

✦ ADEPT YOURSELF • OFFICIAL COMPLETE GRAMMAR HANDBOOK ✦

 120 Master Rules of English Grammar

Comprehensive High-Yield Visual Print Notes for Class 10 & 12 Boards (CBSE / ICSE) & Competitive Examinations

 COPYRIGHT © ADEPT YOURSELF • 14 MODULES • ALL 120 RULES COMPLETE • PRINT EDITION **Section 1: Subject–Verb Agreement (Rules 1–15)****RULE 001** **Core Number Consistency & Modifiers** **Singular Subject → Singular Verb (-s/-es) | Plural Subject → Plural Verb**

The verb must agree strictly with the head subject noun, completely ignoring intervening phrases or descriptors.

✗ Wrong: The quality of these organic apples are not satisfactory.**✓ Correct:** The quality of these organic apples is not satisfactory.**⚠ Exam Trap / Tip:** Never match the verb with the nearest noun ('apples'); locate the core subject ('quality').**RULE 002** **Parenthetical Phrases & Prepositional Connectors** **S1 + (as well as / along with / with / in addition to / besides) + S2 → Verb agrees with S1**

Parenthetical connectors are prepositions, not conjunctions. They do not turn the subject into a plural compound.

✗ Wrong: The commander, along with his soldiers, were captured by the enemy.**✓ Correct:** The commander, along with his soldiers, was captured by the enemy.**⚠ Exam Trap / Tip:** 'As well as' and 'along with' do NOT act like 'and'. Verb is governed strictly by Subject 1.**RULE 003** **Compound Subjects: Dual Entities vs Unified Pairs** **S1 + and + S2 (Separate) → Plural Verb | S1 + and + S2 (Unit/Pair) → Singular Verb**

When two nouns joined by 'and' represent a single unified idea, dish, or profession, use a singular verb.

✗ Wrong: Bread and butter are a wholesome breakfast for athletes.**✓ Correct:** Bread and butter is a wholesome breakfast for athletes.**⚠ Exam Trap / Tip:** If articles precede both nouns ('The director and the producer...'), use a plural verb.**RULE 004** **Correlative Conjunctions & Proximity Rule** **Either...or / Neither...nor / Not only...but also → Verb matches NEAREST Subject (S2)**

In correlative pairs, the verb matches the person and grammatical number of the subject closest to it.

✗ Wrong: Neither the principal nor the teachers was present in the hall.**✓ Correct:** Neither the principal nor the teachers were present in the hall.**⚠ Exam Trap / Tip:** If subjects differ in number, place the plural subject closest to the verb for smooth flow.**RULE 005** **Distributive Pronouns (Each / Every / One of)** **(Each of / One of / Neither of / Either of) + Plural Noun + Singular Verb + Singular Pronoun**

Distributives select individuals one at a time, strictly taking singular verbs and singular possessives.

✗ Wrong: Each of the participants have submitted their assignment on time.**✓ Correct:** Each of the participants has submitted his/her assignment on time.**⚠ Exam Trap / Tip:** Do not be misled by the plural noun following 'of'. The head word is 'each/one/neither'.**RULE 006** **Post-Positional 'Each' with Plural Subjects** **Plural Subject + each + Plural Verb**

When 'each' appears immediately after a plural subject in apposition, the verb remains plural.

✗ Wrong: The delegates each has signed the bilateral treaty.**✓ Correct:** The delegates each have signed the bilateral treaty.**⚠ Exam Trap / Tip:** Contrast: 'Each of the delegates has signed' vs. 'The delegates each have signed'.**RULE 007** **Relative Pronouns with 'One of those who...'** **One of + Plural Noun + who/that → Plural Verb | The only one of... → Singular Verb**

A relative pronoun refers to the plural antecedent directly before it. But if modified by 'only', the verb becomes singular.

✗ Wrong: She is one of those executives who always arrives late.**✓ Correct:** She is one of those executives who always arrive late. (He is the only one who arrives on time)**⚠ Exam Trap / Tip:** Check for 'the only' before 'one of'. If present, use singular; otherwise, plural.**RULE 008** **Quantifiers, Fractions & Proportions** **(Half of / Most of / % of / Two-thirds of) + Uncountable → Sing. | + Plural Countable → Plur.**

Fractional and percentage expressions take their agreement directly from the object of preposition 'of'.

✗ Wrong: Two-thirds of the heritage building were destroyed in the fire.**✓ Correct:** Two-thirds of the heritage building was destroyed in the fire. (Two-thirds of students are present)**⚠ Exam Trap / Tip:** Never assume fractions are always plural. Check the noun governed by 'of'.

RULE 009 🛣️ 📊 'A Number of' vs. 'The Number of'

📌 A number of + Plural Noun → Plural Verb | The number of + Plural Noun → Singular Verb

'A number of' means 'many' (indefinite amount); 'The number of' denotes a specific singular statistical count.

❌ **Wrong:** The number of highway accidents have increased dramatically this year.

✅ **Correct:** The number of highway accidents has increased dramatically this year.

⚠️ **Exam Trap / Tip:** 'A number of' = Plural; 'The number of' = Singular. Memorize this exact rule.

RULE 010 👤 👥 'More than one' vs. 'More [Nouns] than one'

📌 More than one + Sing. Noun → Sing. Verb | More + Plur. Noun + than one → Plur. Verb

Syntax governs: 'More than one candidate was rejected', but 'More candidates than one were rejected'.

❌ **Wrong:** More than one witness were summoned to the courtroom.

✅ **Correct:** More than one witness was summoned to the courtroom.

⚠️ **Exam Trap / Tip:** 'More than one' takes a singular noun and singular verb despite plural implied meaning.

RULE 011 🕒 💰 **Measurements, Sums, Time & Distance Units**

📌 Specific Quantity / Sum / Distance / Time Unit → Singular Verb (as a single unit)

When plural measurement units denote an unbroken block of time, distance, or sum, use a singular verb.

❌ **Wrong:** Ten kilometers are a formidable distance to run without training.

✅ **Correct:** Ten kilometers is a formidable distance to run without training.

⚠️ **Exam Trap / Tip:** If the sum is divided or spent individually ('Rupees were distributed...'), use a plural verb.

RULE 012 🏛️ **Collective Nouns: Unanimous vs. Divided State**

📌 Collective Noun (Jury, Team) + Singular Verb (Unity) | Plural Verb (Internal Division)

If the group acts in unison as one body, use singular; if members dispute or act individually, use plural.

❌ **Wrong:** The jury was divided in their opinions regarding the verdict.

✅ **Correct:** The jury were divided in their opinions regarding the verdict.

⚠️ **Exam Trap / Tip:** Watch pronoun clues: 'in its verdict' (singular) vs. 'in their opinions' (plural).

RULE 013 🛣️ 📍 **Inversion with 'There', 'Here' & Directional Adverbs**

📌 There / Here / Locative Adverb + Verb + Actual Delayed Subject

In inverted sentences, the true subject follows the verb. Match the verb to the post-verbal subject.

❌ **Wrong:** There is countless opportunities available in the tech sector.

✅ **Correct:** There are countless opportunities available in the tech sector.

⚠️ **Exam Trap / Tip:** 'There' is never the grammatical subject; scan past the verb to locate the true noun.

RULE 014 👤 👥 **Indefinite Pronouns: Universal Singulars vs. Plurals**

📌 Everyone, Everybody, Someone, Nobody → Singular | Both, Few, Several, Many → Plural

Indefinite pronouns ending in -one, -body, or -thing are grammatically singular in formal English.

❌ **Wrong:** Everybody who applied for the research fellowship have been interviewed.

✅ **Correct:** Everybody who applied for the research fellowship has been interviewed.

⚠️ **Exam Trap / Tip:** Even if 'everybody' refers to a large crowd, it strictly requires singular agreement.

RULE 015 📖 📌 **Plural-Spelled Singular Nouns (Subjects, Sports)**

📌 Mathematics, Physics, Politics, Economics, News, Measles → Singular Verb

Nouns ending in -s representing academic disciplines, medical conditions, or games take singular verbs.

❌ **Wrong:** Ethics are a fundamental branch of moral philosophy.

✅ **Correct:** Ethics is a fundamental branch of moral philosophy.

⚠️ **Exam Trap / Tip:** If qualified by possessives ('His mathematics are weak'), they mean practical skills and turn plural.

