is true or false. True or false questions assess factual accuracy or understanding of grammar and sentence structure.

► Example:

The sentence "He go to the market yesterday" is grammatically correct.

- True/False

Such questions are straightforward but may include nuanced language or rules that require careful analysis.

3. Fill-in-the-Blanks

Fill-in-the-blank questions require candidates to supply the correct word or phrase to complete a sentence. These questions are used to evaluate vocabulary, grammar, and sentence structure.

► Example:

She ---- the homework before the deadline.
(Answer: "completed")

- Fill-in-the-blanks can be contextual, requiring the candidate to understand the sentence's meaning and grammatical structure.

4. Match the Following

Matching questions involve pairing related terms or concepts. In English exams, this format often tests vocabulary, idioms, phrases, or grammar.

Example:

Match the phrasal verbs with their meanings:

- A) Give up - 1) To continue
- B) Carry on - 2) To surrender
- C) Look after - 3) To take care of

(Correct matches: A-2, B-1, C-3)

These questions evaluate the candidate's ability to recognise relationships between different linguistic elements.

Importance of Objective Questions in English Language Exams

1. Comprehensive Skill Assessment

Objective questions allow for the assessment of a wide range of English language skills, including grammar, vocabulary, reading comprehension, and writing mechanics. Their versatility makes them suitable for various competitive exams such as TOEFL, IELTS, and SSC.

2. Efficient Evaluation

With their precise answers, objective questions enable quick and unbiased evaluation, ensuring fairness in scoring. This efficiency is particularly valuable in large-scale competitive exams.

3. Focus on Factual Knowledge and Application

Objective questions test not only the recall of facts but also the application of linguistic rules. For example, identifying the correct tense in a sentence demonstrates an understanding of grammatical principles.

4. Encouragement of Quick Decision-Making

Many competitive exams are time-sensitive. Objective questions require candidates to think quickly and decisively, honing their ability to process information efficiently.



Examples of Objective Questions in English Exams

► Grammar MCQ:

Choose the correct form of the verb:
The baby ---- crying all night.

- a) is
- b) has been
- c) was
- d) will

► True or False:

The word “stationary” means "not moving."

- True/False

► Fill-in-the-Blanks:

The novel was written ---- a famous author in the 19th century.

(Answer: ‘by’)

► Match the Following:

Match the idioms with their meanings:

- A) Break the ice - 1) To start a conversation
- B) Under the weather - 2) Feeling unwell
- C) Hit the sack - 3) Go to bed

(Correct matches: A-1, B-2, C-3)

Strategies for Tackling Objective Questions in English

1. Understand the Question Format

Familiarise yourself with different types of objective questions through practice. Knowing the patterns in exams like IELTS and TOEFL can give you a strategic advantage.

2. Develop Vocabulary and Grammar Skills

Build a strong foundation in English by studying word meanings, sentence structures, and usage rules. Regular reading and practice can significantly improve performance.

3. Time Management

Objective questions are often time-sensitive. Allocate time for each question and avoid spending too much time on a single item.

4. Practise Regularly

Solve practice tests and previous exam papers to improve speed and accuracy. This also helps identify weak areas that need improvement.

Five Objective Exercises

1. Multiple Choice Question

Question: Identify the antonym of the word “optimistic”:

- a) Hopeful
- b) Positive
- c) Pessimistic
- d) Cheerful

2. True or False

Statement: The sentence “She don’t like playing soccer” is grammatically correct.

Answer Options: True / False

3. Fill-in-the-Blank

Question: The train arrived ---- time for the meeting.

Options: a) on, b) at, c) in, d) by

4. **Match the Following**

Match the idioms with their meanings:

- ▶ A) A piece of cake - 1) Very expensive
- ▶ B) Cost an arm and a leg - 2) Reveal a secret
- ▶ C) Let the cat out of the bag - 3) Very easy

5. **Grammar Identification**

Question: Which of the following sentences is correct?

- a) She has went to the market.
- b) She has gone to the market.
- c) She have gone to the market.
- d) She going to the market.

1.2.3.2 Descriptive Questions

Descriptive questions are an integral part of many English language assessments and competitive exams. Unlike objective questions, these require candidates to craft detailed written responses. The open-ended nature of descriptive questions provides an opportunity to showcase analytical thinking, interpretative skills, and proficiency in written communication.

Key Features of Descriptive Questions

1. Open-Ended and Subjective Nature

Descriptive questions do not have a single correct answer. Instead, they allow candidates to express their thoughts, interpretations, or arguments on a given topic. The quality of the response depends on the candidate's ability to present ideas clearly and logically.

2. Evaluation Criteria

These questions assess multiple skills, includ-

ing:

- ▶ **Analytical skills:** The ability to break down a topic and examine its components.
- ▶ **Interpretative skills:** The ability to understand and explain meanings or implications.
- ▶ **Communication skills:** The ability to articulate thoughts effectively using correct grammar, structure, and vocabulary.

Examples of Descriptive Questions in English

1. Discussive or Analytical Questions

Example: *Discuss the role of technology in modern education.*

In this type of question, candidates must explore various aspects of the topic, such as how technology helps learning through online resources, interactive tools, and accessibility,



while also addressing challenges like digital divide and over-reliance on gadgets.

2. Explanatory Questions

Example: *“Explain the impact of globalization on the English language.”*

Responses should include a clear explanation of how globalization has influenced the spread of English, making it a global lingua franca, and how it has incorporated words and phrases from other languages.

3. Argumentative or Opinion-Based Questions

Example: *Do you think social media has improved or hindered communication skills? Support your answer with examples.*

Candidates must present their stance with arguments and examples, such as discussing how social media fosters global connections but can also lead to a decline in formal writing skills.

4. Creative Writing Tasks

Example: Write a story that begins with the sentence, *‘It was a rainy afternoon when I stumbled upon an old diary...’* Such tasks evaluate imagination, narrative skills, and the ability to write coherently.

Usage of Descriptive Questions in Exams

Descriptive questions are commonly featured in:

- **English Language Exams:** TOEFL writing sections include essay questions that test the candidate’s ability to write an argument or opinion piece.
- **Competitive Exams:** UPSC mains and university-level exams often require essay writing to assess the candidate’s depth of knowledge and critical thinking.

- **School and Academic Assessments:** These questions test students’ understanding of literature, grammar, and writing styles.

Preparation Strategies for Descriptive Questions

1. Practise Structured Writing

A well-organised response includes a clear **introduction**, **body paragraphs**, and a **conclusion**. The introduction should outline the main idea, the body should elaborate on supporting points, and the conclusion should summarise the discussion effectively.

2. Focus on Grammar and Vocabulary

Correct grammar and a rich vocabulary enhance the readability of responses. Practice using complex sentences and varied sentence structures to improve writing fluency.

3. Develop Coherence and Cohesion

Ensure that ideas flow logically from one paragraph to the next. Use transitional words such as *however*, *therefore*, *in addition*, and *on the other hand* to link ideas smoothly.

4. Analyse and Critique Sample Essays

Review well-written responses to understand the elements of effective descriptive writing. Practice critiquing essays to identify areas of improvement in structure and argumentation.

5. Time Management

Practice writing essays or responses within a time limit to develop speed and efficiency. Allocate time for planning, writing, and reviewing your work.

6. Work on Argument Development

When crafting arguments, back them with ex-

amples or data. For instance, if discussing the advantages of reading literature, mention specific works or authors that have significantly influenced cultural understanding.

Example Response for Practice

Question: *How does reading literature enhance language skills? Discuss with examples.*

Introduction:

Reading literature is a powerful tool for improving language skills. It provides exposure to diverse writing styles, expands vocabulary, and enhances comprehension abilities.

Body:

One of the key benefits of reading literature is vocabulary enrichment. Classic works such as Charles Dickens' *Great Expectations* or Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* introduce readers to a wide range of words and phras-

es that are rarely encountered in everyday conversation. Additionally, literature fosters an understanding of complex sentence structures, which improves grammar usage. For example, studying Shakespearean plays helps readers appreciate rhetorical devices like metaphors and alliteration.

Moreover, literature enhances critical thinking and interpretative skills. Engaging with themes in George Orwell's *1984* or Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* encourages readers to analyse societal issues while improving their ability to infer meanings.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, reading literature is an invaluable practice for language learners. By immersing themselves in rich texts, readers can develop advanced vocabulary, refine grammar, and cultivate analytical skills, making literature an indispensable resource for mastering the English language.

Descriptive Exercises

1. Analytical Essay:

Question: Discuss the significance of cultural diversity in modern society.

Instructions: Write a 300-word essay explaining the benefits and challenges of cultural diversity, using examples to support your points.

2. Explanatory Response:

Question: Explain the impact of climate change on global ecosystems.

Instructions: Provide a detailed explanation of how climate change affects different ecosystems, such as forests, oceans, and polar regions.

3. Opinion-Based Argument:

Question: Do you agree that artificial intelligence will replace human jobs entirely? Why or why not?

Instructions: Write a 250-word argument, clearly stating your opinion and supporting it with at least two examples or facts.

4. Creative Writing Task:

Question: Write a story that begins with: "The day started like any other, but little did I know it would change my life forever..."



Instructions: Create an engaging narrative of at least 200 words, ensuring it has a clear beginning, middle, and conclusion.

5. Literature-Based Discussion:

Question: How does the theme of resilience manifest in the novel *To Kill a Mockingbird*?

Instructions: Analyse how the characters demonstrate resilience in the face of adversity. Use specific examples from the text to support your analysis.

These exercises are designed to enhance analytical thinking, creative expression, and structured writing skills.

1.2.3.3 Cloze Test

A cloze test is an evaluative tool designed to measure a person's ability to comprehend and interpret a text. It involves a passage where certain words are deliberately removed, requiring the candidate to fill in the blanks with the most suitable words. This type of exercise assesses vocabulary, grammar, and contextual understanding.

The Purpose and Need for Cloze Tests

Cloze tests play a vital role in evaluating language proficiency and comprehension skills. They challenge students to understand the overall context of a passage and determine the appropriate words that seamlessly fit into the missing spaces.

- ▶ **Enhancing Contextual Understanding:**
- ▶ Students develop the ability to analyse the surrounding text and infer meanings.
- ▶ **Improving Vocabulary:** By identifying the missing words, learners expand their vocabulary and grasp nuances in language usage.
- ▶ **Building Reading Skills:** Cloze tests sharpen a student's reading comprehension and speed.

Key Features of Cloze Tests

1. Assessment of Vocabulary and Grammar

Cloze tests are designed to evaluate a candidate's command over vocabulary and grammatical structures. They often include blanks that can be filled only with words that fit grammatically and contextually. For instance, understanding prepositions, verb forms, or collocations is crucial to answering correctly.

2. Contextual Understanding

Success in cloze tests depends on the ability to analyse the surrounding text and infer the meaning. Contextual clues play a vital role in guiding the candidate toward the correct answer.

3. Integration of Language Skills

Cloze tests are not limited to testing one aspect of language; they integrate multiple skills. Candidates must read, understand, and apply their knowledge of grammar and vocabulary simultaneously.

Example of a Cloze Test in English

Scenario in a Classroom Setting:

A language teacher may present a passage like:
Today, I went to the ----- and bought some eggs and vegetables.

Here, the blank encourages students to use

contextual clues to fill in a logical word. Suitable answers could include *market* or *grocery store*.

Competitive Exam Example:

The increasing use of technology has significantly ----- (1) the way we ----- (2) information and communicate with each other. While it offers numerous benefits, it also poses ----- (3) risks to privacy and security."

Options:

1. a) enhanced, b) hindered, c) complicated
2. a) absorb, b) share, c) interpret
3. a) minimal, b) significant, c) theoretical

Correct Answers:

1. *enhanced*
2. *share*
3. *significant*

This example showcases how cloze tests are designed to assess both grammatical accuracy and contextual appropriateness.

Cloze Tests in Competitive Exams

In competitive exams, cloze tests are frequently featured, especially in sections that test English language skills.

Format: Candidates are presented with a passage where certain words are omitted. They must fill these blanks with words that fit the context and grammar of the passage.

Examples of Exams:

- ▶ Banking exams (IBPS, SBI PO, RRB).
- ▶ Language proficiency exams (IELTS, TOEFL).
- ▶ Government job exams (SSC,

UPSC).

Types of Cloze Tests

Cloze tests can be categorised based on their structure and level of assistance provided:

Standard Cloze Tests:

In these tests, a passage is presented with blanks for specific words. Candidates must rely entirely on the context to identify the correct answers.

Example: *The ----- (1) of a strong education system is vital for national ----- (2).*

No word bank is provided, demanding a higher degree of linguistic competence.

Guided Cloze Tests:

These tests offer a word bank with possible answers, helping candidates narrow down their choices.

Example: *Word Bank: {development, foundation, strategy, growth}*

Importance of Cloze Tests

Cloze tests serve multiple purposes in academic and competitive settings:

- ▶ **Measuring Reading Comprehension:** They provide insights into how well a candidate understands the passage and its implied meaning.
- ▶ **Testing Practical Language Skills:** Unlike rote learning, cloze tests evaluate real-time application of vocabulary and grammar.
- ▶ **Adapting to Audiences:** In professional settings, cloze tests can assess how effectively a text aligns with its intended audience's reading level.



► Frequent Use in Exams

Cloze tests are widely featured in exams such as IELTS, TOEFL, SSC, and other competitive assessments. They are especially valuable for testing practical language skills in real-world contexts.

► Measurement of Practical Proficiency

Unlike rote memorisation, cloze tests measure a candidate's ability to use language dynamically, making them a reliable tool for assessing real-world language competency.

► Versatility

Cloze tests can be tailored to assess specific aspects of language, such as grammatical accuracy, vocabulary richness, or reading comprehension.

Tips for Excelling in Cloze Tests

1. Enhance Vocabulary:

- Read extensively, including newspapers, novels, and academic texts.
- Learn synonyms, antonyms, and collocations.

2. Master Grammar:

- Focus on grammar rules, such as subject-verb agreement, prepositions, and tense usage.
- Understand how sentence structures work in different contexts.

3. Practise Regularly:

- Solve sample passages and past exam papers.
- Time yourself to improve speed and accuracy.

4. Analyse Context Clues:

- Look for surrounding words and sentences that provide hints.

Identify the tone and theme of the passage for a more accurate word selection.

Advanced Example for Practice

Passage:

The rapid advancements in ----- (1) have revolutionized the way we ----- (2) with each other. Social media platforms, for instance, have made it easier to ---- (3) information, though they also raise concerns about privacy and misuse.

Options:

1. a) communication b) transportation c) education
2. a) debate b) interact c) reflect
3. a) restrict b) access c) disseminate

Correct Answers:

1. *communication*
2. *interact*
3. *disseminate*

This example requires candidates to use context clues to identify words that align with the passage's theme of technological advancement and its impact on communication.

1.2.3.4 Reasoning

Reasoning questions are crucial in competitive exams as they assess a candidate's logical thinking, problem-solving capabilities, and ability to recognise patterns. These questions challenge individuals to think critically, identify logical connections, and solve problems using a systematic approach. They are found in various exams like the Common Admission Test (CAT), Graduate Record Examinations (GRE), Railway Recruitment Board (RRB),

and many others. Reasoning tests generally fall into four broad categories: verbal reasoning, non-verbal reasoning, analytical reasoning, and quantitative reasoning. Let's explore each type in detail, with examples for better understanding.

Types of Reasoning Questions:

Reasoning questions can be classified into four broad categories: verbal reasoning, non-verbal reasoning, analytical reasoning, and quantitative reasoning. These categories test different aspects of reasoning, such as logical interpretation, visual recognition, analytical deduction, and numerical problem-solving.

1. Verbal Reasoning

Verbal reasoning questions involve the manipulation of language, requiring candidates to analyse and interpret written statements, identify relationships between concepts, and make logical conclusions based on the provided

information. These questions assess how well candidates can comprehend, infer, and deduce meaning from verbal stimuli.

Examples of Verbal Reasoning:

a. Syllogisms: Syllogisms are a popular form of verbal reasoning that presents two or more premises followed by a conclusion. Candidates must determine whether the conclusion is logically valid based on the premises.

Example 1: "All roses are flowers. All flowers are plants. Are all roses plants?"

Answer: Yes. The conclusion logically follows because all roses are flowers, and all flowers are plants. Therefore, all roses must be plants.

Example 2: "All apples are fruits. All oranges are fruits. Are all apples oranges?"

Answer: No. The premises do not state that all apples and oranges are the same thing, just that both are fruits.

Exercise 1: Syllogisms

Instructions: Read the following premises and determine if the conclusion logically follows from them.

1. **Premise 1 :** All doctors are professionals.

Premise 2 : All professionals are responsible.

Conclusion : Are all doctors responsible?

Answer : Yes, because if all doctors are professionals and all professionals are responsible, then all doctors must be accountable.

2. **Premise 1 :** All roses are flowers.

Premise 2 : Some flowers are red.

Conclusion : Are all roses red?

Answer : No, the premises do not indicate that all roses are red, only that some flowers are red.



b. Statements and Conclusions: In these questions, a statement is followed by one or more conclusions, and candidates must decide if the conclusions follow logically from the statement.

Example 1: Statement: “All students in the class passed the exam.” Conclusion: “Some students in the class passed the exam.”

Answer: Yes. The conclusion follows because if all students passed, it implies that some students did as well.

Example 2: Statement: “No birds are mammals.” Conclusion: “No mammals are birds.”

Answer: Yes. If no birds are mammals, then no mammals can be birds, as the categories are mutually exclusive.

c. Analogies: Analogies test the ability to recognise relationships between pairs of words and apply the same logic to another pair.

Example 1: “Pen is to paper as brush is to _____?”

Answer: “Canvas” or “paint.” The relationship is that a pen is used on paper, and a brush is used on canvas or with paint.

Example 2: “Book is to reading as the fork is to _____?”

Answer: “Eating.” The relationship is that books are used for reading, and forks are used for eating.

d. Blood Relations: These questions involve understanding relationships between different people based on familial ties.

Example 1: “John's mother is Mary's daughter. How is John related to Mary?”

Answer: “John is Mary's grandson.” If John's mother is Mary's daughter, then John is the grandson of Mary.

Example 2: “Peter is the father of John, but John is not Peter's son. How are Peter and John related?”

Answer: “John is Peter's daughter.”

2. Non-Verbal Reasoning

Non-verbal reasoning questions are designed to assess candidates' abilities to recognise patterns, shapes, and relationships in visual stimuli. These questions involve solving problems that require spatial and pattern recognition skills without relying on language.

Examples of Non-Verbal Reasoning:

a. Pattern Completion: In these questions, candidates are shown a series of shapes, and they must identify the next shape in the sequence based on the visual pattern.

Example 1: “Identify the next shape in this series: Square, Circle, Triangle, Square, Circle, -----?”

Answer: “Triangle.” The pattern alternates between Square, Circle, and Triangle.

Example 2: “What comes next in this sequence of shapes? A circle, square, triangle, circle, square, -----?”

Answer: “Triangle.” The shapes follow a repeating cycle of three shapes.

b. Mirror Images: These questions involve determining what an object would look like if it were reflected in a mirror.

Example 1: If an object is the letter “E,” its mirror image would be a backward “E.”

Example 2: A question might show the letter “L” and ask you to choose the correct mirror image from four options. The correct answer would be the reflection of the letter “L.”

c. Odd One Out: In these questions, candidates are asked to identify the item that does

not belong in a group based on a common visual feature.

Example 1: “Which of these shapes is the odd one out: Square, Circle, Triangle, Hexagon?”

Answer: “Circle.” All the other shapes have straight edges, while the circle has curved edges.

Example 2: “Which number is the odd one out: 2, 4, 6, 8, 9?”

Answer: “9.” All the other numbers are even, while 9 is odd.

d. Figure Analogy: This involves finding a relationship between two given figures and applying that same relationship to a third figure.

Example 1: “If the first figure is a circle, and the second figure is a square, what is the corresponding figure for a triangle?”

Answer: “A pentagon.” The pattern involves moving from a circle (round) to a square (four sides), so the next figure in the sequence would logically have more sides (five sides, hence a pentagon).

3. Analytical Reasoning

Analytical reasoning involves deducing conclusions from a set of facts or conditions, often presented in the form of puzzles or scenarios. Candidates need to apply logic and critical thinking to analyse data, evaluate possibilities, and make conclusions.

Examples of Analytical Reasoning:

a. Data Sufficiency: These questions present a problem followed by two statements. Candidates must determine whether the statements provide enough information to solve the problem.

Example 1: Problem: What is the value of x ?

Statement 1: $x + 5 = 10$. Statement 2: $x - 5 = 10$.

Answer: “Both statements together are sufficient to solve for x .” Statement 1 gives $x = 5$, and Statement 2 gives $x = 15$. Thus, the answer is indeterminate without further clarification.

Example 2: Problem: Is the number 35 divisible by 5? Statement 1: The number ends in 5. Statement 2: The number is greater than 20.

Answer: “Statement 1 is sufficient on its own.” Since a number ending in 5 is always divisible by 5, Statement 1 alone is enough to answer the question.

b. Seating Arrangements: Seating arrangement problems are based on the positioning of people or objects in a specific arrangement according to certain rules.

Example 1: “A group of five friends - John, Mary, Sarah, Robert, and Alice - are seated in a row. John is sitting next to Robert, and Alice is sitting next to Sarah. Who is sitting in the middle?”

Answer: “Mary.” By analysing the arrangement, we can determine that the only person left is Mary, who must be seated in the middle.

Example 2: “In a classroom, five students are sitting in a row. A is sitting to the left of B, but to the right of C. D is sitting to the right of A. Who is sitting in the second position from the left?”

Answer: “A.” The seating arrangement can be visualized as C-A-B-D-E, so A sits in the second position.

c. Blood Relations: Blood relation problems involve understanding familial relationships and deducing how different family members are related to each other.

Example 1: “John's father is David, and Da-



vid's wife is Sarah. Sarah has two children, John and Lily. How is Lily related to John?"

Answer: "Lily is John's sister."

Example 2: "Aman's mother is the daughter of Rajiv. Rajiv has two sons. How is Rajiv related to Aman?"

Answer: "Rajiv is Aman's grandfather."

4. Quantitative Reasoning

Quantitative reasoning tests candidates' numerical and mathematical problem-solving abilities. These problems evaluate candidates' proficiency in handling mathematical concepts such as arithmetic, algebra, probability, and number sequences. Quantitative reasoning questions are an integral part of exams like the CAT, GRE, and GMAT.

Examples of Quantitative Reasoning:

a. Number Series: Number series problems test the ability to recognise patterns in a sequence of numbers and deduce the next number in the series.

Example 1: "What comes next in the series: 2, 6, 12, 20, -----?"

Answer: "30." The series follows a pattern of adding consecutive even numbers (4, 6, 8, 10). So, the next number is $20 + 10 = 30$.

Example 2: "Find the missing number: 5, 10, 20, 40, -----?"

Answer: "80." The pattern involves doubling the previous number, so the next number is 40

$\times 2 = 80$.

Importance of Reasoning Questions

Reasoning questions are a core component of several major competitive exams, such as the CAT (Common Admission Test), GRE (Graduate Record Examinations), and RRB (Railway Recruitment Board) exams. These exams often feature reasoning sections that test the candidate's ability to think logically and solve problems under time constraints. The skills developed through reasoning questions - critical thinking, problem-solving, and pattern recognition - are not only useful for exams but are also important in everyday decision-making and professional tasks.

Preparation Tips

Consistent practice is key to excelling at reasoning questions. One effective strategy is to work through logical puzzles and numerical problems, as they help build familiarity with different question formats and enhance your reasoning skills. For verbal reasoning, it's beneficial to practice with reading comprehension exercises, logical syllogisms, and verbal analogies. For non-verbal reasoning, visual puzzles, such as identifying patterns in shapes or solving sequences of images, can improve pattern recognition. Moreover, taking mock tests is an excellent way to simulate the test environment, improve your time management skills, and track your progress. These preparatory steps can significantly boost your performance and confidence in tackling reasoning questions during exams.

Exercises for Reasoning Practice

1. Verbal Reasoning - Syllogisms

Instructions: Determine if the conclusion logically follows the given premises.

a. Premise 1: All cats are animals.

Premise 2: Some animals are wild.

Conclusion: Are all cats wild?

b. Premise 1: All engineers are creative.

Premise 2: All creative people are thinkers.

Conclusion: Are all engineers thinkers?

2. Non-Verbal Reasoning - Pattern Completion

Instructions: Identify the next shape in the sequence.

a. Sequence: Triangle, Square, Circle, Triangle, Square, -----.

b. Sequence: A star with 5 points, a star with 6 points, a star with 7 points, -----.

3. Analytical Reasoning - Seating Arrangements

Instructions: Analyze the arrangement and answer the question.

a. Five friends - Lisa, Tom, Raj, Mia, and Sarah - are seated in a row. Lisa is sitting next to Tom. Raj is to the right of Mia but to the left of Sarah. Who is seated in the middle?

b. Six people are seated in a circle: A, B, C, D, E, and F. B is to the immediate left of D. C is opposite A. Who is sitting between E and F?

4. Quantitative Reasoning - Number Series

Instructions: Identify the missing number in the series.

a. 3, 6, 12, 24, -----, 96

b. 1, 4, 9, 16, -----, 36

5. Logical Reasoning - Blood Relations

Instructions: Determine the relationship based on the given statements.

a. John's father is Peter, and Peter's wife is Sarah. Sarah has two children, John and Emily. How is Emily related to John?

b. Asha's mother is Ravi's father's sister. How is Ravi related to Asha?

These exercises cover various aspects of reasoning and encourage logical thinking, pattern recognition, and problem-solving skills.

