

BASIC STRATEGY

General Commentary: If you're weak at SC, you should feel lucky because it is one of the easier areas to improve in provided that you have the time to prepare properly. The first thing you should do is learn the key SC rules. (The *Manhattan GMAT Sentence Correction Guide* is the best resource out there.) Once you have a basic understanding of the key SC rules, you need to do as many SC problems as possible. It is important to do a lot of SC problems because SC skill is highly dependent on your ability to quickly recognize the most common SC errors patterns. The only way to build the requisite pattern recognition awareness is by doing a lot of problems. The earlier going will be tough, but after you do **several hundred** SC practice problems over the course of a few weeks/months, things should begin to click.

Split and Re-split (i.e., categorize between right & wrong): Do not consider the ACs one-by-one. Instead, scan the answer choices ("**ACs**") and split the ACs between right and wrong based on rules you know/that addresses the most obvious errors in the example sentence.

▪ **Detailed Explanation:**

- When doing an actual problem, read the example sentence looking for errors.
- Then, rather than reading the answer choices ("**ACs**") one-by-one, quickly scan the ACs and eliminate as many of them as possible using rules you know are right. Using 2-3 clear-cut rules will usually allow you to narrow the ACs down to one or two candidates.
- To clarify, **do not** reading all the ACs in full. Instead, I identify one or two clear errors in the example sentence then scan the ACs to see which ones fix/address the particular error you've identified.

▪ **Scanning the ACs for Patterns:**

- This will allow you to filter the ACs faster because several will have large chunks of text in common (i.e., the first, middle or last part of the sentence). Therefore, you won't necessarily have to read each AC in full, but just parts of the various ACs.
- Only at the very end do I read the example along with the one or two candidate ACs in full in order to narrow down/confirm that the AC I've selected is the best option

▪ **Where should I Look for Errors?:** The beginning and end of the ACs are good places to start.

▪ **What should I do if there is no Immediately Obvious Errors?:**¹ Scan the ACs to see how they differ structurally and then compare those elements to see which approach/structure makes the most sense.

▪ **Only as a last resort should you attempt to read the ACs one-by-one:** Sometimes you need to read all the ACs²—especially if the errors are not clear—but you should do so focusing on the elements where the ACs differ.

Slash & Burn:³ Use slash & burn strategy to simplify the sentence/focus on the key aspects.

Brevity is preferred.

¹ Cry!

² If this happens, you should feel happy because that likely means you've done well enough to face the more difficult SC questions.

³ See Manhattan SC Book for an explanation.

SUBJECT-VERB AGREEMENT

Make sure that the sentence has both a **subject** and a **working verb** (else it is a fragment).

- Examples:
 - Right: The electron **WAS NAMED** in 1894.
 - Wrong: The electron named in 1894.

BECAUSE and WHICH create **subordinate clauses**, which cannot stand by themselves.

Make sure the subject and verb make sense together.

- Wrong: The development of a hydrogen car will be able to travel hundreds of miles without refueling.
- Right: Once developed, a hydrogen car will be able to travel . . .

Subject and verb must agreement in number (i.e., singular vs. plural)

- General Rule: Confusing subjects are usually singular.
- Subjects joined by AND: Plural
 - “Joe AND his friends ARE going to the beach.”
- Singular subjects linked by an ADDITIVE PHRASE: Singular
 - “JOE, as well as his friends, IS going to the beach.”
- Collective Nouns: Almost always singular
 - Examples: Agency, army, audience, class, baggage, equipment, fleet, furniture.
- Indefinite Pronouns (i.e., any pronouns that end with –ONE, –BODY, or –THING): Usually Singular
 - Examples: Anyone, somebody, no one, something.
 - Exceptions: The SANAM pronouns.
- Subjects preceded by EACH or EVERY: Singular
 - “Every dog and cat has paws”
 - “Each of these t-shirts is dirty”
 - **No effect if EACH or Every follow the noun**:
 - “They each are great tennis players.
- “THE number of?” (singular/definite) v. “A number of?” (plural/indefinite)
- Subject Phrases and Clauses: Singular
 - “Having good friends IS a wonderful thing.”
 - “Whatever they want to do IS fine with me.”
- Context-Sensitive Scenarios:
 - OR, EITHER . . . OR, & NEITHER . . . NOR: The verb should **agree with whatever noun appears** last.
 - The SANAM pronouns (SOME, ANY, NONE, ALL, MORE/MOST)
 - **Look at the noun object of the “of-phrase”** to determine the number
 - “Some of the money WAS stolen.”
 - “Some of the documents WERE stolen.”
 - Idiomatic phrases that designate number of parts: **Look at the noun object of the “of-phrase”**
 - “Half of the PIE IS blueberry.” “Half of the SLICES ARE gone.”
- Be wary of “Of Phrases” (often singular)
 - Wrong: “The price of oil and other fuel components have risen.”
 - Right: “The price of oil and other fuel components has risen.”