Section 2: Nouns & Pronouns (Rules 16–25)**RULE 016** 🪑 🧳 **Uncountable Nouns (No -s Suffix, No 'a/an')**

📌 Scenery, Furniture, Luggage, Advice, Information, Hair, Bread → Singular Verb

Mass nouns cannot take plural suffixes. Use partitive phrases like 'a piece of furniture' or 'items of luggage'.

❌ **Wrong:** The sceneries of the Himalayas are breathtaking, and he gave me many advices.

✅ **Correct:** The scenery of the Himalayas is breathtaking, and he gave me much advice.

⚠️ **Exam Trap / Tip:** Never write 'furnitures', 'informations', 'sceneries', or 'luggages'.

RULE 017 ✂️ **Always-Plural Nouns (Bifurcated Garments & Tools)**

📌 Trousers, Scissors, Spectacles, Binoculars, Alms, Assets → Plural Verb

Paired garments and two-bladed tools are always plural unless preceded by 'a pair of'.

❌ **Wrong:** My spectacles is broken, so I cannot read the document.

✅ **Correct:** My spectacles are broken, so I cannot read the document. (A pair of spectacles is purchased)

⚠️ **Exam Trap / Tip:** 'Spectacles are...' vs 'A pair of spectacles is...' — 'pair' makes the subject singular.

RULE 018 🛡️ 👤 **Singular in Form but Plural in Concord**

📌 **Cattle, Clergy, Gentry, Poultry, Folk, People, Police** → Always Plural Verb (No -s)

These nouns have no final -s but represent multiple living beings and strictly take plural verbs.

❌ **Wrong:** The police has arrested the suspected fraudster yesterday.

✅ **Correct:** The police have arrested the suspected fraudster yesterday.

⚠️ **Exam Trap / Tip:** Never write 'cattles' or 'polices'. 'Police' is plural; for singular use 'police officer'.

RULE 019 🏠 🏠 **Compound Noun Pluralization & Hyphenated Modifiers**

📌 **Pluralize Root Noun (Brothers-in-law) | Hyphenated Unit Adjectives Never Take -s**

Pluralize the principal/root noun. When numbers + nouns act as compound adjectives before a noun, stay singular.

❌ **Wrong:** He stayed in a five-stars hotel and met his sister-in-laws.

✅ **Correct:** He stayed in a five-star hotel and met his sisters-in-law.

⚠️ **Exam Trap / Tip:** 'A five-rupee note' (correct), NOT 'A five-rupees note'. Hyphenated adjectives are invariable.

RULE 020 🏠 🏠 **Possessive Case ('s) with Living vs Inanimate Nouns**

📌 **Living Entities** → 's (John's car) | **Inanimate Objects** → 'of' phrase (The roof of the house)

Apostrophe -s is reserved for living entities, personified items, time, and distance, not inanimate objects.

❌ **Wrong:** The building's roof was severely damaged by the hailstorm.

✅ **Correct:** The roof of the building was severely damaged by the hailstorm.

⚠️ **Exam Trap / Tip:** Exceptions allowed for time/space: 'a day's leave', 'an arm's length', 'nature's fury'.

RULE 021 🤝 🤝 **Joint Possession vs. Separate Possession**

📌 **A and B's [Noun]** → Joint Ownership | **A's and B's [Nouns]** → Separate Ownership

If two individuals jointly own an item, add 's to the final name only. If owning separately, add 's to both.

❌ **Wrong:** Sita's and Gita's father is a renowned surgeon.

✅ **Correct:** Sita and Gita's father is a renowned surgeon. (Joint father)

⚠️ **Exam Trap / Tip:** 'Shakespeare's and Milton's poems' (two distinct bodies of work; separate 's needed).

RULE 022 👤 👤 **Personal Pronoun Order: 231 vs 123**

📌 **Normal/Pleasant:** 2nd → 3rd → 1st (231) | **Fault/Confession/Plural:** 1st → 2nd → 3rd (123)

For polite social etiquette use sequence 2-3-1 (You, he, and I). For admitting fault or errors, use 1-2-3 (I, you, and he).

❌ **Wrong:** I, you, and he will organize the annual conference.

✅ **Correct:** You, he, and I will organize the annual conference.

⚠️ **Exam Trap / Tip:** In error admissions: 'I, you, and he are responsible for this financial discrepancy.'

RULE 023 ⚖️ ⚖️ **Subjective vs. Objective Pronoun Case**

📌 **After Prepositions/Let** → Objective (me, him) | **After Than/As (Comparison)** → Subjective (I, he)

Prepositions govern objective case pronouns. Comparisons between grammatical subjects require subjective pronouns.

❌ **Wrong:** Between you and I, she is much faster than him.

✅ **Correct:** Between you and me, she is much faster than he (is).

⚠️ **Exam Trap / Tip:** 'Let you and me do this' (objective after 'let'). 'He runs faster than I' (subjective in comparison).

RULE 024 🎯 🛡️ **Reflexive Pronouns: Mandatory vs. Prohibited Verbs**

📌 **Mandatory:** Avail of, Acquit, Adapt, Absent, Exert | **Prohibited:** Keep, Break, Turn, Stop, Hide

Certain transitive verbs mandate a reflexive pronoun when lacking a direct object. Intransitive action verbs never take reflexives.

❌ **Wrong:** He absented from the meeting and hid himself behind the screen.

✅ **Correct:** He absented himself from the meeting and hid behind the screen.

⚠️ **Exam Trap / Tip:** Never say 'Myself Rahul' for introductions; reflexive pronouns cannot act as grammatical subjects.

RULE 025 🤝 🤝 **Reciprocal Pronouns: 'Each Other' vs. 'One Another'**

📌 **Each other** → Exactly TWO entities | **One another** → THREE OR MORE entities

Use 'each other' for dual interactions; use 'one another' for multilateral interactions among three or more participants.

❌ **Wrong:** The three business partners collaborated closely with each other.

✅ **Correct:** The three business partners collaborated closely with one another.

⚠️ **Exam Trap / Tip:** Count the participants: 2 = each other; 3+ = one another.

Section 3: Articles & Determiners (Rules 26–35)

RULE 026 Article 'A' vs. 'An' Governed by Phonetics

 Vowel Sound (a, e, i, o, u phoneme) → 'An' | Consonant Sound → 'A'

Article selection depends on pronunciation, not orthographic spelling. Silent 'h' takes 'an'; vowel letters with 'yu' sound take 'a'.

✗ Wrong: He is a honest officer studying at an university.

✓ Correct: He is an honest officer studying at a university.

⚠ Exam Trap / Tip: Watch acronyms: 'an FIR', 'an MBA', 'an MP', 'an hourly wage', but 'a European', 'a uniform'.

RULE 027 Definite Article 'The' with Geographical Features

 Use 'The': Chains, Rivers, Oceans, Deserts | Omit 'The': Single Peaks, Single Islands, Lakes

Use 'the' with plural chains and water bodies (The Himalayas, The Pacific). Never use 'the' with isolated peaks (Mount Everest).

✗ Wrong: The Mount Everest is the highest mountain peak in the world.

✓ Correct: Mount Everest is the highest mountain peak in the world. (The Himalayas are vast)

⚠ Exam Trap / Tip: Do not write 'The Mount Everest' or 'The Lake Superior'; write 'Mount Everest' and 'Lake Superior'.

RULE 028 Omission of Articles with Institutional Nouns

 School, College, Hospital, Prison, Bed (Primary Purpose) → NO Article | (Visitor) → Use 'The'

When visiting an institution for its foundational purpose (study, worship, medical treatment), omit the definite article.

✗ Wrong: He went to the hospital to undergo surgery for his fractured arm.

✓ Correct: He went to hospital to undergo surgery for his fractured arm. (I went to the hospital to meet the doctor)

⚠ Exam Trap / Tip: Primary purpose = Zero article; Secondary visitor visit = Use 'the'.

RULE 029 Parallel Proportions: 'The More..., The More...'

 The + Comparative Degree..., The + Comparative Degree...

When two correlated qualities or quantities increase or decrease in parallel proportion, both clauses begin with 'The + comparative'.

✗ Wrong: Higher you climb, colder it becomes.

✓ Correct: The higher you climb, the colder it becomes.

⚠ Exam Trap / Tip: Ensure both balanced halves start with 'the' plus their respective comparative forms.

