

Paragraph jumbles (PJ), as the name itself suggests, consist of sentences not arranged in a logical sequence. A choice of arrangement of the sentences is given from which the candidate has to choose the most logical sequence which would be the most appropriate for conveying the message of the passage. This is a test of the student's logical ability, his/her language interpretation ability, and depth in vocabulary. It also tests the student's comprehension abilities since the solving of a para jumble involves very often, the grasping of diverse messages from a wide range of topics.

Before you go through the specific theory of this chapter, make sure that you have completed the 'Ten Step Approach to Improving your Reading Skills' explained in Part I of this book.

Solving a question of this nature is both an art and a science. Art because it requires the specific usage of skills under various conditions and science because there are certain thumb rules that exist, which can be used effectively to improve one's ability to solve paragraph jumbles.

Needless to say, it helps if the student is an avid reader of various kinds of books and magazines. In general, the more diverse the exposure to different texts of varied nature in terms of subjects, authors, writing styles, etc. the better will be your ability to solve paragraph jumble questions. The student is advised to develop his reading habits in such a way that he incorporates varied subjects like philosophy, psychology, sciences, medicine, astronomy, metaphysics, management, finance, marketing, etc. Please re-read the portion about the process of improving reading habits given in the reading comprehension section of the book. This is a very important activity if you want to do well at paragraph jumbles. Before we move ahead, let us illustrate to you the importance of having wide reading habits. Consider the following example. Arrange the given sentences in the correct sequence:

**A.** He rung the doorbell.

- B.** Ramu's school bell rung at precisely 1:35 p.m.
  - C.** He rushed home as he was very excited about the present waiting for him at home.
  - D.** His mother opened the door.
  - E.** He reached home at 5 minutes past two.
- What is your answer?

Is it BCEAD? Most people reading this question will get it right. The reason—the topic described in the passage is so simple and the exposure to something like this so common that there is no strain on the mind. Most readers will be able to logically structure the sequence of events described in the paragraph jumble above. Hence, the chances of error will be remote, and will arise only if you were not focused enough while solving the passage.

Now consider this example:

- 1.** This book has grown out of an attempt to harmonize two different tendencies, one in psychology, the other in physics, with both of which I find myself in sympathy, although at first sight, they might seem inconsistent,
  - A.** They make psychology increasingly dependent on physiology and external observation, and tend to think matter as something much more solid and indubitable than mind.
  - B.** Their world consists of "events," from which "matter" is derived by a logical construction. Whoever reads, for example, Professor Eddington's "Space, Time and Gravitation" (Cambridge University Press, 1920), will see that an old-fashioned materialism can receive no support from modern physics.
  - C.** On the one hand, many psychologists, especially those of the behaviourist school, tend to adopt what is essentially a materialistic position, as a matter of method if not of metaphysics.

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D. Meanwhile the physicists, especially Einstein and other exponents of the theory of relativity, have been making “matter” less and less material.

E. I think that what has permanent value in the outlook of the behaviourists is the feeling that physics is the most fundamental science at present in existence.

7. But this position cannot be called materialistic, if, as seems to be the case, physics does not assume the existence of matter.

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| 1. BECAD | 2. DBECA |
| 3. ADBCE | 4. CADBE |

Getting this correct will be a different kettle of fish. The reason—the topic is one where your exposure is much lower and this makes the structuring of the idea much more difficult. In the CAT and other aptitude tests, this is more likely to be the level of complexity of paragraph jumbles that you are likely to encounter. In case you are not exposed to ideas and writing of this level, you are likely to face a lot of difficulties while solving questions of this level.

Another important way through which diverse reading habits help is that it enhances the skills of finding clues and links within sentences—a skill which is very important to solve paragraph jumbles.

In order to understand the science of solving paragraph jumble questions, we need to first understand the reasons for the creation of paragraphs:

### *The Cream of the Piece*

A paragraph is a collection of sentences and normally, is used to convey a concise idea within a larger idea structure of a passage. In general, paragraphs can be either top heavy or bottom heavy. A top heavy paragraph is one which conveys its main idea at the start of the passage—and then it tapers off in its content; while a bottom heavy paragraph has its main idea towards the end of the paragraph with the start of the paragraph being usually light in content. In our experience, top heavy paragraphs are much more common than bottom heavy paragraphs in general English writing.

