

Rule #1: Two Singular Nouns joined by "As well as", "Along with", "Together with"

[Subject-Verb Agreement]

When two subjects are joined by "as well as", "along with", "together with", "in addition to", "accompanied by", "like", "unlike", "with", "rather than", "except", or "no less than", the verb agrees

Example: The captain along with all the players is present on the ground.

Examiner Note: Examiners place a plural noun ("players") right before the verb to trick candidates into using

Rule #2: Proximity Rule with "Neither... nor", "Either... or", "Not only... but also"

[Subject-Verb Agreement]

When two subjects are joined by "Neither... nor", "Either... or", "Not only... but also", or "Nor/Or", the verb agrees with the NEAREST (second) subject.

Example: Neither Rohit nor his friends were invited to the party.

Examiner Note: Do not confuse this with Rule 1. "With/As well as" looks at Subject 1, while "Neither/Nor" look

Rule #3: "One of the" + Plural Noun + Singular Verb vs Relative Pronoun Exception

[Subject-Verb Agreement]

"One of the + Plural Noun" takes a SINGULAR verb. However, if a Relative Pronoun ("who", "which", "that") comes after the plural noun, the verb becomes PLURAL! Furthermore, if preceded by "Only one of the...",

Example: He is one of those students who are always late to class. (Exception: He is the ONLY ONE of those stu

Examiner Note: This is among the top 3 most frequently tested grammar rules in SSC Tier 2 and Banking Mains.

Rule #4: Unreal Past / Subjunctive Mood in Conditional Sentences ("I wish I were")

[Conditionals]

In hypothetical, imaginary, or impossible conditional clauses introduced by "I wish", "as if", "as though", "if only", or "if I were...", ALWAYS use "were" with all subjects (even singular pronouns like I,

Example: If he were a king, he would eradicate poverty completely.

Examiner Note: Never use "was" in imaginary conditionals.

Rule #5: Third Conditional (Past Unreal): "If + Had + V3 ... Would Have + V3"

[Conditionals]

In past conditional sentences: If + Subject + had + V3, the main clause MUST have Subject + would/could/might + have + V3. Inversion form: "Had he worked hard, he would have succeeded."

Example: If you had informed me earlier, I would have helped you. (OR: Had you informed me...)

Examiner Note: Never use "would have" in the "If-clause". "If" takes "had + V3", main clause takes "would have

Rule #6: Inversion of Subject and Verb after Negative Adverbs ("Hardly", "Scarcely", "No sooner"

[Conditionals]

When a sentence starts with negative or limiting adverbs ("Hardly", "Scarcely", "Barely", "Rarely", "Seldom", "No sooner", "Never", "Little"), the auxiliary verb comes BEFORE the subject (Inversion).

Example: Hardly had he entered the room when the lights went out. / No sooner did he arrive than it started ra

Examiner Note: Examiners replace "than" with "when" or "then" in No sooner sentences. Look for "THAN" strictly

Rule #7: "Lest" is always followed by "Should" (and never takes "Not")

[Conditionals]

"Lest" means "for fear that" or "otherwise". It is inherently negative, so NEVER use "not" with lest. The auxiliary verb that follows MUST be "should" (or bare infinitive).

Example: Work hard lest you should fail in the examination.

Examiner Note: Watch out for examiners using "may/will/might" or adding "not" after lest.

Rule #8: Prepositions after Fixed Adjectives: "Senior", "Junior", "Superior", "Prefer"

[Prepositions]

Comparative adjectives ending in "-ior" (Superior, Inferior, Senior, Junior, Prior, Anterior, Posterior) and the verb "Prefer / Preferable" take the preposition "TO", NEVER "than".

Example: He is senior to me in the department, and tea is preferable to coffee.

Examiner Note: Never use "more" before "preferable" (it is a double comparative error).

Rule #9: Verbs of Perception & Causative Verbs taking Bare Infinitives (Without "To")

[Prepositions]

Verbs like "let", "make", "bid", "watch", "see", "hear", "help", "feel", "notice" take a BARE INFINITIVE (Verb 1st form without "to") in the active voice. (Exception: In passive voice, "make/see/hear" take "to +

Example: The teacher made the students write the essay again.

Examiner Note: In passive voice: "The students were made to write the essay." But in active: "made them write"

Rule #10: Gerund after Prepositions and Phrases ending in "To"

[Prepositions]

Usually "to" is followed by V1. But in phrases where "to" is a PREPOSITION (e.g. "look forward to", "accustomed to", "used to", "with a view to", "addicted to", "given to", "devoted to", "in addition to",

Example: I am looking forward to meeting you next week at the conference.

Examiner Note: Look forward to + V1+ing is tested in almost every single SSC CGL Tier 2 shift.

Rule #11: Uncountable Nouns Never Take Plural "s" or Indefinite Articles ("A/An")

[Pronouns]

Uncountable nouns like "Scenery", "Poetry", "Furniture", "Advice", "Information", "Luggage", "Baggage", "Machinery", "Work", "Bread", "Paper", "Hair", "Mischief" are always singular. They cannot take "s/es" and

Example: The scenery of Kashmir is breathtaking, and he gave me a piece of advice (or: many pieces of advice).

Examiner Note: To express quantity, use "a piece of advice", "articles of luggage", "loaves of bread".

Rule #12: Nouns Plural in Form but Singular in Meaning (Subjects, Diseases, Games)

[Subject-Verb Agreement]

Nouns like "Mathematics", "Physics", "Economics", "Ethics", "News", "Innings", "Politics", "Billiards", "Measles", "Mumps", "Rickets" end in "s" but take a SINGULAR verb. (Exception: When preceded by a

Example: The first innings of the cricket match was washed out by rain.

Examiner Note: Word "Inning" does not exist in English. It is always "Innings" (both singular and plural).

Rule #13: Order of Personal Pronouns: 231 (Normal) vs 123 (Mistake/Crime/Plural)

[Pronouns]

When multiple singular pronouns are used together for good/pleasant acts: Order is Second Person (2) -> Third Person (3) -> First Person (1) (You, he and I). For confessions of guilt, mistakes, crimes, or when

Example: You, he and I have finished our project on time.

