



202

English Rules for Error Spotting

Every rule in 2–4 lines with a wrong and a correct example. For Bank, SSC and Railway exams.

202

numbered rules

404

X wrong / ✓ correct examples

Top 50

one-line rules for the night before

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Subject-Verb Agreement

- 1** Each / every / either / neither + singular verb.
 ✗ Each of the boys have a book.
 ✓ Each of the boys has a book.
 Exam tip: The noun after “of” does not decide the verb.
- 2** “One of the” + plural noun + singular verb.
 ✗ One of my friends are a doctor.
 ✓ One of my friends is a doctor.
- 3** With as well as / along with / together with / in addition to, the verb agrees with the FIRST subject.
 ✗ The teacher as well as the students are present.
 ✓ The teacher as well as the students is present.
- 4** With either...or / neither...nor, the verb agrees with the NEARER subject.
 ✗ Neither the teacher nor the students was present.
 ✓ Neither the teacher nor the students were present.
- 5** With not only...but also, the verb agrees with the nearer subject.
 ✗ Not only the students but also the teacher were laughing.
 ✓ Not only the students but also the teacher was laughing.
- 6** “A number of” + plural verb; “the number of” + singular verb.
 ✗ A number of students was absent.
 ✓ A number of students were absent.
 Exam tip: The number of students is fifty.
- 7** “Many a” + singular noun + singular verb.
 ✗ Many a student have failed.
 ✓ Many a student has failed.
- 8** “More than one” + singular noun + singular verb.
 ✗ More than one student were absent.
 ✓ More than one student was absent.
- 9** Two subjects joined by “and” take a plural verb.
 ✗ Ram and Shyam is good friends.
 ✓ Ram and Shyam are good friends.
- 10** Two nouns with ONE article mean one person or thing: singular verb.
 ✗ The poet and painter are dead.
 ✓ The poet and painter is dead.
 Exam tip: Count the articles: one “the” = one person.
- 11** Two nouns that make one idea take a singular verb.
 ✗ Bread and butter are his breakfast.
 ✓ Bread and butter is his breakfast.



- 12** Each / every before nouns joined by “and”: singular verb.
✗ Every boy and every girl were given a prize.
✓ Every boy and every girl was given a prize.
-
- 13** A collective noun acting as one unit: singular verb.
✗ The jury have given its verdict.
✓ The jury has given its verdict.
-
- 14** A collective noun whose members act separately: plural verb.
✗ The jury is divided in their opinions.
✓ The jury are divided in their opinions.
Exam tip: Look at “its” or “their” to decide.
-
- 15** News, mathematics, physics, economics (subject), measles: singular verb.
✗ The news are true.
✓ The news is true.
-
- 16** An amount, distance or time taken as one whole: singular verb.
✗ Five hundred rupees are a big amount.
✓ Five hundred rupees is a big amount.
-
- 17** Words between the subject and the verb do not change the verb.
✗ The quality of the mangoes are poor.
✓ The quality of the mangoes is poor.
Exam tip: Find the real subject first.
-
- 18** After “there is / there are” the noun that follows decides the verb.
✗ There is many reasons for this.
✓ There are many reasons for this.
-
- 19** “Who / that / which” takes the verb of the noun it refers to.
✗ He is one of the best players who has played for India.
✓ He is one of the best players who have played for India.
Exam tip: “who” refers to “players” (plural).
-
- 20** Book or film titles that look plural take a singular verb.
✗ “The Arabian Nights” are a famous book.
✓ “The Arabian Nights” is a famous book.
-
- 21** “The” + adjective (the rich, the poor, the old) means people: plural verb.
✗ The rich is not always happy.
✓ The rich are not always happy.
-
- 22** Everyone, everybody, someone, anyone, nobody + singular verb.
✗ Everybody have arrived.
✓ Everybody has arrived.
-
- 23** “A pair of” + plural noun + singular verb.
✗ A pair of shoes are lying here.
✓ A pair of shoes is lying here.
-



24 Half / part / percentage of: the noun after “of” decides the verb.

✗ Half of the mangoes is rotten.