## STANDARD PROCESS FOR SOLVING PARAGRAPH JUMBLE QUESTIONS

A PJ question has to be solved using the following four step process, which occur automatically one after the other. One step leads to the next and so on:

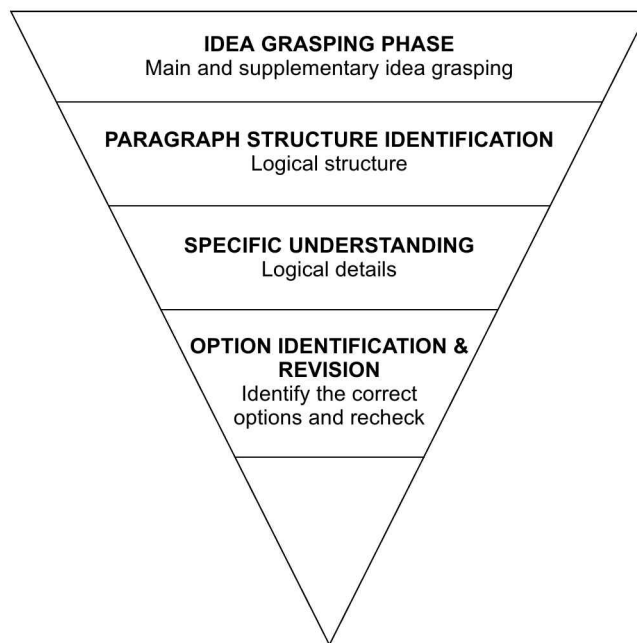


Fig. I4.1 The Inverted Triangle Method

### Step 1: Idea Grasping Phase

In the **idea grasping phase**, the focus has to be on identifying the main and supplementary ideas which constitute the message being conveyed by the paragraph. This gives us a clear picture of the main and the supplementary themes running through the paragraph.

### Step 2: Paragraph Structure Identification Phase

In the **paragraph structure identification phase**, try to identify the logical structure used in the paragraph. The seven structures of a paragraph are detailed below. Perhaps, this is the most critical phase of the solving process. A correct identification of the logical structure of the paragraph will ensure that you look for the correct clues in the next two phases of the solving process. During this phase, try to develop an inkling about the author's tone and style of writing and try to discover the structure and style which the author uses to present his/her ideas.

### Step 3: Specifics Understanding Phase

In the **specifics understanding phase**, we try to fit into the logical structure identified above, the minor details of the key words used. Identify the logical sequence of the sentences and also try to fill in the minor gaps in your understanding of the jumbled sequence.

### Step 4: Incorporation Phase

Finally, in the **incorporation stage**, integrate the ideas presented in the sentences in your own thought process and try to apply them in a structured logical string to test whether the chosen sequence conveys the idea or theme accurately to the reader.

Analyzing a sentence jumble to understand how it should be correctly constructed can be compared to dismantling a machine to understand how it was built. We may stop occasionally and reassemble parts of it to review what we just did and then proceed again to dismantle and assemble more of it. During this process, the understanding proceeds from the specific to the generic and vice-versa. The inverted triangle method aptly represents what we have just tried to explain.

## WHAT TO LOOK FOR WHEN YOU SOLVE PARAGRAPH JUMBLES

### The Nine Types of Structures used in Standard Writing within Paragraphs

There are certain standard structures used for the writing of paragraphs (in fact for the presentation of ideas). The following being the standard structures of paragraphs, they are also usually the dominant ideas or clues to look for in various types of paragraph jumble questions. (What you need to be clear about at the outset is that a single paragraph might use one or more of these types of writing.) These are:

- (1) Cause & Effect
- (2) Generic to Specific
- (3) Contrast
- (4) Parallelisms
- (5) Idea—Explanation/Elaboration
- (6) Chronological (based on the time dimension)
- (7) Action Sequence
- (8) Idea Transformation
- (9) Idea Reiteration

#### *The Cream of the Piece*

Notice the similarity between the theory of Paragraph Jumbles and that of Reading skills development in the first part of the book. Isn't it to be expected that these are almost the same categories as those given under the heading 'Idea Organization' under the reading skills development part of Part I of this book? It further goes to emphasize our constant advice—that the entire

English section (VA and RC) is based on your ability and skillfulness at reading. Hence, the best way to improve your scores in this section is to improve your reading skills.