Examiner Note: If it's an error/guilt: "I, you and he are responsible for the blunder."

Rule #14: Possessive Case Before a Gerund (V1 + ing)

[Pronouns]

A noun or pronoun placed immediately before a Gerund MUST be in the POSSESSIVE case (e.g. "my", "his", "her", "your", "their", "Ram's"), NOT in the objective case ("me", "him", "them").

Example: My father did not like my going out with those boys late at night.

Examiner Note: Watch out for "me going" -> change to "my going", "him coming" -> "his coming".

Rule #15: Correlative Conjunctions: Exact Pairings & Parallel Balance

[Conditionals]

Conjunction pairs must be exact: "Either... or", "Neither... nor", "Not only... but also", "Both... and" (never "Both... as well as"), "Between... and" (never "Between... to"), "From... to", "Although/Though...

Example: The meeting is scheduled between 2 PM and 4 PM, and he is both intelligent and hardworking.

Examiner Note: Ensure the two parts of the sentence following "Not only" and "But also" are grammatically para

Rule #16: "Since" as a Conjunction of Time: Simple Past after Since, Present Perfect before

[Tenses]

When "Since" acts as a time conjunction indicating a starting point in the past: The clause PRECEDING since is in the Present Perfect (has/have + V3), and the clause FOLLOWING since MUST be in the Simple Past

Example: Two years have passed since he left for London.

Examiner Note: Formula: [Present Perfect] + Since + [Simple Past V2]. Never put has/have after since.

Rule #17: Adverb "Too... to" vs "So... that" (Negative Implication)

[Adjectives & Adverbs]

"Too + Adjective + to + V1" carries an inherently negative sense meaning "so ... that one cannot". Never add "not" in the infinitive clause.

Example: He is too weak to walk. (OR: He is so weak that he cannot walk.)

Examiner Note: Do not mix "too" with "that". Pair "Too" with "To", and "So" with "That".

Rule #18: Superfluous / Redundant Words (Pleonasm Errors)

[Adjectives & Adverbs]

Certain words must NEVER be combined because they repeat meaning: "Return back" (use only Return), "Revert back" (use Revert), "Repeat again" (Repeat), "Cousin brother/sister" (use Cousin), "Flee away" (use Flee),

Example: He returned from Delhi and met his cousin.

Examiner Note: Enter into is correct ONLY for abstract agreements/treaties: "India entered into a pact with Ja

Rule #19: Comparative Degree: "Any other" in Positive/Comparative Sentences

[Adjectives & Adverbs]

When comparing a person/thing with others in the SAME group in comparative degree, use "any other" to exclude the subject itself. (e.g. "Iron is more useful than any other metal"). If comparing across

Example: Shakespeare is greater than any other dramatist in English literature.

Examiner Note: If you omit "other", it implies Shakespeare is greater than himself (logical fallacy).

Rule #20: Question Tags: Positive Statement = Negative Tag, Negative Statement = Positive Tag

[Subject-Verb Agreement]

Question tag uses the auxiliary verb of the sentence and pronoun of subject. "I am..." tag is "aren't I?" (not "amn't I"). "Let's / Let us..." tag is "shall we?". Sentences with negative words ("few", "little",

Example: I am a reliable friend, aren't I? / He seldom comes on time, does he?

Examiner Note: Because "seldom/hardly" is negative, the question tag must be POSITIVE ("does he?").

Rule #21: "Few / A few / The few" vs "Little / A little / The little"

[Adjectives & Adverbs]

"Few" (countable) and "Little" (uncountable) mean almost NONE (negative). "A few" and "A little" mean some (positive). "The few" and "The little" mean all that is available.

Example: He has little knowledge of computer science, so he failed. (Knowledge is uncountable).

Examiner Note: Never use "few" with uncountable nouns (water, money, knowledge, milk).

Rule #22: Parallelism: Balancing Items in a Series / List

[Parallelism]

Items connected by commas or coordinating conjunctions ("and", "or", "but") MUST have the same grammatical structure (all nouns, all adjectives, all gerunds, or all infinitives).

Example: She likes swimming, dancing, and cooking.

Examiner Note: Check parallelism strictly after "not only... but also" and "as well as".

Rule #23: Dangling Modifiers: Participle Clause Must Relate to Main Subject

[Parallelism]

An introductory participle phrase ("Being a rainy day...", "Walking in the park...") modifies the grammatical subject that immediately follows. If the subject cannot perform that action, add a proper

Example: It being a rainy day, I decided to stay at home. (OR: Walking in the morning, a snake bit him -> While)

Examiner Note: If you write "Being a rainy day, I decided...", it grammatically means "I was a rainy day".

Rule #24: Prepositions: "Beside" (By the side of) vs "Besides" (In addition to)

[Prepositions]

"Beside" means adjacent to / next to. "Besides" means apart from / in addition to.

Example: He sat beside me on the bench, and besides English he speaks French.

Examiner Note: Examiners swap "beside" and "besides" in fill-in-the-blanks regularly.

Rule #25: Prepositions: "Between" (Two items) vs "Among" (More than two) & Mutual Treaties

[Prepositions]

"Between" is used for two items. "Among" is used for more than two. Exception: "Between" is used for more than two when there is a mutual relationship, alliance, or treaty (e.g. "A trade treaty between India,

Example: There is a free trade agreement between the four countries.

Examiner Note: Look out for words like "treaty", "negotiation", "alliance", "pact" -> Use BETWEEN.

Rule #26: Relative Pronoun "That" vs "Who/Which" after Superlatives & "All", "The same"

[Pronouns]

Use "THAT" (not who/which) after: Superlative degree adjectives ("the best", "the tallest"), "All", "The same", "Only", "None", "Any", "Much", "Little", "Everything", "Nothing".

Example: He is the tallest boy that I have ever seen, and all that glitters is not gold.