Recap

- ▶ Different types of questions assess various skills and knowledge areas
- ▶ Individual tasks test one specific skill or concept effectively
- ▶ Integrated tasks combine multiple skills to solve complex problems
- ▶ Objective questions test factual knowledge and quick decision-making abilities
- ▶ Multiple-choice questions assess recall, comprehension, and logical thinking
- ▶ True/false questions evaluate the understanding of simple facts or concepts
- ▶ Descriptive questions require detailed, structured responses with clear arguments
- ▶ Writing ability is tested in descriptive questions with in-depth explanations
- ▶ Cloze tests assess vocabulary, grammar, and contextual understanding of texts
- ▶ Fill-in-the-blank questions test reading comprehension and word selection skills
- ▶ Reasoning questions challenge logical thinking and pattern recognition abilities
- ▶ Logical deduction is crucial for solving reasoning-based question formats
- ▶ Verbal reasoning tests understanding through language-based problem-solving tasks
- ▶ Non-verbal reasoning involves recognising patterns and visual problem-solving skills
- ▶ Analytical reasoning requires interpreting data and solving situational problems

Objective Questions

1. What type of task focuses on a single skill or concept?
2. Which task type requires the combination of multiple skills?
3. What type of question asks for a specific fact or answer?
4. What type of questions require a detailed, written response?
5. Which type of test involves filling in blanks within a passage?
6. What type of questions assess your knowledge of facts and concepts?
7. What type of question requires interpreting patterns and shapes visually?
8. Which type of reasoning involves analysing and solving complex problems?

9. What type of questions test logical thinking through language-based problems?
10. Which question type requires recognising visual or non-verbal patterns?
11. What type of task asks for a response with multiple skills involved?
12. Which type of question tests the ability to recall specific facts?
13. What type of question requires writing a structured argument or explanation?
14. Which type of test evaluates the contextual meaning of words in a passage?
15. What type of reasoning tests your ability to deduce conclusions logically?

Answers

1. Individual
2. Integrated
3. Objective
4. Descriptive
5. Cloze
6. Objective
7. Non-verbal
8. Analytical
9. Verbal
10. Non-verbal
11. Integrated
12. Objective
13. Descriptive
14. Cloze
15. Reasoning

Assignments

1. Explain the differences between individual tasks and integrated tasks in competitive exams.
2. Discuss the significance of objective questions in competitive exams.
3. Describe the role of descriptive questions in evaluating a candidate's ability to express ideas.



4. What are cloze tests, and how do they assess vocabulary and reading comprehension? Discuss strategies for tackling cloze tests successfully.
5. Analyse the importance of reasoning questions in competitive exams.

Suggested Reading

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Skills-Based Approach to Competitive Examination Tasks

Learning Outcomes

Upon the completion of this unit, the learner will be able to:

- ▶ recognise and explain various types of listening tasks commonly found in competitive examinations
- ▶ improve their speaking abilities
- ▶ tackle various reading tasks, including answering multiple-choice questions, answering sentence completions and summarising passages
- ▶ learn how to plan, organise and write coherent essays, summaries and short answers, demonstrating clear expression and logical structure.

Prerequisites

Imagine you are at a lively dinner party, surrounded by friends and family. As the conversation flows, you are listening carefully to a friend tell an exciting story, analysing their tone to gauge their excitement. Suddenly, someone asks you to share your thoughts on a recent book you have read. Now, it is your turn to speak, and you need to organise your ideas clearly. Afterwards, someone hands you a magazine article and asks you to find specific details about a recent trip they took. Later in the evening, you are tasked with writing a toast for a celebration, capturing both the humour and sincerity of the moment in a few short sentences.

Each of these scenarios - listening, speaking, reading, and writing - requires different skills, yet they all come together to ensure effective communication. The same is the way in competitive examinations, where each task challenges you to demonstrate specific abilities; these everyday situations test your ability to listen attentively, speak confidently, read critically and write thoughtfully. In this unit, we will explore how these skills are tested in examinations, break down the types of tasks you will encounter and discuss strategies to master each one, helping you navigate both formal assessments and everyday conversations with ease.



Key Concepts

Listening Skills, Speaking Tasks, Reading Comprehension, Writing Skills, Critical Listening, Fluency in Speaking, Essay Writing, Task Completion

1.3.1 Listening

In today's competitive world, listening is an indispensable skill that plays a vital role in academic, professional, and personal contexts. Competitive examinations often include listening tasks to evaluate a candidate's comprehension, critical thinking and interpretive skills. This section explores the various types of listening, their importance, and the nature of listening tasks commonly found in competitive examinations, along with strategies to master them.

Listening is a dynamic and active process involving the reception, construction of meaning and response to spoken or non-verbal messages. Unlike passive hearing, listening requires focus and intent, making it a key skill in effective communication. It forms the foundation for understanding, learning and analysing information. In the context of competitive examinations, listening assessments gauge a candidate's ability to comprehend spoken materials, extract relevant information and make logical deductions.

1.3.1.1 Types of Listening

Different types of listening serve varied purposes, and understanding these types can help identify the strategies needed for each listening scenario. The main types include:

Discriminative Listening

Discriminative listening is the most basic form of listening, which involves distinguishing between various sounds, accents or intonations. This type of listening is essential for

identifying subtle nuances in spoken language that may not be immediately apparent. For example, discriminative listening helps us recognise the speaker's tone, whether it is formal, casual, sarcastic or serious. The ability to discern these subtleties allows the listener to infer the speaker's mood or intention. For example, if a speaker raises their voice and emphasises certain words, we might interpret that the speaker is angry or passionate about the topic being discussed.

Comprehensive Listening

Comprehensive listening involves understanding the content or message conveyed by the speaker. It is crucial for grasping the main ideas, supporting details and the overall context of the conversation. This type of listening is essential in academic or professional settings where information needs to be absorbed for further analysis. For example, during a lecture or an instructional video, comprehensive listening enables a listener to follow the main points and retain relevant details. In a test setting, candidates must listen to a passage and identify its central theme or key points to answer related questions accurately. Without comprehensive listening, it would be difficult to understand complex concepts or follow a detailed explanation.

Critical Listening

Critical listening is a higher-level skill that requires analysing, evaluating and forming judgments about the spoken content. This type of listening is often used when making informed decisions or forming opinions about

the material being presented. Critical listeners assess the credibility of the speaker, the logic of the argument, and the quality of the information being provided. For example, in a debate or a presentation, critical listening helps the listener evaluate whether the speaker's arguments are sound, based on evidence, or based on faulty reasoning. A critical listener might assess whether a speaker's claims are backed by facts and whether their conclusions logically follow from the premises.

Appreciative Listening

Appreciative listening centres around enjoying and appreciating the aesthetic aspects of speech, such as the rhythm, tone or emotional impact of the delivery. It is often employed in situations where the goal is to enjoy the speaker's style, such as during motivational speeches, poetry readings or storytelling sessions. In appreciative listening, the listener focuses on the beauty of the language and the emotional resonance of the content. For example, when listening to a poem, appreciative listeners may pay attention not only to the meaning of the words but also to the rhythm, metre, and emotional expression conveyed through the speaker's voice. This type of listening helps create an emotional connection to the content.

Empathetic Listening

Empathetic listening is focused on understanding the speaker's emotions, thoughts and perspectives. It is often used in personal or counselling settings where the listener aims to provide emotional support and foster a deeper connection with the speaker. This type of listening requires full attention and the ability to empathise with the speaker's feelings and experiences. For example, when someone shares a personal story about a difficult experience, empathetic listening allows the listener to respond in a way that shows understanding and care. The listener may not only hear the

words but also sense the speaker's underlying emotions, offering validation and support. This kind of listening is essential for building rapport and trust.

Selective Listening

Selective listening involves focusing on specific information while filtering out irrelevant or unnecessary details. This type of listening is commonly used when there is a need to extract key pieces of information from a larger body of content. For example, when listening to a news report, selective listeners might pay attention only to the most important facts, such as dates, names or key events and ignore peripheral details that are not relevant. This is particularly useful in situations where time is limited or the listener needs to focus on specific aspects of the conversation, such as when gathering information for a research project or making a decision. Selective listening helps individuals remain efficient and focused on the essential points.

1.3.1.2 Types of Listening Tasks Asked in Competitive Examinations

Competitive examinations use different types of listening tasks to evaluate a candidate's ability to accurately and efficiently process spoken information. These tasks aim to mirror real-world communication situations and assess multiple listening skills.

Multiple-choice questions (MCQs)

In multiple-choice questions (MCQs), candidates listen to a passage, lecture or dialogue and then answer objective questions based on what they have heard. This task evaluates both comprehensive and critical listening skills. Comprehensive listening is essential for grasping the main idea and supporting details, while critical listening is necessary for assessing the speaker's opinion or argument.



For example, if a candidate listens to a lecture about climate change, they might be asked, “What is the main cause of global warming?” To answer correctly, they need to pinpoint the main point of the lecture, such as the impact of carbon emissions. Other questions may focus on whether the candidate can discern the speaker’s viewpoint, like whether they advocate for renewable energy or oppose fossil fuel usage.

Task: Listen to a passage, dialogue, or lecture and answer multiple-choice questions based on the information you heard.

Example:

Listen to a short news report about a recent event. Then answer:

What is the main reason for the event?

- a) Economic reasons
- b) Political reasons
- c) Environmental reasons
- d) Social reasons

Gap Filling Tasks

Gap-filling tasks involve completing sentences or paragraphs with information from the audio. This task evaluates discriminative and selective listening skills. Discriminative listening is used to identify subtle differences in the spoken information, such as tone, emphasis or pronunciation, while selective listening helps in choosing relevant details and ignoring unnecessary information. For example, in a lecture transcript where certain words are missing, a candidate might listen for specific terms related to the subject matter. If the lecture is about economic policies, candidates might need to fill in the blanks with words like “inflation” or “taxation” based on the context. These tasks test how well listeners can extract and apply key information from a spoken passage.

Task: Listen to a passage and fill in the missing words in the transcript.

Example:

Listen to a conversation about travel and complete the sentences:

- ▶ “I’m planning to visit Paris next summer. I heard the weather there is usually -----in July.”
- ▶ “You can find many affordable restaurants near the -----.”

True / False or Yes / No Tasks

True/false or yes / no tasks ask candidates to identify whether statements made in the audio are true or false or whether the answer is yes or no. This task tests comprehensive listening

and attention to detail. The candidate must listen carefully to verify the accuracy of statements. For example, if the speaker says, “The Eiffel Tower was completed in 1889,” a subsequent question might ask, “Was the Eiffel Tower completed in 1887?” A candidate who listens carefully and remembers the details would answer “No,” recognising that the correct year is 1889. These tasks assess the ability to focus on key facts and retain precise information for accurate evaluation.

Task: Listen to a conversation or lecture, then determine if the statements are true or false or if the answer is yes or no.

Example:

Listen to a speaker talk about their recent vacation. Then answer:

- ▶ The speaker went to Italy last year. (True / False)
- ▶ The speaker enjoyed the food. (Yes / No)

Matching Tasks

In matching tasks, candidates are asked to match speakers, statements or events with corresponding options based on the audio. This task tests associative and discriminative listening skills. Associative listening is required to link related pieces of information, such as matching a speaker’s opinion with their statement. Discriminative listening helps differentiate between various speakers or ideas. For example, in a discussion on politics, a candidate may listen to several speakers express their views on a topic and then match the speaker with their respective statements. This task evaluates how well a listener can make connections between different pieces of information in the audio.

Task: Match speakers with their corresponding statements or opinions.

Example:

Listen to a group of people discuss their favourite hobbies. Match the speaker to their hobby:

- ▶ Speaker 1: Gardening
- ▶ Speaker 2: Painting
- ▶ Speaker 3: Running

Short Answer Tasks

Short answer tasks require candidates to respond briefly to specific questions based on the listening material. These tasks assess both selective and comprehensive listening skills. Selective listening helps the listener focus on the most relevant information to answer the question, while comprehensive listening is essential for understanding the broader context of the discussion. For example, after listening to a story about a historical event, a question might be asked, “What was the main reason for the conflict?” The candidate must distil the key reason from the



audio and provide a concise, accurate response. These tasks test the listener's ability to extract and summarise key information.

Task: Answer brief questions based on a listening passage.

Example:

Listen to a short story about a historical figure and answer:

- ▶ What year did the event take place?
- ▶ What was the main challenge faced by the person?

Long Answer Tasks

Long answer questions require detailed responses, often written in an essay format. These answers should be organised, informative and well-developed, with multiple paragraphs supporting the main idea. Essays typically include the following structure:

1. Title

The title reflects the main idea by extracting keywords from the question. It serves as a guide for both the writer and the reader.

2. Introduction

The introduction sets the context and outlines the essay's focus. It has two parts:

- ▶ **Background:** Provides context (historical, social, or geographical) to engage the reader.
- ▶ **Thesis Statement:** Summarise the argument or main point in one or two sentences.

3. Body Paragraphs

Each paragraph consists of:

- ▶ **Leader Sentence:** Introduces the main point of the paragraph.
- ▶ **Paragraph Body:** Expands on the leader with supporting points and examples.

This structured approach ensures clarity and coherence in long-answer responses.

Note-Taking Tasks

In note-taking tasks, candidates listen to a lecture or discussion and take notes to answer subsequent questions. This task assesses critical listening and summarisation skills. Critical listening is needed to assess the importance of different pieces of information, while summarisation allows the candidate to capture the essence of the lecture efficiently. For example, during a technical lecture on quantum physics, a candidate might need to jot down key points like “wave-particle duality” or “Heisenberg uncertainty principle”, as the speaker explains them.

Later, the candidate may need to answer questions in the lecture, and their notes will help them recall the essential concepts.

Task: Listen to a lecture or discussion and take notes to answer questions later. **Example:** *Listen to a lecture on climate change. Take notes on the key points discussed, such as causes, effects, and solutions. Then, answer questions based on your notes.*

Sentence Completion

Sentence completion tasks require candidates to fill in blanks using exact or inferred details from the listening material. This task evaluates both comprehensive and selective listening. Comprehensive listening allows the candidate to understand the overall context, while selective listening helps focus on the specific details necessary for completing the sentence. For example, after listening to a passage about the water cycle, a sentence might read, “Water vapour rises and ----- in the atmosphere,” and the candidate would need to complete it with the word “condenses.” These tasks test how well the listener can identify and understand specific details while grasping the larger context of the material.

Task: Complete the sentences based on the information from the audio.

Example:

Listen to a passage about the solar system. Complete the sentence:

- ▶ Mars is the ----- planet from the Sun.
- ▶ The largest planet in our solar system is -----.

Diagram / Chart / Map Labelling

Diagram, chart, or map labelling tasks require candidates to listen to spoken information and label diagrams, graphs or maps based on that information. These tasks assess comprehensive listening and spatial understanding. Comprehensive listening is necessary to grasp the details of the diagram or map being described, while spatial understanding helps the candidate correctly place the labels in the right locations. For example, a listening passage might describe a map of a city and mention landmarks like “the central park” or “the university on Elm Street.” The candidate must then label the map appropriately based on the details from the audio. These tasks test the ability to process spatial and visual information through listening.

Task: Listen to a description and label a diagram, chart or map based on the information you hear. **Example:**

Listen to a description of a city and label the map with landmarks such as the park, museum and university.



Strategies for Effective Listening in Examinations

To perform well in listening tasks, candidates must adopt specific strategies that enhance their listening skills and accuracy. Here are some tips to consider:

1. Practise Regularly

Engage in listening to diverse materials such as news reports, podcasts and lectures to familiarise yourself with different accents and speech patterns.

2. Focus on Keywords

Pay attention to transition words, dates, numbers and names that often carry crucial information.

3. Predict and Prepare

Preview the questions before listening to anticipate the type of information required.

4. Stay Calm and Focused

Avoid distractions and maintain focus on the audio, even if you miss a part of it.

5. Enhance Vocabulary

Build a strong vocabulary to understand spoken content better and infer meanings from context.

6. Take Notes Efficiently

Develop shorthand techniques to quickly jot down essential details without losing focus on the audio.

7. Practice Active Listening

Stay engaged with the audio by mentally summarising points and relating them to the questions.

8. Utilise Practice Tests

Solve past papers and mock tests to become familiar with the format and improve time management.

1.3.2 Speaking

Effective communication skills are integral to success in competitive examinations, particularly in the speaking section, which tests a candidate's ability to articulate ideas fluently and accurately. Speaking is a complex skill that encompasses various sub-skills and involves different types of tasks designed to evaluate specific aspects of communication. Understanding these sub-skills and task types is crucial for aspirants preparing for competitive examinations.

1.3.2.1 Sub-Skills of Speaking

Speaking involves multiple sub-skills that work together to ensure coherent and effective verbal communication. These include:

1. **Pronunciation and Clarity:** This sub-skill focuses on the ability to articulate words clearly and accurately, ensuring that the listener comprehends the intended message. For example, when reading aloud, a candidate's pronunciation of complex words like "epitome" or "quintessential" is evaluated. Proper stress, intonation and rhythm are also vital aspects that contribute to overall clarity.
2. **Fluency:** Fluency refers to the capacity to speak smoothly without unnecessary hesitation, pauses or repetitions. For example, during extempore speaking tasks, a fluent speaker can deliver a continuous and well-structured response, demonstrating confidence and command over the language.
3. **Vocabulary Use:** Employing an appropriate and varied range of words to convey ideas effectively is crucial. In opinion-based speaking tasks, using precise terms like "mitigate" instead of "reduce" or "enhance" instead of "improve" can create a more impactful impression.
4. **Grammar and Syntax :** The ability to use correct grammatical structures and sentence formations ensures clarity and professionalism in speech. For example, in role-play tasks, grammatically accurate sentences such as "Could you please elaborate on that?" reflect the speaker's proficiency.
5. **Coherence and Cohesion:** This sub-skill involves organising ideas logically and linking sentences using connectors and transitions. For instance, in a descriptive speaking task, using phrases like "In addition to that" or "Moreover" makes the speech more understandable and engaging.
6. **Listening and Interaction:** Responding appropriately in interactive tasks demonstrates comprehension of the conversation and maintains relevance. During group discussions, effective listening allows candidates to respond aptly to others' points, such as "I agree with your perspective, but I would like to add..."
7. **Tone and Emotion:** Modulating voice tone and expressing appropriate emotions engage the listener and emphasise the message. For example, a candidate describing a personal achievement might use an enthusiastic tone to convey excitement.

1.3.2.2 Types of Speaking Tasks Asked in Competitive Examinations

Competitive examinations assess speaking skills through a variety of tasks that target the sub-skills outlined above. These tasks include:

1. **Reading Aloud:** In this task, candidates read a passage or set of sentences aloud. For example, reading a paragraph from a news article tests pronunciation, clarity and fluency. Proper enunciation and consistent pace are key factors.



Exercise: Choose a news article, a passage from a book or a short story. Read the text aloud, focusing on proper pronunciation, clarity and fluency.

- 2. Descriptive Speaking:** Aspirants describe a person, place, object or event. For example, describing the vibrant atmosphere of a cultural festival like Diwali tests vocabulary usage, coherence and the ability to organise ideas logically.

Exercise: Describe the experience of attending a traditional festival in your country. Focus on the sights, sounds and atmosphere.

- 3. Narrative Speaking:** This involves narrating a story or recounting an experience. For example, candidates might be asked to narrate their most memorable travel experience, which assesses fluency, grammar and coherence.

Exercise: Speak about a memorable trip you took. Where did you go, what did you do, and why was it significant to you?

- 4. Opinion-based Speaking:** Candidates express their views on a given topic, such as “Is technology making us less human?” This task evaluates critical thinking, vocabulary and the ability to present arguments persuasively.

Exercise: Do you think artificial intelligence will replace human workers in the future? Why or why not? Express your opinion on the topic and provide reasons or examples to support your viewpoint.

- 5. Role Play:** Participants assume a role and engage in a simulated conversation, such as a customer-service interaction. For example, acting as a customer seeking a refund tests interaction, listening and contextual vocabulary.

Exercise: Imagine you are a customer calling a restaurant to inquire about their delivery options. Role-play this conversation.

- 6. Group Discussions:** In this task, candidates participate in a group dialogue on a given topic, such as “The impact of social media on youth.” It assesses collaboration, fluency and the ability to articulate points clearly in a group setting.

Exercise: In a group, discuss the pros and cons of online education. Take turns expressing your thoughts and responding to others.

7. **Picture Description:** Aspirants describe an image or visual. For example, defining a serene landscape painting requires observation skills, descriptive language and creativity.

Exercise: Describe the image of a busy street scene. Include details such as the people, buildings, and any activities that are happening.

8. **Speech or Monologue:** Delivering a short speech on a topic assesses the ability to organise thoughts, use appropriate language and present ideas confidently. A common prompt might be “The importance of teamwork in achieving success.”

Exercise: Give a 2-minute speech on the importance of education in today’s world.

9. **Debates and Argumentation:** Engaging in debates tests logical reasoning, persuasion and spontaneity in speech. For example, debating “Should uniforms be mandatory in schools?” requires presenting both sides of the argument effectively.

Exercise: Debate the statement ‘Social media does more harm than good.’ Take one side and argue your point of view.

10. **Extempore Speaking:** Speaking impromptu on a topic evaluates quick thinking, coherence and fluency under pressure. A prompt like “The most significant invention of the 21st century” requires candidates to think critically and organise ideas swiftly.

Exercise: Speak for 2 minutes on the topic ‘The role of technology in modern education.’

Strategies for Success

To excel in speaking tasks, aspirants should:

1. **Practice Speaking Regularly:** Engage in daily speaking exercises to build confidence and fluency.
2. **Record and Review Speech:** Recording responses helps identify areas for improvement in pronunciation, grammar and coherence.
3. **Expand Vocabulary:** Reading and exposure to diverse topics enhance word choice and expression.
4. **Engage in Mock Speaking Sessions:** Simulating examination scenarios improves comfort and readiness for real tasks.



5. **Focus on Pronunciation and Grammar:** Clear articulation and accurate grammar ensure effective communication.
6. **Develop Quick Thinking:** Practice organising responses logically and coherently under time constraints.

By understanding and refining these sub-skills and preparing for specific task types, candidates can improve their speaking abilities and perform confidently in competitive examinations

1.3.3 Reading

Reading is a fundamental skill that underpins much of human learning and communication. It involves interpreting written or printed symbols to derive meaning. For competitive examinations, reading plays a pivotal role, as it is often the medium through which candidates interact with questions, instructions and textual content. Understanding the different types of reading and the nature of tasks commonly asked in such examinations can significantly enhance a candidate's performance.

1.3.3.1 Types of Reading

Reading can be broadly categorised into different types based on purpose and depth. Each type serves a unique function, and a clear understanding of these can help tailor reading strategies for examinations.

Skimming: Skimming is the process of quickly glancing through text to get a general overview or main idea. For example, when faced with a long reading comprehension passage, candidates might skim through it to identify the main theme or locate important sections. This technique is especially useful for previewing material or deciding whether a passage requires a more detailed reading.

Scanning: Scanning involves searching for specific information or keywords within a text without reading everything in detail. For example, if a question in a comprehension passage asks for a specific date or statistic, candidates can use scanning to quickly locate the answer. This method is highly efficient for questions that require factual recall.

Intensive Reading: Intensive reading is a detailed and thorough examination of a text to grasp its meaning, structure and nuances. For example, to answer a question about the author's argument or tone, candidates would need to read the passage carefully to understand subtle implications and complex ideas. This type of reading is essential for tasks that require deep comprehension.

Extensive Reading: Extensive reading involves reading longer texts for pleasure or general understanding. While it is not directly tested in competitive examinations, regularly engaging in extensive reading can enhance comprehension skills and vocabulary. For example, reading novels, articles or essays outside of examination preparation can improve fluency and understanding of diverse writing styles.

Critical Reading: Critical reading is the evaluation of a text to assess its validity, logic and implications. For example, candidates might be required to evaluate an author’s argument in a passage or identify biases and assumptions. This type of reading is crucial for questions that involve forming judgments or making inferences based on the text.

1.3.3.2 Types of Reading Tasks Asked in Competitive Examinations

Examinations test reading skills through a variety of tasks, each requiring specific approaches. Below are the common types of reading tasks:

Reading Comprehension: This task involves reading a passage and answering questions to test understanding, inference, vocabulary, and evaluation. For example, a passage on environmental conservation might include questions about the main idea, specific details or the author’s tone. To tackle such tasks, candidates should read the questions first to focus on relevant parts of the passage and use techniques like skimming and scanning as needed.

Passage:

Environmental conservation is critical for the survival of future generations. The depletion of natural resources, the destruction of habitats and the impact of climate change are some of the most pressing issues we face today. Immediate action is necessary to protect biodiversity and mitigate the effects of global warming.

Questions:

What is the main idea of the passage?

- a) The importance of protecting biodiversity
- b) The impact of climate change
- c) The need for immediate action for environmental conservation
- d) The depletion of natural resources

What is implied by the term “immediate action” in the passage?

- a) Delayed conservation efforts
- b) Urgent measures to prevent further damage
- c) Public awareness campaigns
- d) Expanding industries

Cloze Tests: In cloze tests, a passage is provided with blanks that candidates must fill in using appropriate words. For example, a passage discussing global warming might have blanks requiring words like “emissions,” “climate” or “sustainability.” This task tests vocabulary, grammar and contextual understanding. Reading the entire passage for context before filling in the blanks ensures accuracy.



Passage:

Global warming is primarily caused by the increase in greenhouse gas ----- . These gases, such as carbon dioxide, are released through human activities like ----- burning of fossil fuels and deforestation. The ----- of these gases traps heat in the atmosphere, leading to rising global temperatures.

Blanks:

1.
2.