A paragraph jumble question will normally exhibit one or more of the above types of writing within the paragraph.

Let us now take a closer look at each of the above types. While doing so, please take care to remember that these rules of paragraph jumbling are at best, thumb rules, i.e., they have to be applied flexibly. You will have to correlate multiple rules while trying to solve a single question. One of the most common reasons for mistakes is that students have a tendency of solving a question on the basis of one or two rules, where more apply. Just because one of these rules fits in, it does not mean that what it points to will be the answer. Typically, in a PJ question, the correct answer will be supported by more than one thumb rule. Let us now explore the different types of structures listed above, one by one:

**Type 1: The Cause & Effect Structure** As the name itself suggests, the cause and effect paragraph consists of two parts—the cause, leading to the effect.

The typical structure of this paragraph is:

**A, hence B or A causes B (where A and B are ideas such that A is the cause and B is the effect.)** Paragraphs of this nature will normally contain defining words like: hence, because, causes, leads to (for more key words refer to the chapter of sentence completion, where cause and effect is explained in the context of a single sentence.) These words will segregate the effect from the cause.

#### *The Cream of the Piece*

In cause-effect paragraphs, you will see the effect following the cause in most cases.

In other words, the cause precedes the effect. (Again, remember this is only a thumb rule and is not a rigid one. You will have to apply it using your own discretion and in the context of the overall writing style of the author.) Let us look at a few examples.



1. The governance of the Ashoka dynasty was amongst the most efficient of its time. **(Cause)**
2. It led to the elimination of crime and created a general feeling of security in the masses. **(Effect)**

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**Type 2: Generic to Specific** In this structure of paragraph, the author talks about a generic idea and then backs it up with specific examples of the same. The flow of this type of paragraph is always from the general to the specific—the idea to the example.



1. Economic justice demands a diminution, if not a total abolition, of the proportion of the national income which goes to the recipients of rent and interest. (**generic statement**)
2. But when the holders of railway shares are given government stock to replace their shares, they are given the prospect of an income in perpetuity equal to what they might reasonably expect to have derived from their shares. (**Specific example**)

**Type 3: Contrast** As the name itself suggests, this is based on the contrast or opposite of one idea against another. In such presentations of ideas, there is a transformation from one point of view, to the opposite point of view. Typically, both the points of view are presented with equal force and the author does not give away his/her biases towards either of the opposite points of view.

This type of paragraph is often signified by a turnaround point between two parts of a paragraph. The turnaround point is signaled by words such as: but, on the other hand, as against, however, although, etc. These indicate a transformation from one point of view to the other.



1. In the late nineties, Brian Lara strode the cricket field like a colossus—an all conquering batsman who had few equals in the history of the game.
2. However, his presence was not enough to inspire his West Indian team mates, resulting in one of the worst periods of West Indian cricket coinciding with Lara's extraordinary artistry at the crease.

**Type 4: Parallelisms** In such kind of writing, you will come across two parallel points of view presented one after the other. Normally, you would find key words such as: likewise, similarly, just as, equally, in the same manner, etc.



1. The investigators directly assessed relations between racial attitudes and values and argued in favor of linkages to two clusters of values.

2. One of these clusters, individualism, corresponds to the Protestant ethic values emphasized in discussions of symbolic racism.
3. The other cluster, communalism, which emphasizes concern about community and the well being of others, has been neglected by theorists of symbolic racism, as has the idea that these values' conflicting implications for racial attitudes produce ambivalence on the part of white Americans.

(In the above sentence sequence, statements 2 & 3 are talking about parallel concepts, one after the other.)

### **Type 5: Idea-Explanation/Elaboration/Completion**

One sentence will present an idea and then it is either explained in detail or elaborated (expanded) or completed in the subsequent sentence/s.



- I (a) I was lucky.  
(b) The bus driver applied the brakes a meter or two away from my car.
- II (a) The theory of the legitimate use of force in human affairs, where a government exists, seems clear.  
(b) Force should only be used against those who use force against others, or against those who will not respect the law in cases where a common decision is necessary and a minority are opposed to the action of the majority.

