

ENGLISH GRAMMAR

100 GOLDEN RULES

A. SUBJECT-VERB AGREEMENT

1. Two or more **Singular Subjects** connected by “*and*” usually take a **Verb** in plural form.

For Example:

Ram and Shyam **are** going to market.

My teacher and my classmate **were** having an argument.

2. If two Singular Nouns refer to same person or the thing, the Verb must be Singular.

Incorrect: *The Secretary and the President* are present on the dais.

Correct: *The Secretary and the President* **is** present on the dais.

3. If the Singular Subjects are preceded by *each* or *every*, the Verb is usually Singular.

For Example:

Incorrect: Every male and female in the group were ready to vote.

Correct: *Every* male and female in the group was ready to vote.

4. Two or more Singular Subjects connected by “*or*”, “*nor*”, “*either.....or*”, “*neither....nor*” take the verb in singular.

For Example:

Neither he nor I was present at the place of incidence.

Either my sister or my brother is appointed to witness the event.

5. When the Subjects joined by “*or*”/”*nor*” are of different numbers, **the Verb must be Plural** and the Plural Subject must be placed before the Verb.

For Example:

Incorrect: The Assistant masters or the headmaster was present in assembly.

Correct: The headmaster **or the Assistant Masters were** present in the assembly.

6. When the Subjects joined by “or” /”nor” are of different persons, *the Verb agrees in person with the one nearest to it.*

For Example:

Incorrect: Either he or I is mistaken.

Correct: Either he or I **am** mistaken

7. A Collective Noun takes a Singular Verb when the collection is thought of as a whole, a Plural Verb when the individuals of which it is composed are thought of.

For Example:

The Council **has** chosen the President.

The military **were** called out

8. Some Nouns which are plural in form but singular in meaning , take a singular verb.

For Example:

Mathematics is a branch of study in every school.

9. Words joined to a Singular Subject by “with”, “together with”, “in addition to”, “as well as” are parenthetical and therefore do not affect the number of the Verb.

For Example:

Incorrect: The Chief, with all his men, were massacred.

Correct: The Chief, with all his men, was massacred.

10. When the Subject of the Verb is a Relative Pronoun, care should be taken to see that the Verb agrees in Number and Person with the Antecedent of the relative.

For Example:

Incorrect: I, who is your friend, will guard your interest.

Correct: I, who am your friend, will guard your interest.

B. USE OF PARTICIPLES AND INFINITIVES

11. Ask, Advise, Allow, Command, Force, Forbid, Invite, Encourage, Compele, Beg, Order, Imagine, Instruct, Permit, Persuade, tell, Require, Remind, Teach etc ..are followed by Object+To+V1

He advised me to do it.

But if these are used in Passive Voice then they are followed by To+V1

She was permitted to go with him.

12. KNOW is followed by
how/where/why/when and Infinitive.
For Example:

I Know how to write a letter

13. After Let, Bid, Behold, Watch, See, feel
Make, etc..we use Bare-Infinitive and not To-
Infinitive

For Example:

I heard him speak on several subjects.

14. Bare Infinitives are used after Modal Auxiliaries (Can, Could, May, Might, Shall, Should, will, Would, Must, Dare not, Need not)

For Example:

Incorrect: You need not to work hard

Correct: You need not work hard.

15. Had better, had rather, had as soon...as...had sooner etc are followed by Bare-Infinitive

For Example:

Incorrect: He had better to go now.

Correct: He had better go now.

16. Conjunction “than” is also followed by
Bare-Infinitive

For Example;

Incorrect: He had better read than to write.

Correct: He had better read than write.

17. When "but" is used as a Preposition and preceded by any form of the verb do, then 'but' is followed with Bare-Infinitive.

For Example:

Incorrect: He did nothing but to wander.

Correct: He did nothing but wander.

18. Every Participle must have a Subject of Reference.

For Example:

Incorrect: Being a rainy day Vijay decided to stay at home.

Correct: It being a rainy day Vijay decided to stay at home.