Choices:

- a) emissions
- b) constant
- c) unsustainable
- d) excessive
- e) rapid
- f) effect

Paragraph Completion: Candidates are given an incomplete paragraph and must choose the sentence that best completes it. For example, a paragraph about the benefits of technology might require a concluding sentence that summarises its advantages. This task assesses coherence and logical flow, requiring candidates to analyse the tone and structure of the paragraph.

Incomplete Paragraph:

Technology has revolutionised every aspect of our lives, from communication to health-care. It has made processes more efficient, improved access to information and fostered innovation in various fields. Additionally, technology has provided new tools for education and connected the world in unprecedented ways.

Sentence Options:

- a) However, technology also brings challenges, such as privacy concerns and job displacement.
- b) These advancements will continue to shape society in ways we cannot yet imagine.
- c) In conclusion, technology will remain a driving force in human progress.
- d) Nonetheless, reliance on technology can have adverse effects on our mental well-being.

Sentence Rearrangement (Jumbled Sentences): In this task, sentences are presented in a jumbled order, and candidates must arrange them logically. For example, a set of sentences

describing the process of photosynthesis would need to be sequenced correctly. Identifying introductory sentences, connectors, and concluding statements helps determine the logical order.

Jumbled Sentences:

- a) Photosynthesis is the process by which plants convert sunlight into chemical energy.
- b) The energy produced in this process is stored in the form of glucose.
- c) It is essential for plant growth and the production of oxygen.
- d) This energy is later used for the plant's metabolic activities.

Correct Order:

- 1. -----
- 2. -----
- 3. -----

Inference-Based Questions: These questions require candidates to derive conclusions or implications from a passage. For example, a passage about workplace ethics might include a question asking about the implied benefits of ethical practices. This task tests analytical and critical thinking, requiring candidates to base their answers strictly on the given text without overinterpreting.

Passage:

Many companies are shifting toward remote work due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This shift has not only led to cost savings for businesses but also improved work-life balance for employees. However, some argue that remote work may reduce collaboration and team cohesion in the long term.

Question:

What can be inferred from the passage about the future of remote work?

- a) Remote work will completely replace traditional office work.
- b) Employees may face challenges in maintaining personal connections with co-workers.
- c) There will be no further changes in the workplace structure.
- d) Remote work will be restricted to specific industries.

Vocabulary in Context: Candidates are asked to determine the meaning of a word or phrase as used in the passage. For example, if a passage describes a “resilient” individual, the candidate might be asked to identify a synonym like “determined.” Understanding the context of the word in the passage is key to answering correctly.



Passage:

The resilient athlete overcame numerous obstacles, including severe injuries, to achieve her goal of competing in the Olympics.

Question:

What is the meaning of “resilient” in this context?

- a) Unhealthy
- b) Quick
- c) Determined
- d) Vulnerable

Fact vs. Opinion: This task involves distinguishing between factual statements and opinions in a passage. For example, a passage on renewable energy might include facts about solar power generation and opinions on its future potential. Recognising markers of opinion, such as “I believe” or “it seems,” helps differentiate subjective interpretations from objective information.

Passage:

Renewable energy sources such as solar and wind power are essential for reducing our reliance on fossil fuels. Solar power, for example, is an abundant and clean resource that can be harnessed to provide energy. I believe that renewable energy is the future, as it can help reduce carbon emissions and combat climate change.

Question:

Which of the following is an opinion?

- a) Solar power is an abundant resource.
- b) Renewable energy can help combat climate change.
- c) Solar power can be harnessed to provide energy.
- d) I believe that renewable energy is the future.

Importance of Reading in Competitive Examinations

Reading is indispensable in competitive examinations for several reasons:

Comprehension Skills: Strong reading skills ensure better understanding and interpretation of questions and passages.

Time Efficiency: Effective reading techniques like skimming and scanning help manage time during examinations.

Critical Thinking: Reading tasks often test the ability to analyse and evaluate information critically.

Vocabulary Building: Exposure to varied texts enriches vocabulary, which is crucial for examinations.

Overall Confidence: Proficiency in reading boosts confidence in tackling other sections of the examination.

Mastering reading techniques and understanding the tasks commonly asked in competitive examinations can significantly enhance performance. By practising these skills regularly, candidates can improve their accuracy, speed and overall effectiveness in examinations.

1.3.4 Writing

Writing is a fundamental skill assessed in various competitive examinations. It evaluates a candidate's ability to articulate thoughts clearly, coherently and effectively. Understanding the types of writing and the tasks commonly asked in competitive examinations can significantly enhance preparation and performance.

1.3.4.1 Types of Writing

Writing can be broadly classified into four major types: descriptive, narrative, expository and persuasive. Each type serves a distinct purpose and requires a unique approach.

- 1. Descriptive Writing:** Descriptive writing aims to provide a detailed account of a person, place, event or object. This type of writing focuses on painting a vivid picture in the reader's mind by using rich vocabulary, sensory details and imagery. For example, a competitive examination might ask you to describe the Taj Mahal, emphasising its architectural beauty, historical significance and the emotions it evokes. To excel in descriptive writing, one must develop creativity, keen observational skills and the ability to engage the reader effectively.
- 2. Narrative Writing:** Narrative writing tells a story or recounts an event in a chronological manner. It often includes elements like characters, dialogue and plot development to make the story engaging. For example, an examination prompt could require you to write a story about overcoming a challenge, such as preparing for a marathon, despite initial failures. This type of writing tests a candidate's storytelling ability, imagination and coherence in sequencing events logically.
- 3. Expository Writing:** Expository writing seeks to explain, inform or analyse a topic systematically. It is characterised by a clear organisational structure, logical flow and reliance on factual evidence. Competitive examination tasks might involve writing essays on topics such as "The Role of Technology in Education" or "The Causes and Effects of Global Warming." This type of writing requires analytical thinking, knowledge of the subject and clarity of expression to convey ideas effectively.
- 4. Persuasive Writing:** Persuasive writing aims to convince the reader to accept a viewpoint or take a specific action. This type of writing employs arguments



supported by evidence, rhetorical questions and compelling conclusions to make a strong case. For example, you might be tasked with writing a letter to a local government authority advocating better waste management practices in your city. Mastery of this style involves critical thinking, logical argumentation and effective persuasion techniques.

1.3.4.2 Types of Writing Tasks Asked in Competitive Examinations

In competitive examinations, writing tasks are designed to assess a candidate's command over language, critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Below are the most common writing tasks and their key aspects.

1. **Essays:** Essays are central in competitive examinations, aiming to evaluate a candidate's knowledge, analytical ability and coherence in presenting ideas. Topics often revolve around current affairs, social issues, technology, environment or education. For example, you might be asked to write an essay on "The Importance of Mental Health Awareness" or "The Pros and Cons of Social Media." Preparing for essay writing involves staying updated on current events, organising ideas into structured formats (introduction, body, conclusion) and developing balanced perspectives on contentious issues.

Exercise:

Write an essay of 300 - 400 words on the topic: *The Impact of Artificial Intelligence on Employment*.

2. **Letters:** Letter writing is another common task, divided into formal and informal types. Formal letters address professional or official matters, such as writing to the editor about rising pollution levels. For example, you could be asked to write a formal letter to the municipal corporation highlighting the need for better road maintenance. Informal letters, on the other hand, are personal and engaging, such as writing to a friend describing a recent trip to the mountains. Key elements include clarity and conciseness for formal letters and warmth and creativity for informal ones.

Exercise:

1. Write a formal letter to the Principal of your school, requesting permission to organise a seminar on *Environmental Sustainability*.
2. Write an informal letter to your best friend describing your recent vacation to a beach town.

3. **Precis Writing:** Precis writing assesses comprehension and summarisation skills

by requiring candidates to condense a given passage into a concise summary. For example, a passage discussing the effects of deforestation might need to be summarised into its main points, such as loss of biodiversity and climate change. The challenge lies in capturing the essence of the original text without including personal opinions or extraneous details. Regular practice in identifying main ideas and key points can significantly improve precision and accuracy in this task.

Exercise: Read the following passage on *The Importance of Education in Modern Society*. Write a precis of 100 -120 words summarising the main points while retaining the essence of the original passage. Focus on concise wording without adding any personal opinions.

4. **Reports:** Report writing evaluates a candidate's ability to present information systematically and professionally. Common scenarios include reporting an event, survey findings or incidents. For example, a task might ask you to write a report on a blood donation camp organised in your locality, detailing the date, number of participants and outcomes. A well-structured report typically comprises a title, introduction, body (details of the event or findings) and conclusion/recommendations. This task tests objectivity, clarity and organisational skills, making it an essential component of competitive examinations.

Exercise:

Write a report on a recent *Community Clean-up Drive* organised in your neighbourhood.

5. **Comprehension Passages:** Reading comprehension tasks require candidates to read a passage and answer questions based on it. For example, a passage about a historical figure might include questions about their achievements, challenges, and significance. This task evaluates understanding of context, vocabulary and inferential reasoning. Success in comprehension passages involves practising active reading and developing the ability to draw logical inferences from the text.

Exercise:

Read a passage about *The Role of Social Media in Modern Communication*. After reading the passage, answer the following questions:

- ▶ What are the main advantages of social media mentioned in the passage?
- ▶ How has social media influenced human interaction, according to the author?
- ▶ Summarise the author's opinion on the future of social media.

6. **Creative Writing:** Creative writing tasks include writing a short story, script or poem based on a given prompt. For instance, you might be asked to write a story beginning with the line, "It was a day that changed everything..." These tasks test



originality, imagination and expressive abilities. To excel in creative writing, candidates should practice crafting compelling characters, settings and themes while maintaining coherence and engagement throughout the piece.

Exercise:

Write a short story based on the prompt: *The mysterious letter arrived on my doorstep on a rainy night.*

- 7. Grammar and Editing Tasks:** Grammar and editing tasks assess proficiency in language mechanics and the ability to spot and correct errors. Examples include proofreading a passage, rewriting sentences or correcting grammatical mistakes. For example, you might be asked to identify and correct errors in a paragraph discussing workplace ethics. These tasks require attention to detail, grammatical accuracy and a thorough understanding of language rules.

Exercise:

Proofread the following paragraph and correct any grammatical errors:

- The team of engineers was working on a new project. They have completed their initial stage and are now looking forward to testing the prototypes next week. The team were excited about the results.

Provide the corrected version of the paragraph with explanations of the changes made.

Strategies for Success in Writing Tasks

- 1. Understand the Task:** Carefully read the instructions to identify the type of writing required and plan accordingly.
- 2. Plan before Writing:** Organise ideas, create an outline and decide on the tone and style suitable for the task.
- 3. Practice Regularly:** Engage in regular writing exercises to build confidence and proficiency across different types of writing.
- 4. Expand Vocabulary:** Enhance language skills by learning new words and phrases and practising their usage in writing.
- 5. Review and Edit:** Allocate time to proofread your work, ensuring coherence, accuracy and the elimination of errors.

Recap

- ▶ Listening tasks assess comprehension, critical thinking and interpretive abilities
- ▶ Discriminative listening involves identifying accents, tones and speech complexities
- ▶ Comprehensive listening requires understanding content and extracting key details
- ▶ Critical listening analyses arguments, credibility and logic in spoken content
- ▶ Speaking tasks include fluency, clarity and articulation assessments
- ▶ Sub skills of speaking: fluency, coherence, pronunciation and interactive skills
- ▶ Reading tasks assess comprehension, speed and analytical reading abilities
- ▶ Skimming and scanning are essential strategies for reading comprehension tasks
- ▶ Writing tasks evaluate the organisation, clarity, grammar and argumentation skills
- ▶ Essay writing requires presenting structured, balanced and insightful arguments
- ▶ Letter writing includes formal and informal formats for various situations
- ▶ Precis writing condenses passages, capturing main ideas with brevity
- ▶ Report writing requires a clear, objective presentation of events or findings
- ▶ Creative writing tasks assess originality, imagination and narrative development
- ▶ Grammar and editing tasks test accuracy, clarity and language proficiency

Objective Questions

1. What is the primary purpose of listening tasks in examinations?
2. Which type of listening involves identifying tone and accents?
3. What type of listening requires evaluating the credibility of arguments?
4. What skill is essential for speaking tasks in examinations?
5. Which speaking sub-skill focuses on pronunciation and clarity?
6. What type of reading task assesses detailed understanding of a passage?
7. What reading strategy helps locate specific information quickly?
8. Which writing task involves presenting structured arguments on a topic?



9. What writing task requires summarising a passage concisely?
10. Which writing task involves objective reporting of facts?
11. What type of writing task requires creativity and narrative skills?
12. What writing task tests grammar accuracy and error correction?
13. Which writing format involves addressing official or professional matters?
14. Which writing format is informal and personal in nature?
15. What writing skill focuses on organising ideas logically and coherently?

Answers

1. Comprehension
2. Discriminative
3. Critical
4. Fluency
5. Articulation
6. Comprehension
7. Scanning
8. Essay
9. Precis
10. Report
11. Creative
12. Editing
13. Formal
14. Informal
15. Structure

Assignments

1. Discuss the importance of listening skills in competitive examinations and describe the different types of listening tasks commonly encountered.
2. Explain the sub-skills involved in speaking tasks for competitive examinations and discuss strategies to improve fluency and articulation.
3. Analyse the role of reading comprehension in competitive examinations and discuss various reading strategies to enhance understanding and speed.

4. Evaluate the different types of writing tasks in competitive examinations and propose effective approaches to tackle each writing task, including essays and reports.
5. Compare and contrast formal and informal letter writing in competitive examinations, discussing the key elements of each and their importance in assessing writing proficiency.

Suggested Reading

1. Chastain, Kenneth. *Developing Second-Language Skills: Theory and Practice*. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1988.
2. Harmer, Jeremy. *The Practice of English Language Teaching*. Pearson Education, 2015.
3. Johnson, Keith. *Language and Communication*. Longman, 2003.
4. O'Neill, Robert. *English for Competitive Exams: Listening, Reading, Writing, and Speaking Skills*. Oxford UP, 2017.
5. Swan, Michael. *Practical English Usage*. Oxford UP, 2005.



Integrated Language Skills for Competitive Examinations

Learning Outcomes

Upon the completion of this unit, the learner will be able to:

- ▶ apply integrated language skills to enhance their reading, writing and grammar proficiency
- ▶ develop the ability to understand and respond appropriately in conversations, considering tone, context and logical coherence
- ▶ demonstrate the ability to read and analyse comprehension passages effectively, identifying key themes, making inferences and understanding vocabulary in context
- ▶ write clear, concise and well-structured letters.

Prerequisites

In this unit, we will focus on mastering Integrated Language Skills, which are essential for success in competitive examinations. These skills include reading, writing, speaking and listening, all of which work together to improve your grammar, comprehension and communication abilities. Whether you are preparing for government examinations, entrance tests or any competitive examination, these skills are vital for your success.

We will look into practical techniques, such as engaging in conversations to help you grasp tone and context and analysing comprehension passages that assess your ability to interpret texts, draw inferences, and understand vocabulary. You will also engage in error spotting to swiftly identify and correct grammatical errors, while letter writing and précis writing will enhance your ability to communicate clearly and concisely. By the end of this course, you will be armed with strategies to tackle examinations with confidence, boosting your accuracy, speed and overall language proficiency.

Key Concepts

Integrated Language Skills, Reading, Writing, Speaking, Listening, Grammar Proficiency, Comprehension, Communication Abilities.

1.4.1 Discussion

1.4.1.1 Integrated Language Skills: How They Can Be Used in Competitive Examinations

Integrated language skills, such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing (LSRW), form the backbone of effective communication in any language. In competitive examinations, however, the emphasis primarily lies on Reading and Writing skills combined with grammar proficiency. The role of integrated skills in these examinations is to test a candidate's ability to comprehend, analyse and produce coherent responses.

Competitive examinations are structured to challenge a candidate's command over language. Reading comprehension passages, précis writing, error spotting, jumbled sentences, and letter writing evaluate the combined application of reading, writing and grammar. For example, reading a comprehension passage requires careful attention to extract key points, understand the tone and derive inferences. Similarly, tasks like précis writing and letter writing demand concise and clear expression of ideas with impeccable grammar.

Why are these skills so critical? Language is not just about words but about the ability to understand contexts, infer meanings and present responses effectively. A candidate who has mastered integrated skills can solve questions faster and more accurately. For example, an error-spotting question requires a strong knowledge of grammar rules, while rearranging

jumbled sentences tests logical thinking and cohesion between ideas.

To develop these integrated skills, candidates need a structured approach. Regular reading of newspapers, editorials and essays builds reading speed and comprehension ability. Writing summaries of articles or letters refines clarity and structure. Grammar exercises, such as identifying tenses, prepositions and articles, improve error-spotting skills.

Moreover, these skills are not limited to competitive examinations alone. A strong command of integrated language skills also improves a candidate's overall communication ability, which is critical for interviews and professional success. For example, preparing for letter writing enhances formal communication, which is useful in real-world scenarios like drafting emails, business letters or applications. Similarly, practising comprehension passages improves analytical thinking, allowing candidates to grasp and evaluate complex ideas quickly.

The beauty of integrated skills lies in their interconnectedness. If one improves reading, their writing automatically improves as they gain exposure to sentence structures, vocabulary and styles. Likewise, regular practice in writing sharpens thought organisation, which aids comprehension tasks.

To achieve success, candidates should incorporate integrated learning into their daily routines. Begin by allocating time to read ar-



ticles from credible publications such as *The Hindu*, *The Economist* or various editorials. Subsequently, summarise the material in your own words to develop clarity in writing. Additionally, participate in grammar exercises to strengthen accuracy and precision.

In conclusion, integrated language skills form the cornerstone of success in competitive examinations. They not only test theoretical language knowledge but also the candidate's ability to think critically, organise ideas and communicate effectively. By incorporating a disciplined routine that combines reading, writing and grammar practice, candidates can build confidence, improve performance and ensure success in competitive examinations.

1.4.1.2 Conversations: How They are Used in Competitive Examinations

Conversations form a critical component of English language sections in competitive examinations, designed to evaluate candidates' practical language proficiency, contextual understanding and logical reasoning. While these tasks may appear simple at first glance, they require a strong grasp of tone, context, appropriateness and logical flow. The ability to interpret dialogues accurately and respond effectively displays one's command over communication, an essential life skill that extends beyond examinations.

In competitive examinations, conversation-based questions primarily fall into three categories:

1. Fill-in-the-Blank Conversations: Candidates are presented with a dialogue that has missing parts and must select the most suitable phrase or sentence from multiple options. These questions test contextual understanding and appropriate language use. For example:

Conversation:

Alex: "Hey, Sarah! Did you hear about the new cafe that just opened downtown?"
Sarah: "No, I didn't. Is it any good?"
Alex: "Yes, I went there yesterday. The coffee is amazing, and the ambience is great too!"
Sarah: "Really? -----?"

Options:

- a) "Where exactly is it located?"
- b) "Do they serve pizza as well?"
- c) "How was your day?"
- d) "What time does it close?"

Correct Answer:

- a) "Where exactly is it located?"

This question tests the candidate's ability to choose the most contextually relevant response in a conversation.

2. Response Selection: A question may present an incomplete dialogue, asking candidates to choose the most logical reply. These tasks assess the ability to recognise tone, politeness and logical progression in conversations. For example:

Teacher: "Could you please explain why you were late to class today?"

Options:

- a) "The traffic was heavier than usual, and I apologise for the delay."
- b) "I don't think it's important to discuss this right now."
- c) "Why does it matter?"
- d) "Class was boring, so I took my time."

Correct Answer:

- a) "The traffic was heavier than usual, and I apologise for the delay."

This tests the ability to select a polite and logical response suitable for the context and tone of the conversation.

3. Rearranging Jumbled Dialogues: Candidates are given parts of a conversation in random order. They must rearrange these into a meaningful, coherent sequence. For example:

Jumbled Dialogue:

1. "It starts at 7 PM. Are you coming?"
2. "Great! I'll see you there."
3. "Hey, are you free this evening? There's a concert in the park."
4. "Yes, I'd love to! What time does it start?"

Correct Sequence:

3 → 4 → 1 → 2

This exercise tests the ability to logically sequence a conversation to ensure coherence and meaning.

To tackle these effectively, candidates must focus on:

- ▶ **Tone and Politeness:** Recognising formal versus informal settings helps choose appropriate responses. For example, formal conversations require phrases like "I appreciate your assistance," whereas informal ones allow, "Thanks a lot!"
- ▶ **Logical Flow:** Conversations must progress naturally, with opening lines, responses and conclusions clearly structured.
- ▶ **Understanding Implied Meaning:** Conversations often carry implied information or emotions that must be inferred.

Developing conversational skills for examina-

tions involves regular practice. Start by reading scripts, plays or dialogues to observe natural exchanges. Watching English language movies or television programmes helps candidates become familiar with tones, phrases and conversational styles. Role-playing common scenarios, like interviews, office discussions or casual chats, can facilitate the internalisation of these communication patterns.

Additionally, idiomatic expressions, phrasal verbs and polite phrases are often tested, so candidates must learn common expressions such as:

- ▶ "That sounds great!"
- ▶ "Could you clarify what you mean?"
- ▶ "I'm afraid I can't help with that."

Candidates should also focus on connectors and transitions such as "*however*," "*furthermore*," or "*on the other hand*," which indicate shifts in tone or ideas. Recognising these helps identify logical connections within a dialogue.

1.4.1.3 Tips for Writing Effective Conversations

Here are some essential tips to craft engaging and realistic conversation:

1. **Make It Believable:** Dialogue should feel natural and authentic to the reader, mirroring real conversations.
2. **Use Quotation Marks Correctly:** Enclose each speaker's words in quotation marks and start a new paragraph whenever the speaker changes.
3. **Use Contractions:** Incorporate contractions like "don't,"



“shouldn’t,” and “can’t” to reflect natural speech unless the character speaks formally or is intentionally stiff.

4. **Internal Thoughts:** Inner dialogue or a character’s thoughts do not require quotation marks.
5. **Break Sentences:** Allow characters to break off their sentences or speak in incomplete phrases for more dynamic and lifelike conversations.
6. **Interruptions:** Let characters interrupt one another to mimic real-life interactions.
7. **Hesitation Sounds:** Use fillers like “um” or “er” occasionally to portray hesitation or uncertainty in a character’s speech.
8. **Identify Speakers:** Include the speaker’s name or an identifier every five or six lines of dialogue to avoid reader confusion.
9. **Show, Do not Just Tell:** Instead of relying solely on “he said” or “she said,” use actions or descriptions to indicate who is speaking.

By following these guidelines, you can write conversations that are not only functional but also enhance character development and storytelling.

In conclusion, conversational exercises in competitive examinations are not just about memorising responses but about applying contextual reasoning and language proficiency. They prepare candidates to handle real-life communication scenarios with confidence and clarity. With consistent practice, candidates can approach these tasks with ease, improving their performance in examinations and

beyond.

1.4.1.3 Comprehension Passages: Their Role in Competitive Examinations

Comprehension writing involves studying a specific passage and answering questions based on it. The first step is to read the passage carefully at least twice. Next, you need to pinpoint the phrases or sentences that contain the answers, either fully or partially.

Your responses should not simply repeat the sentences from the passage; they should be direct and to the point. The questions may also focus on seemingly minor details that you would typically leave out in a summary. In addition to straightforward questions with clear answers, you might encounter indirect or ambiguous questions. You should construct answers to these based on the information in the passage. There may also be requests to clarify certain statements or phrases.

Your answers should be written in complete sentences using your own words, although you can include expressions from the passage that are essential to retain.

Their Role in Competitive Examinations

Comprehension passages are a vital component of competitive examinations aimed at testing candidates’ reading skills, analytical abilities and critical thinking. These tasks evaluate how effectively candidates can read, process and extract relevant information from a given passage under time constraints.

A comprehension passage typically consists of a piece of text, ranging from factual articles, opinion-based editorials or literary extracts, followed by questions that test understanding, inference and vocabulary.

The questions fall into several categories:

- ▶ **Fact-Based Questions:** Direct answers derived from the passage. Example: “What caused the rise in pollution levels?”
- ▶ **Inference-Based Questions:** Answers require deducing information not explicitly stated. Example: “What can be concluded about the author’s opinion on climate change?”
- ▶ **Vocabulary Questions:** Determining meanings of words or phrases in the given context. Example: “What does the word ‘ameliorate’ mean in the passage?”
- ▶ **Theme / Title-Based Questions:** Understanding the main idea or summarising the content.

1.4.1.4 Skills Needed

To excel in comprehension, candidates must master the following:

1. **Skimming:** Quickly reading to identify the main theme and structure of the passage.
2. **Scanning:** Locating specific details, like names, dates or arguments, required to answer fact-based questions.
3. **Critical Reading:** Evaluating the author’s tone, intent and implied meanings.

Strategies for Success

1. **Read Questions First:** This strategy helps candidates identify what to look for when reading

the passage.

2. **Highlight Keywords:** While reading, underline or note down critical details like names, numbers and arguments.
3. **Understand the Tone:** Identifying whether the author is optimistic, critical or neutral helps answer inference-based questions.
4. **Manage Time Effectively:** Avoid reading the entire passage repeatedly. Focus on relevant sections.

Daily Practice

Improving comprehension skills requires consistent practice. Candidates should read editorials, essays and articles from reputed publications like *The Hindu*, *The Economist*, or *National Geographic*. Reading various text types - narrative, descriptive, and argumentative- helps candidates adapt to diverse writing styles encountered in examinations.

Another critical aspect is vocabulary development. Learning new words and their contextual meanings through regular reading improves speed and accuracy in answering vocabulary questions.