### **Type 6: Chronological (Based on the Time Dimension)**

As the name itself suggests, successive sentences will be demarcated on the basis of the time dimension. Normally, successive sentences will take you further along in time (although you might also have paragraphs which go back and forth in time). All action sequences have chronological sequences involved. However, chronology is not just used to illustrate action sequences.



1. Sigmund Freud, the oldest child of a second marriage of Jacob Freud, the Jewish owner of a small cloth mill in the little Austrian town of Freiberg, was born on 6 May 1856.
2. Owing to the changes brought about in weaving by the industrial revolution, in 1860, Jacob Freud moved to Vienna and there set up as a cloth merchant.

**Type 7: Action Sequence** Action sequences depict a set of actions, logically connected to each other. (The example used above where Ramu goes back home from school, would qualify as a typical action sequence.) Note, that in normal circumstances, the action sequence will have a chronological sequence involved.

**Type 8: Idea Transformation** In this presentation, a concept is introduced in the first sentence and the following sentence draws from that concept (in fact it directly refers to it) and presents a new dimension associated with the concept. Note, that the key difference between this type and the idea-elaboration type is that the latter elaborates and explains the idea introduced in the initial part of the sequence, while this type uses the idea presented in the start of the sentence sequence and portrays a totally different dimension to it.

Considered the following examples. The 'component parts' referred to are used in two different contexts.



1. If this sense of humanity came into being in the course of evolutionary history, then it must have component parts, and they in turn, must be identifiable.
2. It is my conviction that we are beginning to identify these components, that we can see the gradual emergence of humanness in our evolutionary history.

**Type 9: Idea Reiteration** Sentence sequences which use this structure of argumentation will start off by giving a point of view, followed by one or more sentences reiterating the fact. Consider, the following example:



- I (a) Sachin was one of the best batsmen of his time.  
(b) In fact, he was so good that his team hardly ever lost a match.
- II (a) By definition, any model necessarily abstracts from and simplifies reality.  
(b) But the model of competitive equilibrium is a travesty of reality.

**Type 10: Question–Answer** As the name itself suggests, in such sentence sequences, the answer to a question follows the question.



1. What was this dreadful little book?
2. Its name in Italian is *Il Principe*, in English, *The Prince*.

Now go through the following real life Paragraph Jumble questions to get a feel of how to apply the above principles in real time problem solving. These examples will illustrate to you the above points in ample details.

## SOLVED EXAMPLES

**Directions:** The sentences given in each question, when properly sequenced, form a coherent paragraph. Each sentence is labelled with a letter. Choose the most logical order of sentences from among the given choices to construct a coherent paragraph.



1. In the twentieth century, John Maynard Keynes has been the most important scholar working in the tradition of the classical political economists.  
A. But his interest, like theirs, was in the analysis of the great issues of his day, the greatest of which in the inter-war period was not growth but unemployment, a problem so acute at the time that in desperation, the Germans turned to Hitler and to fascism.  
B. The very future of Western democracies was placed at risk.  
C. Keynes was concerned not just to understand unemployment intellectually, but to put forward practical suggestions as to how the problem could be solved.  
D. This does not mean that he agreed with everything they wrote.

6. He believed fervently that, for all its faults, Western liberal democracy offered the best hope for the world, and he saw himself working to save it.

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| 1. DCBA | 2. BACD |
| 3. BCDA | 4. DABC |



In the above paragraph, the starting sentence is already defined. The sentence sequence **1DA** is using a **double contrast** — a kind of flip flop argument. Statement D opposes (**contrasts**) the idea of 1, while statement A again **contrasts** the opposition of D. In this question, recognizing this structure is sufficient to get to the correct answer, which is 4.

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A similar structure of argumentation (**using a double contrast**) can be used in diverse situations. Consider the following examples:



- I.
  1. In the 1990s, Sachin, one of the greatest batsmen of all time, dominated cricket like never before.
  2. This does not mean that he always performed in every innings of his.
  3. But his mere presence was enough to strike fear and awe in the minds of all bowlers in the opposition.
- II.
  1. The Indian economy is on a growth path never experienced before.
  2. This does not mean that all the problems inherent to the Indian economy over the past half century have been eradicated.
  3. But, there is a definite movement towards alleviating these problems.