19. For Completed action Having+Va is used in Active Voice, whereas Having + Being +Va is used in Passive Voice. “After” should not be used in such sentences.

For Example:

Incorrect: After the leader having been killed, the followers ran away.

Correct: The leader having been killed, the followers ran away.

20. Participles like considering, judging, referring, concerning, regarding, viewing, broadly speaking, etc..do not take any Subject of Reference.

For Example:

Considering the case, I took the decision.

Here 'I' is not a Subject of Reference of 'considering'. The Subject of Reference of 'considering' is missing, still the sentence is correct.

C. USE OF VERBS

21. When there are two Subjects in a sentence and they are not in the same Number, then we must have to use separate auxiliaries for both of them.

For Example:

Incorrect: Three Killed and one were injured.

Correct: Three were killed and one was injured.

22. A Single Verb should be made to serve two Subjects, only when the form of Verb is same for both the subjects.

For Example:

Incorrect: I am seventeen years old and my sister fourteen.

Correct: I am seventeen years old and my sister is fourteen.

23. Two Auxiliaries can be used with one Principal Verb, only when the form of the principal verb is appropriate to both Auxiliaries.

For Example:

Incorrect: He never has, and never will take such strong decision.

Correct: He has never taken, and never will take such strong decision.

24. When there is only one auxiliary to two principal Verbs, it should be correctly associated with the both.

For Example:

Incorrect: Ten candidates have passed, one failed.

Correct: Ten candidates have passed, one has failed.

25. A Past tense in the main clause should be followed by a Past tense in subordinate clause.

For Example:

Incorrect: He succeeded because he works hard.

Correct: he succeeded because he worked hard.

26. A Past tense in the main clause may be followed by a Present Tense in the subordinate clause when the subordinate clause expresses a Universal truth.

For Example:

Incorrect: The teacher said that the Earth moved round the Sun.

Correct: The teacher said that the Earth moves round the Sun.

27. When the subordinate clause comes after 'lest' the auxiliary verb 'Should' must be used, whatever be the tense of the main clause.

For Example:

Incorrect: We should start early lest we shall miss the train.

Correct: We should start early lest we should miss the train.

28. An Adverb or Adverbial Phrase should not be placed between 'to' and verbal part of the infinitive. (This is called Split Infinitive)

For Example:

Incorrect: I hoped to immediately reply to your letter.

Correct: I hoped to reply immediately to your letter.

29. An infinitive should be in present tense unless it represents an action prior to that of governing Verb.

For Example:

Incorrect: I should have liked to have gone there.

Correct: I should have liked to go there.

30. Gerund is preceded by a Pronoun, that pronoun must be in possessive case.

For Example:

Incorrect: He emphasized me going there.

Correct: He Emphasized my going there.

31. The Present Perfect Continuous Tense is used for an action that began in the past time and still going at the time of speaking – It is used with adverbials of time introduced by ‘since’ ‘for’ and ‘how long’

For Example:

How long have you been working in this office?

32. A Verb when preceded by a Preposition
must be the Gerund

For Example:

They were punished for coming late.

33. The Future Indefinite Tense is not used in the clause of time, place or condition. Here Present Indefinite Tense is used.

For Example:

Incorrect: I shall wait for you till you will finish your work

Correct: I shall wait for you till you finish your work.

34. The Present Perfect tense is not used with the Adverbs of past time like yesterday, in 1990 etc. Here Past indefinite tense is used.

For Example:

Incorrect: I have bought a cycle yesterday.

Correct: I bought a cycle yesterday.

The Past perfect tense is used to represent the earlier of the two past actions.

Example: When I reached the station, the train had already left

35. Modal Auxiliaries are not used together.
But two Auxiliaries can be connected by a
Conjunction.

For Example:

Incorrect: He should must do it

Correct: He should and must do it.

36. When 'need' or 'dare' is followed by not, it turns into modal auxiliary. In this situation it takes Bare Infinitive and we can not use needs not or dares not.

For Example:

He need not do it.