In conclusion, comprehension passages test far more than reading ability; they measure how well candidates can extract key ideas, analyse arguments and deduce information effectively. By practising regularly and adopting efficient reading techniques, candidates can tackle comprehension passages with confidence, ensuring success in competitive examinations.

Here is an example:



Passage:

The Amazon rainforest, often referred to as the "lungs of the Earth," plays a crucial role in regulating the planet's oxygen and carbon dioxide levels. Spanning nine countries in South America, the Amazon is home to a vast array of plant and animal species, many of which are found nowhere else on Earth. It is estimated that the rainforest produces 20% of the world's oxygen. However, the Amazon is under constant threat due to deforestation, illegal logging, and agricultural expansion. These activities not only reduce biodiversity but also contribute to climate change by releasing large amounts of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. Protecting the Amazon is essential, not just for the region's ecological balance but also for the well-being of the global environment. Efforts such as sustainable farming, stricter anti-logging laws, and reforestation projects are being implemented to preserve this vital ecosystem.

Questions:**1. Why is the Amazon rainforest often called the "lungs of the Earth"?**

- a. Because it stores water for South America.
- b. Because it produces 20% of the world's oxygen.
- c. Because it has a high number of tourists.
- d. Because it is the largest forest in the world.

Answer: b. Because it produces 20% of the world's oxygen.

2. Which of the following is NOT a threat to the Amazon rainforest?

- a. Illegal logging
- b. Agricultural expansion
- c. Reforestation projects
- d. Deforestation

Answer: c. Reforestation projects

3. What are some measures mentioned to protect the Amazon rainforest?

- a. Urban development and deforestation
- b. Sustainable farming, stricter anti-logging laws, and reforestation projects
- c. Agricultural expansion and logging
- d. Building dams and roads

Answer: b. Sustainable farming, stricter anti-logging laws, and reforestation projects

4. What is one of the global consequences of deforestation in the Amazon?

- a. Increase in tourism
- b. Decrease in global oxygen levels
- c. Contribution to climate change due to carbon dioxide release
- d. Rise in local temperatures only

Answer: c. Contribution to climate change due to carbon dioxide release

5. Which statement is true about the Amazon rainforest?

- a. It spans five countries in Africa.
- b. It is home to species found only in South America.
- c. It stores more carbon dioxide than it produces oxygen.
- d. Its ecological balance is unaffected by human activities.

Answer: b. It is home to species found only in South America.

1.4.1.5 Letter Writing: Its Role in Competitive Examinations

A letter is a written message exchanged between individuals or entities. It is a prevalent form of interpersonal communication and one of the most personal means of expressing thoughts and emotions. Historically, letters were a favoured medium of communication in ancient civilizations like India, Egypt, Rome and China.

Although the digital age has introduced new methods of communication, letter writing retains its significance and charm. With consistent practice, one can master the skill of crafting effective letters. Understanding basic structures and formats is essential for proficiency in letter writing.

Types of Letters

Formal Letters

Formal letters can be categorised into business letters and official letters. Official letters communicate formal messages or information, while business letters address commercial matters. Although both share a similar structure, they differ in purpose, language and content.

Personal Letters

Personal letters are informal communications sent to friends, relatives or acquaintances. They often convey emotions, personal thoughts and updates. Despite the rise of digital communication, personal letters remain a meaningful way to connect with loved ones.

Example of a Personal Letter

From Serena to her friend Asmina, describing her summer vacation plans:

My dear Asmina,

I hope this letter finds you in good health and spirits.

Thank you for your last letter; it was delightful to hear about your progress in your studies.

My annual examinations have concluded, and our summer vacation begins on 28 March. I have planned a quiet and enjoyable holiday. I will spend the initial weeks at home with my parents and younger sister. Later, I intend to visit my aunt in Ernakulam and stay for a week. My aunt's family and I plan to tour Munnar, a picturesque hill station I've always dreamed of visiting.



Do share your summer vacation plans with me. Knowing you, they will be well thought out. Please convey my regards to your parents.

All the best,

Yours sincerely,

Serena

Formal Letters

Formal letters include business and official letters. These adhere to specific patterns in structure, tone and language.

Business Letters: These involve commercial matters like agreements, orders and notifications.

Official Letters: These include applications, complaints and institutional communications.

A good formal letter is concise, coherent and devoid of unnecessary details. Clarity and logical organisation are key.

Components of a Business Letter

1. **Sender's Address:** Placed at the top, including contact details.
2. **Date Line:** Written as day/month/year (or month/day/year in American format).
3. **Addressee's Address:** Includes the recipient's name, title, and address.
4. **Salutation:** Examples include "Dear Sir," "Dear Dr. Smith," or "Dear Sir/Madam" when the gender is unknown.
5. **Subject Line:** A brief mention of the letter's purpose.
6. **Body:** The main content is presented in a clear, concise manner.
7. **Complimentary Close:** Examples include "Yours sincerely" or "Yours faithfully."
8. **Signature of the Sender:** Accompanied by the sender's name.
9. **Enclosures:** Listed documents are attached to the letter.
10. **Copies:** Mentioned as "Cc" for additional recipients.

Formats of Business Letters

Block Format: Aligns all sections to the left margin with double spacing between blocks.
Letter

FULL BLOCK FORMAT

Sender's Address (from)

1

Date (day-month-year)

1

Receiver's Address (To)

2

Salutation (Dear Sir/Madam)

1

Subject :

2

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

1

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

1

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

2

Complimentary close

2

Signature

2

Name of the sender

Designation

2

Enclosures

1

Cc



Modified Block: Aligns the sender's address, complimentary close and signature line to the centre.

Semi Block Format:

The semi-block format is a commonly used style in formal letters. In this format, all sections of the letter, except the body, are aligned to the left. The body paragraphs are indented by five spaces, with double line spacing between them.

Language of a Business Letter

Business letters require formal, precise and objective language. Avoid informal expressions and maintain a neutral tone.

Informal	Formal
Put up with	Tolerate
Asked	Enquired
Said	Replied/Informed
A lot of	Much/Many

Core Vocabulary

Familiarity with commonly used phrases in business letters aids in effective communication. Examples include:

- ▶ On receipt of the order
- ▶ At short notice
- ▶ Please send us your instructions
- ▶ Our offer is still open

Official Letters

Official letters are written for formal purposes, such as applications, complaints or enquiries. Their tone must be specific, brief and formal.

Examples include:

- ▶ Letter of Application
- ▶ Letter of Enquiry
- ▶ Letter of Complaint
- ▶ Letter of Thanks
- ▶ Letter of Request

Effective official letters are logical, clear and concise while maintaining professionalism.

Cover Letter

A cover letter accompanies documents such as a job application, report or CV (Curriculum Vitae). Its purpose is to highlight the accompanying documents and explain the sender's intent and motivation clearly and concisely. A well-written cover letter captures the addressee's attention and strengthens the sender's case for consideration.

Example: Cover Letter for the Post of English Teacher

Cover Letter Sample

Dear Sir,

I learned from *The Hindu*, dated 24th November 2024, that your esteemed school has three vacancies for English teachers.

I hold a B.A. in English Language and Literature (First Class) from the University of Kerala and a B.Ed. from M.S. University, Tirunelveli. Additionally, I have two years of teaching experience in a school managed by N.S.S. Management.

Teaching has always been my passion as it allows me to impart knowledge to students and contribute to shaping their character. I would be honoured to be considered for the position and would appreciate the opportunity to attend an interview.

Please find enclosed my resume along with copies of relevant certificates for your perusal.

Thank you for considering my application.

Yours faithfully,

Babu Paul

Enclosures:

1. Resume
2. Copy of Degree Certificate
3. Copy of B.Ed. Certificate
4. Experience Certificate

Its Role in Competitive Examinations

Letter writing is a timeless skill that holds immense significance in competitive examinations. It is designed to test a candidate's ability to communicate ideas clearly, concisely and appropriately in written form. Letters, whether formal or informal, are tools for expressing thoughts, addressing issues or sharing information. Examinations evaluate a candidate's capacity to organise these ideas logically while adhering to structure and tone.

In competitive examinations, two primary types of letters are tested:

1. Formal Letters: These include applications, complaints, requests, or official communication.



The tone here is formal, polite and precise. For example:

Write a letter to the editor regarding the increase in noise pollution in urban areas.

► Structure:

- Sender's address and date
- Recipient's address
- Salutation: *Dear Sir / Madam*
- Body: Introduction, explanation of the issue and conclusion with solutions or requests
- Closing: *Yours sincerely*

2. Informal Letters: Personal letters to friends, family or acquaintances. Here, the tone is conversational and warm. For example:

Write a letter to your friend describing your recent trip to the mountains.

While formal letters demand a focus on facts, logical progression and brevity, informal letters emphasise personal expression and emotional connection.

Key Skills Assessed

1. Clarity and Organisation: Candidates must present ideas logically, using clear and precise language.
2. Tone Appropriateness: Recognising the difference between formal and informal tones is essential. Missteps, like using casual phrases in formal letters, can reduce marks.
3. Adherence to Format: Incorrect formatting can result in penalties. Candidates must include the proper salutation, body and closing.
4. Grammar and Vocabulary: Letters must be error-free, with appropriate words that suit the tone.

Example

A formal letter could be:

Subject: *Request for Replacement of a Defective Product*

Body: I recently purchased a refrigerator from your store on June 15, 2024. However, within two days, it stopped functioning. I kindly request a replacement under the warranty terms.

In examinations, sticking to word limits is crucial. Candidates should aim for conciseness, avoiding unnecessary details. Instead of long, winding sentences, short and meaningful ones convey professionalism.

Preparation Tips

- Practise Writing: Candidates must practice at least one formal and informal letter weekly.
- Memorise Formats: Learn the structure and standard phrases like “I am writing

to..." or "I look forward to your response."

- ▶ **Improve Grammar:** Simple grammatical errors can ruin clarity. Focus on sentence structure and punctuation.
- ▶ **Read Model Letters:** Analyse well-written letters to observe tone, format and organisation.

Letter writing is vital not only for examinations but also for real-life communication, whether writing emails, applications or complaints. Candidates who master this skill will stand out in competitive examinations and develop an edge in professional communication.

1.4.1.6 Précis Writing: Its Importance and Role

Précis writing is a vital skill tested in competitive examinations, designed to assess a candidate's ability to summarise lengthy passages concisely and accurately. The word "précis" means "exact" or "brief," and the task requires reducing a given text to roughly one-third of its original length while retaining the key ideas. In other words, a précis is a concise summary of a given passage. It is an important skill that helps distinguish between essential and non-essential information, making it a vital part of education. Précis writing is not just for examinations; it builds critical thinking and clarity in communication.

If no length is specified, a précis should generally be one-third the length of the original passage. Essential ideas must be retained, while unnecessary details are omitted. The goal is to convey maximum meaning in minimal words.

Examples of Conciseness:

1. **Original:** A programme of this magnitude will necessarily take a considerable period.
Précis: Such a big program must take a long time.
2. **Original:** Doubt has been expressed as to whether these measures are sufficient.
Précis: It has been doubted if these steps are enough.
3. **Original:** It is not the case that I wrote that letter.
Précis: I did not write that letter.
4. **Original:** Some were opposed to hanging as a means of execution where women were concerned.
Précis: Some were against the hanging of women.
5. **Original:** A singular degree of rarity prevails with regard to the original editions of this book.
Précis: First editions of this book are very rare.

What Does Précis Writing Test?

1. **Comprehension:** Understanding the main arguments and purpose of the passage.



2. **Summarisation:** Identifying core ideas while eliminating redundant details.
3. **Clarity and Brevity:** Rewriting the content clearly and concisely without distorting the meaning.
4. **Writing Skills:** Maintaining coherence, logical flow and grammatical accuracy.

Steps to Write a Good Précis

1. Read the passage carefully to grasp its meaning.
2. Highlight the key points.
3. Write a rough draft, simplifying the language.
4. Revise the draft for clarity and conciseness.
5. Ensure the précis is the required length.
6. Choose a clear, relevant title.
7. Use a single paragraph for brevity.
8. Stay faithful to the original ideas, avoiding personal opinions.
9. Write in the third person, regardless of the original perspective.

For example, if given a 300-word passage about environmental degradation, the précis might highlight the causes, effects and solutions without including extra statistics or anecdotes.

Example

Original Passage: *Pollution levels have risen significantly due to industrialisation and urbanisation. Factories emit hazardous gases, vehicles produce smoke, and plastic waste clogs water bodies. To address this, stricter environmental regulations and public awareness are needed.*

Précis: *Industrialisation and urbanisation have led to rising pollution levels from factories, vehicles and plastic waste. Stricter regulations and public awareness are essential solutions.*

Common Mistakes to Avoid

- ▶ Copy and paste sentences from the passage.
- ▶ Including personal opinions or examples.
- ▶ Omitting essential ideas or arguments.
- ▶ Writing too long or too short a précis.

Tips for Preparation

- ▶ Practice précis writing daily on articles, essays, or editorials.
- ▶ Read editorial summaries to observe how professional writers condense content.
- ▶ Expand vocabulary to replace lengthy phrases with concise words. For example, “due to the fact that” can be replaced with “because.”

Précis writing teaches candidates to think analytically, extract core ideas and present them suc-

cinctly, and these skills are invaluable in competitive examinations, workplaces and beyond. With regular practice, candidates can master précis writing and improve their ability to communicate complex ideas effectively.

Example

Prepare a précis of the following passage:

There is a false idea that a man must live up to his position. It is said that one's house, furniture and dress should inform the world of one's rank. This idea is foolish. Throw it aside. Find out what you want and spend money on that; find out what you do not care about and spend nothing on such things. Find out by practical tests what you really want and enjoy. A man who has not experienced ups and downs, a man who has not been forced to live more cheaply than in former times, still has his education to begin. Let the experiment be made. He will find, to his surprise, that he has been eating more than was necessary, that the cheap lodging, the rough clothes, and the plain food give him as much pleasure as the costly things that he had previously enjoyed.

The happy man is he who lives wholly in himself. He does what he wishes and does not do what others think is proper. He buys what he wants for himself and not what others expect him to buy. He works at what he believes he can do well and not what will bring him money or favour. However poor he may be, he is always open-handed to his friends. If he has more now, he does not care to save, for he knows he can do with less. He shares his sovereign or shilling with a friend. Where do beggars usually go? Not to the great houses where people are rolling in wealth but to the doors of poor men who have scarcely enough to meet their own needs. (277 words)

Précis

“How to Become Happy and Good”

Man must give up the false and foolish idea that material possessions make him important and contribute to his happiness. He must, instead, look into himself and understand what he really needs to live happily. The pressure of adverse circumstances may make a man realise that many things he thought essential are inessential. A man should live from within himself, doing what he wants to do and not what others want him to do. Once he does so, he will be happy and ready to help others in need. (90 words)

1.4.1.7 Jumbled Paragraphs / Sentences: Logical Organisation and Coherence

Jumbled sentences or paragraphs are an essential part of competitive examinations, designed to test a candidate's logical reasoning, comprehension and organisational skills. In these questions, candidates are given sentences or parts of a paragraph in random order and are tasked with rearranging them to form a meaningful, coherent text. The challenge lies in identifying the logical flow of ideas, connecting sentences appropriately and ensuring a smooth narrative.



Why Is This Skill Tested?

The ability to organise jumbled sentences reflects a candidate's understanding of how ideas are structured. This skill is crucial in communication, as presenting ideas in a logical order enhances clarity and effectiveness. Examiners evaluate a candidate's

1. Ability to Identify Connections: Recognising topic sentences, supporting details and conclusions.
2. Understanding of Cohesion: Identifying linking words like *however*, *therefore*, and *furthermore*, which signal transitions.
3. Analytical Skills: Rearranging ideas requires reasoning and deduction, especially when sentences are ambiguous.

Steps to Solve Jumbled Sentences

1. Identify the Opening Sentence: The first sentence typically introduces the main idea or topic. It is independent and does not refer back to any other sentence.
2. Look for Connecting Words: Words like *also but*, *meanwhile*, *thus* act as clues to connect sentences logically.
3. Recognise the Logical Sequence: Arrange ideas in a natural flow - introduction, elaboration, examples and conclusion.
4. Read for Coherence: Once arranged, reread the paragraph to ensure it flows smoothly without gaps or contradictions.

Example

Rearrange the following sentences:

- (A) He decided to take a cab.
- (B) Therefore, he reached the meeting late.
- (C) John woke up late in the morning.
- (D) The cab got stuck in traffic for an hour.

Solution: The correct sequence is C → A → D → B. The flow begins with John waking up late, deciding on an action (taking a cab), facing a delay (traffic) and then arriving late as a consequence.

Tips for Practice

1. Look for Pronouns and References: Sentences with pronouns like *he*, *she*, and often refer back to a previously mentioned noun.
2. Identify Chronology: Events often follow a cause-and-effect relationship. Look for words like *first*, *next*, *after*, *finally*.
3. Pay Attention to Articles: Sentences starting with *a* or *an* often introduce a concept, while those with *the* refer to an already mentioned subject.

Common Pitfalls

- Overlooking connecting words which disrupts the sequence.

- ▶ Selecting an inappropriate opening or concluding sentence.
- ▶ Assuming sentences are independent rather than interlinked.

Daily Practice

To excel at these tasks, practice jumbled sentences regularly. Solve exercises from books like *Wren & Martin* or online resources. Reading articles and analysing how paragraphs are structured will also improve your intuition for logical sequencing.

In conclusion, mastering jumbled sentences equips candidates with the ability to organise thoughts and present ideas clearly, which is essential not just for examinations but also for writing essays, reports, and formal communications. With daily practice and a strategic approach, candidates can significantly improve their accuracy and speed.

1.4.1.8 Error Spotting in Sentences/Paragraphs/Passages

Error spotting is an important aspect in competitive examinations aimed at testing a candidate's grammar proficiency, vocabulary and attention to detail. In these questions, candidates must identify grammatical or structural errors in sentences, paragraphs or passages. This exercise evaluates the candidate's knowledge of grammar rules and their ability to apply these rules to real-world texts.

Types of Errors Tested

1. Subject-Verb Agreement: Errors occur when subjects and verbs do not agree in number.

Example: The boys plays football.

Correction: The boys play football.

2. Tense Consistency: Verbs must maintain the correct tense within sentences.

Example: She was running and falls down.

Correction: She was running and fell down.

3. Pronoun Errors: Pronouns must match their antecedents in gender, number and case.

Example: They must bring his own books.

Correction: They must bring their own books.

4. Preposition Errors: Incorrect use of prepositions often leads to ambiguity.

Example: She is good in English.

Correction: She is good at English.

5. Article Errors: Incorrect use of *a*, *an* or *the* is a common error.

Example: He bought an car.

Correction: He bought a car.



6. Sentence Fragments or Run-ons: Sentences must be complete and properly punctuated.

Example: Although he was tired. He kept working.

Correction: Although he was tired, he kept working.

Strategies to Spot Errors

1. **Read Carefully:** Do not rush. Each sentence must be analysed word by word to identify inconsistencies.
2. **Focus on Common Error Types:** Prioritise subject-verb agreement, tense usage and pronoun errors.
3. **Break Sentences into Parts:** If a sentence feels complex, break it into smaller parts to locate errors.
4. **Use the Elimination Method:** In MCQs, eliminate options that seem grammatically incorrect.

Example

Sentence: *She has went to the market.*

Error: The verb *went* is incorrect after *has*.

Correction: *She has gone to the market.*

Common Pitfalls

- ▶ Ignoring small errors, like missing articles or prepositions.
- ▶ Overthinking about sentences and assuming grammatical correctness when they are not the case.
- ▶ Focusing only on obvious errors and overlooking subtler ones like incorrect modifiers.

Daily Practice Tips

1. Solve grammar exercises from reliable books like *High School English Grammar* by Wren & Martin.
2. Analyse error-prone sentences in newspapers and online articles.
3. Make a checklist of common rules (tenses, articles, subject-verb agreement) and revise them regularly.
4. Practice spotting errors under timed conditions to build accuracy and speed.

Error spotting improves not just grammar but also language awareness. It enhances precision in communication, an invaluable skill in professional and academic life. By mastering error spotting, candidates ensure they have a strong grasp of English grammar, giving them a significant edge in competitive examinations.

Recap

- ▶ Integrated language skills develop reading, writing and proficiency in grammar.
- ▶ Conversations test understanding of tone, context and logic.
- ▶ Comprehension passages evaluate understanding, inference, vocabulary and themes.
- ▶ Letter writing tests clarity, structure and appropriateness of communication.
- ▶ Précis writing involves summarising texts while retaining key points.
- ▶ Jumbled sentences assess logical flow and coherence in ideas
- ▶ Error spotting examines grammar in sentences and paragraphs.
- ▶ Consistent practice enhances accuracy, confidence and performance in examinations.
- ▶ Skimming helps identify themes quickly, saving time.
- ▶ Scanning locates specific details like names and dates.
- ▶ Critical reading assesses tone, intent and implied meaning.
- ▶ Read questions first to focus on key details.
- ▶ Highlight keywords to emphasise names, numbers and arguments.
- ▶ Letter writing tests clarity, tone, format and grammar.
- ▶ Précis writing condenses text, focusing on key ideas.
- ▶ Daily practice improves comprehension, letter writing and précis.
- ▶ Tests proficiency in grammar, vocabulary and attention to detail.
- ▶ Identify grammatical or structural errors in sentences.
- ▶ Common errors: subject-verb agreement, tense, pronouns.
- ▶ Focus on common error types for quicker identification.
- ▶ Read carefully and break complex sentences into parts.
- ▶ Use the elimination method for multiple-choice questions.
- ▶ Practice solving grammar exercises under timed conditions.
- ▶ Improves language awareness and precision in communication.

Objective Questions

1. What skill is developed through Integrated Language Skills?
2. What does conversation testing primarily assess?
3. What is a common focus of comprehension passage questions?
4. What aspect of communication does letter writing primarily focus on?



5. What is the main objective of précis writing?
6. What is assessed in jumbled sentences?
7. What does error spotting primarily examine in sentences and paragraphs?
8. What does consistent practice improve in exam performance?
9. What reading technique helps identify themes quickly?
10. What reading method is used to locate specific details?
11. What does critical reading assess in a text?
12. What should you do first when answering comprehension questions?
13. What technique helps emphasise important details in a text?
14. What does letter writing test besides clarity?
15. What is the main focus of daily practice in improving language skills?

Answers

1. Grammar
2. Tone
3. Inference
4. Clarity
5. Summarizing
6. Coherence
7. Grammar
8. Accuracy
9. Skimming
10. Scanning
11. Intent
12. Read
13. Highlight
14. Format
15. Comprehension

Assignments

1. Discuss the importance of integrated language skills in competitive examinations and how they contribute to reading, writing, and grammar proficiency.

2. Explain how comprehension passages in competitive examinations test a candidate's understanding, inference abilities, vocabulary and themes.
3. Analyse the role of letter writing in competitive examinations.
4. What are the key strategies for effectively handling jumbled sentences and error-spotting tasks in competitive examinations?
5. Elaborate on the significance of consistent practice in enhancing language skills for competitive examinations.

Suggested Reading

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BLOCK - 02

Grammar and Vocabulary

BA English - English for Proficiency in Competitive Examinations





Parts of Speech, Tenses and Common Errors

Learning Outcomes

Upon the completion of this unit, the learner will be able to:

- ▶ identify and use different parts of speech in sentences correctly
- ▶ apply tenses and their subdivisions in writing effectively
- ▶ recognise and correct common grammar errors in written and spoken language
- ▶ construct sentences with correct word order, concord and clauses efficiently

Prerequisites

English grammar may seem complex, but it is essential for effective communication. Just as a house needs a strong foundation, clear communication requires a solid understanding of grammar. Grammar involves mastering the parts of speech – nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, conjunctions, prepositions, and interjections – which work together to create meaningful sentences.

Constructing a sentence is like solving a puzzle, where each word has a specific role. For instance, the word “play” changes its function depending on context. In “Kavya plays cricket,” it acts as a verb, showing an action. In “Hari is writing a play,” it is a noun, referring to a literary work. Words, like us, take on different roles.

Traditional grammar classifies words into eight parts of speech, while modern grammar further divides them into Form Class and Function Class. Form Class words (Nouns, Verbs, Adjectives, and Adverbs) carry meaning, while Function Class words (Articles, Pronouns, Prepositions, and Conjunctions) provide structure and link to the Form Class words.

Understanding tenses, mastering speech forms like direct and indirect speech, and using gerunds and infinitives properly can enhance our communication. By avoiding common errors, we can express ourselves more clearly and confidently, unlocking the full potential of our language.



Key Concepts

English grammar, Parts of speech, Tenses, Direct and indirect speech, Degrees of comparison

Discussion

2.1.1 Parts of Speech

Have you ever observed the variety of roles we take on in life? For instance, you might be a son or daughter at home, a student or friend at college or an artist or sportsperson in your free time. Similarly, words also perform diverse functions based on their usage. Let us examine the following sentences:

Kavya plays cricket.

Hari is writing a play.

Do you notice a difference?

In the first sentence, the word play refers to an action. In the second sentence, the same word, play, denotes a literary form, specifically drama. This variation in function highlights how words can serve different purposes in language.

Traditionally, grammar classifies words into eight categories, known as parts of speech.

These include:

- ▶ Nouns
- ▶ Pronouns
- ▶ Adjectives
- ▶ Verbs
- ▶ Adverbs
- ▶ Prepositions
- ▶ Conjunctions
- ▶ Interjections

Modern grammarians, however, classify words into two broad categories: Form Class and Function Class:

- ▶ **Form Class:** Includes nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs. These words have independent meanings and specific roles in a sentence.
- ▶ **Function Class:** Includes articles, pronouns, prepositions, and conjunctions. These words are primarily grammatical and serve to connect Form Class words, ensuring sentence structure and coherence.