Examiner Note: "All that glitters is not gold" - tested repeatedly.

Rule #27: Stative Verbs Never Used in Continuous (ing) Tenses

[Tenses]

Verbs of perception/cognition/state ("know", "understand", "believe", "love", "hate", "smell", "taste", "own", "possess", "belong", "consist of") are NOT used in Continuous (-ing) tenses when describing states.

Example: I know the answer to this question. (OR: I have known the answer...)

Examiner Note: "I am having a car" is wrong -> "I have a car". (Having is correct only for eating/experiencing)

Rule #28: Plural Countable Nouns with Fixed Plural Pair Words ("Scissors", "Spectacles", "Trousers")

[Subject-Verb Agreement]

Articles of clothing and tools consisting of two parts ("Scissors", "Spectacles", "Glasses", "Trousers", "Pants", "Pliers", "Tongs", "Alms", "Premises") are always PLURAL and take plural verbs. To make singular,

Example: My spectacles are broken and my trousers are torn. (OR: A pair of spectacles is broken.)

Examiner Note: Watch for "A pair of trousers is" (Singular) vs "Trousers are" (Plural).

Rule #29: Conditional Sentence: "As soon as / When / Until" Never Take "Will/Shall"

[Tenses]

In future time/conditional subordinate clauses introduced by "When", "As soon as", "Until", "Unless", "Before", "After", "If", use the SIMPLE PRESENT tense, NEVER future (will/shall).

Example: I will call you as soon as I reach the airport.

Examiner Note: Two "wills" can never exist in the same condition-result sentence.

Rule #30: Collective Noun: Singular Unit vs Plural When Divided / Discordant

[Subject-Verb Agreement]

Collective nouns ("Jury", "Committee", "Audience", "Family", "Team", "Fleet") take a SINGULAR verb when acting as a unified whole. They take a PLURAL verb and plural pronouns when divided in opinion or acting

Example: The jury were divided in their opinions regarding the verdict. (Unified: The jury has given its verdict)

Examiner Note: Notice the pronoun "their" - if the pronoun is plural, the verb MUST also be plural ("were").

Rule #31: Inversion after Negative / Limiting Adverbs ("Hardly", "No sooner", "Seldom", "Barely"

[Inversion]

When a sentence begins with a negative or restricting adverb ("Hardly", "Scarcely", "Barely", "No sooner", "Seldom", "Never", "Little", "Only by/then"), the sentence MUST use INVERSION: Auxiliary Verb comes BEFORE

Example: Hardly had he reached the station when the train departed. (Or: No sooner did he reach than the train

Examiner Note: Hardly/Scarcely takes "WHEN"; No sooner takes "THAN". Inversion is strictly mandatory.

Rule #32: Gerund after Prepositional Phrases ("Looking forward to", "Used to", "With a view to"

[Non-Finites (Gerund vs Infinitive)]

Although "to" is normally followed by base verb (V1), after specific fixed prepositional idioms ("looking forward to", "accustomed to", "addicted to", "habituated to", "with a view to", "given to", "prone to",

Example: I am looking forward to meeting you next Monday.

Examiner Note: Examiners rely on candidates' reflex to use V1 after "to". Remember: Preposition + Gerund.

Rule #33: Uncountable Nouns Never Take Plural "-s" or Indefinite Articles "A/An"

[Nouns & Numbers]

Nouns like "Information", "Advice", "Scenery", "Furniture", "Luggage", "Baggage", "Poetry", "Machinery", "Work", "Hair", "Bread", "Stationery", "Crocery" are strictly UNCOUNTABLE. They never take "-s/-es" and

Example: The scenery of Kashmir gave me much valuable information.

Examiner Note: Never say "furnitures" or "an information". Use "pieces of information".

Rule #34: Hyphenated / Compound Adjectives Never Take Plural Form

[Adjectives]

When a numerical measure acts as a compound adjective before a noun, the modifying unit MUST remain SINGULAR.

Example: He gave me a five-hundred rupee note for the three-day workshop.

Examiner Note: Rule: "A [Number]-[Singular Unit] [Noun]". Plural is only used when no following noun exists (e

Rule #35: "Prefer / Preferable" Takes Preposition "To", NEVER "Than"

[Adjectives & Degrees]

Latin adjectives ending in "-ior" ("Senior", "Junior", "Superior", "Inferior", "Prior", "Anterior", "Posterior") as well as "Prefer" and "Preferable" are ALWAYS followed by the preposition "TO", NEVER

Example: Milk is preferable to tea for breakfast.

Examiner Note: Never write "more preferable" (Double Comparative) and never use "than".

Rule #36: Lest Clause ALWAYS Takes Modal "Should" (or Bare Subjunctive), NEVER "Not"

[Conjunctions]

"Lest" inherently means "for fear that" or "so that not". Because it is already negative, NEVER use "not" in the lest clause. The verb must be auxiliary "SHOULD" or bare infinitive.

Example: Work hard lest you should fail in the examination.

Examiner Note: Look for two traps: using "will/may" instead of "should", and adding redundant "not".

Rule #37: Pronoun Sequence: 2-3-1 (Good/Normal) vs 1-2-3 (Guilt/Mistake/Plural)

[Pronouns]

When different persons (1st, 2nd, 3rd) are combined in a singular subject for normal/praiseworthy acts, follow order 2nd Person (You) -> 3rd Person (He/She) -> 1st Person (I) (Code: 231). When confessing a

Example: You, he and I will complete the project on time. (Guilt: I, you and he are to blame for the mistake.)

Examiner Note: Verb is always plural ("are/have") because multiple persons are joined by "and".

Rule #38: Dangling / Unattached Participle Error

[Participles & Modifiers]

An introductory participial phrase must modify the SUBJECT immediately following the comma. If the subject cannot perform that action, it creates an absurd "dangling participle" error.

Example: While he was walking down the road, a speeding truck hit him. (Or: Walking down the road, he was hit

Examiner Note: As written, the truck was "walking down the road"! Always assign the proper agent.