D. USES OF ADJECTIVES

37. Adjectives of Quantity show how much of a thing is meant. Adjectives of Quantity (some, much, little, enough, all, no, any, great, half, sufficient, whole) are used for Uncountable Nouns only.

For Example:

I ate some rice.

38. Numeral Adjectives are used for Countable Noun only and they show how many persons or things are meant or in what order a person or thing stands.

For Example:

I have taught a few things (Do not use a little things)

39. When Cardinal and Ordinal are used together Ordinal precedes the Cardinal.

For Example:

The first four boys will be given the chance.

40. Later, Latest refer to time and latter, last refer to position.

For Example: I reached there at 10 a.m, but he was later than expected.

41. Farther means more distant or advanced;
further means additional.

For Example: He insisted on further
improvements

42. **Each** is used in speaking of two or more things, **Every** is used only in speaking of more than two.

For Example:

Incorrect: Every of the two boys will get the prize.

Correct: Each of the two boys will get the prize.

43. To express quantity or degree 'some' is used in affirmative sentences , 'any' in negative or interrogative sentences.

For Example:

Incorrect: Have you got some mangoes?

Correct: Have you got any mangoes?

44. In complaining two things, Comparative should be used and not Superlatives.

For Example:

Incorrect: Which is the best of the two?

Correct: Which is the better of the two?

45. When two qualities of same person or thing are compared, the Comparative in -er is not used. 'More' is used for this purpose.

For Example:

Incorrect: He is wiser than brave.

Correct: He is more wise than brave.

46. When comparison is made by means of comparative, the thing compared should be excluded from the class of things with which it is compared by using 'Other' or some such word.

For Example:

Incorrect: He is cleverer than any boy in the class.

Correct: He is cleverer than any other boy in the class.

47. When comparison is made by means of a superlative, the thing compared should include the class of things with which it is compared.

For Example:

Incorrect: He is the strongest of all other men.

Correct: He is the strongest of all men.

48. When two persons or things are compared, it is important that the same parts of the things should be compared.

For Example:

Incorrect: The population of Mumbai is greater than Delhi.

Correct: The population of Mumbai is greater than that of Delhi.

49. Double comparatives and Superlatives should not be used.

For Example:

Incorrect: He is the most cleverest boy of the class.

Correct: He is the cleverest boy of the class.

50. The Comparative Adjectives superior, inferior, senior, junior, prior, anterior, posterior, prefer etc. should be followed by 'to' instead of 'than'.

For Example:

Incorrect: He is senior than me.

Correct: He is senior to me.

51. Adjectives like unique, ideal, perfect, complete, universal, entire, extreme, chief, full, square and round, which do not admit different degrees of comparison should not be compared.

For Example:

Incorrect: It is the most unique thing.

Correct: It is a unique thing

52. All the Adjectives which refer to the same Noun should be in the same degree of comparison.

For Example:

Incorrect: He is the wisest and the honest worker in the office.

Correct: He is the wisest and the most honest worker in the office.

53. 'Elder' and 'Eldest' should be used for persons only, strictly speaking they are used for the members of the same family only. "Older" and "Oldest" are used for both persons and things.

For Example:

Incorrect: He is my older brother.

Correct: He is my elder brother.

E. USES OF ADVERBS

54. To modify a Verb, an Adjective or another Adverb ,we use an Adverb

For Example:

He washed his car very carefully.

55. Too means more than required and it is used with Unpleasant Adjectives. So we should avoid using too happy, too pleasant, too healthy.

For example:

Incorrect: I am too glad to meet you.

Correct: I am very glad to meet you.

56. A sentence which is based on “too....to” format, we cannot replace “to” with “so that”. If we replace “to” with “so that” , “too” must be replaced with cannot.

For Example:

Incorrect: He is too weak so that he cannot walk .

Correct: He is too weak to walk.

Correct: He is so weak that he cannot walk

57. Much too is followed by an Unpleasant Adjective, Too Much is followed by a noun.

For Example:

Incorrect: His failure is too much painful for me.

Correct: His failure is much too painful for me.