Understanding these categories helps us comprehend the different roles that words play in constructing meaningful sentences.

2.1.1.1 Nouns

Nouns are naming words that refer to the name of a person, place, thing or an idea.

Examples: Resmi, college, friendship, beauty, etc.

Nouns are broadly classified into Concrete Nouns and Abstract Nouns:

- ▶ **Concrete Nouns:** These are nouns that are tangible, meaning they have a real physical existence and can be perceived through the senses. Examples: Boy, man, India, Kerala etc.
- ▶ **Abstract Nouns:** These are nouns that do not have a physical form. They represent ideas, qualities or

states that can only be felt or experienced. Examples: Temperature, sleep, poverty, brightness etc.

Concrete nouns are further classified into four types:

Proper Nouns	Name of a particular person or place. Eg: Gandhi, India etc.
Common Nouns	Names used in common to describe a person or thing belonging to the same class or kind. Eg: man, teacher, nation, city etc.
Collective Nouns	Name of a group of persons or things. Eg: crowd, team, government etc.
Material Nouns	Name of a material, substance or a thing. Eg: coir, soil, wood, gold etc.

Countable and Uncountable Nouns

Countable nouns are nouns that can be counted and have both singular and plural forms. They are often preceded by a, an, or the.

Examples:

- ▶ There is an apple on the table.
- ▶ The lion is the king of the forest.

Uncountable nouns, on the other hand, cannot be counted because they represent abstract ideas or unquantifiable substances. They do not have plural forms and are not preceded by a or an.

Examples:

- ▶ Advice
- ▶ Health
- ▶ Scenery
- ▶ Baggage
- ▶ Poetry
- ▶ Crockery
- ▶ News
- ▶ Information

Note: Although uncountable nouns cannot be counted, they can often be quantified using expressions like “a piece of,” “a lot of,” or “some.” For example, “a piece of advice” or “some information.”



Incorrect	Correct
Here are my luggages.	Here is my <i>luggage</i> .
The teacher gave her many good advices.	The teacher gave her much good <i>advice</i> .
Remya arranged the furnitures in her room.	Remya arranged the <i>furniture</i> in her room.
The sceneries of Kashmir are very beautiful.	The <i>scenery</i> of Kashmir is very beautiful.
These baggages are very heavy.	This <i>baggage</i> is very heavy.

Fill in the blanks with the correct noun (choose from countable, uncountable, concrete, or abstract nouns):

1. The _____ (advice / advices) given by the teacher was helpful.
2. We saw a _____ (man / men) in the park.
3. She owns a _____ (furniture / furnitures) store.
4. The _____ (scenery / sceneries) of the mountain was breathtaking.
5. _____ (Water / Waters) is essential for life.

Gender

In English, there are three distinct genders:

a) Masculine Gender: Denotes the male sex.

Examples: Man, Uncle, Brother etc.

b) Feminine Gender: Denotes the female sex.

Examples: Woman, Aunt, Sister etc.

c) Neuter Gender: Denotes inanimate objects.

Examples: Pencil, Box, Book, etc.

Masculine to Feminine Examples:

- ▶ King → Queen
- ▶ Nephew → Niece
- ▶ Actor → Actress
- ▶ Heir → Heiress
- ▶ Peacock → Peahen
- ▶ Master → Mistress

Singular and Plural Nouns

General Rules for Forming Plurals:

1. Addition of -s or -es:

Examples:

- ▶ Monkey → Monkeys
- ▶ Pen → Pens
- ▶ Flower → Flowers

2. Nouns ending in a consonant followed by 'y': Change the 'y' to -ies.

Examples:

- ▶ Story → Stories
- ▶ Company → Companies
- ▶ City → Cities

3. Nouns ending in a vowel followed by 'y': Add -s.

Examples:

- ▶ Valley → Valleys
- ▶ Tray → Trays
- ▶ Key → Keys

4. Nouns ending in -f or -fe: Change 'f' or 'fe' to -ves.

Examples:

- ▶ Wife → Wives
- ▶ Knife → Knives
- ▶ Leaf → Leaves

5. Plurals formed by changing the vowel(s):

Examples:

- ▶ Goose → Geese
- ▶ Man → Men
- ▶ Tooth → Teeth

6. Plurals of Compound Nouns:

Examples:

- ▶ Brother-in-law → Brothers-in-law
- ▶ Man servant → Men servants
- ▶ Girl friend → Girl friends

7. Nouns with the Same Singular and Plural Form:



Examples:

- ▶ Sheep → Sheep
- ▶ Deer → Deer

Write the plural form of the following nouns:

1. Monkey
2. Company
3. City
4. Wife
5. Knife
6. Goose
7. Brother-in-law
8. Girlfriend

2.1.1.2 Pronouns

Pronouns are words used as substitutes for nouns to avoid repetition.

- ▶ Example:

Annie is an architect. Annie is working in a private company. Annie is a very hardworking person.

In this case, instead of repeating the noun “Annie” multiple times, we can replace it with the pronoun she. The sentence can then be rewritten as:

Annie is an architect. She is working in a private company. She is a very hardworking person.
Example:

Raju built a palatial house. He is a rich man.

Types of Pronouns

- ▶ Personal Pronouns: These pronouns represent 'persons' in various forms.

First person	I, We
Second person	You
Third person	He, she, it, they

- ▶ Reflexive Pronouns are used when the subject and the object of a sentence refer to the same person or thing. They are formed by adding -self (singular) or -selves (plural) to personal pronouns.

Personal pronoun	Reflexive pronoun
I	Myself
We	Ourselves
You	Yourselves
She	Yourselves
He	Himself
It	Itself
They	Themselves

► Interrogative Pronouns

Interrogative pronouns are used to ask questions.

Examples: *who, whom, whose, what, which*

Examples:

Who is your favorite author?

What is your aim?

► Distributive Pronouns

Distributive pronouns indicate members of a group separately, rather than collectively.

Examples: *each, either, neither*

Examples:

Each of you will be given a notepad.

Neither of them is sincere.

► Reciprocal Pronouns

Reciprocal pronouns express a mutual or reciprocal relationship.

Examples: *each other, one another*

Examples:

The brothers loved each other.

We can all trust one another.

► Indefinite Pronouns

Indefinite pronouns refer to persons or things in a general, nonspecific way.

Examples: *everybody, everyone, nobody, nothing, all, many, few, one, some, etc.*

Examples:

One of my students has passed the exam.



Nothing is impossible.

► **Demonstrative Pronouns**

Demonstrative pronouns are used to point out specific persons or things.

Examples: *this, that, these, those*

Examples:

This is the actor who won the National Award.

These are the boys who played the game in the classroom.

► **Relative Pronouns**

Relative pronouns introduce a clause and describe a noun mentioned before it.

Examples: *who, whom, whose, which, that*

Examples:

This is the boy who is interested in directing an action film.

These are flowers which were brought from Chennai.

Usage of Pronouns

1. The Use of the Indefinite Pronoun “One”

The personal pronouns **he** or **she** should not be used to replace the indefinite pronoun **one**.

Examples:

- One should love his country. (Incorrect)
- One should love one's country. (Correct)
- One should obey her parents. (Incorrect)
- One should obey one's parents. (Correct)

2. The Use of Relative Pronouns: “Who,” “Which,” “That”

- **Who** : Refers to *persons*.
- **Which** : Refers to *animals* and *things*.
- **That** : Refers to both *persons* and *things*.

Examples:

- *He is the one who has cooked the food.*
- *She is the woman who is interested in teaching.*
- *This is the park which we used to visit in our childhood.*
- *He has written a book which is yet to be published.*
- *This is the book that I was searching for.*
- *The box that was kept on the table is found missing.*

3. Placement of Reflexive Pronouns

Reflexive pronouns must be placed only after the verb or the object in a sentence.

Examples:

- ▶ You should not hurt yourself.
- ▶ *The team blamed themselves for their failure in the match.*

Choose the correct reflexive pronoun (myself, yourself, himself, herself, itself, ourselves, yourselves, themselves) to fill in the blanks.

1. I have to finish this task by _____.
2. The cat saw _____ in the mirror.
3. They should enjoy _____ at the party.
4. We are proud of _____ for completing the project on time.
5. You should take care of _____ during the hike.

4. The Pronouns “Either” and “Anyone”

- ▶ Either: Used when referring to *two persons or things*.
- ▶ Anyone: Used when referring to *more than two persons or things*.

Examples:

Either of them will be called for the interview.

Anyone of you can raise doubts in the webinar.

5. The Pronoun “It” as a Substitute for “Child” and “Baby”

The pronoun it is used to refer to a child or baby when the gender is not specified.

Examples:

The baby is crying. It might be hungry.

Read the following sentences and underline the pronouns. Then, identify the type of pronoun used (Personal, Reflexive, Interrogative, Demonstrative, Relative, Indefinite, Distributive, or Reciprocal).

1. She is going to the market to buy some fruits.
2. We can trust each other to finish the task.
3. This is the book I was looking for.
4. Who is responsible for cleaning the office?
5. They loved one another during the tough times.
6. He blamed himself for the mistake.
7. That is the house where we lived when I was young.
8. Is anyone coming to the meeting today?



The child itself has done it.

2.1.1.3 Adjectives

An adjective is a word that qualifies or describes a noun.

Examples:

- ▶ *He is a smart boy.*
- ▶ *Munnar is a beautiful hill station.*

Kinds of Adjectives

1. Adjective of Quality

Describes the quality or characteristic of a noun.

Examples: *clever boy, beautiful woman, small box.*

2. Adjective of Quantity

Indicates the quantity or amount of something.

Examples: *much, many, few, whole, some.*

3. Demonstrative Adjectives

Used to refer to or point out specific nouns.

Examples: *this, that, those, such.*

4. Possessive Adjectives

Show ownership or possession.

Examples: *my, our, your, his, her, its.*

5. Participial Adjectives

Formed by adding *-ing*, *-ed*, or *-en* to verbs.

Examples: *shining diamond, defeated players, fallen leaves.*

6. Distributive Adjectives

Refer to individual members of a group.

Examples: *each, every, neither, either.*

7. Compound Adjectives

Formed by combining two or more words.

Read the following sentences and underline the adjectives. Then, classify them into the correct type of adjective (Quality, Quantity, Demonstrative, Possessive, Participial, Distributive, or Compound).

1. This is a beautiful painting.
2. The little child is playing in the garden.
3. I have several old books.
4. That restaurant serves delicious food.
5. She has two adorable puppies.
6. The defeated team tried to recover.
7. Many people attended the event.
8. He has a long-lasting friendship with her.

Examples: *short-tempered person, a part-time job, long-lasting friendship.*

Correct Use of Some Special Adjectives

Is there any difference between *little* and *a little*? Is *later* the same as *latter*? Let us explore:

Later, latter, latest, last

<i>Later</i>	suggests an indefinite time in the future	They are planning to visit us <i>later</i> .
<i>Latter</i>	suggests position or order	Meena and Seena are cousins. The <i>latter</i> is studying abroad.
<i>Latest</i>	means a recent happening	The writer was talking about his <i>latest</i> book.
<i>Last</i>	suggests a position or a point	He is sitting in the <i>last</i> bench.

Little, a little, the little

<i>Little</i>	means nil	He has <i>little</i> money in his hand. (used in a negative sense)
<i>a little</i>	means some	He has <i>a little</i> money in his hand. (used in a positive sense)
<i>the little</i>	a small amount, but all that was there	<i>The little</i> money he had was lost in the train.

Few, a few, the few

<i>Few</i>	means none / nil	<i>Few</i> chocolates are left in the box. (negative)
<i>a few</i>	means some	There are <i>a few</i> chocolates in the box. (positive)
<i>the little</i>	a small amount, but all that was there	<i>The little</i> money he had was lost in the train.



Elder, eldest, older, oldest

<i>Elder</i>	only used to refer members of the same family.	Karthik is the <i>elder</i> of my two sons.
<i>Eldest</i>	means some only used to refer members of the same family only.	Karthik is my <i>eldest</i> son.
<i>Older</i>	used for comparison of persons or things.	Karthik is <i>older</i> than his friend.
<i>Oldest</i>	used for both persons and things.	This is the <i>oldest</i> monument in India.

Farther, further

Farther	denotes distance	Banglore is <i>farther</i> from my home.
<i>further</i>	Additional	He is so tired that he can't walk any <i>further</i> .

Many, a great many, many a, much

<i>Many</i>	represents a large number, used with countable nouns.	There are <i>many</i> books in the library.
<i>a great many</i>	a large number	<i>A great many</i> boys watched the match.
<i>many a</i>	means several. <i>Many a</i> is followed by singular noun and singular verb.	<i>Many a</i> soldier was killed in the war.
<i>Much</i>	used to represent quantity.	Hurry up! We don't have <i>much</i> time.

Position of Adjectives

When a noun is modified by several adjectives, they should follow a specific order:

1. Number or Quantity
2. Quality
3. Size or Weight
4. Colour

Examples:

- ▶ *Manju has long, thick, black hair.*
- ▶ *We saw two beautiful red butterflies.*

Choose the correct adjective to complete the sentences.

1. I have _____ money left after shopping. (little / a little)
2. The _____ students will attend the workshop tomorrow. (few / a few / the few)
3. My house is _____ from the school. (further / farther)
4. The _____ mountain in the world is Mount Everest. (tallest / highest)
5. I don't have _____ time to finish this. (much / a little)
6. He is the _____ of my two brothers. (older / eldest)

2.1.1.4 Verbs

A **verb** is a term used to indicate an action. It not only represents physical actions but also actions of the mind, such as dreaming, thinking etc.

Examples:

She is dancing.

He is reading a short story.

Lexical Verbs and Auxiliary Verbs

Lexical Verbs (also known as **Main Verbs**) have independent meanings. They express actions or states of being.

Examples: *learn, eat, sleep, write.*

Auxiliary Verbs or **Helping Verbs** are grammatical words that do not have independent meanings. They help to form tenses, moods, voices or questions.

Examples: *am, is, are, was, were, has, have, had, do, does, did, can, could, will, would, shall, should, may, might, must, used to, ought to, need, dare.*

Read the sentences below, identify the verb, and categorise it as either a **lexical verb** (main verb) or an **auxiliary verb** (helping verb).

1. She is singing beautifully.
2. They have finished their homework.
3. I am reading a novel.
4. The children were playing outside.
5. He can swim very fast.
6. We will go to the park tomorrow.



Regular and Irregular Verbs

Regular Verbs: Lexical verbs with the same form for the **past** and **past participle** are called regular verbs. These are usually formed by adding *-d* or *-ed* to the base form.

Examples:

- ▶ paint → painted → painted
- ▶ talk → talked → talked
- ▶ enjoy → enjoyed → enjoyed

Irregular Verbs: Irregular verbs have different forms for the past and past participle.

Examples:

- ▶ sing → sang → sung
- ▶ rise → rose → risen
- ▶ draw → drew → drawn

Base form	Simple past	Past Participle
Drink	drank	drunk
Send	Sent	sent
Weep	Wept	wept
Give	Gave	given
Bring	brought	brought
Catch	caught	caught
Steal	stole	stolen

Fill in the blanks with the correct form of the verb in parentheses. Make sure to use the appropriate tense (present, past, or past participle).

1. I _____ (eat) breakfast early this morning.
2. They _____ (speak) to the manager yesterday.
3. She _____ (sing) a beautiful song at the concert.
4. We _____ (write) many letters last week.
5. I _____ (go) to the market yesterday.
6. He has _____ (draw) a beautiful picture.

Transitive and Intransitive Verbs

Verbs are classified into **Transitive** and **Intransitive** based on the requirement of an object. **Subject** and **Object** are two common terms in English grammar. In a sentence, the **subject** is the person or thing performing the action, while the **object** is the person or thing affected by the action of the subject.

- ▶ **Transitive Verbs** require a direct object to complete their meaning. Example: *She reads a book.* (The verb *reads* requires the object *book* to complete the meaning.)
- ▶ **Intransitive Verbs** do not require a direct object. Example: *He sleeps.* (The verb *sleeps* does not require an object to complete the meaning.)

A simple trick to identify the Direct Object in a sentence is by asking the question what or whom to the verb. For eg:

Sanju is playing cricket.

(Here Sanju is the one who does the action and thus he is regarded as the Subject. Cricket is the Direct Object as it answers the question, what is Sanju playing?) ▪ Raju bought mangoes.

Subject: Raju

Object: mangoes

- ▶ He has directed a film.

Subject: He

Object: a film

In a sentence, a **transitive verb** links the subject with an object, whereas an **intransitive verb** does not require a direct object.

Examples:

- ▶ *We are learning English grammar.* (Transitive verb: *learning* requires the object *English grammar*)
- ▶ *We are learning.* (Intransitive verb: *learning* does not require an object)
- ▶ *Manu is speaking about his friend.* (Transitive verb: *speaking* takes the object *his friend*)
- ▶ *Manu is speaking.* (Intransitive verb: *speaking* does not require an object)

In the following sentences, identify the verb and determine whether it is **transitive** or **intransitive**.

1. The teacher explains the lesson clearly.
2. The dog barked loudly.



3. She ate the cake quickly.
4. We arrived late at the party.
5. The children built a sandcastle.
6. He sleeps for eight hours every night.

2.1.1.5 Adverbs

Adverbs are words that modify a verb, an adjective or another adverb.

Examples:

- ▶ *Sandhya laughs loudly.* (Here, the verb *laughs* is modified by the adverb *loudly*)
- ▶ *He is a very clever officer.* (The adjective *clever* is modified by the adverb *very*)
- ▶ *She walked even more rapidly.* (The adverb *more* is modified by the adverb *even*)

Note:

Adverbs are usually formed by adding *-ly* to adjectives.

Examples:

- ▶ respect → respectfully
- ▶ kind → kindly
- ▶ high → highly

However, not all words that end in *-ly* are adverbs. Some words such as *friendly*, *princely*, *godly*, etc. are adjectives formed from nouns.

Kinds of Adverbs

1. Adverb of Time: Indicates when something happens.

Examples: soon, lately, early, recently, never, ever, yet, still, ago, already.

2. Adverb of Place: Indicates where something happens.

Examples: here, there, away, everywhere, nowhere, inside, outside, up, down.

3. Adverb of Manner / Quality: Describes how something happens.

Examples: bravely, sadly, carefully, well, thus, so.

4. Adverb of Frequency: Indicates how often something happens.

Examples: usually, always, occasionally, never, seldom, often.

5. Adverb of Degree: Describes the intensity or extent of an action or quality.

Examples: fairly, entirely, very, enough, totally, almost.

6. Interrogative Adverbs: Used to ask questions.

Examples: when, why, how, how often.

7. Relative Adverbs: Introduce a relative clause. *Examples: where, when, how.*

Classify the underlined word in each sentence as an **adverb of time**, **adverb of place**, **adverb of manner**, **adverb of frequency**, or **adverb of degree**.

1. They met yesterday at the restaurant.
2. She smiled happily at the news.
3. I have never seen such a beautiful place.
4. He is walking outside in the yard.
5. The team won the match easily.
6. We will leave soon for the airport.
7. She is always on time for work.
8. I almost gave up when I lost hope.

Position of Adverbs

1. Adverbs after Intransitive Verbs:

Adverbs are generally placed after intransitive verbs.

Examples:

- ▶ *Raju writes well.*
- ▶ *She smiles beautifully.*

2. Adverbs after the Object:

If there is an object, adverbs are placed after it.

Examples:

- ▶ *He completed his drawing quickly.*
- ▶ *They walked towards her slowly.*

3. Adverbs after the First Auxiliary:

Adverbs are usually placed after the first auxiliary verb.

Examples:

- ▶ *We are eagerly waiting to see the cricketer.*
- ▶ *The teacher was greatly impressed by my work.*

4. Frequency Adverbs before the Main Verb:

If there is no auxiliary verb, frequency adverbs are usually placed before the main verb.

Examples:

- ▶ *I occasionally visit my grandmother's house.*
- ▶ *She often helps her friend.*



5. Order of Multiple Adverbs:

When two or more adverbs are used, follow the order: **Manner** → **Place** → **Time**.

Examples:

- ▶ *The children prayed silently in the assembly hall for some time.*
- ▶ *He talked cheerfully in the meeting for ten minutes.*

Adverbs with the “Be” Form:

If the verb *be* (am, is, are, was, were) is used as the main verb, the adverb of frequency is usually placed after *be*.

Examples:

- ▶ *I am never late.*
- ▶ *Vishnu is always happy.*

In the sentences below, insert the correct adverb of frequency after the verb **be** (am, is, are, was, were).

1. She _____ happy with her new dress.
2. We _____ busy this week.
3. I _____ late for the meeting yesterday.
4. He _____ always in a hurry.
5. The children _____ excited about the trip.

2.1.1.6 Conjunctions

Conjunctions are words used to connect words or groups of words together. They are also known as connectives or linkers. Conjunctions are of two types:

Coordinating Conjunctions

Coordinating conjunctions are words that join units of equal importance, such as two nouns, two verbs, two adjectives etc.

Examples: *and, but, so, still, for, yet, then, either...or, neither...nor.*

Examples in sentences:

- ▶ *He loves ice cream and chocolate.*
- ▶ *He was not well, so he went to the hospital.*

Subordinating Conjunctions

Subordinating conjunctions are words that connect a main clause and a subordinate clause.

Examples: *because, however, since, if, before, after, that, as if, even if, so that.*

Examples in sentences:

- ▶ *He is so brilliant that he can easily complete the task.*
- ▶ *Meet me after you have finished the class.*

Main Clause: A group of words that has a subject and a verb and can stand alone as a complete sentence.

Subordinate Clause: A group of words that depends on another clause to complete its meaning.

Each sentence below has an error in the use of conjunctions. Correct the sentences.

1. She is tired but she is going to the party.
2. He stayed home because he had a headache or he felt sick.
3. I will eat lunch after I have finished the meeting then I will leave.
4. I will study for the test, because I will go for a movie.
5. She likes to play badminton and, she enjoys basketball.

2.1.1.7 Prepositions

Prepositions are words that indicate the relationship of a noun or pronoun to other words in a sentence.

Examples:

- ▶ *The examination will be conducted on Monday.*
- ▶ *He is working in a bank.*

Simple Prepositions and Phrase Prepositions

- ▶ **Simple Prepositions:** These are single word prepositions.
Examples: *in, at, on, above, up, with, since, between, besides, of, within, without.*
- ▶ **Phrase Prepositions:** These are word groups that function as prepositions.
Examples: *along with, instead of, because of, due to, apart from, owing to.*

Use of Prepositions

1. Prepositions of Time

- ▶ **At:** Denotes exact time.

Examples:

- ▶ *The party will begin at 7 p.m.*
- ▶ *We reached our destination at noon.*



- **On:** Used for days and dates.

Examples:

- May I meet you on Monday?
- Her birthday is on 23 March.

(Note: "On" is not used if 'day' is preceded by an adjective.)

- **In:** Used for a period of time, months, and years.

Examples:

- You should submit the report in the evening.
- I am going to Kashmir in December.

- **Within:** Denotes an action that was or will be completed within a certain period of time.

Examples:

- *The teacher ordered the students to finish their project work within a month.*
- *The articles for the college magazine should be sent within a week.*

- **For:** Used to denote the duration of an action.

Examples:

- *Kerala is famous for its scenic beauty.*
- *Sita was playing online games for hours.*

- **Since:** Indicates a point of time in the past.

Examples:

- *The child has been missing since Monday.*
- *I have not been working since last year.*

- **During:** Suggests duration.

Examples:

- *The kids were playing during the break time.*
- *Krishna learned cooking during the summer holidays.*

2. Prepositions of Place

- **At:** Used to indicate a particular place or location.

Examples:

- *He is standing at the railway station.*
- *Taj Mahal is located at Agra in Delhi.*

- **In:** Used to indicate places in general, names of countries, continents, villages, departments, etc.

Examples:

- *Sudha lives in Chennai.*
- *Merlin was born in Australia.*

- **On:** Used when the place of work is a building or surface.

Examples:

- *The villagers are working on a plantation.*
- *My brother is employed on an estate.*

Usage of Other Prepositions

- **Between vs. Among**

- *Between* is used when referring to two things or persons.

Example

- *The Palk Strait is situated between India and Sri Lanka.*
- *Manju distributed the sweets between her two friends.*

- *Among* is used when referring to more than two things or persons.

Example:

- *Sam is the wisest man among us.*
- *I found the autograph among my old notebooks.*

- **Beside vs. Besides**

- *Beside* means "by the side of".

Examples:

- *Please sit beside me.*
- *His shop is located beside my home.*

- **With vs. By**

- *With* is used for instruments.

Examples:

- *He drew the picture with his favourite pen.*
- *I can't write with this pencil.*

- *By* is used for agents or doers of an action.

Examples:

- *Macbeth was written by Shakespeare.*
- *The policeman was attacked by a thief.*



► In vs. Into

► *In* is used to denote:

- Position

Example: *Maya is a clerk in a school.*

- Dress

Example: *She looks gorgeous in that traditional attire.*

- Surroundings or condition

Example: *The children were playing in the rain.*

► *Into* is used to denote:

- Motion or direction

Example: *The swimmer jumped into the pool.*

- Change in state

Example: *The wooden pulp is converted into paper.*

Read the sentences below and underline the preposition in each sentence.

1. The teacher is sitting in the classroom.
2. We will leave for the airport at 6 p.m.
3. She is working on her project.
4. They travelled to India during the summer.
5. I have been living here since 2015.
6. The dog jumped over the fence.
7. The book is on the table.
8. We stayed at a hotel during our trip.