✓ Half of the mangoes are rotten.

Exam tip: Half of the milk is sour (uncountable).



PRACTISE THIS TOPIC

Scan for 20 exam questions on Subject-Verb Agreement with answers and explanations in the PrepZen app.

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- 25** Advice, information, furniture, luggage, baggage, equipment, scenery, machinery have no plural.
 ✗ He gave me many advices.
 ✓ He gave me much advice.
 Exam tip: Or: many pieces of advice.
-
- 26** These uncountable nouns take a singular verb.
 ✗ The furniture are new.
 ✓ The furniture is new.
-
- 27** Cattle, police, people, poultry, clergy are always plural.
 ✗ The police has caught the thief.
 ✓ The police have caught the thief.
-
- 28** Scissors, trousers, spectacles, pliers, tongs take a plural verb.
 ✗ My trousers is torn.
 ✓ My trousers are torn.
 Exam tip: But: A pair of trousers is torn.
-
- 29** “Hair” (on the head) is uncountable.
 ✗ Her hairs are black.
 ✓ Her hair is black.
 Exam tip: One single hair is countable: two grey hairs.
-
- 30** Number + noun used before another noun becomes a hyphenated adjective and stays singular.
 ✗ He gave me a five-rupees note.
 ✓ He gave me a five-rupee note.
 Exam tip: a three-hour journey, a ten-year-old boy
-
- 31** Dozen, score, hundred after a number take no -s.
 ✗ I bought three dozens eggs.
 ✓ I bought three dozen eggs.
 Exam tip: But: dozens of eggs.
-
- 32** Use 's for living beings; use “of” for non-living things.
 ✗ The table's leg is broken.
 ✓ The leg of the table is broken.
 Exam tip: Allowed: a day's journey, a stone's throw.
-
- 33** In compound nouns the plural goes on the main word.
 ✗ All my sister-in-laws came.
 ✓ All my sisters-in-law came.
 Exam tip: passers-by, commanders-in-chief
-



- 34** One thing owned by two people: 's on the last name only.
✗ This is Ram's and Shyam's shop.
✓ This is Ram and Shyam's shop.
Exam tip: Two separate shops: Ram's and Shyam's shops.
-
- 35** "Alphabet" means the whole set of letters.
✗ He knows all the alphabets.
✓ He knows all the letters of the alphabet.
-
- 36** Uncountable nouns take "a piece of", not "a / an".
✗ I have an information for you.
✓ I have a piece of information for you.
-
- 37** Deer, sheep, fish (same kind), aircraft do not change in the plural.
✗ I saw two deers in the zoo.
✓ I saw two deer in the zoo.
-
- 38** "People" (persons) is plural; "peoples" means nations.
✗ The people of India is hard-working.
✓ The people of India are hard-working.
-
- 39** Abstract nouns used in general take no "the".
✗ The honesty is the best policy.
✓ Honesty is the best policy.
-
- 40** For one person in a staff, say "a member of the staff".
✗ He is a staff of this bank.
✓ He is a member of the staff of this bank.
-
- 41** "Offspring" has no plural -s.
✗ She has three offsprings.
✓ She has three offspring.
-
- 42** "Innings" is singular as well as plural.
✗ India won the first inning.
✓ India won the first innings.
-
- 43** "Premises" (a building) is always plural.
✗ The premise of the bank is large.
✓ The premises of the bank are large.
-
- 44** "This kind of / sort of" + singular noun + singular verb.
✗ This kind of mangoes are sweet.
✓ This kind of mango is sweet.
Exam tip: Plural: These kinds of mangoes are sweet.



PRACTISE THIS TOPIC

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45 After a preposition, use the object form (me, him, her, us, them).

✗ This is between you and I.

✓ This is between you and me.

46 After “than / as”, use the form the full sentence needs.

✗ He is taller than me.

✓ He is taller than I (am).

Exam tip: Exams follow the formal rule.

47 After forms of “be”, use the subject form (formal English).

✗ It is me who called you.

✓ It is I who called you.

48 Who = subject, whom = object.

✗ Whom do you think is coming?

✓ Who do you think is coming?

