

ERROR SPOTTING

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SSC CGL English Preparation

Introduction to Error Spotting

Error Spotting questions test your ability to identify grammatical errors in sentences. In SSC CGL exams, these questions typically present a sentence divided into four parts, and you need to identify which part contains the error.

Typical Question Format:

Direction: In the following question, some parts of the sentence have errors and some are correct. Find out which part has an error and mark it as your answer.

- (A) One of the students
- (B) have not submitted
- (C) their assignment
- (D) on time.

Answer: (B) - Error in subject-verb agreement

Approach to Error Spotting:

- 1 Read the entire sentence carefully to understand its meaning
- 2 Check each part for common grammatical errors
- 3 Verify subject-verb agreement
- 4 Check pronoun usage and agreement
- 5 Look for preposition errors
- 6 Verify tense consistency
- 7 Check for redundant words or incorrect word forms

! Common Grammatical Errors

1. Subject-Verb Agreement Errors

- ✗ **Incorrect:** The list of items **are** on the table.
Correct: The list of items **is** on the table.
- ✗ **Incorrect:** Neither of the books **are** interesting.
Correct: Neither of the books **is** interesting.

2. Pronoun Errors

- ✗ **Incorrect:** Each student must bring **their** book.
Correct: Each student must bring **his or her** book.
- ✗ **Incorrect:** Between you and **I**, this is wrong.
Correct: Between you and **me**, this is wrong.

3. Preposition Errors

- ✗ **Incorrect:** She is good **in** mathematics.
Correct: She is good **at** mathematics.
- ✗ **Incorrect:** He insisted **to go** there.
Correct: He insisted **on going** there.

4. Tense Errors

- ✗ **Incorrect:** She **goes** to the market and **bought** vegetables.
Correct: She **went** to the market and bought vegetables.

Error Type	Example	Correction
Double Negative	I don't have no money	I don't have any money
Misplaced Modifier	Running quickly, the finish line approached	Running quickly, he approached the finish line
Redundancy	He returned back yesterday	He returned yesterday
Incorrect Conjunction	Though he was tired, but he worked	Though he was tired, he worked

Error Spotting Techniques

Subject-Verb Check

Always identify the subject first and ensure the verb agrees with it in number.

Pronoun Reference

Check if pronouns clearly refer to their antecedents and agree in number and gender.

Preposition Usage

Verify if prepositions are used correctly with specific verbs and adjectives.

Tense Consistency

Ensure tenses are consistent throughout the sentence unless time reference changes.

Systematic Approach:

- **Read the whole sentence:** Understand the complete meaning first
- **Check grammar basics:** Subject-verb agreement, pronouns, tenses
- **Look for common error patterns:** Prepositions, conjunctions, articles
- **Verify word forms:** Ensure correct use of adjectives, adverbs, verbs
- **Check for redundancy:** Remove unnecessary repetition of ideas

Common Error Patterns in SSC CGL:

- ✗ **Error:** One of the student **are** coming.
Correction: One of the **students is** coming.
- ✗ **Error:** Neither Ram nor Shyam **have** completed their work.
Correction: Neither Ram nor Shyam **has** completed his work.



Practice Exercises

Exercise 1: Spot the Error

Direction: In the following question, some parts of the sentence have errors and some are correct. Find out which part has an error.

1. (A) One of the students / (B) have not submitted / (C) their assignment / (D) on time.

(A) One of the students

(B) have not submitted

(C) their assignment

(D) on time



Explanation: "One of the students" is singular, so it should be "has not submitted"

2. (A) The teacher, as well as the students, / (B) are going / (C) on the field trip / (D) tomorrow.

(A) The teacher, as well as the students,

(B) are going

(C) on the field trip

(D) tomorrow



Explanation: When "as well as" is used, the verb agrees with the first subject ("teacher" - singular), so it should be "is going"

3. (A) She is / (B) one of those women / (C) who always / (D) help others.

(A) She is

(B) one of those women

(C) who always

(D) help others

- ✓ **Explanation:** After "one of those + plural noun", the relative pronoun "who" refers to the plural noun ("women"), so the verb should be plural "help" - actually this sentence is CORRECT! The error would be if it said "helps others"

Exercise 2: Advanced Error Spotting

1. (A) The number of students / (B) in the class / (C) are / (D) quite large.

(C) are

- ✓ **Explanation:** "The number" is singular, so it should be "is"

2. (A) He not only / (B) sings well / (C) but also / (D) dance beautifully.

(D) dance beautifully

- ✓ **Explanation:** With "not only... but also", the verb forms should be parallel - "sings" and "dances"

3. (A) I have / (B) many works / (C) to complete / (D) before tomorrow.

(B) many works



Explanation: "Work" is uncountable, so it should be "much work" or "many tasks"

Exam Tips for Error Spotting

Time Management

Spend no more than 30-45 seconds per error spotting question.

Elimination Method

Eliminate parts that are definitely correct to narrow down options.

Grammar Rules

Master key grammar rules - they're repeatedly tested in SSC CGL.

"No Error" Option

Remember that sometimes the sentence may have no error at all.

Common Pitfalls to Avoid:

- Don't rely on how the sentence "sounds" - verify grammar rules
- Avoid changing the original meaning while correcting
- Don't overlook small words like prepositions and articles
- Be careful with collective nouns and their verb forms
- Watch out for commonly confused words (their/there, its/it's)

Quick Revision Checklist:

- 1 ✓ Subject-verb agreement
- 2 ✓ Pronoun-antecedent agreement
- 3 ✓ Correct tense usage
- 4 ✓ Appropriate prepositions
- 5 ✓ Proper modifiers
- 6 ✓ Parallel structure
- 7 ✓ No redundancy

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