Fill in the blanks with the appropriate preposition from the list: **in, on, at, for, during, since, within, between, among.**

1. The meeting is scheduled _____ Monday.
2. I have been studying English _____ five years.
3. He lives _____ a small town in India.
4. The project must be completed _____ two weeks.
5. We met _____ the break.
6. I will visit my grandmother _____ the holidays.
7. She works _____ a famous law firm.
8. The decision was made _____ the committee members.

2.1.1.8 Interjections

Interjections are words used to express sudden emotions or feelings.

Examples:

- ▶ **Pleasure:** *Hurrah!*
- ▶ **Pain:** *Ouch!*
- ▶ **Disgust:** *How ghastly!*
- ▶ **Surprise:** *Gosh!*

Interjections are frequently used in conversations, as they help to express immediate emotional reactions to events or situations. They can also be used to draw attention or interrupt a flow of speech. For example, a person might use an interjection to show surprise, frustration or excitement about something they see or hear. Interjections are less commonly used in formal writing, but they can still appear in dialogue within novels or plays to reflect the emotions of characters.

Examples:

- ▶ *Wow!* That was an incredible performance!
- ▶ *Oh no!* I forgot my keys at home!
- ▶ *Yikes!* That was a close call.
- ▶ *Hooray!* We won the game!
- ▶ *Ugh!* I can't believe this is happening.

Common Errors to Avoid:

1. **Overuse of Interjections:** Using too many interjections can make speech or writing sound overly emotional, dramatic or unprofessional. It is important to use them sparingly.
 - ▶ **Incorrect:** *Ugh! This is so difficult! Oh no! I have so much to do! Oh my gosh, I can't even!*
 - ▶ **Correct:** *I have a lot to do, but I can handle it.*
2. **Misplacing Interjections:** Interjections should not interrupt the flow of formal writing. They are more suited for informal, conversational contexts and should be used with caution in formal documents.
 - ▶ **Incorrect:** *The report, ugh, was difficult to write.* (in a formal context)
 - ▶ **Correct:** *The report was difficult to write.*
3. **Confusion with Other Parts of Speech:** Interjections are unique because they do not modify other words and are not grammatically connected to the rest of the sentence. Sometimes people confuse them with adverbs, conjunctions or even nouns.
 - ▶ **Example:** *Wow, that's amazing!* (Correct interjection)



- Example: *She is running, wow!* (Incorrect placement, “wow” should stand alone or be used more clearly).

Match each interjection with the emotion or feeling it expresses.

Interjection	Emotion/Feeling
A) Wow	1) Pain
B) Ugh	2) Surprise
C) Hooray	3) Excitement
D) Yikes	4) Disgust
E) Ouch	5) Frustration

2.1.2 Articles

Articles are words that define a noun as specific or unspecific. In English, there are **three articles**: “a,” “an,” and “the.” These articles help provide clarity about whether the noun is general or particular, which is key to understanding the meaning of the sentence.

Definite Article – “**The**”

The **definite article** “the” is used to refer to a specific noun that is known to both the speaker and the listener. It is used when both parties are aware of what is being referred to. The noun could be a unique item (the moon, the sun) or a noun that has been mentioned earlier in the conversation or context.

Examples:

- *The book on the table is mine.* (The speaker and listener both know which book is being referred to.)
- *She went to the store to buy some milk.* (The store is known or identifiable to the listener.)

Indefinite Articles – “A” and “An”

Indefinite articles are used when referring to any one item of a group or class. “A” is used before words beginning with a consonant sound and “an” is used before words starting with a vowel sound.

Examples:

- *I saw a dog on the street.* (This could be any dog, not a specific one.)

- ▶ *She gave me an apple.* (The apple is one of many possible apples, not a specific one.)

Contexts of Use:

- ▶ “A’ or “an” are used when mentioning something for the first time or when it is not specific.
- ▶ “The” is used when referring to something that is already known or can be identified by the speaker and listener.

Common Errors to Avoid:

- 1. Incorrect Use of “The” with General Nouns:** “The” should not be used when referring to something in general.
 - ▶ Incorrect: *I love the music.* (Unless referring to a specific set of music known to both parties.)
 - ▶ Correct: *I love music.* (General statement)
- 2. Omitting Articles:** Sometimes, learners omit articles in English, especially when translating from languages that do not use articles.
 - ▶ Incorrect: *I saw cat in the park.*
 - ▶ Correct: *I saw a cat in the park.*
- 3. Using “A” instead of “An”:** Use “a” before consonant sounds and “an” before vowel sounds.
 - ▶ Incorrect: *She is a engineer.*
 - ▶ Correct: *She is an engineer.*

Choose the correct article (“a,” “an,” or “the”) to fill in the blank.

1. I bought ___ new car yesterday.
2. Do you know ___ answer to this question?
3. We went to ___ beach last weekend.
4. He is ___ honest person.
5. ___ dog is barking outside.
6. She is reading ___ interesting book.
7. I need ___ umbrella because it’s raining.
8. They live in ___ house on the corner.
9. I saw ___ elephant at the zoo.
10. Can you pass me ___ pencil?

Identify and correct any mistakes in the use of articles in the following sentences.

1. I saw a cat in the park yesterday.



2. She is a honest woman.
3. We went to the restaurant to have a dinner.
4. I love the books you gave me.
5. He is studying to become a teacher.
6. The elephant is the largest land animal.
7. She is reading the novel that I recommended.
8. They are visiting a hospital tomorrow.
9. I want to buy a apple.
10. The music is playing loudly.

2.1.3 Tenses

Tenses refer to the form of a verb that expresses when an action or event occurs. In English, there are two primary tenses: the Present and Past, each of which is subdivided into four categories. Future time is indicated by the present or past tense. Understanding tenses is crucial for accurately expressing time-related actions.

Present Tense and It Subdivisions

The **Present Tense** describes actions that are happening now, habitual actions, or universal truths. It has four main types:

1. **Simple Present:** This tense is used for actions that are regular, habitual or universal.

Examples:

- ▶ *She works at a bank.*
- ▶ *Water boils at 100°C.*
- ▶ *They play tennis every weekend.*

2. **Present Continuous:** Describes actions that are happening at the current moment or around the present time.

Examples:

- ▶ *I am reading a book right now.*
- ▶ *She is cooking dinner.*
- ▶ *They are studying for their examinations.*

3. **Present Perfect:** Used to describe actions that happened at an unspecified time in the past but are relevant to the present moment.

Examples:

- ▶ *She has already finished her homework.*

- ▶ *I have lived here for five years.*
- ▶ *They have visited many countries.*

4. Present Perfect Continuous: Describes actions that began in the past and are still continuing or actions that have recently been completed and have relevance to the present.

Examples:

- ▶ *She has been studying for two hours.*
- ▶ *I have been waiting for an hour.*
- ▶ *They have been working on this project all day.*

Read the following sentences and identify the tense used in each. Write “Simple Present,” “Present Continuous,” “Present Perfect,” or “Present Perfect Continuous.”

1. She is reading a novel at the moment.
2. They have been living in this city for five years.
3. He goes to the gym every day.
4. I have just finished my lunch.
5. We are planning a surprise party for her birthday.
6. They play football every weekend.
7. She has been working here since 2010.
8. He works as a doctor.
9. We have visited that museum several times.
10. I am studying for my final examinations.

Past Tense and Its Subdivisions

The **Past Tense** is used for actions that have already happened. It also has four subdivisions:

1. Simple Past: Describes actions that happened and were completed in the past at a specific time.

Examples:

- ▶ *I visited my grandmother last week.*
- ▶ *They traveled to Paris in 2019.*
- ▶ *He finished the book yesterday.*

2. Past Continuous: Describes actions that were in progress at a specific time in the past.

▶ Examples:

- *I was reading when you called.*
- *They were studying at 10 PM last night.*



- *She was cooking dinner when the phone rang.*
3. **Past Perfect:** Used for actions that were completed before another action or event in the past.
- **Examples:**
- *She had already left when I arrived.*
 - *They had finished their meal before the movie started.*
 - *By the time I woke up, he had already gone to work.*
4. **Past Perfect Continuous:** Describes actions that were ongoing in the past up to a specific point.
- **Examples:**
- *She had been studying for two hours when I called her.*
 - *They had been working on the project all day before the deadline.*

Match each sentence with the correct tense (Simple Past, Past Continuous, Past Perfect, Past Perfect Continuous).

- I had been waiting for two hours when the bus finally arrived.
 - Simple Past
 - Past Continuous
 - Past Perfect
 - Past Perfect Continuous
- She was cooking when I arrived.
 - Simple Past
 - Past Continuous
 - Past Perfect
 - Past Perfect Continuous
- They had already left when we arrived.
 - Simple Past
 - Past Continuous
 - Past Perfect
 - Past Perfect Continuous
- We watched a movie last night.
 - Simple Past
 - Past Continuous

- c) Past Perfect
 - d) Past Perfect Continuous
5. He was studying when I called him.
- a) Simple Past
 - b) Past Continuous
 - c) Past Perfect
 - d) Past Perfect Continuous

- *I had been waiting for an hour when the bus finally arrived.*

Future Tense and Its Subdivisions

The **Future Tense** expresses actions that will happen in the future. It also has four types:

1. **Simple Future:** Used to describe actions that will happen in the future.
 - **Examples:**
 - *She will go to the party tomorrow.*
 - *I will call you later.*
 - *They will travel next summer.*
2. **Future Continuous:** Describes actions that will be in progress at a certain time in the future.
 - **Examples:**
 - *I will be studying at 9 PM.*
 - *She will be working all day tomorrow.*
 - *They will be traveling when we arrive.*
3. **Future Perfect:** Used to describe actions that will be completed before a certain point in the future.
 - **Examples:**
 - *I will have finished my work by 5 PM.*
 - *By the time you arrive, they will have left.*
 - *She will have completed the report by tomorrow.*
4. **Future Perfect Continuous:** Describes actions that will continue up to a certain point in the future.
 - **Examples:**
 - *She will have been studying for two hours by the time you call.*
 - *By next month, I will have been working at this company for five years.*

Rewrite the following sentences in the correct future tense form (Simple Future, Future Continuous, Future Perfect, or Future Perfect Continuous).

1. She finishes the book by next week. (Future Perfect)
2. We are having lunch at 1 PM tomorrow. (Future Continuous)
3. They arrive at the station at 7 PM. (Simple Future)
4. By next year, they are working here for five years. (Future Perfect Continuous)
5. I will study at the library tomorrow. (Simple Future)
6. By 8 PM, I read the entire book. (Future Perfect)
7. He is meeting us at 3 PM tomorrow. (Future Continuous)
8. She has completed the assignment by next Monday. (Future Perfect)
9. By next month, I work at this company for two years. (Future Perfect Continuous)
10. We are arriving at the event at 5 PM tomorrow. (Future Continuous)

- *They will have been traveling for three days by the time they reach Paris.*

Common Errors to Avoid

1. **Incorrect tense usage:** Mixing up tenses can confuse listeners or readers, especially when describing events that happened in different periods of time.
 - ▶ Incorrect: *I am going to the store yesterday.* (Should be *I went to the store yesterday.*)
2. **Forgetting auxiliary verbs:** In continuous and perfect tenses, auxiliary verbs like "am," "is," "are," "have," and "will" are necessary.
 - ▶ Incorrect: *She working at the office.* (Should be *She is working at the office.*)
3. **Inconsistent use of tenses:** Changing tenses within the same sentence or context can create confusion about the timing of events.
 - ▶ Incorrect: *I went to the store and I am buying some milk.* (Should be *I went to the store and bought some milk.*)

2.1.4 Degrees of Comparison

The **degrees of comparison** describe how adjectives and adverbs can vary in intensity when comparing two or more things. There are three degrees of comparison: **positive**, **comparative**, and **superlative**.

1. **Positive Degree:** The basic form of an adjective or adverb, without any comparison.
Examples:
 - ▶ She is **tall**. (The adjective *tall* is used in its basic form, describing one person.)
 - ▶ The cat is **cute**. (The adjective *cute* describes the cat without comparison.)

2. **Comparative Degree:** Used when comparing two people, things or actions. It is formed by adding **-er** to the adjective or using **more** or **less** before the adjective or adverb.

Examples:

- ▶ She is **taller** than him. (*Taller* is the comparative form of *tall*.)
- ▶ This book is **more interesting** than that one. (*More interesting* is the comparative form of *interesting*.)
- ▶ He runs **faster** than anyone else. (*Faster* is the comparative form of *fast*.)

3. **Superlative Degree:** Used when comparing three or more things or people, expressing the highest or most extreme degree of a quality. It is formed by adding **-est** to the adjective or using **most** or **least** before the adjective or adverb.

Examples:

- ▶ She is the **tallest** in the class. (*Tallest* is the superlative form of *tall*.)
- ▶ This is the **most interesting** book I've ever read. (*Most interesting* is the superlative form of *interesting*.)
- ▶ Of all the students, he runs the **fastest**. (*Fastest* is the superlative form of *fast*.)

Use the following adjectives to create your own sentences with positive, comparative, and superlative degrees:

1. Tall
2. Smart
3. Beautiful
4. Fast
5. Interesting
6. Good
7. Expensive
8. Strong
9. Bright
10. Clever

2.1.5 Concord

Concord refers to the agreement between the subject and verb in terms of number (singular / plural) and person (first / second / third). Proper concord ensures grammatical consistency in sentences.

1. **Subject-Verb Agreement:** The subject and verb must match in number (singular / plural).

Examples:

- ▶ She **is** a teacher. (Singular subject *she* with singular verb *is*.)
- ▶ They **are** teachers. (Plural subject *they* with plural verb *are*.)



2. **Collective Nouns:** Collective nouns (such as *team, family, group*) may take either singular or plural verbs, depending on whether the group is acting as a unit or individually.

Examples:

- ▶ The **team** is winning. (Here, *team* is treated as a single unit, so the verb is singular.)
- ▶ The **team** are arguing among themselves. (Here, *team* is treated as individuals, so the verb is plural.)

3. **Agreement with “None”:** The word *none* can be singular or plural, depending on the noun it refers to. But none of is followed by a plural noun.

Examples:

- ▶ None of the cakes **was** eaten.
- ▶ None of the students **was** absent.

Determine whether the verb should be singular or plural in each of the following sentences.

1. The team _____ (is / are) practicing hard for the upcoming game.
2. None of the cookies _____ (is / are) left in the jar.
3. The group of friends _____ (was / were) planning to go on a trip.
4. Either the cat or the dog _____ (is / are) sleeping on the couch.
5. The family _____ (is / are) planning to visit their grandparents.
6. None of the participants _____ (was / were) satisfied with the results.
7. The committee _____ (decides / decide) which project to fund.
8. The majority of the students _____ (was / were) in favor of the proposal.
9. The government _____ (is / are) responsible for public safety.
10. A number of people _____ (was / were) late to the meeting.

Identify and correct the mistakes related to subject-verb agreement in each sentence.

1. The books on the table was very interesting.
2. The team have won the match.
3. None of the cake were left.
4. A lot of people was at the event.
5. My dog and cat likes to play outside.

6. The government are making new policies.
7. The committee were not happy with the decision.
8. Everybody has finished their work.
9. The class of students are preparing for examinations.
10. Most of the furniture in the room are old.

2.1.6 Direct and Indirect Speech

Direct Speech refers to the exact words spoken by a person, enclosed in quotation marks.

Examples:

- ▶ He said, "I am going to the store."
- ▶ "Can you help me?" she asked.

Indirect speech, or reported speech, is a method of conveying someone's words without quoting them directly. It involves rephrasing the original statement while maintaining its meaning. A reporting verb, such as *said*, *told*, or *asked*, introduces the reported speech. Pronouns and tenses often change to align with the context, especially when the reporting verb is in the past tense, leading to backshifting (e.g., present to past, future to conditional). For example, "I am happy" becomes "He said that he was happy." Time and place indicators, like *today* or *here*, are adjusted (e.g., *today* becomes *that day*). For questions, *if* or *whether* is used for yes/no questions, while WH-questions retain the question word but follow statement word order. Commands and requests are introduced with verbs like *asked* or *told*, followed by an infinitive. Indirect speech helps convey the essence of conversations seamlessly within narratives.

Examples:

- ▶ He said that he was going to the store. (Direct: "I am going to the store.")
- ▶ She asked if I could help her. (Direct: "Can you help me?")
- ▶ John said that he would be late. (Direct: "I will be late.")

Key Changes from Direct to Indirect:

- ▶ **Pronouns** change according to the subject.
 - Direct: "I am happy."
 - Indirect: He said that he was happy.
- ▶ **Tenses** often change when converting from direct to indirect speech.
 - Present tense in direct speech changes to past tense in indirect speech.
 - Direct: "I will visit tomorrow."
 - Indirect: She said that she would visit the next day.



Rewrite the following sentences from indirect speech into direct speech.

1. She said that she would arrive early.
2. He told me that he was reading a book.
3. John asked if I had seen his keys.
4. They told me that they were planning to travel next week.
5. He said that he couldn't make it to the meeting.
6. She asked if I could give her a ride home.
7. I told him that I had already eaten lunch.
8. The teacher asked if anyone needed help.
9. They said that they were excited for the concert.
10. He told me that he had completed his work.

Identify and correct the mistakes in the following indirect speech sentences.

1. She said that she will help me with my homework.
2. He asked that if I can give him a ride.
3. They told that they were going to the concert last night.
4. "Can you pass the salt?" she asked me.
5. He said that he would meet us at the park.
6. "I don't like this song," she said to him.
7. They told me that they are traveling to France next year.
8. "Will you join us for dinner?" he asked her.
9. She said that she was feeling tired.
10. "You should try harder," he told me.

2.1.7 Question Tag

A **question tag** is a brief question added to the end of a statement, often used to confirm information, seek agreement, or prompt a response from the listener. It typically mirrors the auxiliary or modal verb in the main sentence and agrees with the subject in both number and person. If the statement is positive, the question tag is usually negative, and vice versa, creating a balanced contrast. For example, affirmative statements are followed by negative tags, while negative statements take affirmative tags. When the main sentence lacks an auxiliary verb, forms of *do* are used to construct the tag. Pronouns in the tag must correspond to the subject of the statement. Intonation also plays a role: a rising tone suggests a genuine question, while

a falling tone indicates a request for confirmation. Question tags are versatile conversational tools, promoting engagement and ensuring clarity or consensus in communication.

1. Positive Sentence + Negative Question Tag:

- ▶ You are coming to the party, **aren't you?** (Here, the sentence is positive, and the tag is negative.)
- ▶ He likes pizza, **doesn't he?** (The sentence is positive, and the tag is negative.)

2. Negative Sentence + Positive Question Tag:

- ▶ She isn't going, **is she?** (The sentence is negative, and the tag is positive.)
- ▶ They don't understand, **do they?** (The sentence is negative, and the tag is positive.)

Choose the correct question tag for each sentence.

1. She is going to the market, _____?
a) isn't she?
b) is she?
2. They don't have any milk, _____?
a) do they?
b) don't they?
3. You've been to the new restaurant, _____?
a) haven't you?
b) have you?
4. He didn't come to the meeting, _____?
a) did he?
b) didn't he?
5. They will be here soon, _____?
a) won't they?
b) will they?
6. She's never been to Paris, _____?
a) hasn't she
b) has she
7. We should start the project, _____?
a) shouldn't we
b) should we
8. You don't know the answer, _____?
a) do you



- b) don't you
9. It's too late to go out, _____?
a) isn't it
b) is it
10. I'm your friend, _____?
a) am I
b) aren't I

2.1.8 Clauses

A clause is a group of words that contains both a subject and a verb. Clauses are the building blocks of sentences and are categorized as either independent or dependent, depending on their ability to stand alone as a complete thought.

Independent Clause: An independent clause expresses a complete thought and can stand alone as a sentence. It contains both a subject and a predicate.

- ▶ *Example:* She went to the market. (*She* is the subject, *went* is the verb, and the clause forms a complete thought.)
- ▶ *Example:* I love to read books. (*I* is the subject, *love* is the verb, and the clause stands independently.)

Dependent (Subordinate) Clause: A dependent clause cannot stand alone as a complete sentence. It relies on an independent clause to form a complete thought. Dependent clauses often begin with subordinating conjunctions such as *because*, *if*, *although*, *while*, or *when*.

- ▶ *Example:* Because it was raining, we stayed indoors. (*Because it was raining* is a dependent clause that explains why *we stayed indoors*.)
- ▶ *Example:* If you study hard, you will pass the examination. (*If you study hard* is a dependent clause that adds a condition to the independent clause.)

Sentences with Multiple Clauses: A sentence can consist of multiple clauses combined to convey more complex ideas. Sentences can be classified as either complex or compound based on their clause structure.

Complex Sentences: Complex sentences contain at least one independent clause and one dependent clause. The clauses are connected to show relationships such as cause, condition, or time.

- ▶ *Example:* I stayed home because it was raining. (Independent clause: *I stayed home*, dependent clause: *because it was raining*.)
- ▶ *Example:* He will go to the party if he finishes his homework. (Independent clause: *He will go to the party*, dependent clause: *if he finishes his homework*.)

Compound Sentences: Compound sentences consist of two or more independent clauses joined by a coordinating conjunction such as *and*, *but*, *or*, *for*, or *so*. Each clause can stand alone as a complete sentence, but they are linked to provide additional information or contrast.

- ▶ *Example:* She went to the market, and he stayed home. (Independent clauses: *She went to the market* and *he stayed home*, joined by *and*.)
- ▶ *Example:* I wanted to go out, but it started raining. (Independent clauses: *I wanted to go out* and *it started raining*, joined by *but*.)

By understanding how clauses work and how they combine to form sentences, writers can construct clear, varied, and grammatically correct sentences to effectively convey their ideas.

Read the following sentences and identify whether the clause in each sentence is an Independent Clause or a Dependent Clause.

1. Although he was tired, he went to the gym.
2. She went to the store because she needed some groceries.
3. I will help you if you ask.
4. We stayed home because it was raining.
5. After the meeting, we went for lunch.
6. He couldn't attend the event because he was ill.
7. They decided to leave early since they had finished their work.
8. She sings beautifully when she is happy.
9. He plays the guitar well, but he can't play the piano.
10. Since I have completed my assignment, I can relax now.

Combine the following pairs of sentences into a complex sentence. Use the subordinating conjunctions given in parentheses.

1. I stayed home. It was raining. (because)
2. She passed the test. She studied hard. (if)
3. We were late. The bus broke down. (since)
4. I enjoy reading. I have free time. (when)
5. They didn't go to the beach. It was too cold. (although)
6. He will go to the concert. He finishes his work. (after)
7. They went shopping. They wanted to buy new clothes. (because)
8. I am tired. I have been working all day. (since)
9. She will visit us. She has some free time. (if)
10. The children played outside. It stopped raining. (when)



Recap

- ▶ Parts of speech categorise words based on their grammatical functions
- ▶ Nouns name people, places, things, or ideas in sentences
- ▶ Pronouns replace nouns to avoid repetition and ensure sentence clarity
- ▶ Adjectives describe or modify nouns, adding detail and specificity
- ▶ Verbs show action or state of being within a sentence
- ▶ Adverbs modify verbs, adjectives, or other adverbs for detail
- ▶ Conjunctions link words, phrases, or clauses to show relationships
- ▶ Prepositions indicate relationships between nouns or pronouns and other words
- ▶ Interjections express sudden emotions or feelings in brief exclamations
- ▶ Articles define the specificity of nouns: definite (the) and indefinite (a)
- ▶ Common errors to avoid include incorrect word choice and punctuation
- ▶ Present tense expresses actions happening now or regularly in general
- ▶ Past tense describes actions completed before the present time frame
- ▶ Future tense refers to actions or events that will happen later
- ▶ Degrees of comparison show how adjectives or adverbs compare in intensity
- ▶ Concord ensures subject-verb agreement in terms of number and person
- ▶ Direct speech reports exact words spoken, while indirect paraphrases them
- ▶ Question tags turn statements into questions by adding auxiliary verbs
- ▶ Clauses are groupings of words with a subject and predicate
- ▶ Tenses describe time frames of actions and their respective forms

Objective Questions

1. What part of speech names a person, place, thing or idea?
2. Replace the noun in the sentence with a pronoun: "Sarah went to the store."
3. Identify the adjective in the sentence: "The tall building stood out."
4. What type of verb is used to express actions or states?
5. In the sentence "She sings beautifully," which part of speech is "beautifully?"
6. Combine the following two sentences using a coordinating conjunction: "I went to the park. I met my friend."
7. Fill in the blank with the correct preposition: "The book is _____ the table."

8. In the sentence “Wow! That’s amazing,” what part of speech is “Wow?”
9. Rewrite the sentence in indirect speech: “He said, ‘I will call you tomorrow.’”
10. Identify the error in this sentence: “She don’t like ice cream.”
11. What is the function of the word “but” in the sentence: “I wanted to go, but I was tired?”
12. Choose the correct tense: “I _____ (eat) lunch when she called.”
13. Convert the sentence to passive voice: “The teacher explains the lesson.”
14. What is the correct form of the verb in this sentence: “She _____ (go) to the store every day?”
15. What is the function of a question tag in a sentence?

Answers

1. Noun
2. She went to the store.
3. Tall
4. Verb
5. Adverb
6. I went to the park, and I met my friend.
7. On
8. Interjection
9. He said he would call me the next day.
10. “Don’t” should be “doesn’t.”
11. It connects two contrasting ideas.
12. Was eating
13. The lesson is explained by the teacher.
14. Goes
15. It turns a statement into a question for confirmation

Assignments

1. Explain the different parts of speech and their functions in sentences.
2. Describe the types of pronouns and their role in sentence construction.



3. Discuss the importance of tenses in English grammar and their subdivisions.
4. Elaborate on the degrees of comparison and their correct usage in sentences.
5. Compare and contrast direct and indirect speech, providing examples of each.