Exam tip: Test: “he” is coming, so “who”.

49 “One” is followed by one / one’s.

✗ One should do his duty.

✓ One should do one’s duty.

50 Each / every / everyone takes a singular pronoun in exams.

✗ Every student must bring their own book.

✓ Every student must bring his or her own book.

51 Order for good things: second, third, first person (you, he and I).

✗ I, you and he will go.

✓ You, he and I will go.

Exam tip: For a fault, first person comes first: I, you and he are to blame.

52 Absent, avail, enjoy, pride take a reflexive pronoun.

✗ He absented from the class.

✓ He absented himself from the class.

Exam tip: He availed himself of the chance.

53 “Each other” for two people, “one another” for more than two.

✗ The two brothers love one another.

✓ The two brothers love each other.

Exam tip: A traditional exam rule.

54 Possessive pronouns have no apostrophe: its, yours, ours, theirs.

✗ The dog wagged it’s tail.

✓ The dog wagged its tail.

Exam tip: it’s = it is



- 55** “Who” for persons, “which” for things and animals.
✗ The boy which came here is my brother.
✓ The boy who came here is my brother.
-
- 56** After a superlative, all, any, only, none, use “that” .
✗ This is the best book which I have read.
✓ This is the best book that I have read.
-
- 57** A collective noun acting as one unit takes “its” .
✗ The committee has submitted their report.
✓ The committee has submitted its report.
-
- 58** Do not repeat the subject with a pronoun.
✗ My brother he is a doctor.
✓ My brother is a doctor.
-
- 59** Either / neither for two; any / none for more than two.
✗ Neither of the three boys came.
✓ None of the three boys came.
-
- 60** “The same ... as” and “such ... as” (not “which”).
✗ He gave the same answer which I gave.
✓ He gave the same answer as I gave.
-
- 61** “Let” is followed by the object form.
✗ Let he go home.
✓ Let him go home.
-
- 62** Do not use “myself” as a subject.
✗ Myself and Ravi went there.
✓ Ravi and I went there.
-
- 63** “None of / some of / all of” + object pronoun.
✗ None of we knew the answer.
✓ None of us knew the answer.
-
- 64** After “like” (meaning “such as”), use the object form.
✗ People like he and I work hard.
✓ People like him and me work hard.



PRACTISE THIS TOPIC

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- 65** Use “an” before a vowel SOUND, “a” before a consonant sound.
 ✗ He waited for a hour.
 ✓ He waited for an hour.
 Exam tip: a university, a one-rupee coin, an honest man
-
- 66** For short forms, go by the letter sound.
 ✗ He is a MLA.
 ✓ He is an MLA.
 Exam tip: an MBA, an FIR, a UN official
-
- 67** “The” before things that are only one: the sun, the sky, the earth.
 ✗ Sun rises in east.
 ✓ The sun rises in the east.
-
- 68** “The” before rivers, seas, oceans, mountain ranges and groups of islands.
 ✗ Ganga is a holy river.
 ✓ The Ganga is a holy river.
 Exam tip: No “the” before a single peak: Mount Everest.
-
- 69** “The” before a superlative.
 ✗ He is best student in the class.
 ✓ He is the best student in the class.
-
- 70** No article before the name of a language.
 ✗ He speaks the English fluently.
 ✓ He speaks English fluently.
 Exam tip: But: the English language.
-
- 71** No article before meals in general.
 ✗ We had the dinner at eight.
 ✓ We had dinner at eight.
 Exam tip: Specific: The dinner you cooked was tasty.
-
- 72** No article with school, college, hospital, church, prison used for their main purpose.
 ✗ He goes to the school every day (as a student).
 ✓ He goes to school every day.
 Exam tip: His father went to the school to meet the teacher.
-
- 73** “The” before musical instruments.
 ✗ She plays violin well.
 ✓ She plays the violin well.
-
- 74** “The” before newspapers and holy books.
 ✗ I read Hindu every day.
 ✓ I read The Hindu every day.
 Exam tip: the Gita, the Bible, the Quran
-