RULE 030 Single Article vs. Double Article for Shared Roles

 One Article (The A and B) → 1 Person | Two Articles (The A and The B) → 2 Distinct Persons

A single article distributed across compound nouns denotes one individual fulfilling dual roles, requiring a singular verb.

✗ Wrong: The poet and novelist have published a new literary masterpiece.

✓ Correct: The poet and novelist has published a new literary masterpiece.

⚠ Exam Trap / Tip: 'The poet and the novelist have published' indicates two distinct living authors.

RULE 031 Countable vs Uncountable: 'Few' vs 'Little' Triads

 Few / A few / The few → Countable | Little / A little / The little → Uncountable

Bare 'few' and 'little' have negative connotations (scarcity). Adding article 'a' conveys positive sufficiency.

✗ Wrong: I have little friends in the new city, so I rarely feel lonely.

✓ Correct: I have a few friends in the new city, so I rarely feel lonely.

⚠ Exam Trap / Tip: 'Little milk' = practically no milk; 'A little milk' = sufficient milk for tea.

RULE 032 Zero Article before Meals, Languages & Disciplines

 Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner, English, French, Chemistry → NO Article (General sense)

General meal names and languages reject articles. However, specifying a particular banquet restores the article.

✗ Wrong: We discussed the chemistry over the dinner hosted by the dean.

✓ Correct: We discussed chemistry over dinner. (The dinner hosted by the dean was exquisite)

⚠ Exam Trap / Tip: 'The English' refers to the people/nation; 'English' refers to the spoken language.

RULE 033 Appointed Offices and Executive Titles

 Appoint, Elect, Make, Nominate, Crown + Object + Zero Article (Noun Complement)

When nouns denote unique offices or positions bestowed via election or appointment, omit the preceding article.

✗ Wrong: The board of directors appointed him as the chairman of the committee.

✓ Correct: The board of directors appointed him chairman of the committee.

⚠ Exam Trap / Tip: Avoid writing 'appointed as the chairman'; write directly 'appointed chairman'.

RULE 034 🏠 'Another' vs. 'Other' vs. 'The Other'

📌 **Another + Sing. Countable | Other + Plur. Countable | The Other + Specific Remaining**

'Another' (an + other) is strictly singular. 'Other' takes plural nouns. 'The other' refers to the remaining item in a known set.

❌ **Wrong:** Could you please bring me another glasses from the shelf?

✅ **Correct:** Could you please bring me other glasses / another glass from the shelf?

⚠️ **Exam Trap / Tip:** Never write 'another books'; write 'another book' or 'other books'.

RULE 035 👤 🏆 Quantifier Concord: 'Many a' vs. 'A Great Many'

📌 **Many a + Singular Noun + Singular Verb | A great many + Plural Noun + Plural Verb**

'Many a' has a distributive structure requiring singular nouns and verbs, despite conveying plural meaning.

❌ **Wrong:** Many a soldier have sacrificed their lives for the motherland.

✅ **Correct:** Many a soldier has sacrificed his life for the motherland.

⚠️ **Exam Trap / Tip:** 'Many a man has...' vs 'Many men have...'. Both convey the same quantity with opposite grammar.

Section 4: Tenses & Time Expressions (Rules 36–48)**RULE 036** ☀️ ☀️ Universal Truths, Scientific Axioms & Facts

📌 **Universal Truth / Scientific Axiom → Simple Present Tense (Never Past Tense)**

General truths, natural laws, and permanent facts remain in the simple present even within past-tense reported speech.

❌ **Wrong:** The professor proved that the Earth revolved around the Sun.

✅ **Correct:** The professor proved that the Earth revolves around the Sun.

⚠️ **Exam Trap / Tip:** Even if the main clause is past tense ('proved'), keep the universal clause in present tense.

RULE 037 🕒 17 Specific Past Time Markers vs. Present Perfect

📌 **Yesterday, Ago, Last year, In 1999, That day → Simple Past (V2) (Never Present Perfect)**

Definite completed past time adverbs cannot accompany the present perfect tense ('have/has + V3').

❌ **Wrong:** I have completed the entire manuscript yesterday evening.

✅ **Correct:** I completed the entire manuscript yesterday evening.

⚠️ **Exam Trap / Tip:** 'Have + V3' connects past to now; explicit past dates/words require pure simple past (V2).

RULE 038 ➕ 🚗 Chronological Sequence of Two Past Actions

📌 **1st Action (Earlier Past) → Past Perfect (had + V3) | 2nd Action (Later) → Simple Past (V2)**

When two events happened in the past, use past perfect for the older event and simple past for the subsequent event.

❌ **Wrong:** The patient died before the ambulance arrived at the emergency ward.

✅ **Correct:** The patient had died before the ambulance arrived at the emergency ward.

⚠️ **Exam Trap / Tip:** Do not put 'had' on both actions; apply 'had + V3' exclusively to the earlier action.

RULE 039 🕒 🕒 Hypothetical Unreal Time with 'It is high time...'

📌 **It is high time / It is time + Subject + Simple Past (V2)**

This idiom expresses urgent overdue action and grammatically requires an unreal past subjunctive verb form.

❌ **Wrong:** It is high time we start preparing seriously for the competitive exam.

✅ **Correct:** It is high time we started preparing seriously for the competitive exam.

⚠️ **Exam Trap / Tip:** If followed by an infinitive with no subject, use 'to + V1': 'It is time to start'.

RULE 040 🕒 ⌚ Time Markers: 'Since' (Point) vs. 'For' (Period)

📌 **Since + Starting Point (Monday, 2010, 8 AM) | For + Duration (3 hours, 5 years)**

'Since' anchors to an exact origin in time; 'for' measures the total elapsed duration of an action.

❌ **Wrong:** She has been conducting clinical trials since five years.

✅ **Correct:** She has been conducting clinical trials for five years. (since 2019)

⚠️ **Exam Trap / Tip:** Use 'since childhood', 'since yesterday', but 'for three decades', 'for ten minutes'.

RULE 041 📄 🏠 Adverbial Conjunction 'Since' as a Tense Bridge

📌 **Main Clause (Present Perfect: has/have + V3) + SINCE + Subordinate Clause (Simple Past: V2)**

When 'since' functions as a conjunction of time, it links a simple past event to an ongoing present perfect state.

❌ **Wrong:** Five years have passed since I have seen my childhood mentor.

✅ **Correct:** Five years have passed since I saw my childhood mentor.

⚠️ **Exam Trap / Tip:** The clause directly introduced by 'since' must be in simple past (V2).

RULE 042 **Stative Verbs Prohibited in Progressive (-ing)**

📌 **Belief, Emotion, Perception (Know, Love, Understand, Smell) → Simple Tenses Only**

Verbs expressing cognitive states, ownership, or involuntary sensory perception cannot take continuous aspects.

❌ **Wrong:** I am understanding the complex mathematical theorem now.

✅ **Correct:** I understand the complex mathematical theorem now.

⚠️ **Exam Trap / Tip:** Verbs like 'think', 'smell', 'have' can take -ing only when indicating dynamic voluntary actions.

RULE 043 **Subordinate Clauses in Future Time Frames**

📌 **Main Clause (Simple Future: will + V1) + If / When / Until + Subordinate Clause (Simple Present: V1)**

Never use 'will' or 'shall' inside conditional or time clauses referring to the future; use simple present.

❌ **Wrong:** If you will study diligently, you will clear the examination.

✅ **Correct:** If you study diligently, you will clear the examination.

⚠️ **Exam Trap / Tip:** Double 'will' in conditional sentences is a classic exam error. Strike the 'will' in the 'if' clause.

RULE 044 **Negative Time Limit Conjunctions: 'Until' vs 'Unless'**

📌 **Until = Time condition ('up to') | Unless = Action condition ('if not') [No 'not' inside]**

'Until' relates to temporal duration; 'unless' relates to logical conditions. Never put 'not' in their clauses.

❌ **Wrong:** Wait here until the signal does not turn green.

✅ **Correct:** Wait here until the signal turns green.

⚠️ **Exam Trap / Tip:** Never use 'not' inside an 'until' or 'unless' clause (double negative error).

RULE 045 **Correlative Inversion with 'Hardly / Scarcely...When'**

📌 **Hardly / Scarcely + had + Subject + V3 + WHEN + Subject + V2**

When beginning a sentence with negative adverbs 'hardly' or 'scarcely', invert the auxiliary verb and pair strictly with 'when'.

❌ **Wrong:** Hardly had I stepped out of the house than it started raining heavily.