In fact, as a student trying to improve your language ability, you should recognize that all language used today operates on standard structures such as these. Having as wide an exposure to these nuances will help you develop an internal instinct towards identifying these structures. You should try to develop your perception on these dimensions as you develop your reading habits.

Coming back to the question above, the sentence sequence AB is using a **cause and effect structure**. The effect of the future of Western democracies being placed at risk was **caused** by the Germans turning to Hitler and fascism.



- A. A transplant from my younger brother, Philip, effectively gave me a second life.
  - B. Feeling that whatever years I now had ahead of me were a bonus, I initiated the exploration of the western shore of Lake Turkana.
  - C. I was lucky.
  - D. Following our first tentative prospecting came remarkable finds, some of them technically stunning, some emotionally thrilling.
  - E. The discoveries were worth waiting for, as I shall recount.
1. EDCAB
  2. ABDCE
  3. BCDEA
  4. CABED



In the above question, the sentence sequence CA uses an **idea-elaboration structure**, while from A to B it is a **cause and effect** sentence sequence. Sentence sequence ED is also in the form of an idea elaboration, where E introduces the idea of the discoveries, while D elaborates the same.



1. For centuries, philosophers have dealt with aspects of humanness, of humanity. But, surprisingly, there is no agreed-upon definition of the quality of humanness.
  - A. It is my conviction that we are beginning to identify these components, that we can see the gradual emergence of humanness in our evolutionary history.
  - B. But if this sense of humanity came into being in the course of evolutionary history, then it must have component parts, and they in turn, must be identifiable.
  - C. Those who tried to define humanness found themselves moulding Jell-O: it kept slipping through the fingers.
  - D. It hardly seemed necessary, partly because it appeared so obvious: humanness is what we feel about ourselves.
6. I am therefore perplexed by, and impatient with, a popular alternative view that is championed by several scholars.
  1. ABCD
  2. DCBA
  3. BCDA
  4. CBDA



In the above question, the key sentence sequence is the BA sequence, which is in the form of an **idea** transformation, since B introduces the concept of the component parts, while A refers to **these** components in a different context altogether. Hence, the correct answer is 2.



- A. Economists see the world as a machine.
- B. A very complicated one perhaps, but nevertheless a machine, whose workings can be understood by putting together carefully and meticulously, its component parts.
- C. A lever pulled in a certain part of the machine with certain strength will have regular and predictable outcomes elsewhere in the machine.

- D. The behaviour of the system as a whole can be deduced from a simple aggregation of these components.

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| 1. ABDC | 2. ABCD |
| 3. ACBD | 4. ADBC |

The sentence sequence AB is in the form of an **idea elaboration**, while the sentence sequence DC is in the form of **generic to specific**. Hence, the correct answer is 1.



1. The benefits of growth are plain to see.

- A. But in recent decades, some people have begun to question the foundations of classical and orthodox economics on the question of growth, asking whether its benefits are being wisely used and distributed and, at a more fundamental level, whether its costs, particularly in environmental terms, do not outweigh the benefits.
- B. What may be termed the Green critique of growth is powerful.
- C. More precisely, the word 'critique' should appear in the plural, for there are a number of quite different dimensions to it.
- D. No single source of intellectual authority exists within the movement, and environmentalism embraces many different strands of opinion.

6. All of them require, in different ways and with different degrees of intensity, alterations in behaviour and in the priorities which as a society, we attach to the various outcomes.

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| 1. ABCD | 2. BCDA |
| 3. CDAB | 4. DBCA |



The sentence sequence 1A represents a contrast while the sentence sequence BCD represents an **idea elaboration**. Hence, the correct answer is 1.



1. "We have many bones to show you," promised Kamoya as we unpacked the belly of the plane.

- A. I joked, and we all laughed at the improbable prospect.
- B. "You will like the hominids."
- C. I knew I would.
- D. "Skeletons?"

6. With evening upon us, we drank beer by the mess tent; the darkness fell quickly, as it always does this close to the equator.

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| 1. BCDA | 2. BDCA |
| 3. BACD | 4. BCAD |



The joke referred to in A is obviously referring to the question "Skeletons?" The structure used in DA is an **idea completion**. Hence, DA is one sentence sequence. Although that is enough to give us an answer, the sentence sequence BC is another one in the **idea completion** format. Option (1) is correct.