58. Quite and all are not used together.

For Example:

Incorrect: He is quite all right.

Correct: He is quite right.

Correct: He is all right.

59. A/An + Fairly + Adjective

Noun or Rather + A + Adjective

For Example:

(a) A Fairly good book.

(b) Rather a difficult problem

But we cannot use a Pleasant Adjective with rather and Unpleasant Adjective with Fairly

60. Enough, when used as an Adverb, is preceded by a positive degree Adjective or Adverb.

For Example:

Incorrect: He is greater enough to pardon you.

Correct: He is great enough to pardon you.

61. Two negatives cancel each other. Hence two negatives should not be used in a sentence unless we make an affirmation.

For Example:

Incorrect: I have not got none.

Correct: I have not got any.

62. “At present” means “ at the present time”.
“Presently” means shortly. These should not
be confused.

For Example:

Nothing can be done at present.

He will come back presently.

63. “Hard” means diligently strenuously.
“Hardly” means scarcely at all.

For Example:

I tried hard to win the race.

She has eaten hardly anything today.

64. “Much” is used before past participle and Adjectives or Adverbs of comparative degree. “Very” is used before the present participles and Adjectives or Adverbs of Positive degree.

For Example:

The news is very surprising.

I was much surprised at hearing the news.

65. Hardly is an Adverb which means rarely.
Whereas Hard is an adjective which means
tough.

For Example:

It is a hard task to perform, and I can hardly do
it.

66. Ago is always used with past indefinite tense. So if a sentence uses ago, the sentence must be in past indefinite tense.

For Example:

He came a month ago. (He has come a month ago)

67. “ At present” means at this moment and it is used with present tense, whereas “presently” and “Shortly” are used for future action and generally used with future indefinite tense.

For Example:

At present he is in the room.

He will come here in this room presently.

68. Early means “just after the beginning of anything” and soon means “just after a point of time”.

For Example:

Roses blossomed early this spring.

69. The sentence which starts with seldom, never, hardly, rarely or scarcely takes an inverse structure.

For Example:

Seldom had I seen such a beautiful sight. (We do not use– Seldom I had seen such a beautiful sight)

70. Inversion is also used in a sentence which starts with here/there/away/out/up/ indoor and Main Verb. Aux or Main Verb is used before subject.

For example:

Away went Sita.

F. USES OF CONJUNCTIONS

71. Two conjunctions should not be used in the same sentence.

For Example:

Incorrect: Although she was tired, but she still went on working.

Correct: Although she was tired, she still went on working.

72. 'Both' should be followed by 'and'. It should be used in positive sense. In the negative sense "Neither....nor" should be used.

For Example:

Both Raja and Ram were present there.

Neither Raja nor Ram won the trophy.

73. 'Either...or' , 'Neither....nor' , 'Both....and' ,
'Not only....but also' should be followed by
the same parts of speech.

For Example:

Incorrect: He not only lost his ticket, but also
his baggage.

Correct: He lost not only his ticket but also hi
baggage.

74. Neither should be followed by nor and
Either should be followed by or.

For Example:

Either Ram or Raja will go to the market.

Neither Raja nor Ram will go to the market.

75. 'No Sooner' should be followed by 'Than' and not by 'then' or 'but'

For Example:

Incorrect: No sooner do I finish this book then I work on another one.

Correct: No sooner do I finish this book than I work on another one.

76. “Hardly” and “ Scarcely” should be followed by “when” or “before” and not by “Than” or “That”.

For Example:

Incorrect: Hardly did I reach the station than the train had left.

Correct: Hardly did I reach the station when the train had left

77. “That” should not be used before a sentence in Direct Speech and before interrogative Adverbs and Pronouns in the Indirect Speech.

For Example:

(a) Incorrect: He said that, ” I shall go there”.

Correct: He said, ”I shall go there”.

(b) Incorrect: He asked me that who I was

Correct: He asked me who I was.