✅ **Correct:** Hardly had I stepped out of the house when it started raining heavily.

⚠️ **Exam Trap / Tip:** Do not pair 'hardly/scarcely' with 'than'. Only 'no sooner' pairs with 'than'.

RULE 046 **Correlative Inversion with 'No Sooner...Than'**

📌 **No sooner + had + Subject + V3 (or did + S + V1) + THAN + Subject + V2**

Introductory 'No sooner' triggers inverted word order (auxiliary before subject) and requires correlative partner 'than'.

❌ **Wrong:** No sooner did the bell ring when the students rushed outside.

✅ **Correct:** No sooner did the bell ring than the students rushed outside.

⚠️ **Exam Trap / Tip:** Watch spelling: It is 'THAN' (comparison), never 'THEN' (time).

RULE 047 **Ongoing Actions: Present Perfect Continuous**

📌 **Subject + has/have + been + V-ing + (for/since + time duration)**

Actions that commenced in the past and continue into the present moment require the continuous perfect aspect.

❌ **Wrong:** He is living in this historic apartment for the past ten years.

✅ **Correct:** He has been living in this historic apartment for the past ten years.

⚠️ **Exam Trap / Tip:** Do not substitute simple continuous ('is living') for an action spanning a stated duration.

RULE 048 **Subjunctive Mood in Unreal Desires and Wishes**

📌 **Subject + wish / as if / as though + Subject + WERE (all subjects)**

Hypothetical contrary-to-fact wishes or imaginary states mandate 'were' for all persons and numbers.

❌ **Wrong:** I wish I was the Prime Minister of the country to fix this.

✅ **Correct:** I wish I were the Prime Minister of the country to fix this.

⚠️ **Exam Trap / Tip:** 'He talks as if he was my boss' → change 'was' to 'were'.

 Section 5: Modals & Auxiliaries (Rules 49–55)**RULE 049** **Pure Base Form After Pure Modal Auxiliaries**

📌 **Can / Could / May / Might / Shall / Should / Must + Bare Infinitive (V1 base)**

Modal auxiliaries must be followed directly by the base form of the verb without 'to' or inflectional suffixes.

❌ **Wrong:** She can sings melodiously and should to practice every day.

✅ **Correct:** She can sing melodiously and should practice every day.

⚠️ **Exam Trap / Tip:** Never add -s, -ed, -ing, or 'to' directly after core modal auxiliaries.

RULE 050 **Negative Purpose Conjunction 'Lest' Paired with 'Should'**

📌 **Lest + Subject + SHOULD + V1 (Zero 'not' permitted)**

'Lest' means 'for fear that' and carries an intrinsic negative meaning. It pairs exclusively with 'should'.

❌ **Wrong:** Walk carefully lest you will not trip and fall over the stones.

✅ **Correct:** Walk carefully lest you should trip and fall over the stones.

⚠️ **Exam Trap / Tip:** Never use 'will', 'may', or 'not' inside a clause governed by 'lest'.

RULE 051 **Marginal Auxiliaries: 'Dare' and 'Need' in Negatives**

📌 **As Modal:** Dare/Need not + Bare V1 | **As Main Verb:** Dares/Needs + to + V1

When used as modals in negative sentences, 'need' and 'dare' do not take third-person -s and take bare infinitives.

❌ **Wrong:** He needs not to consult a physician for this minor symptom.

✅ **Correct:** He need not consult a physician for this minor symptom.

⚠️ **Exam Trap / Tip:** 'He need not go' (modal) vs 'He does not need to go' (main verb).

RULE 052 **Unfulfilled Past Actions: Modal + Have + V3**

📌 **Could have / Should have / Would have / Must have + Past Participle (V3)**

Expresses past capability, obligation, or possibility that did not materialize in reality.

❌ **Wrong:** You should inform the authorities before leaving the station yesterday.

✅ **Correct:** You should have informed the authorities before leaving the station yesterday.

⚠️ **Exam Trap / Tip:** Beware colloquial phonetic errors writing 'should of' instead of 'should have'.

RULE 053 **Habitual Past States: 'Used to' vs. 'Be Used to'**

📌 **Subject + used to + V1 (Past Habit) | Subject + (is/are/am) + used to + V-ing (Accustomed)**

Bare 'used to' denotes discontinued past habits. Preceded by auxiliary 'be', it means 'accustomed' and takes a gerund.

❌ **Wrong:** She is used to wake up early in the morning for running.

✅ **Correct:** She is used to waking up early in the morning for running. (She used to wake up early)

⚠️ **Exam Trap / Tip:** If 'be' precedes 'used to', follow with V-ing (gerund), NOT bare V1.

RULE 054 **Degrees of Epistemic Possibility: 'May' vs 'Might' vs 'Must'**

📌 **May (50% Moderate) | Might (20% Remote) | Must (95%+ Deductive Certainty)**

Choose modals based on certainty: 'might' indicates faint possibility; 'must' indicates inescapable deduction.

❌ **Wrong:** The sky is clear and sunny; it must rain heavily this afternoon.

✅ **Correct:** The sky is clear and sunny; it might rain this afternoon.

⚠️ **Exam Trap / Tip:** Ensure the modal matches the evidential context provided in the sentence.

RULE 055 **Preferences and Choices: 'Would Rather...Than'**

📌 **Subject + would rather + Bare V1 + THAN + Bare V1**

'Would rather' expresses preference and connects parallel base verbs using the conjunction 'than'.

❌ **Wrong:** I would rather resign from the post to accept unfair terms.

✅ **Correct:** I would rather resign from the post than accept unfair terms.

⚠️ **Exam Trap / Tip:** Never use 'to' or 'then' with 'would rather'; always use bare infinitive + 'than'.

 Section 6: Adjectives & Adverbs (Rules 56–64)**RULE 056** **Latin Comparatives Followed by 'To' (Never 'Than')**

📌 **Senior, Junior, Superior, Inferior, Prior, Posterior, Preferable + TO**

Latin adjectives ending in -ior and 'preferable' take preposition 'to' instead of comparison marker 'than'.

❌ **Wrong:** This modern smartphone model is superior than the older edition.

✅ **Correct:** This modern smartphone model is superior to the older edition.

⚠️ **Exam Trap / Tip:** Never add 'more' before Latin comparatives (avoid 'more superior').

RULE 057 **Absolute Adjectives Incapable of Degree Modification**

📌 **Unique, Perfect, Dead, Round, Square, Complete, Extreme, Chief → NO 'more/most'**

Absolute adjectives describe ungradable all-or-nothing states. They cannot be qualified with 'more', 'most', or 'very'.

❌ **Wrong:** This is the most unique architectural design I have ever witnessed.

✅ **Correct:** This is a unique architectural design I have ever witnessed.

⚠️ **Exam Trap / Tip:** Never say 'more perfect', 'most unique', or 'very dead'.

RULE 058 **Double Comparatives and Superlatives Prohibited**

Use either '-er/-est' suffix OR 'more/most' modifier (Never both together)

English grammar forbids applying both inflectional and periphrastic comparison markers to a single word.

✗ Wrong: He is more taller and most wisest among all his classmates.

✓ Correct: He is taller and the wisest among all his classmates.

⚠ Exam Trap / Tip: Look out for redundant pairs like 'more smarter', 'most healthiest'.

RULE 060 **Royal Order of Cumulative Adjectives (OSASCOMP)**

Opinion → Size → Age → Shape → Color → Origin → Material → Purpose + Noun

When multiple adjectives modify a single noun, arrange them in the natural standardized English hierarchy.

✗ Wrong: She purchased a leather Italian beautiful black handbag.

✓ Correct: She purchased a beautiful (O) black (C) Italian (O) leather (M) handbag.

⚠ Exam Trap / Tip: Mnemonic: OSASCOMP (Opinion, Size, Age, Shape, Color, Origin, Material, Purpose).

RULE 062 **Confusing Adverb Pairs: 'Late/Lately', 'Hard/Hardly'**

Hard (Diligent/Firm) vs Hardly (Barely, Neg.) | Late (Tardy) vs Lately (Recently)

Adding -ly creates an entirely different adverb with negative or temporal meaning rather than physical manner.

✗ Wrong: He worked hardly throughout the year and passed with distinction.

✓ Correct: He worked hard throughout the year and passed with distinction.

⚠ Exam Trap / Tip: 'Hardly worked' means did almost no work at all!

