**Sem 2**

**General English**

**1ENGTCC01**

**Unit 3, 4 and 5**

**Unit 3**

**A Cup of Tea**

**By Katherine Mansfield**

Katherine Mansfield was born in 1888 and died in 1923) in New Zealand but lived most of her working life as a writer in London, was an expert at writing this kind of short story.

A Cup of Tea is set in 1920s London. Rosemary Fell, the protagonist, is wealthy young matron. We meet her while she is on a shopping trip in town. In an antique shop, she examines an expensive jewelry box that she would love to own. Yet, after inquiring about the price, she decides against the purchase - at least for that day.

Without the longed-for purchase, Rosemary returns to the street, where she is approached by a poor, raggedy looking young woman about her own age. The young woman asks for the price of a cup of tea and says she has no money, which Rosemary finds unimaginable.

Suddenly, inspired by the tales of Dostoevsky that she has recently read, Rosemary experiences a charitable inspiration and takes the girl home. Of course, the reader questions (as Mansfield intended) the true sincerity of Rosemary's impulse. We all believe in helping the less fortunate; however, this wealthy young woman seems more taken with her own fantasy of philanthropy than any real desire to help. At any rate, the young Miss Smith does go home with Rosemary and is given an abundant tea with all the trimmings.

While they're having tea, Mr. Fell (Phillip) comes into the bedroom and finds this unexpected guest. He takes Rosemary into another room, where he first expresses disapproval of what his wife has done and then speaks appreciatively about their poor visitor's beauty.

Once back with her charitable case, Rosemary now feels odd and without direction. What should she do? Ultimately, she gives Miss Smith some cash and sends her on her way. Anxious about her own appearance, Rosemary takes great care in dressing for dinner and seeks reassurance of her charms from Phillip.

This 1922 story “ A cup of tea” is written by Katherine Mansfield which holds class consciousness and materialism as its pivot point. Stunningly well characterized and magnificently portrayed against its plain title, this story, remarkably presents a crystal clear image of class distinction and ones mad fondness towards materialism. It’s just the same as “the doll’s house” and “the garden party” as a matter of fact that these stories also reflect upon the same issue of class distinction. Mansfield also tried to reflect upon the noble act of philanthropy and how people fancy this act to be the cause of ascension for their moral values among their social circle.

Rosemary Fell, a very rich and well off woman, who has been married for two years to a very rich and devoted man Mr. Philips Fell, spends her day out shopping at some west corners of London in the finest of shops. She visits an ingratiating antique dealer’s shop that shows her a beautiful small blue velvet box. Rosemary is taken by the beauty of the creamy piece of art but decides not to buy it and asks the shopkeeper to save it for her.

Out she comes from the shop into the rain and as she reaches towards the car a girl approaches her asking her to pay for the price of a cup of tea. Astonished, Rosemary asks the girl to come home with her for tea, finding it an opportunity of adventure and experience, just like she read in books and stories of Dostoevsky. She wanted to show the girl that rich people do posses mercy. The girl agrees apart from her great fears to ride with Rosemary in her car.

As they reach the house, Rosemary takes the poor girl to her room and asks her to sit by the fire. She helps her take off her coat and hat and tries to sooth her. As she tries to proceed further, the girl cries out that she can’t stand it anymore fearing that she will faint out of hunger. Rosemary hurriedly orders tea.

The girl is provided with tea and sandwiches while Rosemary lights a cigarette. Keen to know the story of the girl, Rosemary starts up a conversation with her which is unintentionally interrupted by her husband. He is surprised to see the stranger in the room and asks his wife to talk to him privately.

As they enter the library, Philips begins to inquire about the matter. To this Rosemary replies that she is just helping the poor lady whom she picked p from the street. Her husband tries to tell her that she can’t have a stranger in the house. Facing a refusal Philips points out that the lady is remarkably pretty giving a rise to insecurities of Rosemary.

Rosemary leaves the library and enters the study room from where she picks up some cash. She returns to her room and hands over the money to the poor girl making her leave the house.

After the girl leaves the house Rosemary joins Philips back in the library and asks him if she could buy the velvet box which wasn’t what she wished to ask. After a pause, she whispers, “Am I pretty?”

A Cup of Tea Characters:

This story is comprised of these few prominent characters.

ROSEMARY FELL:

A socially poised, rich married woman with a devoted and loving husband, who has a great lifestyle. She is well-dressed and well off with all the luxuries she desires for. Her interest is mainly of reading books, always indulged and above all greatly inspired by the characters and their adventurous lives which she comes across in the stories. Her inspirational interest can be judged from the decision she takes when she interacts with a poor soul called Miss Smith by taking her home with a mere thought of it being an adventure for her recalling the stories of Dostoevsky. Apart from this possession and insecurity can be sensed in her character.

PHILIPS FELL:

Husband of Rosemary, is in fact one of the richest persons of his society. He loves his wife devotedly and cares for her a lot. He calls Miss Smith pretty much to his wife’s chagrin, just to make her send Miss Smith away as she refuses to do so when he asks her in the first place even though making his wife feel insecure about herself and her beauty.

MISS SMITH:

She is a lean and thin poor girl of just the age of Rosemary. She can’t even afford a single cup of tea and comes to ask Rosemary to pay her the price of a cup of tea. She is an odd person, frightened and confused. She is shocked when Rosemary asks her to have a cup of tea with her at her home. In Mr. Philips’ point of view Miss Smith is very attractive and pretty.

THE SHOPKEEPER:

The owner of a very beautiful antique ornaments shop which in fact was one of Rosemary’s favorite shops. He would always be looking forward to have Rosemary at his shop and always saving a lovely piece of art for her only just like he had been saving the eye catching blue velvet box.

TITTLE OF THE STORY:

The plain and ordinary title of the story has the tendency to gravitate readers towards it, as one can wonder what a title so simple can hold inside it. The charm of the story exceeds the imagination of the reader as one comes across the contents of the story, finely sketched against the plain title of the story.

The title of the story is relatable to the story at the point when a poor girl from the story asks a rich woman to pay her the price of a cup of tea.

SETTING OF THE STORY:

The story setting takes place in the early 1900’s back in Britain. The story begins with the shopping scenario of Rosemary stopping at florist’s shop and afterwards visiting the antique ornament shop till darkness strikes. It’s where she meets poor Miss Smith outside the shop.

<https://youtu.be/a5bdWZLR-dM>

<https://youtu.be/VKNas5cmCpM>

**2. The Postmaster**

This is a story of human connection and warmth found in the unlikeliest of places. The story revolves around an old postmaster who hails from Calcutta under the British rule. Coming from the big city, he likes to read and write poetry. He is a little antisocial and finds it hard to form friendships

One day, he is commanded to go to a distant village and run the post office in the area. He is nervous and anxious about going to a remote place but follows the orders. Once, he reaches the place, he finds hard to adjust to its life.