Suggested Reading

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Vocabulary and Usage: Homophones, Idioms, Word Forms, and Common Errors

Learning Outcomes

Upon the completion of this unit, the learner will be able to:

- ▶ apply homophones, homonyms and homographs correctly in both written and spoken contexts to enhance precision in language use.
- ▶ expand vocabulary by learning pairs of synonyms and antonyms to improve language variety
- ▶ explore how prefixes and suffixes modify root words to create new meanings and grammatical forms
- ▶ use idioms and phrases to add colour and creativity to communication
- ▶ expand vocabulary by recognising patterns in word formation

Prerequisites

Words: they are the building blocks of our thoughts, the tools of our communication and the bridge to understanding in every aspect of life. But what happens when words deceive us - when they sound the same but mean something entirely different, when their spelling misleads us, or when one small mistake changes their meaning completely? Here, we will explore the areas of language precision, where every homophone, homonym, and homograph holds a secret, and every synonym, antonym and affix opens new doors to expression.

This session is not just about definitions and rules - it's about empowering you to master the complexities of language. Whether you are dealing with idioms, spotting wrong usages, forming new words or tackling easily confused terms, you are not just learning vocabulary; you are crafting a skillset to navigate communication with confidence. Let us learn the mechanics underlying the use of words and sharpen our tools for competitive examinations and life's endless conversations!



Key Concepts

Spelling, Dual Meaning, Pronunciation, Opposites, Prefixes, Suffixes, Root Words, Word Formation.

2.2.1 Discussion

2.2.1.1 Homophones

Homophones are words that sound the same but have different spellings and meanings. These often cause confusion in writing and require understanding the context for correct use.

Examples:

1. *Ate* (past tense of eat) vs. *Eight* (number)
2. *Sea* (ocean) vs. *See* (to perceive with eyes)
3. *Son* (male child) vs. *Sun* (star)
4. *Flour* (powder used for baking) vs. *Flower* (a plant bloom)
5. *Knight* (a medieval soldier) vs. *Night* (opposite of day)
6. *Pair* (a set of two) vs. *Pear* (a fruit)
7. *Plain* (simple) vs. *Plane* (aircraft)
8. *Right* (correct) vs. *Write* (to mark letters)
9. *Buy* (to purchase) vs. *By* (preposition)
10. *Their* (belonging to them) vs. *There* (location)

2.2.1.2 Homonyms

Homonyms are words that have the same spelling and pronunciation but different meanings.

The meaning depends on the context of the sentence.

Examples:

1. *Bark*: The sound a dog makes / The outer layer of a tree
2. *Well*: In good health / A source of water
3. *Date*: A fruit / A specific day or romantic meeting
4. *Watch*: A timepiece / To observe
5. *Match*: A contest / A stick used to light a fire
6. *Bat*: A flying mammal / A cricket or baseball bat
7. *Spring*: A season / To jump upward

8. *Can*: A metal container / To be able to do something
9. *Row*: A line / An argument or dispute
10. *Kind*: Type or category / Caring and considerate

2.2.1.3 Homographs

Homographs are words that have the same spelling but different meanings and often different pronunciations. Context and pronunciation determine their use.

Examples:

1. *Tear*: To rip (*tair*) / A drop from the eye (*teer*)
2. *Lead*: A metal (*led*) / To guide (*leed*)
3. *Wind*: Moving air (*wind*) / To twist or turn (*waind*)
4. *Bow*: To bend forward (*bau*) / A tied ribbon (*boh*)
5. *Bass*: A type of fish (*base*) / Low-pitched sound (*bass*)
6. *Read*: Past tense of reading (*red*) / To look at and understand words (*reed*)
7. *Desert*: A barren land (*dezz-ert*) / To abandon (*di-zert*)
8. *Close*: Near (*klohss*) / To shut (*kloh-z*)
9. *Minute*: Tiny (*my-newt*) / Sixty seconds (*min-it*)
10. *Content*: Happy (*kuhn-tent*) / The subject or material (*kon-tent*)

Fill in the blanks with the correct homophones:

1. (pair, pear): I bought a ____ of shoes and a ____ from the market.
2. (bare, bear): He walked ____ foot through the forest, where he saw a ____.

Identify whether the following are homophones, homographs, or homonyms:

1. Lead (to guide) and Lead (the metal)
2. Bow (to bend forward) and Bow (a weapon for shooting arrows)
3. Right (correct) and Write (to form letters)

2.2.1.4 Antonyms

Antonyms are words that have opposite meanings. They are essential for understanding contrasts in sentences or ideas.

Examples:

- Happy – Sad



- ▶ Big – Small
- ▶ Hot – Cold
- ▶ Early – Late
- ▶ Fast – Slow
- ▶ Young – Old
- ▶ Strong – Weak
- ▶ Increase – Decrease
- ▶ Open – Close
- ▶ Rich – Poor

2.2.1.5 Synonyms

Synonyms are words that have the same or nearly the same meanings. They help avoid repetition in writing and enhance vocabulary.

Examples:

- ▶ Happy – Joyful
- ▶ Big – Large
- ▶ Fast – Quick
- ▶ Smart – Intelligent
- ▶ Rich – Wealthy
- ▶ Strong – Powerful
- ▶ Help – Assist
- ▶ Begin – Start
- ▶ Friendly – Amiable
- ▶ Beautiful – Attractive

Choose the correct antonym for the given words:

- ▶ Happy
- ▶ Start
- ▶ Brave
- ▶ Options: (a) Sad, (b) Finish, (c) Cowardly

Replace the underlined word with a synonym:

- ▶ The big house was painted white.

2.2.1.6 Affixes

Affixes are word parts added to the beginning (prefix) or end (suffix) of a root word to change its meaning or function. Prefixes like "un-" can negate a word, while suffixes like "-ness" transform its grammatical form. They help in expanding vocabulary and creating complex meanings.

Examples:

1. Un- (Prefix):
 - ▶ Happy → Unhappy (Negates the meaning)
2. Re- (Prefix):
 - ▶ Write → Rewrite (Indicates repetition or change)
3. Pre- (Prefix):
 - ▶ View → Preview (Indicates something before)
4. Dis- (Prefix):
 - ▶ Agree → Disagree (Indicates opposition)
5. -ness (Suffix):
 - ▶ Kind → Kindness (Turns an adjective into a noun)
6. -ful (Suffix):
 - ▶ Beauty → Beautiful (Turns a noun into an adjective)
7. -able (Suffix):
 - ▶ Read → Readable (Indicates capability)
8. -ly (Suffix):
 - ▶ Quick → Quickly (Turns an adjective into an adverb)
9. -ment (Suffix):
 - ▶ Develop → Development (Turns a verb into a noun)
10. -less (Suffix):
 - ▶ Care → Careless (Indicates absence of something)

Identify the prefix or suffix in the following words:

1. Unhappiness
2. Careful
3. Irreplaceable



Form a word by adding the appropriate prefix or suffix to the root word:

4. Harm + ____ (Prefix)
5. Health + ____ (Suffix)

2.2.1.7 Idioms and Phrases

Idioms are fixed expressions with meanings different from the literal interpretation of their words. Phrases are groups of words that work together to convey specific ideas but do not form complete sentences. These enrich communication by adding metaphorical and cultural layers.

Examples:

1. *Break the ice* – To initiate conversation in a social setting to ease tension.
2. *Bite the bullet* – To endure something painful or unpleasant.
3. *Under the weather* – Feeling unwell or sick.
4. *Cost an arm and a leg* – To be very expensive.
5. *Hit the nail on the head* – To describe something accurately or exactly.
6. *Burn the midnight oil* – To work late into the night.
7. *A blessing in disguise* – Something that seems bad but turns out to be good.
8. *Spill the beans* – To reveal a secret or disclose something confidential.
9. *The ball is in your court* – It is up to you to make the next decision or take action.
10. *Let the cat out of the bag* – To accidentally reveal a secret.

What does the idiom “broke the ice” mean?

Choose the correct meaning of the phrase “hit the nail on the head”:

- ▶ (a) To hammer something
- ▶ (b) To describe something accurately
- ▶ (c) To fail miserably

2.2.1.8 One Word Substitution

One-word substitution replaces a long phrase or clause with a single, concise word. This enhances precision and reduces verbosity in communication. It is a common feature in competitive examinations to test vocabulary and comprehension.

Examples:

1. Anthropology – The study of humans and human societies
2. Benevolent – Someone who is kind-hearted and charitable
3. Euphoria – A feeling of intense happiness or excitement

4. Philology – The study of language in historical texts
5. Inexorable – Impossible to stop or prevent
6. Misanthrope – A person who dislikes or avoids human society
7. Pessimist – A person who always expects the worst
8. Omnipotent – All-powerful; having unlimited power
9. Synchronise – To occur at the same time or rate
10. Loquacious – Extremely talkative

Replace the phrase with a single word:

1. A person who writes books: _____
2. A building where books are kept: _____

2.2.1.9 Wrong Usages to Be Avoided

Wrong usages occur when words or phrases are used incorrectly, leading to grammatical errors or altered meanings. Correct usage ensures clarity and proper expression in language. Avoiding common errors like incorrect use of preposition enhances accuracy in writing and speaking.

Examples:

Incorrect: “She is married with a doctor.”

Correct: “She is married to a doctor.”

Incorrect: “He is interested for learning Spanish.”

Correct: “He is interested in learning Spanish.”

Incorrect: “I am looking forward to meet you.”

Correct: “I am looking forward to meeting you.”

Incorrect: “She is good in playing tennis.”

Correct: “She is good at playing tennis.”

Incorrect: “He was blamed for the accident.”

Correct: “He was blamed for causing the accident.”

Incorrect: “She didn’t pay attention on her studies.”

Correct: “She didn’t pay attention to her studies.”

Incorrect: “I am waiting since an hour.”

Correct: “I have been waiting for an hour.”

Incorrect: “This is a much better option than the other one.”

Correct: “This is a much better option than the other.”

Incorrect: “He asked me to borrow him the pen.”



Correct: “He asked me to lend him the pen.”

Incorrect: “She is fond of in reading books.”

Correct: “She is fond of reading books.”

Choose the correct sentence:

- ▶ (a) He is taller than I.
- ▶ (b) He is taller than me.

Identify the correct usage:

- ▶ I could care less vs. I couldn't care less

2.2.1.10 Word Formation

Word formation involves creating new words by adding prefixes, suffixes or combining words. This process reflects the adaptability and creativity of language. It is essential for expanding vocabulary and understanding word functions.

Examples:

- ▶ Unhappy (Prefix “un-” + Adjective “happy”)
- ▶ Reader (Suffix “-er” + Verb “read”)
- ▶ Happiness (Suffix “-ness” + Adjective “happy”)
- ▶ Television (Prefix “tele-” + Noun “vision”)
- ▶ Prehistoric (Prefix “pre-” + Noun “historic”)
- ▶ Beautiful (Suffix “-ful” + Noun “beauty”)
- ▶ Rewritten (Prefix “re-” + Verb “written”)
- ▶ Irreplaceable (Prefix “ir-” + Adjective “replaceable”)
- ▶ Dishwasher (Prefix “dish-” + Noun “washer”)
- ▶ Modernise (Suffix “-ise” + Noun “modern”)

Form new words by adding prefixes or suffixes to the following roots:

1. Happy
2. Comfort
3. Create

What is the noun form of the verb “to inform”?

2.2.1.11 Singular / Plural

Singular / plural forms of nouns indicate one or more entities. Regular nouns form their plurals by adding “-s” or “-es,” while irregular nouns require memorising. Some words remain unchanged and others differ entirely in their plural forms.

Examples:

- ▶ Book / Books
- ▶ Cat / Cats
- ▶ Child / Children
- ▶ Leaf / Leaves
- ▶ Box / Boxes
- ▶ Foot / Feet
- ▶ Man / Men
- ▶ Woman / Women
- ▶ City / Cities
- ▶ Child / Children

Change the following sentences into plural:

- ▶ The child is playing with a toy.
- ▶ The woman is sitting in the chair.

Choose the correct plural form:

- ▶ Crisis
- (a) Crises
- (b) Crisis

2.2.1.12 Compound Words

Compound words are formed by combining two or more words into a single term. They may be closed (written as one word), open (written separately) or hyphenated. These words help convey specific meanings effectively.

Examples:

- ▶ Toothbrush (Closed Compound)
- ▶ Ice cream (Open Compound)
- ▶ Mother-in-law (Hyphenated Compound)
- ▶ Football (Closed Compound)
- ▶ Raincoat (Closed Compound)
- ▶ Post office (Open Compound)
- ▶ Well-being (Hyphenated Compound)



- ▶ Notebook (Closed Compound)
- ▶ Coffee cup (Open Compound)
- ▶ High-school (Hyphenated Compound)

Identify the compound word in the following:

1. Sunlight
2. Football
3. Toothpaste

Form a compound word using the following:

4. House + work
5. Rain + bow

2.2.1.13 Word Relations

Word relations explore connections between words, such as synonyms, antonyms and analogies. Recognising these relationships enhances vocabulary and comprehension. They are crucial for understanding nuances of language and context.

Examples:

- ▶ Synonym:
Happy - Joyful
- ▶ Antonym:
Hot - Cold
- ▶ Analogy:
Day is to Night as Summer is to Winter
- ▶ Hyponym (Specific word under a general category):
Rose - Flower
- ▶ Hypernym (General category for a specific word):
Animal - Dog
- ▶ Part to Whole:
Leaf - Tree
- ▶ Cause and Effect:
Rain - Flood
- ▶ Member to Group:
Teacher - School
- ▶ Instrument to Action:

Pen - Write

► Object to Purpose:

Knife - Cut

a. Match the following words based on their relationship:

Pen – (a) Write

Lion – (b) Roar

Doctor – (c) Medicine

b. Which word is related to “education”?

(a) Learn

(b) Teach

(c) All of the above

2.2.1.14 Easily Confused Words

Easily confused words are those with similar spellings or pronunciations but different meanings. Distinguishing between them avoids miscommunication and ensures clarity. They are often used in competitive examinations to assess attention to detail.

Examples:

1. Accept vs. Except

► Accept: To receive or agree to something.

► Except: Excluding or leaving out.

2. Affect vs. Effect

► Affect: To influence something.

► Effect: A result or outcome.

3. Complement vs. Compliment

► Complement: Something that completes or enhances.

► Compliment: A polite praise or remark.

4. Capital vs. Capitol

► Capital: A city where the government is located, or financial assets.

► Capitol: A building where legislative bodies meet.

5. Principal vs. Principle

► Principal: The head of a school or an important figure; a sum of money.



- ▶ Principle: A fundamental truth or belief.
- 6. Stationary vs. Stationery
 - ▶ Stationary: Not moving or staying in one place.
 - ▶ Stationery: Paper, pens, and office supplies.
- 7. Elicit vs. Illicit
 - ▶ Elicit: To draw out or provoke.
 - ▶ Illicit: Illegal or forbidden by law.
- 8. Bare vs. Bear
 - ▶ Bare: Without covering; exposed.
 - ▶ Bear: A large animal or to endure something.
- 9. Advice vs. Advise
 - ▶ Advice: A recommendation or suggestion.
 - ▶ Advise: To give counsel or guidance.
- 10. Loose vs. Lose
 - ▶ Loose: Not tight or free.
 - ▶ Lose: To fail to retain something or be defeated.

Choose the correct word:

1. (Affect / Effect): The new rules will ____ the environment.
2. (Than / Then): He is taller ____ I am.

2.2.1.15 Commonly Used Foreign Words and Expressions

Foreign words and expressions like “*ad hoc*” or “*déjà vu*” are borrowed from other languages and used in English. They add precision and cultural depth to communication. Familiarity with these enhances both written and spoken proficiency.

Examples:

1. ***Ad hoc*** (Latin) - Meaning “for this purpose,” often used to describe something created or done for a specific need or situation.
Example: The committee was formed on an ***ad hoc*** basis.
2. ***Déjà vu*** (French) - The feeling that one has already experienced the present situation.
Example: Walking into the room, she had a strange sense of ***déjà vu***.
3. ***Carte blanche*** (French) - Complete freedom to act as one wishes.
Example: He was given ***carte blanche*** to manage the project.
4. ***Bona fide*** (Latin) - Genuine or real.

Example: This document is a **bona fide** agreement.

5. **Cul-de-sac** (French) - A dead end street or situation.

Example: The negotiation reached a **cul-de-sac**.

6. **Per se** (Latin) - By itself or intrinsically.

Example: The idea is not bad **per se**, but it needs more thought.

7. **Faux pas** (French) - A social blunder or mistake.

Example: Wearing white to the wedding was a major **faux pas**.

8. **Status quo** (Latin) - The existing state of affairs.

Example: They decided to maintain the **status quo** instead of making changes.

9. **RSVP** (French: Répondez s'il vous plaît) - "Please respond," used in invitations to request a reply.

Example: Don't forget to **RSVP** to the party by Friday.

10. **Cliché** (French) - An overused expression or idea.

Example: The phrase "time heals all wounds" has become a **cliché**.

- a. What does "carpe diem" mean?
b. Choose the correct meaning of the expression "déjà vu":
 (a) A feeling of familiarity
 (b) A quick glance
 (c) A sudden realisation

2.2.1.16 Abbreviations

Abbreviations are shortened forms of words or phrases, often using the first few letters or significant parts of the original term. Abbreviations may include periods and are usually pronounced letter by letter or as the original word.

Examples:

1. Mr. - Mister
2. Dr. - Doctor
3. Jr. - Junior
4. U.S. - United States
5. Ltd. - Limited
6. St. – Street / Saint
7. kg - Kilogram



8. Ave. - Avenue
9. min. - Minute
10. vs. - Versus

2.2.1.17 Acronyms

Words formed from the initial letters or parts of a series of words, pronounced as a single word rather than as individual letters.

Examples:

NASA - National Aeronautics and Space Administration

UNESCO - United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation

FIFA - Fédération Internationale de Football Association

COVID - Coronavirus Disease

SCUBA - Self-Contained Underwater Breathing Apparatus

RADAR - Radio Detection and Ranging

PIN - Personal Identification Number

ATM - Automated Teller Machine

LASER - Light Amplification by Stimulated Emission of Radiation

NGO - Non-Governmental Organisation

a. Expand the following abbreviations:

- ▶ USA
- ▶ CEO
- ▶ ASAP

b. Which of the following is an acronym for “World Health Organisation”?

- (a) WHO
- (b) WHOLE

Recap

- ▶ Homophones are words that sound alike different meanings
- ▶ Homonyms have the same spelling or sound different meanings
- ▶ Homographs are words spelled the same, but pronounced differently
- ▶ Antonyms are words with opposite meanings like hot cold
- ▶ Synonyms are words with similar meanings like happy joyful
- ▶ Affixes are prefixes and suffixes added to words
- ▶ Idioms and phrases have figurative meanings beyond word meaning
- ▶ One word substitution replaces longer expressions with one word
- ▶ Wrong usages include common grammar errors needing careful correction
- ▶ Word formation creates new words from roots or parts
- ▶ Singular and plural show quantity of one or more things
- ▶ Compound words join two words forming a single term
- ▶ Word relations show context meanings or associations between terms
- ▶ Easily confused words look or sound alike, with different meanings
- ▶ Foreign words are borrowed terms used in English conversations

Objective Questions

1. What is the term for words that have the same pronunciation but different meanings?
2. What do you call words that are spelled the same but have different meanings?
3. Which term refers to words that sound alike and are spelled alike but have different meanings?
4. What is the opposite of “ascend”?
5. What is a synonym for “rapid”?
6. What is the prefix in the word “unhappy”?
7. What is the suffix in the word “happiness”?
8. What does the idiom “spill the beans” mean?
9. What is the one-word substitution for “one who studies the stars”?
10. What is the process of creating a new word by adding a prefix or suffix called?
11. What is the plural form of “crisis”?
12. What type of compound word is “sunflower”?
13. What is the relationship between the words “pen” and “write”?
14. What is the correct word: “affect” (verb) or “effect” (noun) for “The new policy had a positive ____ on sales”?



Answers

1. Homophones
2. Homographs
3. Homonyms
4. Descend
5. Fast
6. Un
7. Ness
8. Reveal
9. Astronomer
10. I
11. Derivation
12. Crises
13. Closed
14. Function
15. Effect

Assignments

1. Discuss the differences between homophones, homonyms and homographs. Provide examples of each and explain how they can impact clarity in communication.
2. Explain the role of affixes in word formation. How do prefixes and suffixes contribute to the creation of new words, and what are some common examples of their use?
3. Define idioms and phrases and discuss their significance in language. Illustrate with examples how idiomatic expressions enrich communication and provide insights into culture and context.
4. Examine the importance of correct usage in language, particularly in relation to synonyms, antonyms and commonly confused words. Discuss how misusing these can affect the accuracy and effectiveness of communication.
5. Provide an in depth analysis of abbreviations and acronyms in both formal and informal contexts. Discuss their evolution, use and the potential problems that may arise from overuse or incorrect usage in writing and speech.

Suggested Reading

1. Swan, Michael. *Practical English Usage*. 4th ed., Oxford UP, 2016.
2. Trask, R. L. *The Penguin Guide to Punctuation*. Penguin Books, 2004.
3. Fowler, H. W., and F. G. Fowler. *The King's English*. Oxford UP, 2004.
4. Oxford University Press. *The Oxford English Dictionary*. 2nd ed., Oxford UP, 1989.
5. Crystal, David. *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of the English Language*. 2nd ed., Cambridge UP, 2003.





Verbal Reasoning and Puzzles: Coding, Jumbled Words, and Spelling

Learning Outcomes

Upon the completion of this unit, the learner will be able to:

- ▶ enhance their reading comprehension skills
- ▶ develop strong problem solving skills
- ▶ learn to decode and encode information
- ▶ improve their vocabulary and word formation skills

Prerequisites

In today's competitive world, excelling in competitive examinations requires more than just knowledge; it demands strong analytical and verbal skills. Verbal reasoning and language proficiency play a critical role in many entrance and recruitment examinations, as they test a candidate's ability to understand, analyse and apply language effectively. This unit focuses on developing these skills through various techniques and exercises, which are essential for success in competitive examinations.

Key Concepts

Verbal Reasoning, Competitive Examinations, Critical Thinking, Analytical Skills, Verbal Puzzles, Coding Exercises, Jumbled Words

2.3.1 Discussion

2.3.1.1 Verbal Reasoning

Verbal reasoning is a crucial aspect of competitive examinations and language proficiency tests, designed to assess a candidate's ability to process and analyse information presented in words. It involves understanding, evaluating and reasoning with concepts expressed in language. Unlike numerical reasoning, which relies on mathematical concepts and operations, verbal reasoning tests the capacity to think logically and interpret written material.

Key Aspects of Verbal Reasoning:

1. **Reading Comprehension:** This part evaluates the candidate's ability to understand and analyse a written passage. The passage typically presents a situation, argument or description and questions are based on the information within it. Candidates are expected to infer meaning, identify the main idea and assess logical flow. The questions may focus on specific details, inferences, the tone of the passage or the author's intent.

Example: Passage:

"The benefits of regular exercise are well documented. It not only improves physical health but also enhances mental well being. Exercise helps in reducing anxiety, improving sleep and boosting mood through the release of endorphins."

Question:

What is the primary benefit of exercise mentioned in the passage?

- A) Improving physical health
- B) Boosting the economy
- C) Increasing work efficiency
- D) Improving family life

Answer: A) Improving physical health

2. **Synonyms and Antonyms:** Verbal reasoning often tests your vocabulary by asking you to identify words with similar or opposite meanings. Understanding word relationships is crucial in many competitive examinations as it not only measures vocabulary but also reflects an understanding of context and nuances of language.

Example:

Synonym for "eloquent":

- A) Silent
- B) Articulate
- C) Confused
- D) Shy

Answer: B) Articulate



Select the correct synonym or antonym for the given word.

1. **Turbulent** A) Calm

B) Chaotic

C) Quiet

D) Stable

Answer: B) Chaotic

2. **Benevolent** A) Evil

B) Generous

C) Selfish

D) Angry

Answer: B) Generous

3. **Efficient** A) Lazy

B) Productive

C) Slow

D) Wasteful

Answer: B) Productive

4. **Cautious** A) Reckless

B) Careful

C) Bold

D) Disregardful

Answer: B) Careful

3. Logical Deductions: Logical deduction involves drawing conclusions based on the information provided. This is typically done through syllogisms or conditional reasoning. In these exercises, a set of premises is given and the candidate must deduce a valid conclusion from those premises.

Example: Premise 1: All teachers are kind.

Premise 2: Mr. Smith is a teacher.

Conclusion: Mr. Smith is kind.

This example shows how logical reasoning works. The ability to draw accurate conclusions from given facts is essential in verbal reasoning.

Read the premises carefully and deduce the correct conclusion.

1. **Premise 1:** All animals need food to survive.

Premise 2: A dog is an animal.

Conclusion:

- A) A dog does not need food to survive.
- B) A dog is a plant.
- C) A dog needs food to survive.
- D) All animals are dogs.

Answer: C) A dog needs food to survive.

2. **Premise 1:** No one in the class has failed the exam.

Premise 2: John is in the class.

Conclusion:

- A) John failed the exam.
- B) John passed the exam.
- C) John is not in the class.
- D) John did not take the exam.

Answer: B) John passed the exam.

3. **Premise 1:** All politicians are good speakers.

Premise 2: Mark is a politician.

Conclusion:

- A) Mark is a bad speaker.
- B) Mark is a good speaker.
- C) Mark is not a politician.
- D) Mark cannot speak.

Answer: B) Mark is a good speaker.

4. **Analogies:** Analogies test the ability to identify relationships between two words or phrases and apply that relationship to another set. An analogy might look like this: "Hand is to glove as foot is to ____."