RULE 064 **Linking Verbs Modified by Adjectives (Never Adverbs)**

Look, Smell, Taste, Sound, Feel, Seem, Appear, Become + ADJECTIVE (Not Adverb)

Sensory linking verbs describe the state of the subject and take adjective subject complements, not manner adverbs.

✗ Wrong: The freshly baked artisanal cake tastes delightfully.

✓ Correct: The freshly baked artisanal cake tastes delightful.

⚠ Exam Trap / Tip: 'He looked angry' (emotion state) vs 'He looked angrily at the thief' (manner of looking).

RULE 059 **Illogical Comparison of Incomparable Entities**

Compare Subject to Equivalent Subject: Use 'that of' (Singular) or 'those of' (Plural)

Ensure comparisons match parallel entities. Do not compare a feature of an item to the entire item itself.

✗ Wrong: The climate of Shimla is much cooler than Delhi.

✓ Correct: The climate of Shimla is much cooler than that of Delhi.

⚠ Exam Trap / Tip: Shimla's climate is being compared to Delhi's climate, not to Delhi itself.

RULE 061 **Adverbial Post-Positioning: Placement of 'Enough'**

Adjective / Adverb + ENOUGH + to-Infinitive | ENOUGH + Noun

'Enough' acts as an adverb modifying adjectives/adverbs from behind, but precedes nouns as an adjective.

✗ Wrong: He is enough intelligent to crack this difficult puzzle.

✓ Correct: He is intelligent enough to crack this difficult puzzle. (He has enough money)

⚠ Exam Trap / Tip: 'Positive degree adjective + enough' (e.g., 'brave enough', NOT 'more brave enough').

RULE 063 **Correlative Intensifiers: 'Too...To' vs. 'So...That'**

Too + Adj/Adv + to + V1 (Neg.) | So + Adj/Adv + THAT + Subject + cannot + V1

'Too...to' implies an excess leading to an inability without using the word 'not'. 'So...that' requires a full clause.

✗ Wrong: He is too weak that he cannot walk without assistance.

✓ Correct: He is too weak to walk without assistance. / He is so weak that he cannot walk.

⚠ Exam Trap / Tip: Do not blend the two formulas into 'too...that' or 'so...to'.

Section 7: Prepositions & Collocations (Rules 65–75)**RULE 065** **Spatial Distribution: 'Between' vs. 'Among'**

Between → TWO distinct items / Reciprocal treaties | Among → THREE OR MORE members

Use 'between' for two entities or distinct named treaties; use 'among' for undifferentiated groups of 3+.

✗ Wrong: Divide these administrative funds between all five departments.

✓ Correct: Divide these administrative funds among all five departments.

⚠ Exam Trap / Tip: 'Between' CAN be used for >2 if named distinctly: 'A treaty between USA, UK, and Canada'.

RULE 066 **Temporal Deadlines: 'In', 'Within', 'By'**

In + End of period | Within + Before duration expires | By + Point of deadline

'By 5 PM' means at or before 5 PM; 'Within an hour' means before 60 minutes elapse.

✗ Wrong: You must submit the finalized tender documents within Monday.

✓ Correct: You must submit the finalized tender documents by Monday.

⚠ Exam Trap / Tip: Use 'by' with fixed point deadlines ('by noon'); use 'within' with durations ('within two days').

RULE 067 🛤️ 🏠 **Dynamic Movement vs Static Position: 'In/Into', 'On/Onto'**

📌 **In / On → Static position | Into / Onto → Dynamic directional motion across boundary**

Incorporate 'into' and 'onto' when the action involves active directional motion across an entry threshold.

❌ **Wrong:** The frightened deer jumped in the deep swimming pool.

✅ **Correct:** The frightened deer jumped into the deep swimming pool.

⚠️ **Exam Trap / Tip:** Do not say 'entered into the room' (enter already includes 'into' unless entering a contract).

RULE 068 🚗 🚚 **Prepositions with Vehicles and Transportation Modes**

📌 **By + Vehicle (zero article) | In + Private Vehicle (In a car) | On + Public (On a bus, On foot)**

General mode takes 'by' with no article. Modifying with 'a/the' switches preposition to 'in' (private) or 'on' (deck/open).

❌ **Wrong:** He commutes to the downtown corporate office by his personal car.

✅ **Correct:** He commutes to the downtown corporate office in his personal car. (He travels by car)

⚠️ **Exam Trap / Tip:** Always say 'on foot', never 'by foot'.

RULE 069 🏞️ 🏠 **Fixed Collocations: 'Accustomed to', 'With a view to' + Gerund**

📌 **Looking forward to / With a view to / Accustomed to / Prone to + GERUND (V-ing)**

In these idioms, 'to' is a preposition governing an object, which requires a gerund rather than a bare infinitive.

❌ **Wrong:** We visited the trade expo with a view to explore new business alliances.

✅ **Correct:** We visited the trade expo with a view to exploring new business alliances.

⚠️ **Exam Trap / Tip:** Classic trap: 'I am looking forward to meet you' → must be 'meeting you'.

RULE 070 🏠 🏥 **Verbs of Causation and Disease: 'Die of' vs. 'Die from'**

📌 **Die OF + Disease / Hunger / Thirst (Direct) | Die FROM + External cause / Overwork**

Diseases and natural starvation take 'die of'. Secondary external causes take 'die from'.

❌ **Wrong:** The elderly villager died from malaria last night.

✅ **Correct:** The elderly villager died of malaria last night. (He died from overwork)

⚠️ **Exam Trap / Tip:** 'Died of cancer' vs 'Died from excessive blood loss'.

RULE 071 🏠 🏠 **Fixed Preposition 'Of': 'Dispose of' & 'Deprive of'**

📌 **Dispose OF (single 'f') / Deprive OF / Desirous OF / Devoid OF / Accused OF**

The verb 'dispose' takes single-f 'of'. 'Off' (double f) denotes detachment or disconnection.

❌ **Wrong:** He decided to dispose off his old ancestral mansion immediately.

✅ **Correct:** He decided to dispose of his old ancestral mansion immediately.

⚠️ **Exam Trap / Tip:** Never write 'dispose off' or 'comprise of'. Write 'dispose of'.

RULE 072 🧑🏫 📄 **Synonymous Prepositional Pairs: 'Consist of' vs. 'Comprise'**

📌 **Consist + OF = Comprise (Zero preposition in active voice)**

'Comprise' contains the meaning of 'of' within itself. Never add 'of' to active 'comprise'.

❌ **Wrong:** The steering committee comprises of seven senior board members.

✅ **Correct:** The steering committee comprises seven senior board members. / consists of seven...

⚠️ **Exam Trap / Tip:** 'Comprise of' is strictly wrong in active voice; in passive voice 'is comprised of' is accepted.

RULE 073 🗣️ 🏠 **Transitive Verbs of Communication (Zero Preposition)**

📌 **Attack, Order, Request, Emphasize, Accompany, Tell, Resemble + NO Preposition**

These transitive verbs take direct objects without any intervening prepositions like 'to', 'on', or 'at'.

❌ **Wrong:** He ordered for a cup of coffee and emphasized on the urgent deadline.

✅ **Correct:** He ordered a cup of coffee and emphasized the urgent deadline.

⚠️ **Exam Trap / Tip:** Do not say 'order for food', 'attack on enemy', or 'tell to me'.

RULE 074 🏞️ 🏠 **Differentiated Senses of 'Agree with' vs. 'Agree to'**

📌 **Agree WITH + a Person | Agree TO + a Proposal / Terms | Agree ON + Common Decision**

Preposition governs the object type: people require 'with'; proposals and concepts take 'to'.

❌ **Wrong:** I completely agree to your brother regarding the economic forecast.

✅ **Correct:** I completely agree with your brother regarding the economic forecast.

⚠️ **Exam Trap / Tip:** 'Agree with Rahul' (person) vs 'Agree to Rahul's proposal' (plan).

RULE 075 ⚠️ 👁️ **Multi-Faceted Collocations with 'Differ' and 'Blind'**

📌 **Differ WITH (opinions) / Differ FROM (look) | Blind IN (eye) / Blind TO (faults)**

Sensory defects take 'blind in'; metaphorical unawareness takes 'blind to'.

❌ **Wrong:** The doting mother was blind in her son's blatant misdemeanors.

✅ **Correct:** The doting mother was blind to her son's blatant misdemeanors.