The village has a big factory with most of the village men employed in it. These workers are of less literate and refined outlook and the Postmaster finds it hard to adjust to their vulgar means.

Ratan – A Young Girl

Even though he loves poetry, he feels uninspired to write even a few lines. However, in his solitude, there is one person who he establishes a connection with. It is Ratan, a young girl who does his daily household chores.

Every evening he enjoys the conversation and company of the young maid. He enquires about her family and home and in return, shares his memories and sadness. This creates a relationship between mentorship and guidance between the two.

One day while enjoying the bounties of the village scene, the postmaster asks Ratan if she would like to learn how to read and write. She agrees with delight. She gradually learns how to read and write the language and slowly gets better at it.

Ratan Decides to Go to Calcutta

However, like everything in life, there comes a parting of ways for the too. The postmaster runs into health problems and gets bored with his life in the village. As a last resort, he gives up his job and decides to return home to Calcutta.

Ratan learns about this and tries to persuade him to take her with him. However, the postmaster realizes the predicament of his own life and the life of the big city, so he declines.

The postmaster leaves and Ratan is crestfallen. However, she is optimistic and hopeful of his return and perseveres in his wait. The wait is however painful and futile as he never returns to the village or to his young friend Ratan.

Title: On one hand, the literal significance of the title reflects how life changed in the village, in particular for Ratan, once the Postmaster entered.  Ratan's life is forever changed by the presence of the postmaster.  To a large extent, we, as the reader, can assess this change through the postmaster's eyes, for we, like he, are new to the village and interpret much of it as he does.  This might be where the title holds some level of symbolic significance.  While we, as the reader, understand the village through his eyes, we slowly become more attune to Ratan, and while we initially understand consciousness through the postmaster, the real protagonist of the story might be Ratan.  There is a definite siding with the orphaned and abandoned Ratan in terms of her loyalty, her commitment to the postmaster, and her willingness to stgand with him through challenges and successes.  When the postmaster leaves the village and tries to rationalize away his abandoning of Ratan, like he, we as the reader experience a divided consciousness for we end the narrative, yet constantly wonder what will become of Ratan.  If we, as the reader, open with the postmaster, the title's significance is that we don't end with him, as we are more concerned with Ratan.  It is Tagore's genius that he is able to shift our sympathies without we, as the reader, being conscious of it.

The Postmaster is a short story that narrates the story of the titular postmaster who is posted to a village and forms a mentor-like relationship with a young girl named Ratan. While there are many themes that run through the text, the major theme is of "loneliness". It is loneliness that makes the postmaster take an interest in Ratan and decide to teach her. It is also, to an extent, Ratan's own loneliness that encourages her to form what sees as a friendship with the postmaster. At the end, the abandoned Ratan remains lonely by hoping for the return of the postmaster while the latter never returns, probably, due to not being lonely since returning to the city.

Theme: While there are many themes that run through the text, the major theme is of "loneliness". It is loneliness that makes the postmaster take an interest in Ratan and decide to teach her. It is also, to an extent, Ratan's own loneliness that encourages her to form what sees as a friendship with the postmaster.

**3. The kite maker**

The Kite Maker is a short story by British-Indian author Ruskin Bond. In it, an old man in rural India muses on how the world has changed while his grandson flies a kite nearby. Bond uses nature imagery as symbols, with an old, gnarled banyan tree standing in for the old man, while a young, spry mimosa tree represents the vitality of the grandson.

Ali, a young Indian boy, plays with a kite as his grandfather, Mehmood, rests under an old banyan tree, the only tree on the street.  Ali’s kite gets caught in the tree’s branches, and he asks his grandfather for help. Mehmood is too old to retrieve the kite or teach Ali to fly it properly, but he makes him another kite. Ali promises not to loose this one, and goes off to fly it.

Mehmood sits under the banyan tree and thinks of his former profession as a master kitemaker. In the old days, he remembers, grown men happily flew kites. There was more open space then, and less hustle and bustle in the town. Men would compete against each other and bet on the outcome. Even the nawab, the local village chieftain, would come to watch. When he was a kitemaker, Mehmood had been known and revered for his skill. Once, he had built a spectacular kite for the nawab, one that looked like a dragon in the air. That kite was too difficult for even Mehmood to fly, so he made the nawab a prettier, easier one.

Mehmood muses on just how much has changed since then. The nawab is dead, and his descendants are ordinary people, just like Mehmood. He no longer has a patron, and none of his neighbors know him. The pace of life has changed, and those living in his village are busy and harried. One of Mehmood’s sons works in a local garage, and the other is stuck in Pakistan. When India and Pakistan were made into two separate countries, he was on the wrong side of the border and cannot come home.

Mehmood is grateful that his other son lives nearby, as it gives him an opportunity to see Ali, his only grandson, grow up. He enjoys watching Ali play. Ali, he thinks, is like the mimosa sapling at the edge of the courtyard. They are young, and will grow up tall and strong. Mehmood is like the banyan tree he sits beneath. Both are old, stooped, their bones and branches twisted.

Mehmood feels himself growing tired and wonders if he’ll dream of the kite he wants to make, one that looks like a giant white bird. He should have something to leave Ali, he thinks. He hears Ali calling to him, but the boy’s voice sounds faint and far away. Ali returns to the banyan tree and sees his grandfather, whose eyes are closed. There is a little white butterfly resting on his beard. Ali tries to wake Mehmood, but can’t. Frightened, he runs away, calling for help from his mother. The butterfly flies from Mehmood’s beard to the mimosa tree, and Ali’s kite suddenly takes flight and disappears into the sky.

<https://youtu.be/cCXy9M0cVsg>

**4. The Diamond Necklace**

Mathilde Loisel is “pretty and charming” but feels she has been born into a family of unfavorable economic status. She was married off to a lowly clerk in the Ministry of Education, who can afford to provide her only with a modest though not uncomfortable lifestyle. Mathilde feels the burden of her poverty intensely. She regrets her lot in life and spends endless hours imagining a more extravagant existence. While her husband expresses his pleasure at the small, modest supper she has prepared for him, she dreams of an elaborate feast served on fancy china and eaten in the company of wealthy friends. She possesses no fancy jewels or clothing, yet these are the only things she lives for. Without them, she feels she is not desirable. She has one wealthy friend, Madame Forestier, but refuses to visit her because of the heartbreak it brings her.

One night, her husband returns home proudly bearing an invitation to a formal party hosted by the Ministry of Education. He hopes that Mathilde will be thrilled with the chance to attend an event of this sort, but she is instantly angry and begins to cry. Through her tears, she tells him that she has nothing to wear and he ought to give the invitation to one of his friends whose wife can afford better clothing. Her husband is upset by her reaction and asks how much a suitable dress would cost. She thinks about it carefully and tells him that 400 francs would be enough. Her husband quietly balks at the sum but agrees that she may have the money.