Rule #39: Possession before Gerund: Possessive Adjective ("My/His"), NOT Objective ("Me/Him")

[Gerunds & Pronouns]

A noun or pronoun placed immediately BEFORE a gerund (verbal noun) MUST be in the POSSESSIVE case ("my", "his", "their", "John's"), NOT objective case ("me", "him", "them", "John").

Example: My father did not approve of my going to the cinema alone.

Examiner Note: Father disapproves of the "going" (Gerund), which belongs to "my".

Rule #40: Parallelism in Correlative Conjunctions ("Not only... but also", "Either... or")

[Conjunctions & Parallelism]

Correlative conjunctions MUST connect grammatically parallel structures. If "but also" is followed by a verb, "not only" must precede a verb; if "but also" precedes a prepositional phrase, "not only" must

Example: He lost not only his ticket but also his luggage.

Examiner Note: "Lost" applies to both objects, so place "not only" right before "his ticket" to match "but als

Rule #41: Comparison of Inequality: "That of" (Singular) & "Those of" (Plural)

[Comparisons & Pronouns]

When comparing attributes of two entities, you must compare the attribute to the attribute, NOT the attribute to the whole entity. Use "that of" for singular nouns and "those of" for plural nouns.

Example: The climate of Shimla is colder than that of Delhi. (Plural: The streets of Mumbai are wider than those of Delhi.)

Examiner Note: Never compare climate to a city. Always insert "that of".

Rule #42: Causative Verbs: "Make / Let / Bid" take BARE Infinitive (V1 without "to")

[Verbs & Causatives]

Causative verbs "Make", "Let", "Bid", "Hear", "See", "Watch" in active voice are followed directly by BARE INFINITIVE (V1 without "to"). Exception: In passive voice, "make" takes "to + V1" (e.g. "He was made to").

Example: The teacher made the naughty student apologize before the class.

Examiner Note: Do not insert "to" after "make/let" in active voice sentences.

Rule #43: Correlative Preposition Pairs: "Between... And" vs "From... To"

[Prepositions]

The conjunction pair is "Between... AND", NEVER "Between... to". The pair for "From" is "From... TO". Do not cross-mix them.

Example: The library remains open between 9:00 AM and 5:00 PM. (Or: From 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM.)

Examiner Note: A classic 1-second spotting error in SSC CGL Tier 1.

Rule #44: Fixed Prepositions with "Die": "Die of", "Die from", "Die in", "Die for"

[Prepositions]

Die OF: A specific disease/hunger/thirst (e.g. "died of malaria/cancer"). **Die FROM:** An indirect external cause/overwork/wound/snakebite (e.g. "died from loss of blood"). **Die IN:** Battle/harness/accident (e.g. "died in the battle").

Example: The patient died of cholera due to contaminated water.

Examiner Note: Disease = OF; Overwork/wound = FROM.

Rule #45: Superfluous / Redundant Words in Indian Govt Exams

[Superfluous Expressions]

Avoid pairing synonymous words that repeat the same meaning: "Return back" / "Revert back" -> Use only "Return" or "Revert". "Supposing if" -> Use only "Supposing" or "If". "Equally as good as" -> Use "As good as".

Example: If he returns the money, what will you do?

Examiner Note: Remove the redundant word immediately.

Rule #46: Adverbs of Frequency Placement (Before Main Verb, After Auxiliary "Be")

[Adverbs]

Adverbs of indefinite frequency ("Always", "Never", "Often", "Seldom", "Rarely", "Usually", "Sometimes") are placed BEFORE the main verb, but AFTER the auxiliary verb "be" (is, am, are, was, were).

Example: He always comes on time and is never late.

Examiner Note: Place between subject and main verb: Subject + Adverb + Verb.

Rule #47: "Doubt / Doubtful" takes "If/Whether" in Affirmative, but "That" in Negative/Question

[Conjunctions]

In AFFIRMATIVE sentences (positive statements), "Doubt" and "Doubtful" express uncertainty and take "IF" or "WHETHER". In NEGATIVE or INTERROGATIVE sentences where certainty is implied, they take "THAT".

Example: I have no doubt that India will win the final match. (Positive: I doubt whether he will pass).

Examiner Note: "No doubt" = Certainty => MUST take "THAT".

Rule #48: Nouns Plural in Form but Singular in Meaning & Vice Versa

[Nouns & Agreement]

Singular Meaning (takes Singular Verb): "News", "Innings", "Politics", "Mathematics", "Physics", "Economics", "Billiards", "Measles", "Rickets". **Plural Meaning (No "-s" suffix, takes Plural Verb):**

Example: The cattle are grazing in the field and the news is verified.

Examiner Note: Never say "cattles". "Police are investigating", NOT "Police is".

Rule #49: Tense Harmony in Subordinate Clauses: Past Main Clause Requires Past Subordinate

[Sequence of Tenses]

If the main/principal clause is in the PAST tense, the subordinate clause MUST also be in the past tense.

Exceptions: Universal truths, scientific facts, habitual actions, and comparisons introduced by "than".

Example: He told me that he would come to the meeting. (Universal truth: He said that the Earth revolves around the sun.)

Examiner Note: Change "will" to "would", "can" to "could", "may" to "might".

Rule #50: Double Comparatives & Double Superlatives are Strictly Prohibited

[Adjectives & Degrees]

Never use two comparative markers ("more better", "more taller") or two superlative markers ("most highest", "most best") together. An inflected word already carries the degree.

Example: This is a unique and much better solution to the problem.

Examiner Note: "Unique", "Perfect", "Complete", "Universal", "Dead", "Round" are absolute adjectives and never take degrees.

Rule #51: Reciprocal Pronouns: "Each other" (Two Entities) vs "One another" (Three or More)

[Pronouns]

Use "each other" when referring to two persons or things. Use "one another" when referring to more than two persons or things.

Example: The three business partners helped one another during the financial crisis.

