

Rules to solve Error Spotting Questions for Defence Exams

1. 'No sooner' is followed by 'than'

- (i) No sooner had I entered the class when the students stood up. (Incorrect)
- (ii) No sooner had I entered the class than the students stood up. (Correct)

Note: The Sentence Form must be past perfect or past indefinite

2. **More than one** indicates a plural sense, but it is treated as a sort of compound of one. Thus it agrees with a singular noun and takes a singular verb.

Example:

- (i) More than employees were killed in the accident. (Incorrect)
- (ii) More than one employee was killed in the accident. (Correct)

3. It is common practice in conversation to make a statement and ask for confirmation; as 'it is very hot, isn't it?' Two points are to be kept in mind. If the statement is positive, the pattern will be

Auxiliary + n't + Subject

If the statement is negative, the pattern will be

Auxiliary + subject

Example:

- (i) It is raining, is it? (Incorrect)
- (ii) It is raining isn't it? (Correct)
- (iii) You are not busy, aren't you? (Incorrect)
- (iv) You are not busy, are you? (Correct)

4. '**The two first**' is a meaningless expression for it implies that two things may be first. We should say 'the first two'.

Example:

- (i) The two first chapters of novel are dull. (Incorrect)
- (ii) The first two chapters of the novel are dull. (Correct)

5. '**Only**' should be placed immediately before the word it qualifies.

Example:

- (i) He only lost his ticket in the stampede. (Incorrect)
- (ii) Only he lost his ticket in the stampede. (Correct)



6. An infinitive verb should not be split.

Example:

- (i) I request you to kindly help me. (Incorrect)
- (ii) I request you kindly to help me. (Correct)

7. Care should be taken with some statements like

Example:

- (i) The doctor saw the pulse of the patient. (Incorrect)
- (ii) The doctor felt the pulse of the patient. (Correct)

8. Scarcely should be followed by when, not by than.

- (i) Scarcely had he arrived than he had to leave again. (Incorrect)
- (ii) Scarcely had he arrived when he had to leave again. (Correct)

9. Till is used of time and to is used of place.

- (i) The office will remain open to six in the evening. (Incorrect)
- (ii) The office will remain open till six in the evening. (Correct)

10. The preposition “off” denotes “separation”, “at a distance from” or “far from” whereas the preposition “of” denotes cause, origin, quality, possession.

- (i) He put of his coat. (Incorrect)
- (ii) He put off his coat. (Separation) (Correct)
- (iii) He died off cancer. (Incorrect)
- (iv) He died of cancer. (Cause) (Correct)

11. Beside means by the side of while besides means in addition to.

- (i) He sat besides the chair. (Incorrect)
- (ii) He sat beside the chair. (Correct)

12. Between is used for only two things or persons while among is used for more than two.

- (i) You have to choose among tea and coffee. (Incorrect)
- (ii) You have to choose between tea and coffee. (Correct)

13. Above and below merely denote position while over and under also carry a sense of covering or movement.

- (i) The bird flew above the lake. (Incorrect)
- (ii) The bird flew over the lake. (Correct)



14. During is used when we are talking about the time within which something happens. For is used when we are talking about how long something lasts.

- (i) There were few incidents of irregularity for the Emergency years. (Incorrect)
- (ii) There were few incidents of irregularity during the Emergency years. (Correct)

15. There are some nouns that indicate length, measure, money, weight or number. When they are preceded by a numeral, they remain unchanged in form.

Foot, meter, pair, score, dozen, head, year, hundred, thousand, million

- (i) It is a three – years degree course. (Incorrect)
- (ii) It is a three – year degree course. (Correct)

16. Some nouns are always used in a plural form and always take a plural verb.

Trousers, scissors, spectacles stockings, shorts measles, goods, alms, premises, tidings, annals, chattels, etc.

Example:

- (i) Where is my trouser? (Incorrect)
- (ii) Where are my trousers? (Correct)

17. A pronoun must agree with its antecedent in person, number, and gender.

Example:

- (i) Every man must bring his luggage.
- (ii) All students must do their homework.
- (iii) Each of the girls must carry her own bag.

18. The pronoun ‘one’ must be followed by ‘one’s’.

Example:

- (i) One must finish his task on time. (Incorrect)
- (ii) One must finish one’s task on time (Correct)

19. ‘Whose’ is used for living persons and ‘which’ for lifeless objects.

Example:

- (i) Which photograph is lying here? (Incorrect)
- (ii) Whose photograph is lying there? (Correct)



20. Use of 'less' and 'fewer'

Example:

'Less' denotes quantity and 'fewer' denotes a number.

- (i) No less than fifty persons were (Incorrect)
- (ii) No fewer than fifty people were (Correct)

21. 'One of' always takes a plural noun after it.

Example:

- (i) It is one of the most important day in my life. (Incorrect)
- (ii) It is one of the most important days in my life. (Correct)

22. Use of 'not only 'and 'but also 'examine the sentences given below.

Example:

- (i) He not only comes for swimming but also for coaching the learners. (Incorrect)
- (ii) He comes not only for swimming but also for coaching the learners. (correct)

23. The adverb 'as' is not used with verbs like 'appointed', 'elected', 'considered', 'called' but it is used with 'regard'.