⚠️ **Exam Trap / Tip:** Physical disability = 'blind in left eye'; Moral ignorance = 'blind to flaws'.

Section 8: Conjunctions & Connectors (Rules 76–82)

RULE 076 Correlative Balance: 'Not only...But also' Parallelism

▶ Not only + [Part of Speech X] + but also + [Same Part of Speech X]

Both parts of the correlative pair must precede identical grammatical structures (noun-noun, verb-verb, prep-prep).

✗ **Wrong:** He not only visited Paris but also Rome during his vacation.

✓ **Correct:** He visited not only Paris but also Rome during his vacation.

⚠ **Exam Trap / Tip:** Place 'not only' directly before the specific item being contrasted.

RULE 077 Causal Redundancy: Prohibiting 'So' after 'Because/Since/As'

▶ Because / Since / As + Clause 1, (Comma only) + Clause 2 (Zero 'so / therefore')

Subordinating causal conjunctions make the addition of coordinating result connectors grammatically redundant.

✗ **Wrong:** Because he worked late into the night, therefore he missed the morning train.

✓ **Correct:** Because he worked late into the night, he missed the morning train.

⚠ **Exam Trap / Tip:** Never join 'Because...so' or 'Since...therefore' across clauses.

RULE 078 Adversative Conjunction Pairs: 'Although/Though' with 'Yet'

▶ Although / Though + Clause 1, (YET or Comma) + Clause 2 (Never 'But')

'Although' and 'though' introduce concessive clauses and can only pair with 'yet' or a comma, never 'but'.

✗ **Wrong:** Although he fought with exemplary courage, but he was defeated.

✓ **Correct:** Although he fought with exemplary courage, yet he was defeated.

⚠ **Exam Trap / Tip:** 'Although...but' is a standard error-spotting question. Replace 'but' with 'yet'.

RULE 079 Correlative Inversion with 'Both...And' (No 'as well as')

▶ BOTH + Subject 1 + AND + Subject 2 (Never 'as well as', 'else', or 'or')

The conjunction 'both' pairs strictly with 'and'. It can never combine with 'as well as' or 'along with'.

✗ **Wrong:** Both the manager as well as the supervisor attended the mandatory session.

✓ **Correct:** Both the manager and the supervisor attended the mandatory session.

⚠ **Exam Trap / Tip:** Check every occurrence of 'both' — verify it links to 'and'.

RULE 080 Conditional and Doubt Markers: 'Whether...Or' vs. 'That'

▶ Doubt / Uncertainty → Use 'Whether / If' | Affirmative Certainty → Use 'That'

Clauses introduced by verbs of doubt ('doubt', 'not sure') take 'whether/if' in affirmative and 'that' in negative statements.

✗ **Wrong:** I doubt that he will qualify the preliminary selection round.

✓ **Correct:** I doubt whether/if he will qualify the preliminary selection round. (I do not doubt that he will win)

⚠ **Exam Trap / Tip:** Affirmative 'doubt' → whether/if; Negative 'no doubt' → that.

RULE 081 Prohibited Double Conjunctions: Combining 'That' with Interrogatives

▶ Reporting Verb + Interrogative Connector (Why, Where, How, What) (Zero 'That')

In reported speech, wh- question words serve as self-sufficient connectors. Preceding them with 'that' creates an illegal double conjunction.

✗ **Wrong:** The investigator inquired that why the security alarm did not trigger.

✓ **Correct:** The investigator inquired why the security alarm did not trigger.

⚠ **Exam Trap / Tip:** Never say 'that why', 'that how', or 'that whether'.

RULE 082 Negative Temporal Connectors: 'Seldom or Never' vs 'Seldom if Ever'

▶ Seldom OR never | Seldom IF ever (Never mix into 'Seldom or ever')

These paired fixed idioms emphasize rarity. 'Or' pairs with negative 'never'; 'if' pairs with affirmative 'ever'.

✗ **Wrong:** He seldom or ever visits his ancestral village during holidays.

✓ **Correct:** He seldom or never visits his ancestral village during holidays. / Seldom if ever...

⚠ **Exam Trap / Tip:** Memorize: 'or never' vs 'if ever'. Any cross-combination is incorrect.

⚡ Section 9: Gerunds, Infinitives & Participles (Rules 83–90)

RULE 083 **Mandatory Possessive Case Preceding a Gerund**

📌 **Possessive Adjective (my, your, his, Ram's) + GERUND (V-ing as verbal noun)**

A gerund functions as a noun; therefore, the entity performing the gerund action must take the possessive case.

❌ **Wrong:** The teacher objected to him entering the laboratory without safety goggles.

✅ **Correct:** The teacher objected to his entering the laboratory without safety goggles.

⚠️ **Exam Trap / Tip:** Objective pronouns (me, him, them) before a gerund are grammatically incorrect in formal writing.

RULE 084 **Verbs Governing Bare Infinitives (Zero 'to') in Active Voice**

📌 **Make, Bid, Let, Watch, See, Hear, Feel + Object + Bare Infinitive (V1 base)**

Sensory and causative verbs in active voice take infinitive complements without the particle 'to'.

❌ **Wrong:** The strict drill sergeant made the recruits to run five miles.

✅ **Correct:** The strict drill sergeant made the recruits run five miles. (Passive: They were made to run)

⚠️ **Exam Trap / Tip:** 'Let' never takes 'to', even in passive: 'He was let go'.

RULE 085 **Fixed Expressions Governed Strictly by Gerunds**

📌 **It is no use / Can't help / Feel like / Worth / No good / Busy + GERUND (V-ing)**

These idiomatic adjective/verb structures take gerund complements rather than to-infinitives.

❌ **Wrong:** This classic literary volume is certainly worth to read several times.

✅ **Correct:** This classic literary volume is certainly worth reading several times.

⚠️ **Exam Trap / Tip:** Never say 'worth to visit' or 'no use to cry'. Use '-ing'.

RULE 086 **Verbs Requiring 'How/Where/When + To-Infinitive'**

📌 **Know, Learn, Teach, Discover, Explain + Interrogative (How/Where) + to-Infinitive**

When these cognitive skills take an infinitive complement denoting procedural ability, insert the conjunction 'how'.

❌ **Wrong:** She knows to operate complex spectroscopic instruments.

✅ **Correct:** She knows how to operate complex spectroscopic instruments.

⚠️ **Exam Trap / Tip:** Say 'learn how to swim', 'teach how to drive', NOT 'learn to swim'.

RULE 087 **Dangling / Unattached Participle Modifiers**

📌 **Participle Phrase must logically modify the SUBJECT of the main clause**

An introductory participial phrase attaches automatically to the main clause subject. If subjects differ, supply an explicit subject.

❌ **Wrong:** Walking along the quiet country road, a speeding truck knocked him down.

✅ **Correct:** While he was walking along the quiet country road, a speeding truck knocked him down.

⚠️ **Exam Trap / Tip:** Ensure the subject of the main clause is capable of performing the participle action.

RULE 088 **Perfect Participles for Completed Sequential Past Actions**

📌 **Having + Past Participle (Having + V3) + Main Clause**

Use the perfect participle when one action is fully concluded before the secondary subsequent action begins.

❌ **Wrong:** Finishing his university homework, he went to play tennis.

✅ **Correct:** Having finished his university homework, he went to play tennis.

⚠️ **Exam Trap / Tip:** 'Finishing' implies simultaneous action; 'Having finished' marks completed sequence.

RULE 089 **Split Infinitives in Formal Exam Conventions**

📌 **Keep 'TO' directly adjacent to its 'BASE VERB' (Avoid: to + Adverb + Verb)**

In formal exam standards, avoid separating the infinitive marker 'to' from its base verb with intervening adverbs.

❌ **Wrong:** You need to carefully review the financial balance sheet before signing.

✅ **Correct:** You need to review the financial balance sheet carefully before signing.

⚠️ **Exam Trap / Tip:** Move the modifying adverb either before 'to' or after the verb/object phrase.

RULE 090 **Meaning Shifts: Infinitive vs. Gerund Complements**

📌 **Remember / Stop / Forget + Infinitive (Future Purpose) | + Gerund (Past Action)**

'Stop to smoke' means pausing an activity in order to smoke; 'Stop smoking' means terminating the habit.

❌ **Wrong:** He stopped to smoke after his doctor warned him about lung damage.

✅ **Correct:** He stopped smoking after his doctor warned him about lung damage.