Examiner Note: Watch for numerical indicators in the sentence like "two brothers" vs "all members of the team"

Rule #52: Relative Pronoun "That" after Superlatives, "All", "The same", "None", "Only"

[Pronouns]

Always use the relative pronoun "that" (NOT "who" or "which") when the antecedent is modified by a superlative adjective, or words like "all", "the same", "only", "none", "any", "nothing", "everything".

Example: This is the best book that I have ever read in my life. / All that glitters is not gold.

Examiner Note: Examiners frequently use "who" or "which" right after "the best", "the only", or "all". Change

Rule #53: Reflexive Pronouns Cannot Function as Sentence Subject Alone

[Pronouns]

A reflexive pronoun (myself, himself, herself, yourself, themselves) cannot be used as the subject of a sentence without a preceding noun or pronoun antecedent.

Example: I, Dr. Sharma, will conduct the seminar today. / I myself will conduct the seminar today.

Examiner Note: Very common error in spoken English ("Myself Rahul") that examiners frequently test in Spotting

Rule #54: Pronoun Case in Comparisons: Nominative Case after "Than" and "As"

[Pronouns]

When two subjects are compared using "than" or "as... as", the pronoun following "than/as" must be in the NOMINATIVE (subjective) case, because an ellipsis of the verb is implied (e.g. "...than I [am]").

Example: He runs faster than I (am) in long-distance races.

Examiner Note: If the comparison is between two objects, objective case is used: "He likes you more than me" (

Rule #55: Transitive vs Intransitive Confusion: "Lie" (Recline) vs "Lay" (Put/Place)

[Verbs & Tenses]

"Lie" (intransitive: lie, lay, lain, lying) means to rest or recline. "Lay" (transitive: lay, laid, laid, laying) means to put or place something down and REQUIRES a direct object.

Example: He lay on the grass for two hours yesterday watching the clouds. (Past of intransitive lie is lay).

Examiner Note: Crucial distinction: Past tense of "lie" is "lay"; past tense of "lay" is "laid".

Rule #56: Stative / Non-Continuous Verbs Cannot Be Used in Progressive (-ing) Tenses

[Verbs & Tenses]

Verbs of perception, cognition, emotion, and possession (see, hear, smell, notice, recognize, know, understand, believe, remember, love, hate, want, wish, belong, possess, own) are NOT used in Continuous

Example: I know the answer to this complex question / He has three cars.

Examiner Note: Exception: When "have" means eating/drinking/experiencing ("He is having lunch"), continuous fo

Rule #57: Causative Verbs: "Make / Let / Have" + Bare Infinitive vs "Get" + To-Infinitive

[Verbs & Tenses]

Active causative verbs "make", "let", and "have" take a BARE infinitive (V1 without "to"): Subject + make/let/have + person + V1. In contrast, active "get" takes a TO-infinitive: Subject + get + person + to

Example: The teacher made the student apologize in front of the whole class. (With get: She got him to apologize)

Examiner Note: In passive voice, "make" DOES take "to": "He was made TO apologize by the teacher."

Rule #58: Gerunds (V-ing) After Fixed Prepositional Phrases Ending in "To"

[Gerunds & Infinitives]

While most infinitives take "to + V1", phrases where "to" functions as a PREPOSITION take a GERUND (V-ing). Examples: "look forward to", "accustomed to", "addicted to", "used to (be/get used to)", "with a

Example: I am looking forward to meeting you at the international conference.

Examiner Note: The single most repeated Gerund question across all SSC and Banking exams.

Rule #59: "Too... to" Inherent Negative Meaning vs "So... that" Construction

[Adverbs]

The construction "too + adjective + to + V1" carries an inherently NEGATIVE meaning ("so excessively that one cannot"). Therefore, never add "not" inside the infinitive. If converting to "so... that", include

Example: He is too weak to walk properly. / He is so weak that he cannot walk properly.

Examiner Note: Never mix "too" with "that" clause. Pair "too" with "to", and "so" with "that".

Rule #60: "Very" (Positive Degree & Present Participles) vs "Much" (Comparative & Past Particip

[Adverbs]

Use "very" to modify positive degree adjectives and present participles (-ing). Use "much" to modify comparative degree adjectives and past participles (-ed/V3). You may also use "very much" before

Example: The candidate was much shocked (or very much shocked) to hear the unexpected result.

Examiner Note: Exceptions: Very tired, very pleased, very delighted, very limited are idiomatic exceptions.

Rule #61: Precise Positioning of Limiting Adverbs ("Only", "Merely", "Just", "Even")

[Adverbs]

Limiting adverbs like "only", "merely", "just", "almost", "even" must be placed immediately BEFORE the specific word, phrase, or clause they are intended to modify.

Example: He died only a week ago after battling a chronic illness.

Examiner Note: Placing "only" before the verb alters the meaning to "he did nothing else except die". Place it

Rule #62: "Little / A Little / The Little" (Uncountable) vs "Few / A Few / The Few" (Countable)

[Adjectives & Quantifiers]

"Little/Few" = almost none (negative meaning). "A little/A few" = some/small quantity (positive meaning).

"The little/The few" = not much, but all that is available.

Example: A little knowledge is a dangerous thing, but he had a little milk in the jug. (Milk is uncountable).

Examiner Note: Never use "few" with uncountable nouns (water, money, sugar, milk) or "little" with plural coun

Rule #63: Order of Multiple Royal Adjectives (OSASCOMP Hierarchy)

[Adjectives & Degrees]

When multiple adjectives qualify a single noun, arrange them in the strict OSASCOMP sequence: Opinion -> Size -> Age -> Shape -> Color -> Origin -> Material -> Purpose + NOUN.

Example: She bought a stylish (Opinion) new (Age) black (Color) leather (Material) handbag for the party.

Examiner Note: Memorize the mnemonic OSASCOMP: O-S-A-S-C-O-M-P.

Rule #64: "Elder / Eldest" (Family Blood Relations, No "Than") vs "Older / Oldest" (General Age)

[Adjectives & Degrees]

"Elder" and "eldest" are used strictly for members of the same family and NEVER take the preposition "than" (use "to" or no preposition). "Older" and "oldest" are used for unrelated persons, animals, and

Example: He is older than his classmate Rohan by two years. (Family: He is my elder brother).