- 75** “The” before ordinal numbers (first, second, last).
✗ This is first time I have seen it.
✓ **This is the first time I have seen it.**
-
- 76** A few = some (positive); few = almost none (negative).
✗ Few friends helped him, so he did not feel alone.
✓ **A few friends helped him, so he did not feel alone.**
Exam tip: Same for little / a little.
-
- 77** No article before plural or uncountable nouns used in general.
✗ The books are our best friends.
✓ **Books are our best friends.**
-
- 78** “What a / such a” only with singular countable nouns.
✗ What a fine weather!
✓ **What fine weather!**
Exam tip: “weather” is uncountable.
-
- 79** Use “a / an” before a profession.
✗ He is engineer.
✓ **He is an engineer.**
-
- 80** “The ... the” in double comparatives.
✗ More you read, more you learn.
✓ **The more you read, the more you learn.**
-



PRACTISE THIS TOPIC

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- 81** Never use a double comparative or superlative.
 ✗ This is more better than that.
 ✓ This is better than that.
- 82** Comparing two: use the comparative, not the superlative.
 ✗ She is the tallest of the two sisters.
 ✓ She is the taller of the two sisters.
- 83** Senior, junior, superior, inferior, prior, preferable + “to”.
 ✗ He is senior than me.
 ✓ He is senior to me.
- 84** Compare like with like (use that of / those of).
 ✗ The climate of Delhi is hotter than Shimla.
 ✓ The climate of Delhi is hotter than that of Shimla.
- 85** Comparing within the same group, add “other”.
 ✗ He is better than any boy in the class.
 ✓ He is better than any other boy in the class.
- 86** Linking verbs (be, seem, look, feel, smell, taste, sound) + adjective.
 ✗ The rose smells sweetly.
 ✓ The rose smells sweet.
- 87** Action verbs + adverb.
 ✗ He drives careful.
 ✓ He drives carefully.
- 88** Fast, hard, late, early are both adjective and adverb; “fastly” does not exist.
 ✗ He runs fastly.
 ✓ He runs fast.
- 89** Hard = with effort; hardly = almost not.
 ✗ He works hardly to pass the exam.
 ✓ He works hard to pass the exam.
- 90** “Very” with the positive degree, “much” with the comparative.
 ✗ He is very better now.
 ✓ He is much better now.
- 91** “Too” means more than needed (a negative sense).
 ✗ I am too happy to meet you.
 ✓ I am very happy to meet you.
 Exam tip: Correct use: too tired to walk.



- 92** “Elder / eldest” for family, before a noun; “older ... than” for comparing.
✗ My brother is elder than me.
✓ My brother is older than me.
Exam tip: my elder brother
-
- 93** “Fewer” with countable nouns, “less” with uncountable nouns.
✗ He made less mistakes this time.
✓ He made fewer mistakes this time.
-
- 94** “Little” for quantity, “few” for number.
✗ He has few money.
✓ He has little money.
-
- 95** Order of adjectives: opinion, size, age, shape, colour, origin, material, purpose.
✗ She bought a red big ball.
✓ She bought a big red ball.
-
- 96** Unique, perfect, complete, ideal, absolute cannot be compared.
✗ This is the most unique design.
✓ This is a unique design.
-
- 97** “Enough” comes after an adjective but before a noun.
✗ He is not enough tall.
✓ He is not tall enough.
Exam tip: enough money
-
- 98** “Such” + noun, “so” + adjective.
✗ It was so a nice day.
✓ It was such a nice day.
Exam tip: It was so nice.
-
- 99** Put “only / even” just before the word it qualifies.
✗ He only drank milk (meaning nothing else).
✓ He drank only milk.
-
- 100** Late = not on time; lately = recently.
✗ He came lately to the office today.
✓ He came late to the office today.
-



PRACTISE THIS TOPIC

Scan for 20 exam questions on Adjectives & Adverbs with answers and explanations in the PrepZen app.