As the day of the party approaches, Mathilde starts to behave oddly. She confesses that the reason for her behavior is her lack of jewels. Monsieur Loisel suggests that she wear flowers, but she refuses. He implores her to visit Madame Forestier and borrow something from her. Madame Forestier agrees to lend Mathilde her jewels, and Mathilde selects a diamond necklace. She is overcome with gratitude at Madame Forestier’s generosity.

At the party, Mathilde is the most beautiful woman in attendance, and everyone notices her. She is intoxicated by the attention and has an overwhelming sense of self-satisfaction. At 4 a.m., she finally looks for Monsieur Loisel, who has been dozing for hours in a deserted room. He cloaks her bare shoulders in a wrap and cautions her to wait inside, away from the cold night air, while he fetches a cab. But she is ashamed at the shabbiness of her wrap and follows Monsieur Loisel outside. They walk for a while before hailing a cab.

When they finally return home, Mathilde is saddened that the night has ended. As she removes her wrap, she discovers that her necklace is no longer around her neck. In a panic, Monsieur Loisel goes outside and retraces their steps. Terrified, she sits and waits for him. He returns home much later in an even greater panic—he has not found the necklace. He instructs her to write to Madame Forestier and say that she has broken the clasp of the necklace and is getting it mended.

They continue to look for the necklace. After a week, Monsieur Loisel says they have to see about replacing it. They visit many jewelers, searching for a similar necklace, and finally find one. It costs 40,000 francs, although the jeweler says he will give it to them for 36,000. The Loisels spend a week scraping up money from all kinds of sources, mortgaging the rest of their existence. After three days, Monsieur Loisel purchases the necklace. When Mathilde returns the necklace, in its case, to Madame Forestier, Madame Forestier is annoyed at how long it has taken to get it back but does not open the case to inspect it. Mathilde is relieved.

The Loisels began to live a life of crippling poverty. They dismiss their servant and move into an even smaller apartment. Monsieur Loisel works three jobs, and Mathilde spends all her time doing the heavy housework. This misery lasts ten years, but at the end they have repaid their financial debts. Mathilde’s extraordinary beauty is now gone: she looks just likes the other women of poor households. They are both tired and irrevocably damaged from these years of hardship.

One Sunday, while she is out for a walk, Mathilde spots Madame Forestier. Feeling emotional, she approaches her and offers greetings. Madame Forestier does not recognize her, and when Mathilde identifies herself, Madame Forestier cannot help but exclaim that she looks different. Mathilde says that the change was on her account and explains to her the long saga of losing the necklace, replacing it, and working for ten years to repay the debts. At the end of her story, Madame Forestier clasps her hands and tells Mathilde the original necklace was just costume jewelry and not worth anything.

Character List

CHARACTERS CHARACTER LIST

Mathilde Loisel - The protagonist of the story. Mathilde has been blessed with physical beauty but not with the affluent lifestyle she yearns for, and she feels deeply discontented with her lot in life. When she prepares to attend a fancy party, she borrows a diamond necklace from her friend Madame Forestier, then loses the necklace and must work for ten years to pay off a replacement. Her one night of radiance cost her and Monsieur Loisel any chance for future happiness.

Monsieur Loisel - Mathilde’s husband. Monsieur Loisel is content with the small pleasures of his life but does his best to appease Mathilde’s demands and assuage her complaints. He loves Mathilde immensely but does not truly understand her, and he seems to underestimate the depth of her unhappiness. When Mathilde loses the necklace, Monsieur Loisel sacrifices his own future to help her repay the debt. He pays dearly for something he had never wanted in the first place.

Themes

MAIN IDEAS THEMES

The Deceptiveness of Appearances

The reality of Mathilde’s situation is that she is neither wealthy nor part of the social class of which she feels she is a deserving member, but Mathilde does everything in her power to make her life appear different from how it is. She lives in an illusory world where her actual life does not match the ideal life she has in her head—she believes that her beauty and charm make her worthy of greater things. The party is a triumph because for the first time, her appearance matches the reality of her life. She is prettier than the other women, sought after by the men, and generally admired and flattered by all. Her life, in the few short hours of the party, is as she feels it should be. However, beneath this rightness and seeming match of appearances and reality is the truth that her appearance took a great deal of scheming and work. The bliss of her evening was not achieved without angst, and the reality of her appearance is much different than it seems. Her wealth and class are simply illusions, and other people are easily deceived.

The deceptiveness of appearances is highlighted by Madame Forestier’s necklace, which appears to be made of diamonds but is actually nothing more than costume jewelry. The fact that it comes from Madame Forestier’s jewelry box gives it the illusion of richness and value; had Monsieur Loisel suggested that Mathilde wear fake jewels, she surely would have scoffed at the idea, just as she scoffed at his suggestion to wear flowers. Furthermore, the fact that Madame Forestier—in Mathilde’s view, the epitome of class and wealth—has a necklace made of fake jewels suggests that even the wealthiest members of society pretend to have more wealth than they actually have. Both women are ultimately deceived by appearances: Madame Forestier does not tell Mathilde that the diamonds are fake, and Mathilde does not tell Madame Forestier that she has replaced the necklace. The fact that the necklace changes—unnoticed—from worthless to precious suggests that true value is ultimately dependent on perception and that appearances can easily deceive.

The Danger of Martyrdom

Mathilde’s perception of herself as a martyr leads her to take unwise, self-serving actions. The Loisels live, appropriately, on the Rue des Martyrs, and Mathilde feels she must suffer through a life that is well beneath what she deserves. Unable to appreciate any aspect of her life, including her devoted husband, she is pained by her feeling that her beauty and charm are being wasted. When Mathilde loses the necklace and sacrifices the next ten years of her life to pay back the debts she incurred from buying a replacement, her feeling of being a martyr intensifies. She undertakes the hard work with grim determination, behaving more like a martyr than ever before. Her beauty is once again being wasted; this work eventually erases it completely. Her lot in life has gotten worse, and Mathilde continues to believe she has gotten less than she deserves, never acknowledging the fact that she is responsible for her own fate. Her belief in her martyrdom is, in a way, the only thing she has left. When Madame Forestier reveals that the necklace was worthless, Mathilde’s sacrifices also become worthless, and her status as a martyr—however dubious—is taken away entirely. At the end of the story, Mathilde is left with nothing.

Whereas Mathilde sees herself as a martyr but is actually very far from it, Monsieur Loisel himself is truly a martyr, constantly sacrificing his desires and, ultimately, his well-being for Mathilde’s sake. He gives up his desire for a gun so that Mathilde can buy a dress, and he uncomplainingly mortgages his future to replace the necklace Mathilde loses. Forced to sacrifice his happiness and years of his life to accommodate Mathilde’s selfish desires, he is the one who truly becomes a martyr.