Examiner Note: Watch out for "elder than" in error spotting sentences-it is always grammatically incorrect.

Rule #65: "Although / Though" is Correlated with "Yet" or a Comma, NEVER "But"

[Conjunctions]

Clauses introduced by "although" or "though" must be joined with the correlative "yet" or simply a comma. They can NEVER be paired with "but", "and", or "so".

Example: Although he worked extremely hard day and night, yet he failed the exam. (OR: ...day and night, he fa

Examiner Note: Examiners almost always insert "but" after "although". Strike out "but" and replace with "yet"

Rule #66: "Both... and" Cannot Be Paired with "As well as", "Or", or "Else"

[Conjunctions]

The correlative pair for "both" is strictly "and". Never combine "both" with "as well as", "together with", or "along with". Additionally, "both" is never used in negative sentences (use "Neither... nor"

Example: Both the Prime Minister and the President attended the republic ceremony. / Neither of them came.

Examiner Note: Replace "as well as" with "and", or convert negative "both" to "neither".

Rule #67: Mandatory "Whether" over "If" with "Or", After Prepositions, and Before Infinitives

[Conjunctions]

Use "whether" (NOT "if"): (1) when followed by "or / or not", (2) immediately following a preposition ("depends on whether..."), (3) before a to-infinitive ("wondered whether to go"). "If" is reserved

Example: It all depends on whether the train arrives on schedule or not.

Examiner Note: Never say "depends on if". Preposition + whether is the rule.

Rule #68: Symmetrical Placement of Correlative Conjunctions ("Not only... but also")

[Conjunctions & Parallelism]

Correlative conjunctions ("not only... but also", "either... or", "neither... nor") must connect grammatically parallel elements. If "but also" is followed by a verb, "not only" must precede a verb; if

Example: He visited not only Paris but also London during his European holiday.

Examiner Note: Anchor on the second part ("but also London" = noun phrase) and position "not only" right befor

Rule #69: "Between" (Two Entities or Reciprocal Relations) vs "Among" (Three or More)

[Prepositions]

"Between" is used for two distinct persons or things, and also for more than two when expressing mutual or reciprocal agreements/treaties (e.g. "treaty between 5 nations"). "Among" is used for three or more in a

Example: Divide these sweets among all the twenty children in the class. (Reciprocal: An agreement between Ind

Examiner Note: "Between" is always paired with "and", NEVER with "to" (e.g. "between 2 PM and 4 PM", NOT "betw

Rule #70: "Beside" (By the Side of) vs "Besides" (In Addition to)

[Prepositions]

"Beside" means by the side of, adjacent to, or next to. "Besides" with an "s" means in addition to, apart from, or furthermore.

Example: Besides Mathematics, he is also preparing for General Intelligence. (Position: Sit beside me).

Examiner Note: Examiners drop or add the trailing "s" to invert spatial location vs additive inclusion.

Rule #71: Omission of Prepositions After Direct Transitive Verbs

[Prepositions]

Direct transitive verbs take an object directly without an intervening preposition. Common verbs that NEVER take a preposition: "discuss", "describe", "order", "reach", "enter", "attack", "marry", "resemble",

Example: We will discuss the new syllabus in today's session. / He entered the room.

Examiner Note: Exception: "Enter into an agreement/contract" is an idiomatic figurative expression and is correct.

Rule #72: Preposition Collocations with "Die": "Die of", "Die from", "Die for", "Die in"

[Prepositions]

Die OF: a specific disease, hunger, thirst, or shame. **Die FROM:** an external cause, wound, overwork, loss of blood, or poisoning. **Die FOR:** one's country or a noble cause. **Die IN:** harness (on duty), a battle, or

Example: The brave soldier died of cancer while the patriot died for his country.

Examiner Note: Look closely at the noun following "die" to choose of vs from vs for.

Rule #73: Omission of Article "The" Before Institutions for Primary Purpose

[Articles]

Do not use the definite article "the" before "school", "college", "university", "church", "hospital", "prison", "jail", "bed", "market" when these places are visited for their PRIMARY intended purpose (e.g.

Example: He was seriously injured in an accident and rushed to hospital. (Secondary: I went to the hospital to

Examiner Note: Look for the purpose: if patient -> hospital; if student -> school; if criminal -> prison (no a

Rule #74: Articles "A" vs "An" Governed by Initial Phonetic Sound, NOT Spelling

[Articles]

Use "an" before words starting with a VOWEL SOUND (a, e, i, o, u phonetic sounds), regardless of whether the first letter is a consonant (e.g. silent h or acronyms: an honest man, an heir, an hour, an M.P., an

Example: He is an honest police officer and lodged an FIR against a European traveler.

Examiner Note: Acronyms starting with letters F, H, L, M, N, R, S, X begin with vowel sounds (ef, aitch, el, e

Rule #75: Pluralization of Compound Nouns on the Root/Head Word

[Nouns]

In compound nouns, the plural marker "-s" is added to the PRINCIPAL / ROOT noun, not to the preposition or descriptive qualifier. Examples: "sons-in-law", "passers-by", "commanders-in-chief", "lookers-on",

Example: All his sons-in-law and commanders-in-chief gathered at the ceremony.

Examiner Note: Never attach the plural -s to the preposition (avoid "son-in-laws" or "passer-bies").

Rule #76: Nouns of Multitude: Singular When Unanimous, Plural When Divided

[Nouns & Subject-Verb Agreement]

Collective nouns (jury, committee, team, orchestra, audience, panel) take a SINGULAR verb and singular pronoun (it/its) when acting as a unified whole. They take a PLURAL verb and plural pronoun (they/their)

Example: The jury were divided in their opinions regarding the verdict of the case. (Unanimous: The jury has g

Examiner Note: If the sentence contains "divided", "different opinions", or "their", the verb must be plural (

Rule #77: Strict Parallelism in Series, Comparisons, and Coordinate Constructions

[Parallelism]

Items joined by coordinating conjunctions (and, but, or) in a series or list must share the identical grammatical form (e.g. all gerunds, all infinitives, all nouns, or all prepositional phrases).