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- 101** Never use the present perfect with a past time word.
 ✗ I have met him yesterday.
 ✓ I met him yesterday.
 Exam tip: yesterday, ago, last year → simple past
-
- 102** “Since” + point of time; “for” + period of time.
 ✗ He has been ill since three days.
 ✓ He has been ill for three days.
 Exam tip: since Monday, since 2015
-
- 103** With “since / for”, use the present perfect (continuous), not the present.
 ✗ He is working here since 2015.
 ✓ He has been working here since 2015.
-
- 104** Of two past actions, the earlier one takes the past perfect.
 ✗ The train left before I reached the station.
 ✓ The train had left before I reached the station.
-
- 105** A past main verb is followed by a past verb (sequence of tenses).
 ✗ He said that he will come.
 ✓ He said that he would come.
 Exam tip: Universal truths stay present: the earth moves round the sun.
-
- 106** No “will” after when, if, before, after, till, as soon as.
 ✗ I will call you when I will reach.
 ✓ I will call you when I reach.
-
- 107** Know, believe, love, like, own, belong, see, hear are not used in the -ing form.
 ✗ I am knowing him for years.
 ✓ I have known him for years.
-
- 108** Do / does / did + base verb.
 ✗ Did you went there?
 ✓ Did you go there?
-
- 109** A modal (can, may, must, should) + base verb.
 ✗ He can speaks English.
 ✓ He can speak English.
-
- 110** Make, let, help, bid, see, hear + base verb (no “to”).
 ✗ He made me to laugh.
 ✓ He made me laugh.
 Exam tip: Passive takes “to”: I was made to laugh.
-
- 111** Look forward to, object to, be used to, with a view to + -ing.
 ✗ I look forward to meet you.
 ✓ I look forward to meeting you.
-



- 112** Avoid, enjoy, finish, mind, risk, deny, admit, suggest + -ing.
✗ He avoided to meet me.
✓ He avoided meeting me.
-
- 113** Want, decide, hope, refuse, promise, agree + to + verb.
✗ She refused going there.
✓ She refused to go there.
-
- 114** Lie (lay, lain) = to rest; lay (laid, laid) = to put.
✗ He laid on the bed all day.
✓ He lay on the bed all day.
Exam tip: She laid the book on the table.
-
- 115** Hang → hanged (to execute); hang → hung (to suspend a thing).
✗ The murderer was hung.
✓ The murderer was hanged.
Exam tip: The picture was hung on the wall.
-
- 116** Rise has no object; raise needs an object.
✗ Prices have raised again.
✓ Prices have risen again.
Exam tip: They raised the prices.
-
- 117** “It is (high) time” + past tense.
✗ It is high time we leave.
✓ It is high time we left.
-
- 118** “Would rather” + another person + past tense.
✗ I would rather you go now.
✓ I would rather you went now.
-
- 119** Suggest / recommend / insist that + subject + base verb (or should).
✗ He suggested that she goes home.
✓ He suggested that she (should) go home.
-
- 120** Verbs that take no object have no passive.
✗ The accident was happened at night.
✓ The accident happened at night.
Exam tip: happen, occur, arrive, die, sleep
-
- 121** A longer action (past continuous) is interrupted by a short one (simple past).
✗ I was reading when he was coming.
✓ I was reading when he came.
-
- 122** “Had better” + base verb.
✗ You had better to go now.
✓ You had better go now.
-
- 123** “Lest” + should + base verb.
✗ Work hard lest you will fail.
✓ Work hard lest you should fail.
-



124 “Wish” for an unreal present + past (were for all persons).

✗ I wish I was rich.

✓ I wish I were rich.



PRACTISE THIS TOPIC

Scan for 20 exam questions on Verbs & Tenses with answers and explanations in the PrepZen app.

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125 For a missed duty in the past: should / ought to + have + V3.

X He should come yesterday.

✓ He should have come yesterday.

126 “Need not / dare not” as modals take the base verb without “to”.

X You need not to worry.

✓ You need not worry.

Exam tip: Also correct: You do not need to worry.

127 “Ought” always takes “to”.

X You ought respect your elders.

✓ You ought to respect your elders.

128 “May” for formal permission.

X Can I come in, sir?

✓ May I come in, sir?

129 “Could” is the past of “can”.

X He can swim when he was young.

