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CLAT 2020 English Language : Spotting The Errors

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Spotting the errors is that area of English language where grammatical skills of a candidate are comprehensively tested. It is an integrated grammar exercise, so it covers all the grammatical parts.

Therefore in order to solve these questions of CLAT English a candidate needs to be well versed with the grammatical rules in total. Candidates must analyse the options on the basis of grammatical rules and then select the appropriate option.

Each question consists of a complex sentence which is divided into three or four parts. One of the parts contains an error. The candidates have to spot the error and mark the incorrect part. Incorrect part of the sentence is the right option.

In order to solve these questions of CLAT English the aspirants should have a clear idea about the grammatical rules of various topics like noun pronoun articles etc. following is a comprehensive list of commonly used grammatical rules

Rules of Prepositions

prepositions are the words used with a noun or pronoun to show their relationship. Following are rules to be kept in mind while solving the question:

1. In is used for bigger places (towns, cities, countries) while at is used for smaller places. Eg. I live in Delhi. I live at Karol Bagh in Delhi.
2. Into is used in speaking of things at rest. Into is used in speaking of things in motion. Eg. the snake crawled into the hole. He is shopping in the market.
3. On denotes position, upon denotes movement. The cat is on the table. The cat pounced upon the mouse

4. With denotes the instrument and by denotes the agent. Eg. The letter is written by him with his pen.
5. Above and below merely denote position while over and under also carry a sense of movement. Eg. The train is running under the bridge. The train is standing below the bridge.
6. Under is used before a noun to indicate that a person or thing is being affected by something or is going through a particular process. Eg I am rarely under pressure at work.
7. No preposition is placed after the following verbs when they are used in the active voice: order, request, reach, attack, resemble, emphasis, accompany, discuss, investigate, comprise, enter, join, affect, board etc.

Eg. Our forces attacked on the enemy fort (incorrect)

Our forces attacked the enemy fort (correct)

1. Till is used in a particular time while until is used for an indefinite time. Eg. We shall work until we fell down. We shall work till 14:00 hrs.
2. Beside means 'by the side of' whereas besides means 'in addition to'. Eg Besides eating he is also watching TV. You were sitting beside me.
3. From is normally used with 'to/till' whereas between is used with 'and'. Eg. He works from nine to six. The meeting was scheduled to be held between 2:00 p.m. and 3:00 p.m.

Omission of Articles

articles are of two types 'indefinite-A/An' and 'definite-The'. Following are the rules where the usage of articles is skipped in the sentence.

1. Before Proper Noun. Eg. The New Delhi is the capital of India (incorrect)
2. Before material noun and abstract noun used in general sense. Eg. I have the love for you (incorrect)
3. Before a noun used in the widest sense. Eg. The man is immortal (incorrect)
4. Before uncountable nouns. Eg. He gave me advice.
5. Before school, college, home, church, temple, sea, work, bed, table, hospital, market, prison and court. Eg. I go to church every Sunday.
6. Before names of diseases. Eg. Cancer can be treated if detected early.

7. Before modes of travel. Eg. He will go by air.
8. Before names of relation like an uncle, aunt, mother etc. Eg. father is working on a project.
9. Before adjectives used as nouns signifying language or colours. Eg. I like red and blue.
10. When two or more adjectives qualify different nouns, expressed or understood, the Article is used before each adjective. Eg. He possesses a black dog and a white bitch.

Rules of Conjunctions

conjunctions are the words that join together sentences or words. Following are the rules for using conjunctions in sentences:

1. Scarcely and Hardly should be followed by when and not by Eg. Hardly had he arrived, when he had to leave again.
2. No sooner is followed by than and not by Eg. No sooner had I started than the rain started.
3. Seldom or never and seldom if ever both are correct but seldom or ever is incorrect. Eg. He seldom or never goes to see a movie in the theatre.
4. Unless means ‘if not’ and therefore, it should not be used in a sentence which is already negative. Eg. Unless you do not work hard, you will fail (incorrect). Unless you work hard, you will fail (correct).
5. Lest expresses a negative sense and therefore cannot be used with not. Should is always used with Eg. Walk steadily, lest you should fall.
6. From is used after the adjective ‘different’ instead of Eg. He took a different role from the ones he has been doing for long.
7. Nothing else should be followed by but, not by Eg. it is nothing else but your carelessness, that you have failed in the exam.
8. The use of present tense after as if and as though should be avoided. Eg. He looks as if he suspected something.
9. When ‘suppose’ is used at the beginning of a sentence to denote a command or a request, it is not followed by Eg. Suppose you are caught, what will happen to your parents?
10. That is not used in ‘direct narration’ and ‘indirect speech if the sentence is interrogative’. Eg. He asked who he was?