Example: He enjoys reading historical novels, playing cricket, and swimming in the river.

Examiner Note: Watch out for an infinitive sneaking into a list of gerunds or an adjective in a list of nouns.

Rule #78: Dangling / Unattached Participles and Misplaced Modifiers

[Modifiers]

A participial phrase at the start of a sentence must modify the immediate subject of the main clause. If the subject cannot perform the action described in the participle, it becomes a "dangling participle" and

Example: While he was walking through the botanical garden, a venomous snake bit him. (OR: Walking through the

Examiner Note: Ask "Who was walking?". The snake wasn't walking; the man was. Rephrase so the human is the sub

Rule #79: Question Tags: Imperatives, "Let's", Semi-Negative Words, and Pronoun Inversion

[Question Tags]

Rules: (1) Positive statement -> Negative tag; Negative statement -> Positive tag. (2) "Let's..." takes "shall we?". (3) Imperatives take "will you?" / "won't you?". (4) Sentences with semi-negative words

Example: He seldom visits his native hometown, does he? / Let's start the revision, shall we?

Examiner Note: Semi-negative adverbs (seldom, hardly, scarcely, rarely) make the clause negative, requiring a

Rule #80: Superfluous Expressions, Pleonasm, and Redundant Collocations

[Superfluous Expressions]

Avoid redundant words that repeat the meaning already contained in the base word. Never write: "return back" (use return), "revert back" (use revert), "consensus opinion" (use consensus), "supposing if" (use

Example: If he returns without completing the assignment, what will happen? (OR: Supposing he returns...).

Examiner Note: Search for "return back", "revert back", "flee away", "reason why... because". Strike out the r

Rule #81: Inversion with Negative and Restrictive Adverbs (Hardly, Seldom, Nowhere)

[Inversion & Adverbs]

When a negative or restrictive adverb (Hardly, Scarcely, Seldom, Rarely, Barely, Little, Nowhere, "Under no circumstances", "Not only") begins a clause, partial inversion **MUST** occur (Auxiliary Verb comes **BEFORE**

Example: Seldom have I seen such a breathtaking performance by a newcomer.

Examiner Note: Watch out for sentences starting with "Hardly", "Rarely", "Never before". If the auxiliary verb

Rule #82: Bare Infinitives after Modal Auxiliaries and Sensory Verbs (Bid, Let, Make, See)

[Non-Finite Verbs]

Bare Infinitives (Verb base form without "to") must be used after: (1) Modals (can, could, will, should, must), (2) Verbs of perception and causation (bid, let, make, see, hear, watch, observe) in **ACTIVE** voice.

Example: The strict officer made all the recruits run five kilometers before breakfast. (Passive: They were ma

Examiner Note: Examiners routinely add "to" after "made" or "let" in active voice sentences. Remove "to".

Rule #83: Dangling / Unattached Participles (Subject of Reference Mismatch)

[Participles & Modifiers]

A participial phrase at the start of a sentence must refer directly and logically to the grammatical subject of the main clause. If the subject cannot perform the action of the participle, it becomes a

Example: While he was walking in the garden early in the morning, a poisonous snake bit him. (OR: Walking in t

Examiner Note: In the incorrect sentence, the snake seems to be walking in the garden! Clarify the subject of

Rule #84: Strict Parallel Placement of Correlative Conjunctions

[Conjunctions & Parallelism]

Correlative conjunction pairs ("Not only... but also", "Either... or", "Neither... nor", "Both... and") must precede parallel parts of speech. If "but also" precedes a verb, "not only" must precede a verb; if

Example: He lost not only his ticket but also his luggage at the railway terminal.

Examiner Note: "but also" is followed by a noun phrase ("his luggage"). Therefore, "not only" must immediately

Rule #85: Comparative Degree with "Other" for Class Exclusion

[Adjectives & Degrees of Comparison]

When comparing a person or thing with other members of the **SAME** group or class, use "any other" or "all other" to exclude the subject being compared. If comparing with a **DIFFERENT** class, omit "other".

Example: Gold is more precious than any other metal found on planet earth.

Examiner Note: Without "other", gold would be more precious than itself, which is logically impossible.

Rule #86: Causative Verbs (Have, Make, Get): Active vs Passive Object Construction

[Causative Verbs]

Patterns: (1) Make someone do something (V1 bare infinitive - force/compulsion). (2) Have someone do something (V1 bare infinitive - request/assign). (3) Get someone **TO** do something ("to + V1" - persuasion).

Example: I must get my watch repaired before the exam starts. / I got the technician to repair my watch.

Examiner Note: When an inanimate object ("watch", "car", "hair") follows "get" or "have", the subsequent verb

Rule #87: Hyphenated Compound Nouns Used as Adjectives Never Take Plural Form

[Nouns & Modifiers]

When a compound numerical expression modifies a subsequent noun as a hyphenated adjective, the unit of measurement remains **SINGULAR**. Never pluralize the modifying adjective.

Example: The state government sanctioned a five-crore project for rural irrigation. / I gave him a ten-rupee n

Examiner Note: Do not say "a ten-inches ruler" or "a three-days workshop". Say "a ten-inch ruler", "a three-da

Rule #88: Gerund Preceded Strictly by Possessive Adjective / Noun

[Gerunds & Pronouns]

A Gerund (V1 + ing functioning as a noun) must be qualified by a **POSSESSIVE** adjective (my, your, his, her, their, our) or possessive noun (Rohan's), **NEVER** by an objective pronoun (me, him, them, us).

Example: The committee objected to his entering the examination hall without an admit card.