✓ He could swim when he was young.

130 First conditional: If + present, will + base verb.

X If it will rain, we will stay at home.

✓ If it rains, we will stay at home.

131 Second conditional: If + past (were), would + base verb.

X If I am rich, I would buy a car.

✓ If I were rich, I would buy a car.

132 Third conditional: If + had + V3, would have + V3.

X If he had worked hard, he would pass.

✓ If he had worked hard, he would have passed.

133 Never use “would” in the if–clause.

X If you would have told me, I would have helped.

✓ If you had told me, I would have helped.

134 “Unless” already means “if not”; do not add “not”.

X Unless you do not work hard, you will fail.

✓ Unless you work hard, you will fail.

135 Inverted conditional: Had + subject + V3.

X Had I know, I would have come.

✓ Had I known, I would have come.

Exam tip: = If I had known



136 “Should” at the start means “if”: Should + subject + base verb.

✗ Should you will need help, call me.

✓ Should you need help, call me.

137 “Used to” + base verb for a past habit.

✗ I used to playing cricket.

✓ I used to play cricket.

Exam tip: be used to + -ing: I am used to waking early.

138 Must not = forbidden; need not = not necessary.

✗ You must not come if you are busy.

✓ You need not come if you are busy.

139 “Would you mind” + -ing.

✗ Would you mind to open the window?

✓ Would you mind opening the window?

140 “Dare not” + base verb.

✗ He dare not to speak.

✓ He dare not speak.



PRACTISE THIS TOPIC

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141 Married to (not with).

✗ She is married with a doctor.

✓ She is married to a doctor.

142 Die of a disease; die from a wound or a cause.

✗ He died from cholera.

✓ He died of cholera.

143 Prefer A to B (not than).

✗ I prefer tea than coffee.

✓ I prefer tea to coffee.

144 Discuss a topic (no “about”).

✗ We discussed about the plan.

✓ We discussed the plan.

145 Enter a place (no “into”).

✗ He entered into the room.

✓ He entered the room.

Exam tip: But: enter into an agreement.

146 Comprise (no “of”); consist of.

✗ The book comprises of ten chapters.

✓ The book comprises ten chapters.

Exam tip: The book consists of ten chapters.

147 Reach a place (no “at / to”).

✗ We reached at the station.

✓ We reached the station.

148 Angry with a person, angry at a thing.

✗ I am angry on him.

✓ I am angry with him.

149 Afraid of.

✗ She is afraid from dogs.

✓ She is afraid of dogs.

150 Congratulate someone on something.

✗ I congratulated him for his success.

✓ I congratulated him on his success.

151 Between two, among more than two.

✗ Divide the sweets between the three boys.

✓ Divide the sweets among the three boys.



152 At a time, on a day or date, in a month or year.

✗ The meeting is on 5 o'clock in Monday.

✓ **The meeting is at 5 o'clock on Monday.**

Exam tip: in March, in 2026

153 Beside = next to; besides = in addition to.

✗ There is a temple besides the river.

✓ **There is a temple beside the river.**

154 Aware of.

✗ He is not aware about the rule.

✓ **He is not aware of the rule.**

155 Interested in.

✗ She is interested on music.

✓ **She is interested in music.**

156 Good at a subject.

✗ He is good in maths.

✓ **He is good at maths.**

157 Abide by a rule.

✗ You must abide with the rules.

✓ **You must abide by the rules.**

158 Accused of a crime; charged with a crime.

✗ He was accused for theft.

✓ **He was accused of theft.**

159 Deprived of.

✗ He was deprived from his rights.

✓ **He was deprived of his rights.**

160 Agree with a person, agree to a proposal.

✗ I agree to you completely.

✓ **I agree with you completely.**

Exam tip: We agreed to the plan.

161 On foot; by bus, by train, by car.

✗ He came by foot.

✓ **He came on foot.**

162 Different from.

✗ This book is different than that one.