The Perceived Power of Objects

Mathilde believes that objects have the power to change her life, but when she finally gets two of the objects she desires most, the dress and necklace, her happiness is fleeting at best. At the beginning of “The Necklace,” we get a laundry list of all the objects she does not have but that she feels she deserves. The beautiful objects in other women’s homes and absence of such objects in her own home make her feel like an outsider, fated to envy other women. The things she does have—a comfortable home, hot soup, a loving husband—she disdains. Mathilde effectively relinquishes control of her happiness to objects that she does not even possess, and her obsession with the trappings of the wealthy leads to her perpetual discontent. When she finally acquires the dress and necklace, those objects seem to have a transformative power. She is finally the woman she believes she was meant to be—happy, admired, and envied. She has gotten what she wanted, and her life has changed accordingly. However, when she loses the necklace, the dream dissolves instantly, and her life becomes even worse than before. In reality, the power does not lie with the objects but within herself.

In contrast to Mathilde, Madame Forestier infuses objects with little power. Her wealth enables her to purchase what she likes, but more important, it also affords her the vantage point to realize that these objects are not the most important things in the world. She seems casual about, and even careless with her possessions: when Mathilde brazenly requests to borrow her striking diamond necklace, she agrees. And later, when Mathilde informs her that the necklace in her possession is actually extremely valuable, she seems more rattled by the idea that Mathilde has sacrificed her life unnecessarily. The fact that Madame Forestier owned fake jewels in the first place suggests that she understands that objects are only as powerful as people perceive them to be. For her, fake jewels can be just as beautiful and striking as real diamonds if one sees them as such.

Mathilde Loisel

CHARACTERS MATHILDE LOISEL

Beautiful Mathilde Loisel was born into a family of clerks, and her utter conviction that her station in life is a mistake of destiny leads her to live her life in a constant rebellion against her circumstances. Although she has a comfortable home and loving husband, she is so unsatisfied that she is virtually oblivious of everything but the wealth she does not have. Her desire for wealth is a constant pain and turmoil. She cannot visit her wealthy friend Madame Forestier without being overcome with jealousy, and the idea of going to a party without expensive clothes drives her to tears. Mathilde is a raging, jealous woman who will do anything in her power to reverse the “mistake of destiny” that has plunged her into what she perceives as a wholly inappropriate and inadequate life.

Mathilde is happy at only one point in “The Necklace”: on the night of the party, when her new dress and borrowed jewels give her the appearance of belonging to the wealthy world she aspires to. Fully at ease among the wealthy people at the party, Mathilde feels that this is exactly where she was meant to be—if it hadn’t been for the mistake of destiny. She forgets her old life completely (her husband dozes in an empty room for most of the night) and immerses herself in the illusion of a new one. Her moment of happiness, of course, is fleeting, and she must spend the next ten years paying for the pleasure of this night. However, her joy was so acute—and her satisfaction, for once, so complete—that even the ten arduous years and her compromised beauty do not dull the party’s memory. Just as Mathilde was oblivious to the small pleasures that her life once afforded her, she is oblivious to the fact that her greed and deception are what finally sealed her fate.

<https://youtu.be/6KTmdKkbyqg>

**Unit 4**

**Paragraph**

A paragraph is a series of sentences that are organized and coherent, and are all related to a single topic. Almost every piece of writing you do that is longer than a few sentences should be organized into paragraphs. This is because paragraphs show a reader where the subdivisions of an essay begin and end, and thus help the reader see the organization of the essay and grasp its main points.

Paragraphs can contain many different kinds of information. A paragraph could contain a series of brief examples or a single long illustration of a general point. It might describe a place, character, or process; narrate a series of events; compare or contrast two or more things; classify items into categories; or describe causes and effects. Regardless of the kind of information they contain, all paragraphs share certain characteristics. One of the most important of these is a topic sentence.

PARAGRAPH STRUCTURE

Most paragraphs in an essay have a three-part structure—introduction, body, and conclusion. You can see this structure in paragraphs whether they are narrating, describing, comparing, contrasting, or analyzing information. Each part of the paragraph plays an important role in communicating your meaning to your reader.

Introduction: the first section of a paragraph; should include the topic sentence and any other sentences at the beginning of the paragraph that give background information or provide a transition.

Body: follows the introduction; discusses the controlling idea, using facts, arguments, analysis, examples, and other information.

Conclusion: the final section; summarizes the connections between the information discussed in the body of the paragraph and the paragraph’s controlling idea.

COHERENCE

In a coherent paragraph, each sentence relates clearly to the topic sentence or controlling idea, but there is more to coherence than this. If a paragraph is coherent, each sentence flows smoothly into the next without obvious shifts or jumps. A coherent paragraph also highlights the ties between old information and new information to make the structure of ideas or arguments clear to the reader.

Along with the smooth flow of sentences, a paragraph’s coherence may also be related to its length. If you have written a very long paragraph, one that fills a double-spaced typed page, for example, you should check it carefully to see if it should start a new paragraph where the original paragraph wanders from its controlling idea. On the other hand, if a paragraph is very short (only one or two sentences, perhaps), you may need to develop its controlling idea more thoroughly, or combine it with another paragraph.

A number of other techniques that you can use to establish coherence in paragraphs are described below.

Repeat key words or phrases. Particularly in paragraphs in which you define or identify an important idea or theory, be consistent in how you refer to it. This consistency and repetition will bind the paragraph together and help your reader understand your definition or description.

Create parallel structures. Parallel structures are created by constructing two or more phrases or sentences that have the same grammatical structure and use the same parts of speech. By creating parallel structures you make your sentences clearer and easier to read. In addition, repeating a pattern in a series of consecutive sentences helps your reader see the connections between ideas. In the paragraph above about scientists and the sense of sight, several sentences in the body of the paragraph have been constructed in a parallel way. The parallel structures (which have been emphasized) help the reader see that the paragraph is organized as a set of examples of a general statement.

Be consistent in point of view, verb tense, and number. Consistency in point of view, verb tense, and number is a subtle but important aspect of coherence. If you shift from the more personal "you" to the impersonal “one,” from past to present tense, or from “a man” to “they,” for example, you make your paragraph less coherent. Such inconsistencies can also confuse your reader and make your argument more difficult to follow.

Use transition words or phrases between sentences and between paragraphs. Transitional expressions emphasize the relationships between ideas, so they help readers follow your train of thought or see connections that they might otherwise miss or misunderstand. The following paragraph shows how carefully chosen transitions (CAPITALIZED) lead the reader smoothly from the introduction to the conclusion of the paragraph.