- A. Competitive advantage is not something which falls from the skies like manna from Heaven.
- B. However, according to orthodox economic theory, this should not happen, since if any single firm were able to gain an advantage at any point in time, competitive forces would rapidly ensure that this state of affairs would be purely temporary.
- C. It has to be created and earned, but once earned, it can be used to ensure a position of enduring dominance.
- D. Economic competition between companies, particularly large ones, bears a strong resemblance to this military world.

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| 1. ABDC | 2. BCDA |
| 3. BCAD | 4. DACB |



The sentence sequence AC is one where the idea (competitive advantage) is elaborated, while CB uses a structure of a **contrast**. The sentence D can only come before the sequence ACB, since it is an introduction sentence, drawing a parallel from the military world (which must have been talked about before this sentence sequence). Hence, option (4) is correct.



- A. Contemporary orthodox economics is isolated.
- B. And its methodology, despite the pretensions of many of its practitioners, is isolated from that of the physical sciences, to whose status it none the less aspires.
- C. It is isolated from its roots in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, when economists were by no means afraid to theorise, but did so purely to illustrate and understand the great practical issues of the day.

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- D. Its method of analysis is isolated from the wider context of society, in which the economy operates, and which Adam Smith believed to be of great importance.

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| 1. ADCB | 2. BDCA |
| 3. CDBA | 4. ACDB |



The sentence sequence ACDB is an obvious case of **idea elaboration**. Hence 4.



- A. Fear of destitution is not a motive out of which free creative life can grow, yet it is the chief motive which inspires the daily work of most wage-earners.
- B. The hope of possessing more wealth and power than any man ought to have, which is the corresponding motive of the rich, is quite as bad in its effects; it compels men to close their minds against justice, and to prevent themselves from thinking honestly on social questions, while in the depths of their hearts they uneasily feel that their pleasures are bought by the miseries of others.
- C. Then a great fear would be removed from the lives of the many, and hope would have to take on a better form in the lives of the few.
- D. The injustice of destitution and wealth alike, ought to be rendered impossible.
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| 1. ABCD | 2. BDAC |
| 3. BCDA | 4. ABDC |



The sentence sequence AB uses a **parallelism** between the two motives of working ('Fear of destitution' for the poor and 'the hope of possessing more wealth and power than any man ought to have' for the rich). DC uses a **cause and effect** structure, where C is the effect of the cause of rendering impossible the injustice of destitution and wealth.) Hence, the answer will be 4.



- A. Few men seem to realise how many of the evils from which we suffer are wholly unnecessary, and they could be abolished by a united effort within a few years.
- B. With goodwill, generosity, intelligence, these things could be brought about.
- C. If a majority in every civilised country so desired, we could, within twenty years, abolish

all abject poverty, quite half the illness in the world, the whole economic slavery which binds down nine tenths of our population; we could fill the world with beauty and joy, and secure the reign of universal peace.

- D. It is only because imagination is sluggish, and what always has been is regarded as what always must be.

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| 1. CDBA | 2. ACDB |
| 3. BCDA | 4. BDCA |



The sentence sequence AC uses an **idea elaboration** structure. B obviously has to come later than C in the paragraph since the 'these things' referred to in it are defined in sentence C. (Note: 'These things' in sentence C refer to the abolition of poverty, and of half the illnesses in the world, removal of economic slavery and the consequential filling of the world with beauty and joy.) The sentence D does not quite fit in, however, its placement becomes a non issue due to the options available. The correct answer is obviously option 2.



- A. Thus, while not in any way seeking to deny the existence of serious poverty and hardship in many developing economies, present accounting conventions underestimate their per capita incomes precisely because they do not take account of economic activity which takes place outside the market.
- B. In a subsistence economy, a great deal of food production, for example, will never be bought and sold in the market, but is consumed by the community in which it is produced.
- C. Its value is therefore, not reflected in the national accounts of these economies.
- D. In developing economies, a far higher proportion of total transactions takes place within the household compared to those in the money economy.

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| 1. DBCA | 2. DBAC |
| 3. DCAB | 4. DABC |



Sentence D introduces the idea, while BC is an example of the idea. Hence, the **idea example** structure operates in DBC. Further, A is an **idea completion sentence**, completing the sentence sequence in DBCA.





