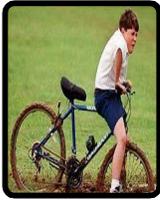


Bingo! Grammar  
is so manageable.

# Grammar Primer

## Tickle Your Funny Bone



OUCHHH!

Well! **You are not alone** to be reacting like this upon hearing the word "**grammar**". Yes, English grammar was something many of us loved to hate at school. We had renamed the famous authors of the grammar bible, Wren and Martin as Wrench and Hammer for the effect their book had on our poor brains!

Well, school is history now. Grammar, however, is not. In fact, it is your future, considering that it is an important part of every major competitive examination. No, you don't have to make that face. It is not that bad! Since you are intelligent enough to seek PT's help to clear the path to your dream career, you definitely have it in you to conquer grr...ammar.

Let us talk about **Pavneet Singh**, the CAT 2008 topper. Casually, we might say "**Pavneet scored 100 percentile in CAT.**" Now, do you find **three mistakes** in this sentence? Well, if you don't, you are pretty ill-prepared for the questions based on grammar (on the CAT). The correct sentence will be "Pavneet scored a 100 percentile on the CAT." Yes! It will be '**ON**' the CAT, not '**IN**'. This may sound strange, but that's the way it is.

Grammar questions on (not in) the CAT test such finesse with language. No wonder it bamboozles most test takers; and, that too, quite disarmingly. Grammar has always been the **pet-peeve** of Indians, more so of the younger generation. These days, when MS-WORD™ does the spelling and grammar check (not correctly, though, as it may prove useless without human discretion), and SMSs and e-mails flaunt rules of grammar with impunity, there is little possibility of it going right for most of us.

**Gotcha!** And this becomes the Achilles' heel (of most students) for the CAT-setters, AND, believe us; they always go for the jugular, catching the students unawares by the scruff of the neck.

**But, wait! Does the CAT test you on those prissy, schoolmarmish, persnickety, prudish, priggish or puristic rules of grammar; or on Standard Correct Usage?** Well, the CAT tests you on usage and not on rigorous rules of traditional grammar. The CAT may never test you on controversial areas. Also, it will not have questions lacking consonance between grammar and usage. **In this introductory chapter, we shall try to see how grammar can be made interesting and fun.** Let us see some examples.



There's this story about the man who appeared at the Pearly Gates. St. Peter asked him, "Who goes there?" "**It is I**", answered the man.  
"Oh, no", moaned St. Peter. "Not another English teacher."  
Got the joke? A common soul, not used to the niceties of grammar, is likely to have replied, "It is me."

**Rahul calls up** a friend and so goes the conversation:

"Hi, have you been very busy over the last fortnight?"

"Ya! Sorta! My sister was to be married off and it took a lot of my time."

"But you must be free now."

"Sure I am as the **marriage is over.**"

"**WHAT! Is she divorced?**"

"Are you outta your wits? She has just gotten married – how could you even talk of a divorce?"

"You just said the **marriage is over.**"



(Well, he should have said, "the wedding is over" not "marriage".)



The common saying, "**Let's lay in the sun**" (please do not suggest this to anyone!), is not only incorrect grammatically, it suggests a **public promiscuity** that's frowned on even in this age of permissiveness. Not that there's anything wrong with THAT! It's just ungrammatical (unless you're talking about ... well, **you know what**). (It should have been "**lie**" rather than "**lay**".)

### Why grammar?

Let us hear it from Bunty.

Bunty received two letters from Babli. Wonder why he is looking so flustered? Read both the letters and you will know.

Dear Bunty  
I want a man who knows what love is all about. You are generous, kind, thoughtful. People who are not like you admit to being useless and inferior. You have ruined me for other men. I yearn for you. I have no feelings whatsoever when we're apart. I can forever be happy -- will you let me be yours?



Dear Bunty  
I want a man who knows what love is. All about you are generous, kind, thoughtful people, who are not like you. About to being useless and inferior. You have ruined me. For other men, I yearn. For you, I have no feelings whatsoever. When we're apart, I can forever be happy. Will you let me be?