I don’t wish to deny that the flattened, minuscule head of the large-bodied "stegosaurus" houses little brain from our subjective, top-heavy perspective, BUT I do wish to assert that we should not expect more of the beast. FIRST OF ALL, large animals have relatively smaller brains than related, small animals. The correlation of brain size with body size among kindred animals (all reptiles, all mammals, FOR EXAMPLE) is remarkably regular. AS we move from small to large animals, from mice to elephants or small lizards to Komodo dragons, brain size increases, BUT not so fast as body size. IN OTHER WORDS, bodies grow faster than brains, AND large animals have low ratios of brain weight to body weight. IN FACT, brains grow only about two-thirds as fast as bodies. SINCE we have no reason to believe that large animals are consistently stupider than their smaller relatives, we must conclude that large animals require relatively less brain to do as well as smaller animals. IF we do not recognize this relationship, we are likely to underestimate the mental power of very large animals, dinosaurs in particular.

**Reading comprehension**

Reading comprehension is the ability to process text, understand its meaning, and to integrate with what the reader already knows. Fundamental skills required in efficient reading comprehension are knowing meaning of words, ability to understand meaning of a word from discourse context, ability to follow organization of passage and to identify antecedents and references in it, ability to draw inferences from a passage about its contents, ability to identify the main thought of a passage, ability to answer questions answered in a passage, ability to recognize the literary devices or propositional structures used in a passage and determine its tone, to understand the situational mood (agents, objects, temporal and spatial reference points, casual and intentional inflections, etc.) conveyed for assertions, questioning, commanding, refraining etc. and finally ability to determine writer's purpose, intent and point of view, and draw inferences about the writer (discourse-semantics).

Comprehension passages are sure shot scoring questions. We are given a passage and some questions that follow the passage. The questions are to be answered by using the data given in the passage, even if it differs from real life facts.

Right Approach to Answer the Questions

1).Questions is to be answered on the basis of the information provided in the passage, and you are not expected to rely on outside knowledge of a particular topic. Your own views or opinions may sometimes conflict with the views expressed or the information provided in the passage. Be sure that you work within the context of the passage. You should not expect to agree with everything you encounter in reading passages.

2).You should analyze each passage carefully before answering the accompanying questions. As with any kind of close and thoughtful reading, look for clues that will help you understand less explicit aspect of the passage. Try to separate main ideas from supporting ideas or evidence.

3).Note transitions from one idea to the next, and examine the relationships among the different ideas or parts of the passage. For example, are they contrasting? Are they complementary? Consider the points the author made, the conclusions drawn, and how and why those points are made or conclusions are drawn.

4).Read each question carefully and be certain that you understand exactly what is being asked.

5).Always read all the answer choices before selecting the best answer.

6).The best answer is the one that most accurately and most completely answer the questions being posed. Be careful not to pick an answer choice simply because it is a true statement. Be careful also not to be misled by answer choices that are only partially true or only partially satisfy the problem posed in the question.

7).The methodology of eliminating wrong answers also works here. It simply means that if you are unable to judge the right choice or right answer, tick the answer that are incorrect, in this way if there remains one answer to be ticked, that will be the correct answer. But if there remains more than one answer to be ticked then it is you, whether you like to take risk or not. None can help you, as there may be negative marking also.

Passage - 1

Philosophy of Education is a label applied to the study of the purpose, process, nature and ideals of education. It can be considered a branch of both philosophy and education. Education can be defined as the teaching and learning of specific skills, and the imparting of knowledge, judgment and wisdom, and is something broader than the societal institution of education we often speak of.

Many educationalists consider it a weak and woolly field, too far removed from the practical applications of the real world to be useful. But philosophers dating back to Plato and the Ancient Greeks have given the area much thought and emphasis, and there is little doubt that their work has helped shape the practice of education over the millennia.

Plato is the earliest important educational thinker, and education is an essential element in "The Republic" (his most important work on philosophy and political theory, written around 360 B.C.). In it, he advocates some rather extreme methods: removing children from their mothers' care and raising them as wards of the state, and differentiating children suitable to the various castes, the highest receiving the most education, so that they could act as guardians of the city and care for the less able. He believed that education should be holistic, including facts, skills, physical discipline, music and art. Plato believed that talent and intelligence is not distributed genetically and thus is be found in children born to all classes, although his proposed system of selective public education for an educated minority of the population does not really follow a democratic model.

Aristotle considered human nature, habit and reason to be equally important forces to be cultivated in education, the ultimate aim of which should be to produce good and virtuous citizens. He proposed that teachers lead their students systematically, and that repetition be used as a key tool to develop good habits, unlike Socrates' emphasis on questioning his listeners to bring out their own ideas. He emphasized the balancing of the theoretical and practical aspects of subjects taught, among which he explicitly mentions reading, writing, mathematics, music, physical education, literature, history, and a wide range of sciences, as well as play, which he also considered important.

During the Medieval period, the idea of Perennialism was first formulated by St. Thomas Aquinas in his work "De Magistro". Perennialism holds that one should teach those things deemed to be of everlasting importance to all people everywhere, namely principles and reasoning, not just facts (which are apt to change over time), and that one should teach first about people, not machines or techniques. It was originally religious in nature, and it was only much later that a theory of secular perennialism developed.

During the Renaissance, the French skeptic Michel de Montaigne (1533 - 1592) was one of the first to critically look at education. Unusually for his time, Montaigne was willing to question the conventional wisdom of the period, calling into question the whole edifice of the educational system, and the implicit assumption that university-educated philosophers were necessarily wiser than uneducated farm workers, for example.

Q1.What is the difference between the approaches of Socrates and Aristotle?

1)Aristotle felt the need for repetition to develop good habits in students; Socrates felt that students need to be constantly questioned

2)Aristotle felt the need for rote-learning; Socrates emphasized on dialogic learning

3)There was no difference

4)Aristotle emphasized on the importance of paying attention to human nature; Socrates emphasized upon science

Ans1. The first option is correct – their approaches were different and this difference is quite explicitly explained in the fourth paragraph

Q2.Why do educationists consider philosophy a ‘weak and woolly’ field?

1)It is not practically applicable

2)Its theoretical concepts are easily understood

3)It is irrelevant for education

4)None of the above

Ans2. The first option is correct because educationists believe that philosophical abstractions are not suitable for practical application.

Q3.What do you understand by the term ‘Perennialism’, in the context of the given comprehension passage?

1)It refers to something which is of ceaseless importance

2)It refers to something which is quite unnecessary

3)It refers to something which is abstract and theoretical

4) It refers to something which existed in the past and no longer exists now

Ans3. The first option is correct because the term comes from the root word ‘perennial’ – which means ceaseless.

Q4.Were Plato’s beliefs about education democratic?

1)He believed that only the rich have the right to acquire education

2)Yes

3)He believed that only a select few are meant to attend schools

4) He believed that all pupils are not talented

Ans4. The second option is correct – Plato’s beliefs were democratic but not his suggested practices

Q5.Why did Aquinas propose a model of education which did not lay much emphasis on facts?