Example: "Bird is to flying as fish is to ____." A) Walking

- B) Swimming
- C) Running
- D) Flying

Answer: B) Swimming

Analogies help assess both vocabulary and the ability to understand relationships in language.

Choose the pair of words that best completes the analogy.

1. Hand is to glove as foot is to ____.



- A) Shoe
- B) Hat
- C) Glove
- D) Sock

Answer: A) Shoe

2. Bird is to flying as fish is to _____. A) Walking
B) Swimming
C) Running
D) Flying

Answer: B) Swimming

3. Doctor is to medicine as teacher is to _____. A) Classroom
B) Book
C) Students
D) Knowledge

Answer: D) Knowledge

4. Cup is to tea as plate is to _____. A) Cake
B) Knife
C) Food
D) Fork

Answer: A) Cake

Importance of Verbal Reasoning in Competitive Examinations

Verbal reasoning tests are commonly found in competitive examinations such as the GRE, GMAT, Civil Services and Banking examinations. These tests are designed to evaluate a candidate's analytical skills, comprehension abilities and language proficiency. Strong verbal reasoning skills can improve overall performance in these examinations and are particularly valuable in sections focusing on verbal ability, analytical reasoning and critical thinking.

To excel in verbal reasoning, it is important to practice regularly, improve vocabulary and work on comprehension skills. Reading widely, solving puzzles and engaging with complex texts are excellent ways to strengthen verbal reasoning abilities.

2.3.1.2 Verbal Puzzles

Verbal puzzles are language based problems that test a candidate's ability to think critically and solve problems using linguistic clues. These puzzles often require reasoning, pattern recognition and sometimes lateral thinking. Verbal puzzles can vary in complexity, ranging from simple riddles to complex word games and they are frequently included in competitive examinations to evaluate problem solving abilities.

Types of Verbal Puzzles

1. **Riddles:** Riddles are short puzzles where the answer is hidden within the phras-

ing of the question. They require candidates to think outside the box and use logic, lateral thinking and often, a good grasp of language.

Example: “I am tall when I am young, and I am short when I am old. What am I?”

Answer: A candle.

Riddles often play on multiple meanings of words and sometimes, the answer may be a metaphorical or abstract concept.

Solve the following riddles:

1. **Riddle 1:**

“I speak without a mouth and hear without ears. I have no body, but I come alive with the wind. What am I?”

Answer: An echo.

2. **Riddle 2:**

“The more you take, the more you leave behind. What am I?”

Answer: Footsteps.

3. **Riddle 3:**

“What has a heart that doesn’t beat?”

Answer: An artichoke.

4. **Riddle 4:**

“I can be cracked, made, told and played. What am I?”

Answer: A joke.

2. **Word Clues:** In these puzzles, candidates are given a set of clues and must use wordplay to decipher the solution. The clues may involve puns, word combinations or hidden meanings.

Example: “What fiveletter word becomes shorter when you add two letters to it?”

Answer: Short. Adding “er” makes it “shorter.”

Use the clues provided to solve the word puzzles:

1. **Clue 1:**

“What five letter word becomes shorter when you add two letters to it?”

Answer: Short (Adding “er” makes it “shorter”).

2. **Clue 2:**

“What word has six letters, and when you take one away, it becomes twelve?”

Answer: Dozens (When you remove the “s,” you are left with “dozen,” which is twelve).

3. **Clue 3:**



“What word is spelled the same forwards and backwards, but is not a palindrome?”

Answer: “Racecar” (This one might be tricky — sometimes it plays on expectations!)

4. **Clue 4:**

“What is always in front of you but can never be seen?”

Answer: The future.

3. **Word Ladder:** The word ladder puzzle involves changing one word into another by changing one letter at a time. Each intermediate step must be a valid word. This puzzle tests knowledge of words, spelling and logical thinking.

Example: Change the word “COLD” to “WARM” in four steps:

- ▶ COLD → CORD
- ▶ CORD → WORD
- ▶ WORD → WORM
- ▶ WORM → WARM

Answer: CORD, WORD, WORM, WARM

4. **Rearranging Sentences:** In this type of verbal puzzle, a sentence is presented with jumbled words and the candidate must rearrange them to form a coherent, grammatically correct sentence. These puzzles assess syntax, sentence structure and overall understanding of language.

Example: “world / the / know / how / will / you / the / save”

Rearrange the jumbled words to make a meaningful sentence:

1. **Jumbled Words:** “dog / big / is / the / fast / very”

Answer: The big dog is very fast.

2. **Jumbled Words:** “him / it / told / I / that / knew / she / no”

Answer: I told her that she knew no it.

3. **Jumbled Words:** “buy / can / where / I / it / the / get / shoes”

Answer: Where can I buy the shoes?

Answer: “How will you save the world?”

5. **Cryptic Puzzles:** Cryptic puzzles are often seen in word games and involve using clues that have both a literal and a figurative meaning. These puzzles require not only logical thinking but also the ability to understand subtleties and indirect clues.

Example:

“I have keys but open no locks. I have space but no room. You can enter, but you cannot go outside. What am I?”

Answer: A keyboard.

Solve the following cryptic clues:

1. **Clue 1:**

“I have keys but open no locks. I have space but no room. You can enter, but you cannot go outside. What am I?”

Answer: A keyboard.

2. **Clue 2:**

“What has cities, but no houses; forests, but no trees and rivers, but no water?”

Answer: A map.

3. **Clue 3:**

“I can be cracked, made, told and played. What am I?”

Answer: A joke.

Why Verbal Puzzles are Important in Competitive Examinations:

Verbal puzzles are commonly found in competitive examinations such as CAT, GMAT, GRE and other entrance tests. They evaluate a candidate’s ability to solve problems under time constraints, apply logical reasoning and demonstrate creativity. The ability to solve verbal puzzles effectively enhances a candidate’s problem-solving skills, critical thinking and language proficiency, all of which are essential in examinations that assess general reasoning ability.

By practicing these puzzles, candidates can improve their vocabulary, become more familiar with common linguistic patterns and develop quicker problem solving strategies. Regular practice with verbal puzzles also helps in enhancing one’s focus and concentration, which are crucial in high pressure examination environments.

2.3.1.3 Verbal Coding Exercises

Verbal coding exercises are an essential part of competitive examinations that test logical thinking, pattern recognition and understanding of language coding systems. These exercises often involve substituting letters or numbers in specific patterns or codes, requiring candidates to identify the logic behind the given codes and use it to decode or encode new information.



Types of Verbal Coding Exercises:

1. **Letter Coding:** In letter coding exercises, each letter of the alphabet is substituted with another letter or symbol according to a specific rule. The challenge lies in identifying the rule and applying it consistently.

Example:

In a specific code, each letter is substituted by the one that comes two places after it in the alphabet. So, $A \rightarrow C$, $B \rightarrow D$, etc.

What is the code for the word “CAT”?

Solution:

$C \rightarrow E$

$A \rightarrow C$

$T \rightarrow V$

Answer: ECV

In this exercise, each letter of the alphabet is substituted with another letter based on a rule. Identify the rule and code the word accordingly.

1. **Rule:** Each letter is substituted by the one that comes three places after it in the alphabet. What is the code for the word “HELLO”?

Solution:

$H \rightarrow K$

$E \rightarrow H$

$L \rightarrow O$

$L \rightarrow O$

$O \rightarrow R$

Answer: KHOOO

2. **Rule:** Each letter is substituted by the one that comes five places after it in the alphabet. What is the code for the word “SMART”?

Solution:

$S \rightarrow X$

$M \rightarrow R$

$A \rightarrow F$

$R \rightarrow W$

$T \rightarrow Y$

Answer: XRFWY

2. **Number Coding:** In number coding exercises, letters are substituted with numbers based on their position in the alphabet or other patterns. These exercises test a candidate’s ability to understand numerical and alphabetic relationships.

Example:

If the letter “A” is coded as 1, “B” as 2, and “C” as 3, what is the code for the word “CAB”?

Solution:

C → 3

A → 1

B → 2

Answer: 3-1-2

In these exercises, letters are substituted with numbers based on their position in the alphabet. Decode the word using the provided number codes.

1. If the letter “A” is coded as 1, “B” as 2, “C” as 3, and so on, what is the code for the word “PEACE”?

Solution:

P → 16

E → 5

A → 1

C → 3

E → 5

Answer: 16-5-1-3-5

2. If the letter “A” is coded as 1, “B” as 2, “C” as 3, and so on, what is the code for the word “EXAM”?

Solution:

E → 5

X → 24

A → 1

M → 13

Answer: 5-24-1-13

3. **Substitution Codes:** Substitution codes involve replacing certain letters with other letters, numbers or symbols according to a predetermined key. This type of exercise requires an understanding of the code and applying it to solve the problem.

Example:

In a given substitution cipher, the letter “R” is replaced by “M”, “E” by “T” and “A” by “P”. What is the encoded form of the word “REAL”?

Solution:

R → M



E → T
A → P
L → (Use the code for L from the cipher)
Answer: MTP_

In these exercises, letters are substituted according to a given cipher. Decode the word based on the substitution rules.

1. Cipher:
B → D
E → F
S → G
T → A
What is the encoded form of the word "BEST"?

Solution:
B → D
E → F
S → G
T → A
Answer: DFGA

2. Cipher:
P → L
O → T
W → C
E → H
What is the encoded form of the word "POWER"?

Solution:
P → L
O → T
W → C
E → H
R → (Refer to cipher for R)
Answer: LTHC_

4. **Symbolic Coding:** In symbolic coding exercises, candidates are asked to identify the meaning of symbols or characters based on a set of rules. This could involve abstract symbols representing numbers or letters, and the task is to decode or encode a message.

Example:

If ☒ = 2, ○ = 3, and Δ = 5, what does ☒○Δ represent?

Solution:

$$\text{⌘} = 2$$

$$\circ = 3$$

$$\Delta = 5$$

Answer: 2 3 5

In symbolic coding, symbols represent numbers or letters. Decode the message using the given symbolic values.

1. Given:

$$\text{⌘} = 3, \circ = 5, \Delta = 7, \nabla = 2$$

What does the code $\text{⌘} \circ \Delta \nabla$ represent?

Solution:

$$\text{⌘} = 3$$

$$\circ = 5$$

$$\Delta = 7$$

$$\nabla = 2$$

Answer: 3 5 7 2

2. Given:

$$* = 4, \spadesuit = 6, \heartsuit = 9, \clubsuit = 3$$

What does the code $* \spadesuit \heartsuit \clubsuit$ represent?

Solution:

$$* = 4$$

$$\spadesuit = 6$$

$$\heartsuit = 9$$

$$\clubsuit = 3$$

Answer: 4 6 9 3

Importance of Verbal Coding Exercises

Verbal coding exercises are included in competitive examinations to assess the candidate's problem-solving skills, attention to detail and logical thinking. These exercises are important because they challenge candidates to process complex information quickly and accurately.

In real life applications, coding exercises help develop analytical skills that are useful in fields like data science, programming, cryptography and even linguistics. By practicing these exercises, candidates can not only improve their exam performance but also enhance their critical thinking abilities.



2.3.1.4 Jumbled Words

Jumbled words are a popular type of verbal reasoning puzzle in competitive examinations that test a candidate's ability to rearrange letters and form meaningful words. These exercises require not only a strong vocabulary but also quick thinking and an understanding of word patterns.

How Jumbled Words Work?

In a jumbled word exercise, a set of letters is given and the task is to rearrange them to form a meaningful word. The challenge lies in identifying the correct order of letters, which may require a systematic approach, considering the most common prefixes, suffixes and combinations of letters in the English language.

Key Techniques to Solve Jumbled Words

1. Identifying Common Prefixes and Suffixes

Many words have common prefixes (un-, re-, pre-) or suffixes (-ing, -ed, -ly, -ness) that can help you identify potential candidates for the word.

Example:

Jumbled Word: "ENIRMG"

Look for common suffixes like "-ing" or prefixes like "re-."

Answer: MARGIN

2. Recognizing Word Patterns: Many English words have common letter combinations or structures (like "ed," "sh," "est," "able") that can help you figure out the word. Experimenting with these patterns can guide you to the correct solution.

Example:

Jumbled Word: "AEMLXB"

Try rearranging it to form a familiar word structure.

Answer: EXAMPLE

3. Elimination Method: In some cases, recognising the impossible combinations (such as sequences of vowels or uncommon letters) can help you eliminate incorrect combinations, narrowing down the possibilities.

Why Jumbled Words Are Important in Competitive Examinations:

Jumbled words are an effective way to assess both vocabulary and cognitive ability. These exercises test the candidate's ability to recognise familiar patterns and think logically under time pressure.

By practicing regularly, candidates can sharpen their spelling skills, increase their word knowl-

edge and improve their overall language proficiency. These exercises are not only important for verbal reasoning sections in examinations but also useful for enhancing general language and communication skills.

Recap

- ▶ Verbal reasoning tests logical thinking and comprehension
- ▶ Reading comprehension assesses understanding of written material
- ▶ Synonyms and antonyms test vocabulary knowledge and usage
- ▶ Logical deduction involves drawing conclusions from given premises
- ▶ Analogies evaluate understanding of word relationships and patterns
- ▶ Verbal puzzles test critical thinking and problem-solving abilities
- ▶ Riddles require creative, lateral thinking and wordplay
- ▶ Word ladder puzzles involve changing words step-by-step
- ▶ Rearranging jumbled words tests understanding of sentence structure
- ▶ Letter and number coding involve substitution based problems
- ▶ Substitution codes require identifying patterns or letter relationships
- ▶ Symbolic coding uses abstract symbols for encoding messages
- ▶ Jumbled words require rearranging letters to form words
- ▶ Understanding prefixes and suffixes helps solve word puzzles
- ▶ Verbal coding exercises improve logical and analytical thinking

Objective Questions

1. Which aspect of verbal reasoning evaluates the candidate's ability to understand and analyse written passages?
2. What is the opposite of the word "eloquent"?
3. Which verbal reasoning exercise involves drawing conclusions based on premises?
4. In an analogy, "Hand is to glove as foot is to ____." What is the correct answer?
5. What is the term used to describe a puzzle where one letter is changed at a time to form another word?
6. Which type of verbal puzzle involves using clues that have both a literal and figurative meaning?
7. What is the code for the word "CAT" if each letter is substituted with the letter two places ahead in the alphabet?



8. What is the term for rearranging a jumbled set of words to form a grammatically correct sentence?
9. In number coding, if the letter “A” is coded as 1, “B” as 2, and “C” as 3, what is the code for the word “CAB”?
10. What is the answer to the riddle: “I am tall when I am young, and I am short when I am old”?
11. What is the answer to the cryptic puzzle: “I have keys but open no locks. I have space but no room. You can enter, but you cannot go outside”?
12. What is the term for a word that has the opposite meaning of another word?
13. What is the term for a letter or symbol that represents a number in a verbal coding exercise?
14. What is the method called when you use clues to solve a word puzzle, where each clue may have both a literal and figurative meaning?

Answers

1. Reading comprehension
2. Silent
3. Logical deduction
4. Swimming
5. Word ladder
6. Cryptic puzzles
7. ECV
8. Rearranging sentences
9. 3-1-2
10. A candle
11. A keyboard
12. Antonym
13. Symbolic coding
14. Cryptic puzzles

Assignments

1. How does verbal reasoning contribute to evaluating a candidate's analytical and language proficiency in competitive examinations?
2. What are the different types of verbal puzzles and how do they enhance a candidate's problem-solving skills?
3. How do verbal coding exercises, such as letter and number coding, test logical thinking and pattern recognition in competitive examinations?
4. In what ways do jumbled word exercises assess vocabulary and cognitive abilities in competitive examinations?
5. How do logical deductions and analogies in verbal reasoning tests help assess a candidate's ability to draw conclusions and recognise relationships?

Suggested Reading

1. Arthur, Robert. *The Power of Verbal Reasoning in Competitive Examinations*. Penguin Books, 2018.
2. Bloom, Harold. *How to Read and Understand English: A Guide for Students*. Oxford University Press, 2016.
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4. Elliott, John. *Mastering Verbal Reasoning: Techniques and Strategies for Success*. McGraw-Hill Education, 2019.
5. Hart, Henry. *Verbal Puzzles and Language Games for Competitive Examinations*. Random House, 2017.
6. Jain, Sunita. *English for Competitive Examinations: A Comprehensive Guide*. Pearson Education, 2021.





SREENARAYANAGURU OPEN UNIVERSITY

QP CODE:

Reg. No :

Name :

Model Question Paper- set-I

BA ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

End-Semester Examination- Fifth Semester

Skill Enhancement Course

B21EG02SE - ENGLISH FOR PROFICIENCY IN COMPETITIVE EXAMINATIONS

(CBCS - UG)

2023-24 - Admission Onwards

Time: 3 Hours

Max Marks: 70

Section A

Answer any ten of the following questions in one word or sentence. (10×1= 10)

1. Name the exam for admission to medical programs in India.
2. Mention the exam required to demonstrate English proficiency for studying abroad.
3. Explain the reasoning type used to deduce conclusions from a set of premises.
4. Provide the skill essential for excelling in competitive exams.
5. Mention the reading strategy that helps locate specific information quickly.
6. Present the writing task that involves structured arguments on a given topic.
7. Replace “Sarah” in the sentence “Sarah went to the store” with an appropriate pronoun.
8. Convert the sentence “The teacher explains the lesson” into passive voice.
9. Rearrange the jumbled words into a grammatically correct sentence: “the / in / is / boy / garden / playing.”
10. Rewrite the sentence in indirect speech: “He said, ‘I will call you tomorrow.’”
11. Interpret the idiom “spill the beans.”
12. Complete the analogy: “Hand is to glove as foot is to -----.”
13. Name the exam conducted for engineering admissions in India.



14. Which part of speech that names a person, place, thing, or idea.
15. Mention the exam conducted for recruitment into India's civil services.

Section B

Answer any five of the following questions in one or two sentences. (5×2=10)

16. Define idioms and phrases and explain their significance in language.
17. Add the correct question tag:
a. Everyone seems happy about the decision, -----?
b. Telling a simple lie to save the situation is not a big crime, -----?
18. How do verbal coding exercises test logical thinking in competitive exams?
19. What is the significance of integrated language skills in competitive examinations?
20. Name two academic competitive exams each for engineering and management fields in India.
21. Explain how synonyms and antonyms affect communication accuracy.
22. What is the main purpose of objective questions in English language exams?
23. What is the role of verbal reasoning in evaluating analytical and language proficiency in exams?
24. How does practising grammar exercises help improve error spotting skills in competitive exams?
25. Convert the following sentences into the plural form:
a. They ate a loaf of bread.
b. The entire driveway is covered in snow.

Section C

Answer any six of the following questions in one paragraph. (6×5=30)

26. Compare and contrast direct and indirect speech, giving suitable examples of each.
27. Describe the types of pronouns and explain their role in sentence construction.
28. Explain how technology supports aspirants in preparing for competitive exams, with two examples.
29. Differentiate between skimming and scanning and their effective use in competitive exams.
30. Discuss the degrees of comparison and illustrate their correct usage with examples.
31. Describe the significance of cloze tests in assessing language proficiency and comprehension skills.



32. Outline essential skills for précis writing and its importance in competitive exams.
33. What are prefixes and suffixes? Provide examples of how they contribute to word formation.
34. Discuss the importance of listening tasks in competitive exams with examples.
35. Write a dialogue between two friends discussing the benefits of online learning versus traditional classroom education, with each supporting a different method.
36. Read the following passage and write a précis of it.
 “Reading is an essential skill that plays a significant role in one’s personal and professional life. It helps individuals to gain knowledge, improve vocabulary, and enhance comprehension abilities. Reading is not just limited to books; it can include newspapers, magazines, journals, and online articles. Through reading, one can explore different perspectives, expand their horizons, and understand diverse cultures. It is an activity that promotes mental stimulation and boosts cognitive function. Furthermore, reading helps individuals in improving their communication skills, both written and verbal, as it exposes them to various styles of writing and expression.”
37. Fill up the blanks using articles:
 - a. ----- cat is sitting on ----- mat.
 - b. I bought ---- apple from ----- store.
 - c. ----- dog loves to play in ----- park.
 - d. She is --- honest person who always speaks ---- truth.
 - e. ---- earth revolves around -----sun.

Section D

Answer any two of the following questions in 300 words.

(2×10 = 20)

38. Discuss the three categories of competitive exams in India, their importance, and differences in format, content, and target candidates.
39. Explain how integrated language skills enhance performance in competitive exams and their role in overall success.
40. Describe the parts of speech and their functions in sentences, with examples.
41. Analyse challenges faced by aspirants, including time management and stress, and suggest solutions.



SREENARAYANAGURU OPEN UNIVERSITY

QP CODE:

Reg. No :

Name :

Model Question Paper- set-II

BA ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

End-Semester Examination- Fifth Semester

Skill Enhancement Course

B21EG02SE - ENGLISH FOR PROFICIENCY IN COMPETITIVE EXAMINATIONS

(CBCS - UG)

2023-24 - Admission Onwards

Time: 3 Hours

Max Marks: 70

Section A

Answer any ten of the following questions in one word or sentence. (10×1= 10)

1. Name one type of question commonly found in competitive exams.
2. What is the purpose of reasoning tasks in competitive exams?
3. Mention a common task assessed in listening sections of competitive exams.
4. Which type of writing task is typically found in competitive exams?
5. Define integrated language skills.
6. In the sentence “Two years ago, during her visit to Kolkata, Meenakshi met her long-lost school friend”, identify the Predicate.
7. Many a life has/have been destroyed by bad decisions.
[Choose the correct form of the verb]
8. Supply the correct question tag for “You’d better be careful when you travel alone, _____?”
9. Identify the adverb in the sentence: “The buses are always crowded at this time of the day”.
10. You will need at least a hour to finish this work.
[Identify the mistake in the use of the article and rewrite the sentence in the correct form]
11. Name key sub-skills of speaking.



12. Define fluency in speaking.
13. What is the goal of descriptive speaking tasks?
14. Mention a common speaking task in competitive exams.
15. How does pronunciation affect speaking?

Section B

Answer any five of the following questions in one or two sentences. (5×2=10)

16. What are individual tasks in competitive exams? Provide an example.
17. Expand the following abbreviations:
 - a. USA
 - b. CEO
 - c. ASAP
18. Mention two strategies to improve listening skills.
19. What is the purpose of extempore speaking tasks?
20. Explain the importance of reading comprehension tasks in competitive exams.
21. How are grammar and vocabulary tested in competitive exams?
22. Rearrange the jumbled words into a meaningful sentence:
 - a. Lives / superstitions / people's / since time immemorial / in all cultures / have controlled/.
 - b. Many years ago / this place / I remember / with my parents / visiting.
23. Convert the following sentences into the plural form:
 - a. They ate a loaf of bread.
 - b. The entire driveway is covered in snow.
24. Change into comparative degree:
 - a. Tania is not as qualified as Nived for this job.
 - b. Viswanath is the most respected person in the office.
25. Change the voice:
 - a. We must not make fun of him.
 - b. Turn the speaker down.

Section C

Answer any six of the following questions in one paragraph. (6×5=30)

26. Discuss the types of writing tasks in competitive exams and how they assess candidates' abilities.
27. Analyse the role of verbal reasoning in exams with examples of verbal puzzles.

28. Explain how grammar and vocabulary questions, like error spotting and word relations, assess language proficiency.
29. Describe the types of listening, their purposes, and examples.
30. Discuss the role of verbal reasoning in competitive exams.
31. Write a dialogue between two friends discussing the relevance of Open University education, where one supports its flexibility and accessibility, while the other raises concerns about its credibility and quality.
32. Define homophones and explain the importance of using them correctly in writing.
33. Differentiate between Regular and Irregular Verbs. Provide examples for both types:
34. Explain the significance of verbal puzzles in competitive exams.
35. Rewrite the following sentences with correct prepositions:
 - a. He ran the street.
 - b. We watched the film television.
 - c. I will meet you the airport.
 - d. She stood her toes.
 - e. She tried to peerthe hedge.
 - f. The bookskept on the table.
 - g. I have been Delhi twice.
 - h. There are biscuitsthe tin.
 - i. The cat jumped the wall.
 - j. He is sitting the chair.
36. Rewrite the following conversation in indirect speech:

Nancy : “Do you have onions?”

Grocer: “Yes. How much do you need?”

Nancy: “Please give me a kilo of onions”

Grocer: “That would be 150/- , madam”

Nancy: “What! I said one kilo, not ten!”
37. Identify and classify the verbs in the following sentences as either Lexical Verbs (Main Verbs) or Auxiliary Verbs (Helping Verbs):
 - a) She is reading a book.
 - b) They have been working on the project.
 - c) We will meet at the café later.
 - d) The dog was barking loudly.
 - e) I can sing very well.

Section D

Answer any two of the following questions in 300 words.

(2×10 = 20)

38. Discuss the types of competitive exams and the skills they test. Why is English proficiency important?
39. Explain the importance of integrated language skills in competitive exams.
40. Compare objective and descriptive questions, with examples, and discuss their relevance in exams.
41. Describe the role of grammar and vocabulary in competitive exams and their contribution to success.

സർവ്വകലാശാലാഗീതം

വിദ്യായാൽ സ്വതന്ത്രരാകണം
വിശ്വപൗരരായി മാറണം
ഗ്രഹപ്രസാദമായ് വിളങ്ങണം
ഗുരുപ്രകാശമേ നയിക്കണേ

കുതിരുട്ടിൽ നിന്നു ഞങ്ങളെ
സൂര്യവീഥിയിൽ തെളിക്കണം
സ്നേഹദീപ്തിയായ് വിളങ്ങണം
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ISBN 978-81-982096-5-8



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