Yours,  
Babli

Babli

**Funny, isn't it?** The same words in both the letters but they convey totally different meanings. We haven't dared to ask Babli yet, but Bunty has definitely realised the importance of grammar. **Last heard, he was looking for the nearest PT centre.**

### Bad grammar can confuse you (ROYALLY):

- When your kids reach a certain age, you must prepare to talk to them about sex, even if you've never done **it** before. (**Done what before?**). [This is an error of ambiguous pronoun reference.]
- Looking radiant in my new dress, my boyfriend insisted on taking me to the discotheque. (**Hey, we don't care if the guy's a cross-dresser**, but if you write this sentence in a letter to your parents, they may get the wrong idea). [This is an error of misplaced modifier.]
- **Man to his belle:** Tired of cleaning yourself? Let me do it. (**I'd groove it!**) [This is an error of pronoun placement.]



- **A newspaper headline:** Two Soviet Ships Collide, One Dies. (**I'd love to see how a ship dies**). [This is called ellipsis error.]
- Are you cooking yourself for dinner? (**Ouch! It seems painful being grilled on the pan**). [This is an error of ambiguous position of the reflexive pronoun.]
- He is a man who cares. (**A rare sight indeed!**)
- He is a man. Who cares? (**What the HELL!**)
- The boss says, "The employee is a fool." (**The boss is always right!**)
- "The boss", says the employee, "is a fool." (**May be he has seen the latest Naukari.com ad!**)

## How can you tell if you're grammarphobic?



There's no denying the fact that the rules of standard written English are **scary** – **more frightening** than a voyage on the **Titanic** or a night with **Michael Jackson**. English rules are scary, yes — but difficult, no. Remember your **English teachers** (when you were at school)? You always **wanted to give their classes the royal slip**, didn't you? But the rules of compulsory attendance **thwarted your noble intentions!**

You're suffering from acute **GRAMMAR-ITIS** if any (or all) of the following happen(s) with you:

1. Having to conjugate an irregular verb **feels like a kick in the gut** from Jackie Chan.
2. I'd rather **shoot myself in the foot** than be asked when and how to use the possessive case before a gerund.
3. **Chewing ground glass** is more appealing to me than having to write a résumé and a letter of application for a job (no matter how good the job and the salary sound).
4. I'd rather **dive into a pile of double-edge razor blades** than have to distinguish between "who" and "whom."
5. Having my **finger slammed in a car door** is less painful than knowing if I should use an adjective or adverb after a linking verb.
6. **Rip out my intestines** with a fork? No problem. It's far preferable to having to draft a letter for my boss.
7. I break into a **cold sweat** at the very thought of seeing my high-school **English teacher again**.



## Grammar bloopers?

1. Being an esteemed politician, the poodle lunged straight for Mr. Laloo's saffron scarf. (Is the poodle a politician? **Well, politicians may be as good as poodles** in India BUT they are not poodles, literally).
2. Do not sit in the chair without being fully assembled. (**Ha! Ha!** – your body may have been **smashed to smithereens** after an accident – so the **warning** – get all the **slings etc.** mounted **before mounting the chair!**)
3. Locked in a vault for 50 years, the owner of the coins decided to sell them. (**Ha! Ha!** – may be he learnt a trick or two from the Egyptians – who know **how to preserve the mummies** – and applied them to himself!)
4. While eating dinner, a fly slipped into her soup. (**Did the fly have soup after having dinner?**)
5. Sailing up the river, the Taj Mahal was seen. (**You must be crocked!**)
6. Two cars were reported stolen by the police yesterday. (What's there to **laugh at?** The **police in India pull off such feats everyday with impunity!**)
7. The patient was referred to a psychologist with several emotional problems. (**I never knew shrinks were shrunken too!**)
8. A superb and inexpensive restaurant; fine food expertly served by waitresses in appetising forms. (**YUM YUM!**)
9. **For sale:** Several very old dresses from grandmother in beautiful condition. [**Must be the modern, up-market gran!**]
10. **Wanted:** Man to take care of cow that does not smoke or drink. (**A teetotaler cow indeed!**)



## Choose the correct word in each set of parentheses:



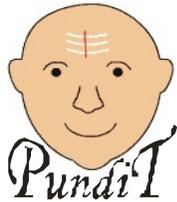
1. **Bigamy:** One wife (to/two/too) many. **Monogamy:** same idea.
2. Living with a (conscious/conscience) is like **driving a car with the brakes on**.
3. Being (conscious/conscience): **that annoying time between naps**.
4. **Egotist:** a person more interested in himself (**than/then**) in me.
5. In America (there/their) are two classes of travel – **first class and with children**.
6. Just remember (you're/your) **unique, just like everyone else**.
7. **Archaeologist:** A person (who's/whose) **career lies in ruins**.