✓ **This book is different from that one.**



PRACTISE THIS TOPIC

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- 163** No sooner ... than.
 ✗ No sooner did he arrive when it began to rain.
 ✓ No sooner did he arrive than it began to rain.
-
- 164** Hardly / scarcely ... when.
 ✗ Hardly had he left than the phone rang.
 ✓ Hardly had he left when the phone rang.
-
- 165** Though / although ... yet (or a comma), never “but”.
 ✗ Though he is poor but he is honest.
 ✓ Though he is poor, yet he is honest.
-
- 166** Both ... and (not as well as).
 ✗ Both Ram as well as Shyam came.
 ✓ Both Ram and Shyam came.
-
- 167** Not only ... but also.
 ✗ He not only sings but dances.
 ✓ He not only sings but also dances.
-
- 168** Either ... or; neither ... nor.
 ✗ Neither he or his brother came.
 ✓ Neither he nor his brother came.
-
- 169** Do not use “because” and “so” together.
 ✗ Because he was ill, so he did not come.
 ✓ Because he was ill, he did not come.
-
- 170** “Until” already has a negative sense; no “not” after it.
 ✗ Wait here until I do not return.
 ✓ Wait here until I return.
-
- 171** As if / as though + past (were).
 ✗ He talks as if he is a king.
 ✓ He talks as if he were a king.
-
- 172** Whether ... or not (not “or no”).
 ✗ I do not know whether he will come or no.
 ✓ I do not know whether he will come or not.
-
- 173** So ... that (not “so ... as”).
 ✗ He is so weak as he cannot walk.
 ✓ He is so weak that he cannot walk.
-



174 Would rather / sooner ... than + base verb.

✗ I would rather die than to beg.

✓ I would rather die than beg.

175 “Lest” is already negative; use “should”, not “not”.

✗ Walk carefully lest you may not fall.

✓ Walk carefully lest you should fall.

176 Do not use “since” and “therefore” together.

✗ Since he was late, therefore he was punished.

✓ Since he was late, he was punished.

177 Fixed pairs: seldom or never, little or nothing.

✗ He seldom or ever visits us.

✓ He seldom or never visits us.

178 “No other ... than” (not “but”).

✗ He has no other friend but me.

✓ He has no other friend than me.



PRACTISE THIS TOPIC

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179 A negative word at the start (never, seldom, rarely, hardly) needs inversion.

✗ Never I have seen such a sight.

✓ Never have I seen such a sight.

180 “Not only” at the start needs inversion.

✗ Not only he sings but he also dances.

✓ Not only does he sing but he also dances.

181 “Only after / only then / only when” at the start needs inversion.

✗ Only after the exam I rested.

✓ Only after the exam did I rest.

182 Items in a list must be in the same form (parallelism).

✗ She likes reading, writing and to dance.

✓ She likes reading, writing and dancing.

183 Paired words join the same kind of word.

✗ He is not only intelligent but also works hard.

✓ He is not only intelligent but also hard-working.

184 Avoid redundant words: return back, repeat again, revert back, reply back.

✗ Please reply back soon.

✓ Please reply soon.

185 “The reason is that” (not because).

✗ The reason is because he was ill.

✓ The reason is that he was ill.

186 “Cousin” alone; “cousin brother / sister” is not standard.

✗ He is my cousin brother.

✓ He is my cousin.

187 No double negatives.

✗ I don't know nothing about it.

✓ I don't know anything about it.

188 Hardly, scarcely, barely are negative; no “not” with them.

✗ I could not hardly hear him.

✓ I could hardly hear him.

189 Question tag: positive statement → negative tag, and the reverse.

✗ He is coming, is he?

✓ He is coming, isn't he?



190 “I am” takes the tag “aren’t I”.

✗ I am late, amn’t I?

✓ I am late, aren’t I?

191 “Let’s” takes “shall we”; an order takes “will you”.

✗ Let’s go, will we?

✓ Let’s go, shall we?

Exam tip: Close the door, will you?

192 Everyone / nobody / somebody take “they” in the tag.

✗ Nobody came, did he?

✓ Nobody came, did they?



PRACTISE THIS TOPIC

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193 Affect (verb) / effect (noun).

✗ The rain effected the crops.

✓ The rain affected the crops.