G. USES OF PREPOSITION

78. Objective case of Noun or pronoun is used after Preposition.

For Example:

I do not depend on him. (I do not depend on him ...is incorrect)

79. The preposition used after two words must be made clear if these two words are connected by “and” or “or”.

For Example:

Incorrect: She is conscious and engaged in her work.

Correct: She is conscious of and engaged in her work.

80. If a Principal Verb is used after about, after, at, before, for, from, in, on, to that Verb must be in -ing form.

For Example:

You prevented me from doing it.

81. On, in, at, are not used before today, tomorrow, yesterday, the following day, the next day etc.

82. No preposition is used before the word HOME. At home is a phrase which bears a different meaning.

83. After transitive verbs like discuss, describe, reach, order, tell, demand, attack, resemble, ridicule, etc...we directly use the object and no preposition is used after the Verb.

For Example:

Incorrect: The poet describes about the beauty of the nature.

Correct: The poet describes the beauty of the nature.

84.Say/Suggest/Propose/speak/reply/explain/
talk/listen/write is followed by “to”
preposition if there is a person in the form of
object.

For Example:

He did not reply to me.

He did not write the letter.

H. USES OF PRONOUN

85. When a Pronoun is used as the complement of the Verb “to be” , it should be in the nominative case.

For Example:

Incorrect: If I were him, I would not do it.

Correct: If I were he, I would not do it.

86. When the pronoun is used as the object of a verb or of a preposition, it should be in the objective case.

For Example:

Incorrect: Let you and I do it.

Correct: Let you and me do it.

Incorrect: These presents are for you and I.

Correct: These presents are for you and me.

87. Emphatic pronouns cannot stand alone as subjects.

For Example:

He himself did it

88. The indefinite pronoun 'one' should be used throughout if used at all.

For Example:

Incorrect: One must not boast of his own success.

Correct: One must not boast of one's own success.

89. 'Either' or 'Neither' is used only in speaking of two persons or things. 'any', 'no one' and 'none' is used in speaking of more than two.

For Example:

Neither of the two boys completed his homework.

None of the boys in the class completed the homework.

90. “Each Other” is used in speaking of two persons or things. “One Another” is used in speaking of more than two persons or things.

For Example:

The two brothers loved each other (not one another)

91. A Noun or Pronoun governing a Gerund should be put in possessive case.

For Example:

Incorrect: Please excuse me being late.

Correct: Please excuse my being late.

92. A Pronoun must agree with its antecedent in person, number or gender.

For Example:

Incorrect: Each of these boys has done their homework.

Correct: Each of these boys has done his homework.

93. When two or more Singular Nouns are joined by 'and', the Pronoun used for them must be in Plural.

For Example:

Incorrect: Both Raja and Ram have done his homework.

Correct: Both Raja and Ram have done their homework.

94. When two or more Singular Nouns are joined by 'and' refer to the same person or thing, the Pronoun used for them must be in Singular.

For Example:

The collector and the D.M is not negligent in his duty.

95. When two or more Singular nouns joined by 'or' or 'nor' , 'either...or' , 'neither...nor,' The Pronoun for them should be singular.

96. When two or more singular Pronouns of different persons come together, the Pronoun of second person singular comes first, followed by pronoun of third person singular and lastly the pronoun of first person singular.

For Example:

You, he and I must work together.

97. When two or more plural Pronouns of different persons come together, first person plural comes first, then the second person plural and in the last the third person plural.

For Example:

We, you and they must work together.

98. The Relative pronoun “who” is in subjective case whereas “whom” is in subjective case. Therefore, for ‘who’ there must be a finite verb in the sentence. When ‘whom’ is used in the sentence and there is more finite verbs than the number of subjects in the sentence , then ‘whom’ should be changed to ‘who’

For Example:

The Doctor who came here was Ram’s brother.

99. With Superlative Degree Adjectives only, none, all, etc..we use 'that' and not 'which' or 'who'.

For Example:

Incorrect: All which glitters is not gold.

Correct: All that glitters is not gold.

100. After let, if a pronoun is used, that pronoun must be in Objective Case.

For Example:

Incorrect: Let he go there.

Correct: Let him go there.