⚠️ **Exam Trap / Tip:** Infinitive = forward-looking purpose; Gerund = past ongoing memory/action.

Section 10: Active & Passive Voice (Rules 91–97)

RULE 091 Tenses Lacking Standard Passive Voice Forms

Pres. Perf. Cont. / Past Perf. Cont. / Fut. Cont. / Fut. Perf. Cont. → No Passive

These four tenses create awkward double continuous forms and are kept in active voice in standard English.

✗ Wrong: The workers have been being supervised by the foreman for two hours.

✓ Correct: The foreman has been supervising the workers for two hours.

⚠ Exam Trap / Tip: If an exam question offers passive forms for these four tenses, mark them grammatically invalid.

RULE 093 Passive Voice with Non-'By' Prepositions

Surprise AT / Know TO / Marry TO / Please WITH / Satisfy WITH / Annoy AT

Many verbs take specific fixed prepositions in the passive voice instead of the standard agent marker 'by'.

✗ Wrong: His unexpected sudden dismissal surprised by everyone in the firm.

✓ Correct: His unexpected sudden dismissal surprised everyone / Everyone was surprised AT his dismissal.

⚠ Exam Trap / Tip: 'He is known to me' (NOT 'known by me'); 'She was married to him' (NOT 'with him').

RULE 095 Preservation of Prepositional Phrasal Verbs in Passive

Subject + be + V3 + Fixed Preposition + by + Agent

When converting phrasal verbs to passive voice, retain the inherent preposition alongside the verb participle.

✗ Wrong: The committee looked the proposal thoroughly. → The proposal was looked by the committee.

✓ Correct: The proposal was looked into by the committee.

⚠ Exam Trap / Tip: Do not drop the attached preposition ('looked into', 'laughed at', 'cared for').

RULE 097 Passive Voice of Modal Auxiliaries

Modal + V1 → Modal + BE + V3 | Modal + have + V3 → Modal + have + BEEN + V3

Modal passives insert the auxiliary 'be' after simple modals and 'been' after modal perfects.

✗ Wrong: We must preserve historical monuments. → Historical monuments must preserved.

✓ Correct: Historical monuments must be preserved by us.

⚠ Exam Trap / Tip: Check for 'be' after simple modals: 'can be done', 'should be sent'.

RULE 092 Intransitive Verbs Incapable of Passive Transformation

Die, Arrive, Disappear, Occur, Sleep, Happen, Fall → Cannot form Passive Voice

Verbs that cannot take a direct object in the active voice have no object to promote to the subject position in passive voice.

✗ Wrong: A severe tragedy was occurred on the national expressway.

✓ Correct: A severe tragedy occurred on the national expressway.

⚠ Exam Trap / Tip: Never write 'was died', 'was happened', or 'was appeared'.

RULE 094 Imperative Sentence Passive: 'Let + Object + be + V3'

Command: Let + Object + be + V3 | Moral Advice: Object + should + be + V3

Transform commands using 'Let...be + V3' and moral obligations/advice using 'should be + V3'.

✗ Wrong: Shut the front gate! → The gate is shut by you immediately.

✓ Correct: Let the front gate be shut. (Help the poor → The poor should be helped)

⚠ Exam Trap / Tip: Maintain the command tone; do not turn direct orders into descriptive statements.

RULE 096 Passive Voice of Quasi-Passive Verbs

Quasi-Passive: Subject + Verb + Adj → Subject + is/are + Adj + WHEN + it is + V3

Verbs active in form but passive in sense (e.g., taste, smell) expand via an adverbial time clause in formal passive.

✗ Wrong: Quinine tastes bitter. → Quinine is tasted bitterly.

✓ Correct: Quinine is bitter when it is tasted.

⚠ Exam Trap / Tip: 'Roses smell sweet' → 'Roses are sweet when they are smelt'.

Section 11: Direct & Indirect Speech (Rules 98–104)

RULE 098 Present/Future Reporting Verbs Freeze Subordinate Tenses

 Reporting Verb in Present (says) or Future (will say) → NO Tense Backshift

Backshifting of tenses applies ONLY when the reporting verb is in the past tense ('said').

✗ Wrong: He says to me, 'I am working on a new project.' → He says to me that he was working...

✓ Correct: He tells me that he is working on a new project.

⚠ Exam Trap / Tip: If the prompt says 'She says', keep the quoted statement's present tense intact.

RULE 100 Reporting Verb Substitutions: 'Said to' Conversion

 Said to + Object → Told + Object (Zero 'to') | Inquired OF + Object | Asked + Object

'Told' is a transitive verb and must be followed directly by its indirect object without the preposition 'to'.

✗ Wrong: He told to me that the flight had been delayed due to dense fog.

✓ Correct: He told me that the flight had been delayed due to dense fog.

⚠ Exam Trap / Tip: Never write 'told to him' or 'said him'. Use 'told him' or 'said to him'.

RULE 102 Optative Sentences: Indirect Expression of Blessings

 Said, 'May God bless you' → Prayed / Wished + that + Subject + MIGHT + V1

Optative sentences expressing prayers and wishes backshift modal 'may' into 'might' following the reporting noun.

✗ Wrong: The priest said, 'May God pardon your sins.' → The priest wished that God may pardon...

✓ Correct: The priest prayed that God might pardon my sins.

⚠ Exam Trap / Tip: Transform 'May God...' into 'that God might...' with a terminal period.

RULE 104 Deictic Shifts: Spatial and Temporal Conversions

 Now → Then | Today → That day | Yesterday → The previous day | Tomorrow → The next day

Proximal time and space indicators transform into distal indicators when reported from a different time perspective.

✗ Wrong: He said, 'I will complete the assignment tomorrow.' → He said that he would complete the assignment tomorrow.

✓ Correct: He said that he would complete the assignment the following day.

⚠ Exam Trap / Tip: Always check and convert time/place deictic pointers in past-tense indirect speech.

RULE 099 ? Interrogative Shifts: Word Order Rectification & Connectors

 Yes/No Question → 'If/Whether' + S + V | Wh- Question → 'Wh- word' + S + V (No Inversion)

Reported questions transform into affirmative statement syntax (Subject + Verb) and omit question marks.

✗ Wrong: He asked me, 'Where do you live?' → He asked me where did I live.

✓ Correct: He asked me where I lived.

⚠ Exam Trap / Tip: Remove auxiliary inversion: 'where I lived', NOT 'where did I live'.

RULE 101 Imperative Speech Indirect Shifts via 'To-Infinitive'

 Imperative Command → Ordered / Advised + Object + TO + Base V1

Direct commands convert into an infinitive phrase. Negative imperatives use 'not to + V1' or 'forbade + to + V1'.

✗ Wrong: The doctor said, 'Do not consume sugar.' → The doctor advised me to not consume sugar.

✓ Correct: The doctor advised me not to consume sugar. / forbade me to consume sugar.

⚠ Exam Trap / Tip: 'Forbade' already contains a negative meaning; never add 'not' after 'forbade'.

RULE 103 Exclamatory Sentence Indirect Conversions

 Exclaimed with joy / sorrow / wonder + THAT + Subject + Verb + Modifier

Exclamatory words (Hurrah, Alas, Wow) are omitted and replaced by descriptive adverbial reporting phrases.

✗ Wrong: He said, 'Alas! I am undone.' → He said alas that he was undone.

✓ Correct: He exclaimed with sorrow that he was undone.

⚠ Exam Trap / Tip: Delete the interjection ('Alas') and incorporate its emotional tone into the reporting verb.

Section 12: Conditional Sentences (Rules 105–109)

RULE 105 ☀️ ✍️ Zero Conditional: Scientific Constants & Absolute Truths

📌 If + Simple Present (V1), Simple Present (V1)

Used for automatic cause-and-effect relationships and scientific constants that occur every time without exception.

❌ **Wrong:** If you heat water to 100 degrees Celsius, it will boil.

✅ **Correct:** If you heat water to 100 degrees Celsius, it boils.

⚠️ **Exam Trap / Tip:** Do not insert 'will' in the result clause of fundamental physical laws.

RULE 106 🚌 📖 First Conditional: Realistic Future Possibilities

📌 If + Simple Present (V1), Subject + Will / Shall / Can / May + Base V1

Expresses realistic conditions and their likely outcomes in the present or future.

❌ **Wrong:** If the train will arrive on schedule, we will reach the venue before lunch.

✅ **Correct:** If the train arrives on schedule, we will reach the venue before lunch.