**HELP:** too, conscience, conscious, than, there, you're, whose.

## The other side of grammar

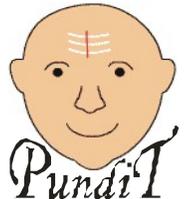
### How you speak it! (Some STYLES named by PT)

In order to make the study of grammar painless and interesting, we have introduced some terms (for the styles of writing and speaking). So, throughout this book, you may find the following styles:



**Read the following sentence:**

The man became very angry when the channel started showing the remix of the beautiful and soothing golden oldie, with skimpily clad models and cacophonous tunes. He thought the recording was an insult to the great song, its singers and its composer.



**Now read the following sentence:**

**The dude was really ticked when the channel started playing this cheesy music. He thought it was so lame.**

If you speak (or write) like this, you are going to have a lot of (loadsa) problems in the CAT.

Well, the **PUNTER** style may seem very tempting to follow, but, sadly enough, you have to follow the **PUNDIT** style for the CAT.

**Now read the following conversation (heard at an up-market party):**



Last night Mom told us we had to go listen to this cheesy chorus my dad is in. I was like, "Mom, I'm not into choruses." Mom goes, "It will be cool, honey." I was like, "As if! Who ever heard of a good chorus? Those guys are totally lame." Mom started wiggling out and was like, "The group is the best chorus in the whole country! The least you could do is go support your father!" I rolled my eyes and was like, "Whatever, Mom. Chill out." Things went downhill from there. I ended up getting grounded because of "disrespect." Unfortunately, the grounding didn't stop until after the stupid chorus concert. BUMMER!

Well, once again, **PAGE-THREE-style** is very tempting, BUT you should refrain from it when dealing with MBA Entrance Tests.

**Are you an idiom freak? Check out.**

**Would you ever go about speaking such sentences?**

- Due to his lack of sincerity he has been **on the carpet** (reprimanded) but he said his health had been **on the fritz** (broken/bad). In fact he had been **on the lam** (fleeing – usually the police) beforehand for having been **on the make** (eager for financial or sexual gain) with the receptionist and he said it was the laced drink that made him **on the prowl** (in search of the prey) and that he was generally **on the wagon** (not drinking).



- Remember, if you have a **tough row to hoe**, be a **tough nut to crack** and **tough it out**. Truth will **win out** and you can **turn over a new leaf**, **turn the tables**, **turn the other cheek**, or **turn the corner**. **Under a cloud? Not up to par or, scratch, or snuff?** Use your head; it's all **water under the bridge**. After all: **The world is your oyster** — you can **bet your bottom dollar!**

**Using too many idioms is not considered good. These days, even the best of orators do not use many idioms. Please do not take a fancy to idioms.**

**The Final Words:** So, all in all, grammar is about being able to cherish language and its beautiful usage and not about trying to be the linguistic police who arrest the miscreants who split their infinitives or dangle their participles in public.

## Let's get real (and serious)

Welcome to the most dreaded, yet one of the most important test-areas of MBA Entrance: GRAMMAR.

**The way all of you would have reacted, whenever the topic of "grammar" sprang up, is anybody's guess.** Yes, all of us may hate it to glory, but the CAT-setters definitely think otherwise. Of the 50 marks that the Language Section comprises, at least 15 depend on good knowledge of grammar. **The CAT-grammar questions can be too hot to handle even for the so-called "Best-Stock".**

**Why is grammar necessary?** Remember **GELS**? The very first word here is GRAMMAR. Believe us, bad grammar may put off some of the humblest of people and at times is **enough to make a saint swear**. Even if you speak garden-variety English, it has to be grammatically correct. PERIOD. It is a great pain listening to "grammatically incorrect" English. You needn't be scholarly but have GOT to be correct.