Exam tip: The rain had a bad effect.

194 Principal (main, head) / principle (a rule, a value).

✗ He is a man of principals.

✓ He is a man of principles.

195 Lose (fail to keep) / loose (not tight).

✗ Don't loose hope.

✓ Don't lose hope.

196 Advice (noun) / advise (verb).

✗ Please advice me.

✓ Please advise me.

197 Stationary (not moving) / stationery (paper, pens).

✗ I bought some stationary.

✓ I bought some stationery.

198 Accept (take) / except (leave out).

✗ Everyone came accept him.

✓ Everyone came except him.

199 Compliment (praise) / complement (something that completes).

✗ She paid me a complement.

✓ She paid me a compliment.

200 Then (time) / than (comparison).

✗ He is taller then me.

✓ He is taller than me.

201 Formerly (earlier) / formally (officially).

✗ He was formally a teacher (meaning earlier).

✓ He was formerly a teacher.

202 Economic (of the economy) / economical (saving money).

✗ This car is very economic.

✓ This car is very economical.

**PRACTISE THIS TOPIC**

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Top 50

THE NIGHT BEFORE THE EXAM

One-line rules you must not forget

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1 Each / every + singular verb. | 26 Unless is already negative: no “not” after it. |
| 2 One of the + plural noun + singular verb. | 27 Though ... yet (not “but”). |
| 3 A number of + plural; the number of + singular. | 28 Not only...but also / both...and join the SAME parts. |
| 4 Neither...nor / either...or: the verb follows the nearer subject. | 29 No redundancy: return back, repeat again, revert back. |
| 5 As well as / along with: the verb follows the first subject. | 30 Discuss a topic (not discuss about). |
| 6 Many a + singular noun + singular verb. | 31 Married to (not with); die of a disease. |
| 7 Advice, information, furniture, luggage, equipment, scenery: no plural. | 32 Prefer A to B (not than). |
| 8 Cattle, police, people, poultry: always plural. | 33 Make / let / help + base verb: <i>made him laugh</i> . |
| 9 News, mathematics, physics + singular verb. | 34 Look forward to / be used to + -ing . |
| 10 Fewer with countable, less with uncountable nouns. | 35 Present perfect never with past-time words. |
| 11 After a preposition use the object form: <i>between you and me</i> . | 36 Earlier of two past actions: past perfect. |
| 12 Who = subject, whom = object. | 37 Each other (2 people), one another (more than 2). |
| 13 “One” takes “one’s”: <i>One should do one’s duty</i> . | 38 Comparing two: <i>the taller of the two</i> . |
| 14 An before a vowel SOUND: <i>an hour, an MBA; a university</i> . | 39 Scarcely / hardly are negative: no “not” with them. |
| 15 The before rivers, oceans, unique things and superlatives. | 40 After “the reason is” use that , not because. |
| 16 No article before a language: <i>He speaks English</i> . | 41 Agree with a person, agree to a proposal. |
| 17 No double comparative: <i>better</i> , never <i>more better</i> . | 42 Between two, among more than two. |
| 18 Senior, junior, superior, inferior, prior + to (not than). | 43 Beside = next to; besides = in addition to. |
| 19 Linking verbs + adjective: <i>The rose smells sweet</i> . | 44 Enter a room, reach a place, comprise ten parts: no preposition. |
| 20 Hardly / scarcely ... when; no sooner ... than . | 45 Avoid / enjoy / finish / mind + -ing . |
| 21 Never / seldom / hardly at the start: invert. <i>Never have I seen...</i> | 46 Need not / dare not + base verb (no “to”). |
| 22 Since + point of time; for + period of time. | 47 Had better + base verb: <i>You had better go</i> . |



23 No “will” in the if-clause: *If it rains, we will stay.*

24 Wish / if only + past: *I wish I were rich.*

25 **Lest** + should: *Work hard lest you should fail.*

48 **It is high time** + past tense: *It is high time we left.*

49 Should + have + V3 for a missed duty: *He should have come.*

50 Question tag: positive → negative tag; *I am late, aren't I?*



Test yourself on all 202 rules

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