⚠️ **Exam Trap / Tip:** Never use 'will' in the 'if' condition clause.

RULE 107 💡 📞 Second Conditional: Hypothetical / Unreal Present

📌 If + Simple Past (V2 / Were), Subject + Would / Could / Might + Base V1

Describes imaginary or contrary-to-fact scenarios in the present. 'Were' is used for all subjects with copular 'be'.

❌ **Wrong:** If I was having his phone number, I will contact him immediately.

✅ **Correct:** If I had his phone number, I would contact him immediately. (If I were you...)

⚠️ **Exam Trap / Tip:** Always use 'were' instead of 'was' in unreal conditional clauses: 'If I were rich'.

RULE 108 📖 🎓 Third Conditional: Unfulfilled Past Conditions & Regrets

📌 If + Past Perfect (had + V3), Subject + WOULD HAVE / COULD HAVE + V3

Refers to past situations that did not happen and their hypothetical unfulfilled outcomes.

❌ **Wrong:** If you worked harder in the previous semester, you would have passed.

✅ **Correct:** If you had worked harder in the previous semester, you would have passed.

⚠️ **Exam Trap / Tip:** Strict structural pairing: 'had + V3' in the condition links strictly to 'would have + V3' in the result.

RULE 109 ⚠️ 📊 Inverted Conditional Clauses (Omitting 'If')

📌 Had + Subject + V3..., Subject + Would have + V3 | Were + Subject..., Subject + Would + V1

Conditionals can omit 'if' by inverting the auxiliary verb to the front of the sentence.

❌ **Wrong:** If had he realized the potential risk, he would not have invested.

✅ **Correct:** Had he realized the potential risk, he would not have invested.

⚠️ **Exam Trap / Tip:** Do not write 'If had he'; choose either 'If he had' OR 'Had he'.

Section 13: Clauses, Structure & Parallelism (Rules 110–114)

RULE 110 🎯 ✨ Relative Pronoun 'That' Mandatory Usage Triggers

📌 Use 'THAT' (not who/which) after: All, The same, The only, None, Any, Superlatives

Restrictive clauses modified by totalizing indefinite determiners or superlative adjectives require 'that'.

❌ **Wrong:** This is the most intriguing historical mystery which I have ever encountered.

✅ **Correct:** This is the most intriguing historical mystery that I have ever encountered.

⚠️ **Exam Trap / Tip:** 'All which glitters is not gold' is wrong; it must be 'All that glitters...'

RULE 111 🔄 📖 Syntactic Parallelism Across Series and Lists

📌 Item 1, Item 2, and Item 3 must share the EXACT same grammatical form

Coordinate structures joined by 'and', 'or', or 'than' must maintain morphological and syntactic symmetry.

❌ **Wrong:** The candidate enjoys hiking, reading non-fiction, and to swim in the ocean.

✅ **Correct:** The candidate enjoys hiking, reading non-fiction, and swimming in the ocean.

⚠️ **Exam Trap / Tip:** Mix-and-matching '-ing' words with 'to + V1' in a single list violates parallelism.

RULE 112 📁 📖 **Subjective 'Who' vs. Objective 'Whom' Case Distinction**

📌 **Who** = Replaces He/She/They (Subject) | **Whom** = Replaces Him/Her/Them (Object of verb/prep)

Use 'who' when the pronoun performs the action; use 'whom' when the pronoun receives the action or follows a preposition.

❌ **Wrong:** The scholar whom authored this breakthrough paper won the award.

✅ **Correct:** The scholar who authored this breakthrough paper won the award.

⚠️ **Exam Trap / Tip:** Test with 'he/him': If 'he' fits → 'who'; if 'him' fits → 'whom'.

RULE 113 💡 ⚡ **Comma Splices & Run-On Sentence Rectification**

📌 **Independent Clause + (Semicolon ';' OR ',' + Coordinating Conjunction') + Independent Clause**

Two independent clauses cannot be joined by a comma alone. Use a coordinating conjunction (FANBOYS) or a semicolon.

❌ **Wrong:** The heavy storm knocked out the power grid, we had to rely on backup generators.

✅ **Correct:** The heavy storm knocked out the power grid; we had to rely on backup generators.

⚠️ **Exam Trap / Tip:** A comma alone cannot glue two full standalone sentences together.

RULE 114 📁 🏠 **Dangling and Misplaced Modifiers Distorting Meaning**

📌 **Modifier must sit directly adjacent to the exact noun it describes**

Descriptive phrases modify the nearest available noun. Misplacement attributes actions to unintended subjects.

❌ **Wrong:** Covered in creamy chocolate frosting, the birthday boy devoured the cake.

✅ **Correct:** The birthday boy devoured the cake, which was covered in creamy chocolate frosting.

⚠️ **Exam Trap / Tip:** Check if the subject immediately following the introductory modifier is physically doing the action.

Section 14: Advanced Error-Spotting & Superfluous Rules (Rules 115–120)**RULE 115** 📁 🔄 **Superfluous / Tautological Expressions (Redundancies)**

📌 **Return (NOT return back) / Repeat (NOT repeat again) / Revert (NOT revert back)**

Prefix 're-' already means 'again' or 'back'. Combining them with redundant adverbs creates grammatical tautology.

❌ **Wrong:** Please return back the reference books and repeat the instructions again.

✅ **Correct:** Please return the reference books and repeat the instructions.

⚠️ **Exam Trap / Tip:** Never say 'cousin brother/sister', 'revert back', 'retreat back', or 'enter into the room'.

RULE 116 ⚠️ 🚫 **Redundant 'Reason Why' and 'Because' Combinations**

📌 **The reason why / The reason is + THAT (Never 'because' or 'due to')**

The noun 'reason' already denotes causality. Pairing it with 'because' creates illegal semantic duplication.

❌ **Wrong:** The reason why he failed to qualify was because he neglected his studies.

✅ **Correct:** The reason why he failed to qualify was that he neglected his studies.

⚠️ **Exam Trap / Tip:** 'The reason...is because' is a ubiquitous exam trap. Always correct 'because' to 'that'.

RULE 117 🛡️ 🚫 **Prohibited Negative Doubling with Negative Adverbs**

📌 **Rarely, Scarcely, Seldom, Barely, Hardly, Prevented + AFFIRMATIVE Clause (No 'Not')**

Inherently negative adverbs and restrictive verbs already convey negative meaning and cannot accept 'not'.

❌ **Wrong:** The security guard prevented the visitor from not entering the secure server room.

✅ **Correct:** The security guard prevented the visitor from entering the secure server room.

⚠️ **Exam Trap / Tip:** Watch verbs like 'deny', 'refuse', 'forbid', 'prevent' — never follow them with a negative word.

RULE 118 🎯 🌟 **Prohibited Comparative Qualifiers on Ultimate Superlatives**

📌 **Chief, Utmost, Supreme, Main, Principal, Final → Incompatible with 'more / most'**

Nouns and adjectives representing the pinnacle or ultimate boundary of a quality cannot accept comparative modifiers.

❌ **Wrong:** This is the most chief objective of our annual national defense strategy.

✅ **Correct:** This is the chief objective of our annual national defense strategy.

⚠️ **Exam Trap / Tip:** Avoid 'more supreme', 'most ultimate', or 'very principal'.

RULE 120 🗨️ 📁 **Grammatical Concord in Question Tags**

📌 **Positive Statement → Negative Tag | Negative Statement → Positive Tag | Mirror Auxiliary & Pronoun**

Question tags must mirror the auxiliary tense and subject pronoun of the main sentence with reversed polarity.

❌ **Wrong:** She hardly speaks any foreign language, doesn't she?

✅ **Correct:** She hardly speaks any foreign language, does she?

⚠️ **Exam Trap / Tip:** Because 'hardly' makes the sentence negative, the question tag must be positive ('does she?').

RULE 119**Subjunctive Inversion after Negative****Adverbial Starters**

🚩 **Negative Starter** (Never, Under no circumstances, Little) + **AUXILIARY** + **Subject** + **Verb**

Starting a sentence with an emphatic negative phrase forces full inversion of the auxiliary verb before the subject.

❌ **Wrong:** Little he knew that his groundbreaking discovery would revolutionize medicine.

✅ **Correct:** Little did he know that his groundbreaking discovery would revolutionize medicine.

⚠️ **Exam Trap / Tip:** 'Under no circumstances you should leave' → must be 'Under no circumstances should you leave'.