- A. But this point is so obvious that it needs no elaboration.
- B. I am not prepared to maintain that economic justice requires an exactly equal income for everybody.
- C. It would be utterly absurd to maintain that the men who inherit great wealth deserve better of the community than those who have to work for their living.
- D. Economic injustice is perhaps the most obvious evil of our present system.
- E. Some kinds of work require a larger income for efficiency than others do; but there is economic injustice as soon as a man has more than his share, unless it is because his efficiency in his work requires it, or as a reward for some definite service.
1. ABCDE                      2. DCBEA  
3. CDBAE                    4. BACDE



In the above question we see a mixture of two levels of **idea elaboration** (as seen in the sentence sequence DC as also in BE). Further, the sentence sequence BE follows up the idea introduced and elaborated in DC.) Thus, the correct option is 2.

### — The Cream of the Piece —

#### Tips for solving PJ questions

The following techniques would be of further help to you in focussing on:

- Finding the starting sentence:** One of the keys to solving a question correctly is the location of the starting sentence. Very often, a paragraph jumble question will get solved only by identifying the starting sentence. In the context of the types of sentence sequences used in writing paragraphs, the starting sentence can be identified as the first part of one of the ten types. (For example, the cause will mostly be the starting sentence in a typical cause and effect sentence structure. Similarly, the starting idea in a sentence sequence involving a contrast is likely to be the starting sentence of the paragraph.)
- Locating the “topic sentence”:** Mostly, one of the sentences in a paragraph will introduce the main topic of the paragraph. This sentence will give us the key to the entire paragraph. Very often, the topic sentence might be the clue to the first

sentence of the passage, but that is not an absolute rule.

- Finding the general theme:** Finding the general theme or main idea from the jumbled sentences may require some skill, but careful reading can reveal which idea is the central or the main one, and can be found if it is most frequently used or when most of the other sentences relate to it.
- Finding logical relationships:** Once you have found the general theme, you should relate the ideas and opinions found in the sentences and place them in a logical sequence. You can look for the interrelation of ideas in the sentences to form a whole. Supporting facts, words or phrases that signal emphasis or a shift in thought, and the relation of one idea to another—for example, the cause and effect relationship, help in finding the logical relationship and thus give clues about the structure of the paragraph.
- Finding the concluding sentence:** The concluding sentence will normally wind up the argument, without leaving any loose ends.

## A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO PARAGRAPH JUMBLES PROBLEM SOLVING

Let us now analyze all the above points with the help of the following solved CAT questions, to make the whole theory very clear.

Consider the following question:



- What does the state do in a country where tax morality is very low?
  - It tries to spy upon the tax payers.
  - It investigates income sources and spending patterns.
  - Exactly what the tax authorities tries to do now even if inconsistently.
  - It could also encourage people to denounce to the tax authorities, any conspicuously prosperous neighbours who may be suspected of not paying their taxes properly.
- The ultimate solution would be an Orwellian system.
  - BACD
  - DBAC
  - ABCD
  - DCBA

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As is seen in the above question, we know that the government here is seeking to solve the problem of tax evasion & looking at the options available for doing so. So the first thing to look for in this jumble is either the starting or the finishing sentence, as we know that the general theme is tax evasion.

Keeping that in mind, the sentence 'D', starting with "it could also.....", shows that this sentence is not the first as it talks of other options of solving the problem before it. The use of the word 'also' here shows that there are other sentences before it. Similarly the sentence 'C', starting with the word "Exactly", also illustrates that it is trying to corroborate a fact previously talked about. So that leaves us with only 'A' or 'B' as the starting sentences. Since spying is the aim of the government and the sentence 'B' directly extends the answer given in 'A', it is the more

logical option as the first sentence in the paragraph. This is followed by sentence 'B', which is just an illustrative restatement of statement 'A' and which is corroborated by sentence 'C', finally ending with sentence 'D', which has to be the last sentence since the paragraph ends with the mention of the "Orwellian system" which was largely about people supplying information to the authorities about others. So ABCD is the correct answer.

Here, it is important to note that if you had good reading habits, you might have been aware of the Orwellian system and would have thus been able to logically solve the jumble faster and more accurately due to your prior knowledge of the subject than a student who has not been reading widely. This again strengthens our previous emphasis on varied reading and its usefulness.