Rules of comparison of degrees of Adjective

adjective is a word used with a noun or pronoun to add something to its meaning. There are three degrees of an adjective:

1. Positive degree- when only one case is used. Eg. Meerut is a big city.
2. Comparative degree- when two cases are used. eg. Meerut is bigger than Ghaziabad.
3. Superlative degree- when more than two cases are used. Eg. Meerut is the biggest city of West Uttar Pradesh.

Following are the rules of usage of the degree of an adjective:

1. Double comparatives and double superlative are not used. Eg. She is the most prettiest girl (incorrect). She is the prettiest girl. (correct)
2. The adjective ending in ‘er’ should be used as ‘more’ while comparing two qualities of the same person or thing. Eg. He is wiser than his brother. He is more wise than strong.
3. In superlative cases, other is not used. Eg. Akbar was the most powerful of all the kings of his time.
4. Adjectives expressing qualities, that do not have different degrees, cannot be compared. Eg. Perfect, complete, circular, full, unique etc. eg. The glass is more full than that glass. (incorrect)
5. If there is a gradual increase, it is expressed with two comparatives and not with positives. Eg. He became more and more intelligent while studying.
6. The adjectives ‘little’ and ‘few’ are not used to qualify the nouns of quantity and number. Instead ‘small’ should be used. Eg. I asked him not to waste even small quantity of food.
7. When two adjectives in different degrees of comparison are used in the same sentence, each should be complete in itself. Eg. He is as good as if not better than his brother.
8. In comparative cases, other is used with ‘than’. Eg. He is stronger than any other person in the class.
9. ‘That of’ is used when similar things are compared. Eg. The climate of Dehradun is better than that of Delhi.
10. The comparative degree is generally followed by ‘than’ but the following comparative adjectives are followed by ‘to’- superior, junior, senior, prefer, preferable, elder, younger etc. eg. I prefer tea to coffee.

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Rules of Subject-Verb Agreement

following are the rules to be kept in mind while dealing with the sentences of subject-verb agreement.

1. If two subjects together express one idea, one being added to the other for the sake of emphasis or clarification, the verb is singular. Eg. slow and steady wins the race.
2. When the plural noun denotes some specific quantity, distance, time or amount considered as a whole, the verb is generally singular. Eg. six miles is not a long distance for me.
3. Two or more singular subjects connected by either-or, neither-nor, take a verb in singular. Eg. either harsh or darsh is absent today.
4. When the subjects joined by ‘or’ or ‘nor’ are of different numbers, the verb must be plural and the plural subject must be placed next to the verb. Eg. Either Ashna or her parents are coming to the party.
5. When two nouns or pronouns are joined by ‘not only-but also’, the verb agrees with the second noun or pronoun. Eg. Not only the officer but also the soldiers were awarded.
6. ‘a great many’ is always followed by a plural verb and a plural noun. Eg. A great many students have qualified this year.
7. A noun qualified by ‘each’ or ‘every’ is followed by a singular verb. Even if two nouns so qualified are connected by and, the verb must still be singular. Eg. Every day and each hour teaches us something.
8. A singular or plural verb is used with such nouns as pains, a lot of, means, variety, plenty, rest, wages according to the sense in which they are used. Eg. A variety of pens are available at the shop.
9. A verb should agree with its subject and not with the predicate. But if the sentence begins with ‘the’ then the word is according to the predicate. Eg. The starts were our only guide. Our only guide was the stars.
10. ‘Many a’ is always followed by a singular verb and a singular noun. Eg. Many a soldier has got medal this year.

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