**What do we mean by correct grammar?** So far as the CAT is concerned, correct grammar means standard and commonly acceptable set of norms/rules applicable to "written" English. There are a lot of ambiguities in English grammar but they are never tested. The stress in the CAT is on errors that somehow elude our attention when we are at school. Errors pertaining to misplaced modifiers, parallelism, subject-verb agreement, pronoun case, articles, prepositions, subjunctive mood, adverbs, phrasal verbs, homonyms, etc. are stressed more whereas others related to tenses, verbs, modals, adjectives, conjunctions, nouns, idioms, active and passive voice, direct and indirect speech, pronoun antecedent agreement, etc. are stressed less. **Though there is no thumb rule governing the types of questions asked**, the best way to prepare is to read and listen to a lot of quality content in English. Don't be frightened by all the jargon. What matters is your skill in spotting errors in usage and your ability to pick the best, most concise way to structure a sentence.

**The PT way.** We at PT Education will try to make grammar as much fun as possible. We have used a particular terminology that will make things very clear to you. **PT makes grammar fun.** Well, now that we know how important grammar is, we cannot afford to make fun of it, but we can definitely have fun while learning it. That is the PT approach to grammar; we try to make grammar simple and fun to learn.

### The Start Drill Part 1

**Read the following sentences and find out if there is something wrong with these. Most of these will sound correct to you, though.**

1. That's the true me.
2. Hopefully, I shall learn correct English soon.
3. John Abraham looks too cool in his bed-head style of hair.
4. She met her friend after a long time and her friend never recognised her.
5. She has not come back uptil now.
6. There was pindrop silence during the Prac-CATs.
7. This computer needs upgradation.
8. He simply refused to go to the party.
9. The website needs updation.
10. Why don't you prepone the meeting?
11. There is no boundation on any member of the party to keep working.
12. Can you explain me the working of a computer?
13. I am seeking for the best possible solution for this problem.
14. He ordered for a sandwich.
15. PT Education is existing since the last 13 years.
16. My friend is older than me.
17. My friend is not as fast as me.

18. The leader of the men who are tired is unwilling to rest.
19. The problem are the mice.
20. The mice is the problem.
21. Convey him my greetings.
22. Meet my would-be wife Priya.
23. Our Prime Minister always goes to take the blessings of Godman Chandraswami.
24. Please bring the tent from the godown.
25. This shop sells very good shirtings and suitings at low rates.
26. Let us go to city and buy some medicine.
27. We have no work to do so we came here for a movie just as a time-pass.
28. The Mathematics teacher was very pleased with me when I told that the under root of 2025 is 45.
29. The customer complained to the waiter that there was less salt in the curry.
30. Tiger Woods instructed the caddie to keep the ball back in the hole.
31. Can we meet tomorrow itself?
32. We are going to temple for prayer.
33. The England team members fell sick due to so much of heat in the sub-continent.
34. Please take your breakfast on time.
35. She is having many skirts.

### Correct Answers to Part 1

1. That's the true I.
2. I hope I shall learn correct English soon. ("Hopefully" is an Indianism and should be avoided).
3. John Abraham looks very cool in his bed-head style of hair ("too" is used for negative attributes). **Colloquially, there is no problem, in such a construction, though.**
4. She met her friend after a long time and her friend did not recognise her. **(In such usage, "never" is an Indianism. Also, some people use "anyways" which is wrong).**
5. She has not come back till now (or yet or so far). ('Uptil' is not a standard English word).
6. During the Prac-CATs, you could hear a pin drop. ('Pin-drop silence' is an Indianism and not a standard English phrase).
7. This computer needs to be upgraded. ('Upgradation' is not a standard English word).
8. He simply refused to go to the party. ('Simply' means 'in a simple manner', and should be avoided in such sentences. **Indians misuse this word a little too often).**
9. The website needs to be updated. ('Upadation' is not a standard English word).
10. Why don't you re-schedule (or antedate) the meeting? ('Pre-pone' is not a standard English word).
11. There is no obligation / binding on any member of the party to keep working. ('Boundation' is not a standard English word).
12. Can you explain to me the working of a computer?
13. I am seeking ~~for~~ the best possible solution to this problem.
14. He ordered ~~for~~ a sandwich.
15. PT Education has been existing for (~~since~~) the last 13 years.
16. My friend is older than I.
17. My friend is not as fast as I.
18. CORRECT.
19. The problem is the mice.
20. The mice are the problem.
21. Convey my greetings to him. **(This is a common error made by Indians).**
22. Meet my fiancée Priya. ('Would-be wife' is not a standard English usage).
23. Our Prime Minister always goes to seek the blessings of the religious guru (or leader) Chandraswami. ('Godman' is not a standard English word).
24. Please bring the tent from the warehouse. ('Godown' is not a standard English word).
25. This shop sells very good shirting and suiting at low prices. ('Shirtings and suitings' is an Indian usage and must be avoided).
26. Let us go to the city and buy some medicine(~~s~~). (There is no plural 'medicines')
27. We had no work to do so we came here for a movie just to while away (or kill) time. ('Time-pass' is not a standard English word).
28. The Mathematics teacher was very pleased with me when I told that the square root of 2025 is 45. ('Under-root' is not a standard English word).
29. The customer complained to the waiter that there was little salt in the curry.
30. Tiger Woods instructed the caddie to put the ball back in the hole.
31. Can we meet tomorrow ~~itself~~? ('Tomorrow itself' is an Indianism and must be avoided).
32. We are going to the temple for a prayer.
33. The England team members fell ill owing to so much ~~of~~ heat in the sub-continent.
34. Please have your breakfast on time.
35. She has many skirts.