1)Facts are not important

2)Facts do not lead to holistic education

3)Facts change with the changing times

4)Facts are frozen in time

Ans5. The third option is correct – facts do change with the changing times, hence, they are not of the utmost importance when aiming for holistic education.

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<https://youtu.be/BtT87B3K_9E>

<https://youtu.be/8boxlzOObMc>

**Unit 5**

**Transformation of sentences.**

The transformation of a sentence is all about changing its form without altering its meaning. We can, for example, transform an exclamatory sentence into an assertive sentence or vice-versa. We can also transform simple sentences into complex or compound sentences.

Transformation of sentences

There are three types of Transformation of sentences. Those are –

Simple Sentences

Complex Sentences and

Compound Sentences

What is Clause?

The clause is where there will be a subject and a predicate as a group of words, but that will not be considered as a full sentence. The clause can be of two types. Those are –

1. Independent Clause:

A Clause that –

contains both a subject and a predicate.

can stand alone as a sentence or

can be a part of a multi-clause sentence.

uses conjunctions such as – or, for, nor, so, yet, and, but.

Example: We visited Agra, but we did not go to Taj Mahal.

2. Dependent Clause:

A Clause that  is –

that have a subject and a predicate

cannot stand alone as a sentence

always be a part of a sentence, on which it depends for meaning.

A dependent clause is of three types – Adjective Clause, Adverb Clause, and Noun Clause.

1. Adjective Clause or Relative Clause:

An adjective clause or relative clause is like an adjective which comes before to change or modify the noun or pronoun by – who, which, that, where, when, whose, whom, whoever, etc.

Example:

This is a resort that we saw on the TV.

The Lady who was our tour guide is a American.

2. Adverb Clause or Adverbial Clause:

An adverbial clause or subordinate clause is a type of dependent clause which starts with subordinating conjunctions like – because, although, when, if, until, as if etc.

Example:

The homeless guy spent the night on the road.

We wanted to go to the Bashundhara Cineplex.

3. Noun Clause:

In a sentence when a clause functions as the complement, subject or object is called noun clause. It starts with the same words that begin adjective clauses, e.g., that, who, when, which, where, whether, why, how.

Example:

What we saw at the Thor movie was amazing.

To understand the types of transformation of sentences we need to know the definition of the Simple Sentences, Complex Sentences, and Compound Sentences.

Simple Sentence:

When in a sentence that has one independent clause it is called simple sentence.

Example: He confessed his illegal act.

Complex Sentence:

When in a sentence that has one clause and one or more    subordinate clauses it is called a complex sentence.

Example: He confessed that he was guilty of his illegal act.

Compound Sentence:

When in a sentence that has more than one main clause it is called the compound sentence.

Example: I went to watch a movie named Justice League, but the movie was already houseful.

Transforming Simple Sentences into Complex Sentences:

Converting Simple Sentences into Complex Sentences can be done easily. And this can be done by simply expanding a word or a phrase into a clause. Moreover, we can do the same thing when we want to change the Complex Sentences into Simple Sentences. And this can be done by eliminating a clause into a word or a phrase.

Few examples are given below to understand the concept and conventional rules of transforming between Simple Sentence and Complex Sentences:-

Rule: 1:

“Present participle” in a simple sentence, to convert into complex sentences by adding “since/as/when” at the first half of the sentence.

Simple Sentence: Closing the door, I went back to school.

Complex Sentence: When I closed the door, I went back to school.

Rule: 2

“Being/ Verb+ing” in a simple sentence, to convert into a complex sentence by adding “as/when/since” at the first half of the sentence.

Simple Sentence: After winning a beauty contest she cried.

Complex Sentence: As she won the beauty contest, she cried.

Rule: 3

“Too…to” in a simple sentence, to convert into a complex sentence by adding “so…that (negative)”.

Simple Sentence: He is too weak to carry the box.

Complex Sentence: He is so weak that he cannot carry the box.

Rule: 4

“To” in the simple sentence, to convert into a complex sentence by adding “so that” in the sentence.

Simple sentence: We eat to live.

Complex Sentence: We eat so that we can live.

Rule: 5

In the simple sentence “in spite of/ despite”, to convert into the complex sentence by adding “though/ although” in the sentence.

Simple Sentence: In spite of being rich, she is hard working.

Complex Sentence: Though she is rich, she is hard working.

Rule: 6

“Because of” in the simple sentence, to convert it to the complex sentence by adding “since” at the beginning of the sentence.

Simple Sentence: Because of his illness, he could not join the meeting.

Complex Sentence: Since he was ill, he could not join the meeting.

Rule: 7

“Subject + verb + object + present participle” type of simple sentence, to convert it to the complex sentence by “subject + verb + object + relative pronoun of the object + be verb according to relative pronoun and tense + rest of the sentence”.

Simple Sentence: I saw a bird flying.

Complex Sentence: I saw a bird which was flying.

Rule: 8

In the simple sentence starts with “without”,  by adding “if/ in case” is converted into the complex sentence.

Simple Sentence: Without adding the sugar the dish will taste bad.

Complex Sentence: If you do not add sugar the dish will taste bad.

Rule: 9

In the simple sentence “at the time” will be converted into “when” in the complex sentence.

Simple Sentence: She woke up at the time of load shedding.

Complex Sentence: She woke up when it was load shedding.

Rule: 10:

In the simple sentence, “adjective” will be converted into “that/which” in the complex sentence.

Simple Sentence: It was a blue shirt.

Complex Sentence: It was a shirt which was blue.

Transformation of Sentences

Transformation-of-Sentences is done in various ways.

The nature of the sentences can be changed without changing the meaning of the sentences.

1. Sentences containing the adverb ‘too’:

Example-1:

• My friend is too rich to by my consort.

You can see How the Transformation-of-Sentences, containing the adverb ‘too’, takes place without changing the meaning of the sentence.

• My friend is so rich that he can not be my consort.

Example-2:

• The news is too good to be true.

You can see How the Transformation-of-Sentences takes place into the following version without changing the meaning of the sentence.

• The news is so good that it can not be true.

Example-3:

• He drove too fast for the police to catch.

This sentence can be changed into the following version with out changing the meaning of the sentence.

• He drove so fast that the police can not catch him.

The Transformation-of-Sentences takes place by removing the adverb ‘too’ and by adding a conjunction ‘so…that’.

In this way, the following sentences have been changed for your attention.

Examples:

• He is too proud to beg.

• He is so proud that he will not beg.

• It is never too late to mend.

• It is not so late that it can not be mended.

• He is too ignorant for the post of a postman.

• He is so ignorant that he is not suitable for the post of a postman.

• This shirt is small for me.

• This shirt is so small that it is not suitable for me.

• He speaks too fast to be understood.

• He speaks so fast that he can not be understood.

2. Interchange of Degrees of Comparison: :

The Transformation-of-Sentences, containing comparatives, can be done as follows with out changing the meaning of the sentences.