Example:

- (i) I regard Ramesh my friend (Incorrect)
- (ii) I regard Ramesh as my friend (Correct)

24. The case of the noun or pronoun preceding or succeeding the verb 'to be' should be the same.

Example:

- (i) It is him who came to see us. (Incorrect)
- (ii) It is he who came to see us. (Correct)
- (iii) It is me who caught the thief. (Incorrect)
- (iv) It is I who caught the thief. (Correct)

25. Neither is followed by nor, not by

- (i) The phone neither went dead or worked properly. (Incorrect)
- (ii) The phone neither went dead nor worked properly. (Correct)

26. Some nouns have one meaning in the singular and another in the plural:



Advice = counsel advice's = information

- **Air** = atmosphere, **airs** = proud
- **Authority** = command, **authorities** = persons in power
- **Good** = wise, **goods** = property
- **Iron** = metal, **irons** = fetters, chains
- **Force** = strength, **forces** = army
- **Content** = satisfaction, **contents** = things contained
- **Physic** = medicine, **physics** = physical sciences,
- **Respect** = regards, **respects** = compliments
- **Work** = job, **works** = compositions, factories,.
- **Earning** = income ,**earnings** = sowing
- **Quarter** = one – fourth ,**quarters** = houses

Examples

(A) Air is necessary for human life.

(B) It is bad to put on airs.

(A) I have eaten one quarter of the cake.

(B) I live in the government quarter

27. While using ‘everybody’ ‘everyone’, ‘anybody’, and ‘each’ the pronoun of the masculine or the feminine gender is used according to the content.

- Each of the six boys in the class has finished their tasks. **Incorrect**
- Each of the six boys in the class has finished his task. **Correct**

28. The pronoun ‘one’ must be followed by ‘one’s’.

- One must finish his task in time. **Incorrect**
- One must finish one’s task in time. **Correct**

29. **Enjoy, apply, resign, acquit, drive, exert, avail, pride, absent**, etc., when used as transitive verbs, always take a reflexive pronoun after them.

When ‘**self**’ is added to ‘my’, ‘your’, ‘him’, ‘her’, and ‘it’, and ‘**selves**’ to our and them – they are known as **reflexive pronouns**.

- He absented from the class. **Incorrect**
- He absented himself from the class. **Correct**

30. **Who**’ denotes the subject and ‘**whom**’ is used for the object?



- **Whom** do you think won the award? **Incorrect**
- **Who** do you think won the award? **Correct**
- **Who** are you talking to? **Incorrect**
- **Whom** are you talking to? **Correct**

31. **'Whose'** is used for living persons and **'which'** for lifeless objects.

- **What** book do you read? **Incorrect**
- **Which** book do you read? **Correct**

32. **'When'** denotes a general sense and **'while'** implies a time duration of doing something.

- When learning how to sing, technique is of utmost importance. **Incorrect**
- While learning how to sing, technique is of utmost importance. **Correct**

33. **'Unless'** expresses a condition and is always used in the negative sense. Thus **'not'** is never used with **'unless'**.

- **Unless** you do not work hard, you will not excel in the examination. **Incorrect**
- **Unless** you work hard, you will not excel in the examination. **Correct**

34. **'Though'** is followed by **'yet'** and **not** by **'but'**.

- **Though** he is poor **but** he is honest. **Incorrect**
- **Though** he is poor, **yet** he is honest. **Correct**

35. **An infinitive verb should never be split.**

- I request you to kindly tell me. **Incorrect**
- I request you kindly to tell me. **Correct**

36. **'Some'** is used in affirmative sentences to express quantity or degree. **'Any'** is used in negative or interrogative sentences.

- I shall buy **some**
- I shall not buy **any**
- Have you bought **any** apples?

But **'some'** may be correctly used in interrogative sentences which are, in fact, requests.

- Will you please give me **some** milk? **Correct**
- I shall read **any** **Incorrect**
- I shall read **some** book. **Correct**
- Have you bought **some** apples? **Incorrect**
- Have you bought **any** apples? **Correct**



37. Use of 'less' and 'fewer'

'Less' denote quantity and 'fewer' denote number.

- No less than fifty persons were killed. **Incorrect**
- No fewer than fifty persons were killed. **Correct**
- There are **no fewer** than five liters of water in the jug. **Incorrect**
- There are **no less** than five liters of water in the jug. **Correct**

38. Use of little, a little, the little.

'Little' means 'hardly any'

- There is a little hope of his recovery. **Incorrect**
- There is little hope of his recovery. **correct**

'A little' means 'some', though not much.

- Little knowledge is a dangerous thing. **Incorrect**
- A little knowledge is a dangerous thing. **Correct**

'The little means 'not much but all there is'.

- The little milk that is in the pot may be used for the patient. **Incorrect**
- The little milk that is in the pot may be used for the patient. **Correct**

39. Use of elder, older.

'Older' refers to persons as well as things and is followed by 'than'.

- Ram is elder than all other boys of this area. **Incorrect**
- Ram is older than all other boys of this area. **Correct**

'Elder' is used for members of the family.

- Suresh is my older brother. **Incorrect**
- Suresh is my elder brother. **Correct**

40. Normally 'than' is used in the comparative degree, but with words like **superior, inferior, senior, junior, prior, anterior, posterior** and prefer 'to' is used.

- Shelley is junior than Wordsworth. **Incorrect**
- Shelley is junior to Wordsworth. **Correct**
- I prefer reading than sleeping. **Incorrect**
- I prefer reading to sleeping. **Correct**



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