

**CGPSC MAIN EXAM  
PAPER I  
LANGUAGE**

**Questions on Common Errors:**

**1. Error of concord:**

**1. Two singular subjects followed by a singular verb**

(i) The principal and secretary are absent.

The principal and secretary is absent.

When two singular nouns refer to the same person or thing and have only one article, the verb is singular.

But when the two singular nouns refer to two different persons, the verb is plural.

The principal and the secretary are absent.

(ii) His power and influence are immense.

His power and influence is immense.

When two singular nouns are practically synonymous one being added to the other for emphasis, the verb is singular.

(iii) Bread and butter are what they have for breakfast.

Bread and butter is what they have for breakfast.

When two singular nouns are not synonymous but are intended to express jointly a single idea, the verb is singular.

**2. Singular subject followed by a plural verb :**

(i) The cattle is grazin in the field.

The cattle are grazing in the field.

(ii) The whole group does not agree on the point.

The whole group do not agree on the point.

When the singular noun is a mass/collective noun, the verb is always in the plural.

**3. Plural subject followed by a singular verb:**

"The Human Seasons" are prescribed in class IX.

"The Human Seasons" is prescribed in class IX.

When the plural noun is a proper name for some collective unit or a single object, the verb is singular.

**4. Subject followed by “as well as”:**

Rimlee as well as Momee have arrived

Rimlee as well as Momee has arrived.

**5. Subjects connected by “either....or”/ “neither.... nor”**

(i) Either you or I are in the wrong.

Either you or I am is the wrong.

(ii) Neither he nor you was in the wrong.

Neither he nor you were in the wrong.

When two singular pronoun of different persons are connected by “either...or”/“neither...nor”, the verb according to the rule must agree with the one nearest to it.

**2. Errors of construction**

**1. Article**

I am studying for a MA in History

I am studying for an MA in History

Note : We use ‘an’ before a vowel sound. MA begins with a vowel sound.

Otherwise, we use a. In most cases, the letters ‘e’ ‘o’ and ‘u’ are vowels; but sometimes they are pronounced as consonants e.g. a European, a one – hour journey, a University.

**2. Adjective**

(i) I was too frightened to move

I was too frightened to move

Note : Many adjectives are past participles i.e. frightened, scared, pleased, proposed

(ii) The medicine made me feel more better.

The medicine made me feel much better.

We do not use -er/-est form and more/much together. Thus, 'more' and 'better' do not correlate.

(iii) My most favourite subject is English.

My favourite subject is English.

Some adjectives are not normally used with -er/-est or with more/most because they already have a comparative/superlative meaning.

### 3. Adverb

(i) I want to go to France for learning French.

I want to go to France to learn French.

We use for + ing when we mention the purpose of an object. For example: 'This knife is for cutting bread'. But when we mention the purpose of an action, we normally use a to-clause.

(ii) He behaved rather silly.

He behaved in a rather silly way.

Some words ending in -ly are adjectives not adverbs. Commonly -ly adjectives include:

brotherly, cowardly, elderly, fatherly, friendly, likely, lively, lonely, lovely, manly, motherly, silly, sisterly, ugly, womanly.

Since these -ly adjectives do not have a corresponding adverb, we have to use either a different structure or an adverb with a similar meaning.

(iii) I pulled the string tightly

I pulled the string tight.

If the word that follows an object describes the object, we use an adjective.

The structure is S+V+O+ A as in 'I painted the door green'.

(iv) If you will turn on the radio, it makes a strange noise.

If you turn on the radio, it makes a strange noise.

When 'if' means every time or whenever, we normally use the simple present tense in both parts of the sentence i.e. the 'if' clause and the main clause.

However, when we are talking about something in the future, we normally use the simple present in the if clause.

(v) If you will go to Delhi, you can stay in Assam House.

If you go to Delhi, you can stay in Assam House.

### 3. Errors of order

(i) When you are going home?

When are you going home?

In interrogative sentences, the 'be' verb precedes the subject.

(ii) Last week happened to me something very strange.

Last week something very strange happened me.

In a statement, we put the subject before the verb. The normal word order does not change when the verb is 'happen'.

(iii) He was too busy unfortunately to see me yesterday.

Unfortunately, he was too busy to see me yesterday.

Some adverbs express our attitude to what we are about to say e.g. sadly, unfortunately, surprisingly, luckily, undoubtedly, frankly, apparently, in short, of course etc.

They are normally placed at the beginning of a sentence.

Many of these can also be used in the middle position also

- We would naturally be delighted to see you
- You are undoubtedly in the wrong.

(iv) He told us to read carefully the questions

He told us to read the questions carefully.

Note that an adverb does not normally come between a verb and its object

Take note of the structure sub+verb+ object+ Adverb.

(v) I shall be every afternoon available

I shall be available every afternoon.

An adverb does not normally come between a verb and a complement.

- Note the order: Sub + Verb + Comp + Adv

#### 4. Errors in Prepositions

(i) On last Sunday I visited the zoo.

Last Sunday I visited the zoo.

We do not use on before a time expression beginning with last, next, this, that, every etc.

(ii) On this photograph you can see me in my naval uniform.

In this photograph you can see me in my naval uniform.

Note that before things which have three dimensions such as a room or a photograph, we use 'in'. Before things which have two dimensions such as a map, we use 'on'.

(iii) My teachers congratulated me for my success.

My teachers congratulated me on my success.

Note that we congratulated someone on (doing) something, not for doing something.

(iv) Don't meddle with my affairs.

Don't meddle in my affairs.

'Meddle' takes the preposition 'in' when we talk about meddle in one's affairs. e.g. Meddle in politics. But we can say: Don't meddle with the files.

#### 5. Errors in conjunctions

(i) The table was filled with books, pictures, posters.

The table was filled with books, pictures, and posters.

When a sentence or part of a sentence consists of two equal units, we link the two units with 'and', 'or', or 'but'. When there are three or more co-ordinates, we link the last two.

(ii) I am interested in poetry, drama and in music.

I am interested in poetry, drama and music.

There should be a consistency in our expression. There is nothing wrong with 'in music' but in that case there should have been an 'in' before drama.

- I am interested in (poetry, drama and music)
- I am interested (in poetry, in drama and in music)

(iii) She both lost her money and her passport.

•Note that when we use coordinating conjunctions like either...or, neither...nor, both... and, not only... but also, etc., we must ensure that they co-ordinate the two alternatives only and not the verb.

(iv) And on the whole, the editors have scored a success.

On the whole, the editors have scored a success.

We must avoid the common mistake of beginning a fresh sentence with 'and'. The function of 'and' is to join one word or one clause with another.

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