Examiner Note: Spot "him doing", "me going", "them coming" and replace with "his doing", "my going", "their co

Rule #89: Fixed Idiomatic Phrases Followed by Gerund (V1+ing), Not Bare V1

[Prepositions & Gerunds]

In these fixed expressions, "to" is a preposition (not part of an infinitive) and must be followed by a **GERUND** (V1+ing): "look forward to", "with a view to", "accustomed to", "used to (adjective)", "addicted

Example: We are eagerly looking forward to welcoming the newly appointed civil servants.

Examiner Note: This is one of the most tested traps in English error detection. Examiners tempt you with "to +

Rule #90: Split Infinitives and Placement of Modifying Adverbs

[Infinitives & Adverbs]

In formal standard English tested by examiners, do not insert an adverb between "to" and the base verb (Split Infinitive). Place the adverb before "to" or after the object.

Example: The auditor decided to inspect the accounts of the municipal corporation thoroughly.

Examiner Note: Keep "to + inspect" unified wherever stylistically feasible in competitive tests.

Rule #91: Absolute Superlative without Comparison ("A most interesting book")

[Adjectives & Degrees]

When "most" is used in the sense of "very" (an intensive adjective without comparing one against all), it takes the indefinite article "a / an", NOT "the".

Example: The professor delivered a most inspiring lecture yesterday, which mesmerized everyone. (Means: a very)

Examiner Note: Use "the most" only when explicit comparison with an entire group or class is stated.

Rule #92: Prepositions: "Between" (Two or Reciprocal Relationship) vs "Among" vs "Amidst"

[Prepositions]

"Between" is used for TWO entities, OR for more than two entities when a mutual, reciprocal, or contractual relationship is expressed (e.g. "a treaty between 5 nations"). "Among" is used for more than

Example: There is a triangular tournament between India, Australia, and England.

Examiner Note: Whenever a trade agreement, pact, treaty, or match involves named countries, use "between" even

Rule #93: Confusing Verbs: Lie (Lied, Lied) vs Lie (Lay, Lain) vs Lay (Laid, Laid)

[Irregular & Confusing Verbs]

(1) Lie (lied, lied) - to tell a falsehood (intransitive). (2) Lie (lay, lain) - to recline or rest horizontally (intransitive, no object). (3) Lay (laid, laid) - to place or put something down (transitive,

Example: He was tired and lay on the grass under the shade of the banyan tree. / He laid his books on the table

Examiner Note: The past tense of "lie" (recline) is "lay", NOT "laid"! "Laid" always requires an object ("laid

Rule #94: Confusing Verbs: Rise (Rose, Risen) vs Raise (Raised, Raised) vs Raze

[Irregular & Confusing Verbs]

Rise (rose, risen) is an INTRANSITIVE verb meaning to ascend, get up, or increase on its own (takes no object). Raise (raised, raised) is a TRANSITIVE verb meaning to lift or bring up something (takes an

Example: The treasury department has raised the interest rates to curb retail inflation.

Examiner Note: "interest rates" is the direct object of the verb; therefore, use the transitive form "raised".

Rule #95: Expressions of Time, Distance, Money, and Quantity as a Unit take Singular Verb

[Subject-Verb Agreement]

When plural nouns denote a single quantity, amount, distance, duration, or sum considered as a whole, they take a SINGULAR verb. However, if individual units are being distributed or spent separately, use a plural

Example: Ten thousand rupees is a handsome amount for a monthly student scholarship. (Contrast: Ten thousand r

Examiner Note: Look at the complement: "a handsome amount", "a long distance", "a difficult period" all signal

Rule #96: "Lest" is Followed Strictly by "Should" or Bare Subjunctive, Never "Not"

[Conjunctions & Mood]

"Lest" means "for fear that" or "so that not" and is inherently negative. Rules: (1) It must NEVER be followed by "not". (2) It takes modal "should" or the bare subjunctive base verb. Never use "may", "will",

Example: Walk carefully lest you should stumble and fall on the slippery rocks. (OR: lest you stumble...).

Examiner Note: Strike out "may not", "will not", "can not" after "lest" and substitute with "should".

Rule #97: "Unless" (Condition) vs "Until" (Time) - Never Use "Not" in Subordinate Clause

[Conjunctions & Conditionals]

"Unless" denotes condition (if not). "Until" denotes time (up to the point in time). Both are negative in themselves. Never use "not" or "never" within the clause introduced by "unless" or "until". Also, never

Example: Unless you submit the original caste certificate, your candidature will be canceled.

Examiner Note: Remove "do not" or "does not" after "unless" and "until".

Rule #98: Subject Complement Pronoun Rule: "It is I / It was he who...", NOT "It is me"

[Pronouns & Case]

When a pronoun follows the linking verb "to be" (is, am, are, was, were, been) as a subject complement, it MUST be in the NOMINATIVE / SUBJECTIVE case (I, he, she, we, they), not the objective case (me, him, her,

Example: It was he who single-handedly drafted the comprehensive policy document. / It is I who am responsible

Examiner Note: In spoken English "It is me" is colloquial, but in formal examinations it is an error. Use "It

Rule #99: Order of Personal Pronouns: 2-3-1 for Normal vs 1-2-3 for Confessions & Plurals

[Pronouns & Etiquette]

Rule 2-3-1: When singular pronouns of different persons are used together in positive, polite, or general statements, the order is Second Person (You) -> Third Person (He/She) -> First Person (I). Rule 1-2-3:

Example: You, Deepak and I will represent our college in the national debate. (Confession: I, you and he are t

Examiner Note: Check the tone of the sentence. If neutral or positive, enforce 2-3-1. If negative/confession,

Rule #100: Nouns of Multitude / Collective Nouns: Singular vs Plural Division Rule

[Nouns & Agreement]

A collective noun (jury, committee, team, parliament, board, audience) takes a SINGULAR verb and singular pronoun (it, its) when thought of as a single undivided unit. It takes a PLURAL verb and plural pronoun

Example: The committee were divided in their opinions regarding the implementation of the new pension scheme.

Examiner Note: Notice the clue word "divided" or "different opinions". It signals a plural verb ("were") and p