# The Start Drill

## Part 2

Select the right option in the following questions:

1. These days, the train is running (to time / on time / in time).
2. Each of the Femina Miss India (contestants / contestant) (has / have) long, lustrous and shiny (hair / hairs).
3. He runs faster than (I / me).
4. (He is older to me / He is elder to me / He is older than me / He is older than I / He is elder than me / He is elder than I).
5. The cat licked (its / it's) tail.
6. I cannot (cope with / cope up with) the tensions of my job.
7. The report (comprises / comprises of) five sections.
8. This morning I (lied / laid / lay) in bed for three hours.
9. PT material is (continuously / continually) updated, year after year.
10. This is to be kept between you and (I / me).
11. Let Raju and (I / me) enter the room.
12. (This / It) is one of those (book / books) (which / that) (have / has) been published in the last one year.
13. I (had / had had / have had) my dinner before the phone (rang / rings / had rung).
14. Walk carefully (lest / so that) you (should / should not / would / would not) stumble.
15. You cannot succeed until and unless you (study hard / do not study hard).
16. "Doctor, My child and (I / me) would like to visit you tomorrow" – said the lady over the phone.
17. This is a (childrens / children's / childrens') park.
18. (Bill Gates' / Bill Gates / Bill Gates's) worth is \$80 billion.
19. His shot is wide (of / off) the mark.
20. The two horses were almost (neck to neck / neck and neck) at the finish line.
21. The mystery of the CAT paper has always (lied / laid / lain) in the RC section.
22. The river has (overflowed / overflowed) (its / it's) (banks / bank's / banks').
23. His bank account has been (freezed / frozen / frozen) by the police.
24. The police (has / have) arrived.
25. (This jeans / This pair of jeans / These jeans / These pair of jeans) (have / has) been washed more than (hundred / a hundred) times but you still look foxy in (this / these / it).
26. That problem was (too much / much too) difficult so I left it.
27. At PT the number of successful students (is / are) increasing every year.
28. I am feeling very (low / lowly) today. Let us go to Baskin Robbins' and freak out.
29. There is (so much / so much of) happiness in being honest!
30. Last Friday, our Mathematics teacher (took/gave) a very tough test. One student fainted while (giving / taking) the test.

### Correct Answers to Part 2

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1. to time  | 2. contestants, has, lustrous and shiny hair. |
| 3. I  | 4. He is older than I                         |
| 5. its  | 6. cope with                                  |
| 7. comprises  | 8. lay Lie/lay/lain lay/laid/laid             |
| 9. continually  | 10. me  |
| 11. me  | 12. This, books, that, have                   |
| 13. I had had , rang  | 14. lest, should                              |
| 15. study hard  | 16. I   |
| 17. children's  | 18. Bill Gates'                               |
| 19. of  | 20. neck and neck                             |
| 21. lain  | 22. overflowed, its, banks                    |
| 23. frozen  | 24. have                                      |
| 25. This pair of jeans ... has, a hundred, it. <b>OR</b> These jeans, have, a hundred, these  |   |
| 26. much too  | 27. is  |
| 28. low. Let us go to Baskin Robbins' and have a good time (or have a ball/blast etc.) " <b>Freak out</b> " is an Indianism when we want it to mean 'have a good time'. It has a very different meaning, otherwise. |   |
| 29. so much   | 30. gave, taking                              |