Example-1:

• I am as strong as him.

This sentence is in positive degree.

This sentence can be changed into a sentence of comparative one.

• I am not stronger than him

This sentence conveys the same meaning as the above sentence.

Example-2:

• Positive: This razor is not as sharp as that one.

• Comparative: That razor is sharper than this one.

Example-3:

• Positive: Very few cities in India are as rich as Mumbai.

• Comparative: Mumbai is richer that most other cities in India.

• Superlative: Mumbai is one of the richest cities in India.

Example-4:

• Superlative: Upshaw is not the tallest girl in the class.

• Comparative: Upshaw is not taller than many girls in the class.

The Transformation-of-Sentences,according to the nature of the sentences, takes place into either negative or affirmative sentences.

3. Interchange of Active and Passive voice:

A sentence in the Active form can be changed into Passive form.

Example-1:

• Active: Brutus stabbed Caesar.

• Passive: Caesar was stabbed by Brutus.

The proper Auxiliary verb and ‘by’ are used in the Passive form.

Example-2:

• Active: The members will make him the President of this organization.

• Passive: He will be made the President of this organization by its members.

Example-3:

• Active: The audience loudly cheered the Mayor’s speech.

• Passive: The Mayor’s speech was loudly cheered.

Whenever it is evident who the agent (doer of the action) is, it is not necessary to mention him in the passive voice and this omission gives the sentence a beauty.

In the example-3, it is evident that only the audience would have cheered the speaker.

So, it has been avoided and such an omission adds only a touch of beauty to the sentence.

Example-4:

The same way, the proper Pronoun form and the proper verb should be added in the active sentence when the passive sentences is changed into an active sentence.

• Passive: She is known to me.

• Active: I know her.

Example-5:

• Passive: Promises should be kept.

• Active: One should keep one’s promises.

The Active Voice is used to make the agent prominent.

The Passive Voice is used to make ‘the action of the verb’ prominent.

The Passive Voice can be used when the agent is unknown.

Example-6:

• Active: We admire the brave.

• Passive: The brave is admired.

In this sentence, the agent ‘we’ has been omitted to generalize the statement that the brave is admired.

Although, the Active-sentence has used the pronoun ‘we’.

4. Interchange of affirmative and negative sentences:

The affirmative sentence can be changed into a negative sentence by using ‘not’.

Example-1:

• Affirmative: I was doubtful whether it was you.

• Negative: I was not sure that it was you.

Example-2:

• Affirmative: Everybody was present.

• Negative: Nobody is absent.

Example-3:

• Affirmative: All cheered.

• Negative: There was no one present who did not cheer.

In this way the negative sentences can be changed into affirmative sentences as follows.

Example-4:

• Negative: God will not forget the cry of the humble.

• Affirmative: God will heed the cry of the humble.

The ‘not’ in the negative sentences should be removed to convert them into affirmative sentences.

Example-5:

• Negative: No one could deny that she is pretty.

• Affirmative: Every one accepts that she is pretty.

**Articles**

“A/an” and “The” are the three types of English articles. There are rules to help you decide which one to use, but first, you need to know what type of noun you are using.

Grammar rule 1

When you have a single, countable English noun, you must always have an article before it. We cannot say “please pass me pen”, we must say “please pass me the pen” or “please pass me a pen” or “please pass me your pen”.

Nouns in English can also be uncountable. Uncountable nouns can be concepts, such as ‘life’, ‘happiness’ and so on, or materials and substances, such as ‘coffee’, or ‘wood’.

Grammar rule 2

Uncountable nouns don’t use ‘a’ or ‘an’. This is because you can’t count them. For example, advice is an uncountable noun. You can’t say “he gave me an advice”, but you can say “he gave me some advice”, or “he gave me a piece of advice”.

Some nouns can be both countable and uncountable. For example, we say “coffee” meaning the product, but we say “a coffee” when asking for one cup of coffee.

Grammar rule 3

You can use ‘the’ to make general things specific. You can use ‘the’ with any type of noun – plural or singular, countable or uncountable.

“Please pass me a pen” – any pen.

“Please pass me the pen” – the one that we can both see.

“Children grow up quickly” – children in general.

“The children I know grow up quickly” – not all children, just the ones I know.

“Poetry can be beautiful”- poetry in general.

“The poetry of Hopkins is beautiful” – I’m only talking about the poetry Hopkins wrote.

More uses of English articles

Here are some more rules for when we use English articles “a/an” and “the” – or when we omit the article:

Rivers, mountain ranges, seas, oceans and geographic areas all use ‘the‘.

For example, “The Thames”, “The Alps”, “The Atlantic Ocean”, “The Middle East”.

Unique things have ‘the’.

For example, “the sun”, “the moon”.

Some institutional buildings don’t have an article if you visit them for the reason these buildings exist. But if you go to the building for another reason, you must use ‘the’.

“Her husband is in prison.” (He’s a prisoner.)

“She goes to the prison to see him once a month.”

“My son is in school.” (He’s a student.)

“I’m going to the school to see the head master.”

“She’s in hospital at the moment.” (She’s ill.)

“Her husband goes to the hospital to see her every afternoon.”

Musical instruments use ‘the‘.

“She plays the piano.”

Sports don’t have an article.

“He plays football.”

Illnesses don’t have an article.

“He’s got appendicitis.”

But we say “a cold” and “a headache”.

Jobs use ‘a’.

“I’m a teacher.”

Countries

We don’t use ‘a’ if the country is singular. “He lives in England.” But if the country’s name has a “plural” meaning, we use ‘the’. “The People’s Republic of China”, “The Netherlands”, “The United States of America”.

Continents, towns and streets don’t have an article.

“Africa”, “New York”, “Church Street”.

Theatres, cinemas and hotels have ‘the’.

“The Odeon”, “The Almeira”, “The Hilton”.

Abbreviations use ‘the’.

“the UN”, “the USA”, “the IMF”.

We use ‘the’ before classes of people.

“the rich”, “the poor”, “the British”.

Some Rules using Articles

Singular count nouns:

indefinite: use 'a'

definite: use "the"

My daughter wants to buy a dog this weekend. (Indefinite-Could be any dog)

The dog in the backyard is very cute.(Definite-The one in the backyard)

He requested a puppy for his birthday.

He wanted the puppy he played with at the pet shop.

She ordered a hamburger without onions.

Did you drink the coke I just ordered?

Plural count nouns:

Use "the" or Nothing, never 'a'.

Come and look at the children. (definite)

Children are always curious. (indefinite)

She loves flowers. (indefinite)

The flowers in her garden are beautiful. (definite)

Do you like reading grammar rules?

Do you like reading the grammar rules on this page?

Non-count nouns:

Use "the" or nothing.

He has experience. (if indefinite or mentioned for the first time)

He has the experience necessary for the job. (if definite or mentioned before)

The medicine the doctor prescribed had unpleasant side effects.

Writing in a second language is especially challenging.

Have you studied the history of South Africa?

History reminds us that events repeat themselves.

Definite Article THE Rules

Adjectives as Nouns

When referring to a group of people by use of an adjective rather than a noun, use "the".

the elderly the disabled the unemployed

the rich the sick the needy

the homeless the young the restless

Names of Countries

Some countries are preceded by "the", usually if the name is plural, contains an adjective, or includes "of".

The United States The Soviet Union The Republic of Congo

America Russia Spain

Japan China Mexico

Cities and Streets use nothing

Chicago Fifth Avenue San Francisco

Highway 5 London Kennedy blvd.

Rivers, Oceans, Seas, Groups of Mountains & Islands use "the"

the Amazon the Atlantic the Mediterranean

the Cascades the Hawaiian Islands the Bahamas

Numbers

Cardinal numbers(1,2,3) use nothing

World War 2 Page 7 Chapter 1

Mission 1 Paragraph 5 Channel 6

Ordinal numbers (1st,2nd,3rd) use "the"

The Second World War the seventh page the first chapter

the first mission the fifth paragraph the sixth channel

Titles of People

When a title is given with a name, use nothing

President Mitchael Queen Mary Professor Scott

When a title is used without a name, use "the"

The president the queen the professor

Schools

When a school has "of" in its title, use "the"

The University of Arizona The University of London Chapter 2

When a school does not have "of" in its title, use nothing

Lincoln High School Arizona State University Liverpool John Moores University

Location versus Activity

When referring to an activity, use nothing

I am going to school now.(activity-study)

He is always on time for class. (activity-learn)

When referring to the location, use "the"

The meeting is at the school. (location-campus)

They are remodeling the movie theater. (location-building)

The new student had trouble finding the class. (location-classroom)

Unique Objects - Use THE

the earth the human race the world

the moon the sun the universe

Part of a larger group, Use THE

-One of the students

-None of the students

-Both of the students

-All of the students

Prepositions

Prepositions are short words (at, in, on) which are used to show position, location, direction, and time in English.

Some examples of common prepositions used in sentences are:

He sat on the chair.

There is some milk in the fridge.

She was hiding under the table.

The cat jumped off the counter.

He drove over the bridge.

She lost her ring at the beach.

The book belongs to Anthony.

They were sitting by the tree.

Agreement of subject with verb

Being able to find the right subject and verb will help you correct errors of subject-verb agreement.

Basic Rule. A singular subject (she, Bill, car) takes a singular verb (is, goes, shines), whereas a plural subject takes a plural verb.

Example: The list of items is/are on the desk.

If you know that list is the subject, then you will choose is for the verb.

Rule 1. A subject will come before a phrase beginning with of. This is a key rule for understanding subjects. The word of is the culprit in many, perhaps most, subject-verb mistakes.

Hasty writers, speakers, readers, and listeners might miss the all-too-common mistake in the following sentence:

Incorrect: A bouquet of yellow roses lend color and fragrance to the room.

Correct: A bouquet of yellow roses lends . . . (bouquet lends, not roses lend)

Rule 2. Two singular subjects connected by or, either/or, or neither/nor require a singular verb.

Examples:

My aunt or my uncle is arriving by train today.

Neither Juan nor Carmen is available.

Either Kiana or Casey is helping today with stage decorations.

Rule 3. The verb in an or, either/or, or neither/nor sentence agrees with the noun or pronoun closest to it.

Examples:

Neither the plates nor the serving bowl goes on that shelf.

Neither the serving bowl nor the plates go on that shelf.

This rule can lead to bumps in the road. For example, if I is one of two (or more) subjects, it could lead to this odd sentence:

Awkward: Neither she, my friends, nor I am going to the festival.

If possible, it's best to reword such grammatically correct but awkward sentences.

Better:

Neither she, I, nor my friends are going to the festival.

OR

She, my friends, and I are not going to the festival.

Rule 4. As a general rule, use a plural verb with two or more subjects when they are connected by and.

Example: A car and a bike are my means of transportation.

But note these exceptions:

Exceptions:

Breaking and entering is against the law.

The bed and breakfast was charming.

In those sentences, breaking and entering and bed and breakfast are compound nouns.

Rule 5a. Sometimes the subject is separated from the verb by such words as along with, as well as, besides, not, etc. These words and phrases are not part of the subject. Ignore them and use a singular verb when the subject is singular.

Examples:

The politician, along with the newsmen, is expected shortly.

Excitement, as well as nervousness, is the cause of her shaking.

Rule 5b. Parentheses are not part of the subject.

Example: Joe (and his trusty mutt) was always welcome.

If this seems awkward, try rewriting the sentence.

Rule 6. In sentences beginning with here or there, the true subject follows the verb.

Examples:

There are four hurdles to jump.

There is a high hurdle to jump.

Here are the keys.

Rule 7. Use a singular verb with distances, periods of time, sums of money, etc., when considered as a unit.

Examples:

Three miles is too far to walk.

Five years is the maximum sentence for that offense.

Ten dollars is a high price to pay.

BUT

Ten dollars (i.e., dollar bills) were scattered on the floor.

Rule 8. With words that indicate portions—e.g., a lot, a majority, some, all—Rule 1 given earlier in this section is reversed, and we are guided by the noun after of. If the noun after of is singular, use a singular verb. If it is plural, use a plural verb.

Examples:

A lot of the pie has disappeared.

A lot of the pies have disappeared.

A third of the city is unemployed.

A third of the people are unemployed.

All of the pie is gone.

All of the pies are gone.

Some of the pie is missing.

Some of the pies are missing.

Rule 9. With collective nouns such as group, jury, family, audience, population, the verb might be singular or plural, depending on the writer's intent.

Examples:

All of my family has arrived OR have arrived.

Most of the jury is here OR are here.

A third of the population was not in favor OR were not in favor of the bill.

Rule 10. The word were replaces was in sentences that express a wish or are contrary to fact:

Example: If Joe were here, you'd be sorry.

Shouldn't Joe be followed by was, not were, given that Joe is singular? But Joe isn't actually here, so we say were, not was. The sentence demonstrates the subjunctive mood, which is used to express things that are hypothetical, wishful, imaginary, or factually contradictory. The subjunctive mood pairs singular subjects with what we usually think of as plural verbs.

Examples:

I wish it were Friday.

She requested that he raise his hand.

In the first example, a wishful statement, not a fact, is being expressed; therefore, were, which we usually think of as a plural verb, is used with the singular it. (Technically, it is the singular subject of the object clause in the subjunctive mood: it were Friday.)

Normally, he raise would sound terrible to us. However, in the second example, where a request is being expressed, the subjunctive mood is correct.

Note: The subjunctive mood is losing ground in spoken English but should still be used in formal speech and writing.

<https://youtu.be/LfJPA8GwTdk>