PARALLELISM

General Rule: Comparable sentence parts must be structurally and logically similar (i.e., they must be comparable elements).

Parallel Markers

Marker	Structure
And	X and Y X, Y and Z
Both/And	Both X and Y
Or	X or Y
Either/Or	Either X or Y
Not/But	Not X but Y
Not Only/But Also	Not only X but also Y
Rather Than	X rather than Y
From/To	From X to Y

Parallel Elements: Almost any grammatical element can be made parallel

- **Nouns**
 - Concrete nouns
 - Action nouns & complex gerunds
 - Simple Gerunds
- **Verbs**
 - Working Verbs
 - Infinitives (TO verb form)
 - Gerunds (-ING verb form functioning as a noun)
- **Adjectives**
- **Participles/Participle Phrases** (-ING verb form used as a modifier)
- **Clauses**

Element	Example
Nouns	I like <u>BOTH cats AND dogs</u> .
Adjectives	The park was <u>NEITHER accessible NOR affordable</u> .
Verbs	I <u>cleaned the basement AND washed the care</u> .
Infinitives	We would like <u>NOT ONLY to hear your side of the story BUT ALSO to provide a response</u> .
Participles	I rock star left quickly, <u>shunning his fans AND ducking into a car</u> .
Prepositional Phrases	I left the money <u>in the drawer RATHER THAN on the table</u> .
Subordinate Clauses	They contended <u>that the committee was biased AND that it should be disbanded</u> .

“Number Two Tells You What to Do” Rule: In a series of 2+ elements, what you do on element #2 determines what you do with elements #3 and on.

- “I like to swim, to run, AND to dance.”
- “I like to swim, run, AND dance.”

Some verbs or forms derived from verbs consist of more than one word. You may split these expressions apart so that the initial word(s) count across all the elements:

- “They wanted TO increase awareness and motivate purchases.”
- “The division WAS opening offices and hiring staff.”
- “The railroad CAN EITHER lose more money or solve its problems.

Placement of the parallel marker may place a limitation on what words can be omitted from infinitive lists:

- Right: “It is critical to suspend activities, notify investors AND say nothing.”
 - The parallel marker appears after the first infinitive.
- Wrong: “It is critical EITHER to suspend activities OR notify investors.”
 - The parallel marker appears before the first infinitive.
- Right: “It is critical EITHER to suspend activities OR to notify investors.”

PARALLEL CLAUSES should start with the same word (parallelism trumps concision).

- Example 1
 - Wrong: “I want to retire to a place WHERE I can relax AND THAT has low taxes.”
 - Right: “I want to retire to a place WHERE I can relax AND WHERE the taxes are low.”
- Example 2
 - Wrong: “A mastodon carcass, thawed only once AND which is still fresh, is on display.”
 - Right: “A mastodon carcass, which has been thawed only once AND which is still fresh, is on display.”

Lists with AND: All elements must be parallel.

- Sometimes lists of AND can be embedded within other lists of AND
 - Example (three levels of lists!): “She argues THAT the agency acts WITH reckless abandon AND WITH disregard for human life AND property, AND THAT it should therefore be shut down.”

Superficial Parallelism vs. Actual Parallelism

- **Sometimes you need to subordinate certain elements** (e.g., it is not safe to assume that all verbs and verb forms need to be parallel).
- **You need to be especially careful with verbs and verb forms.**
 - Example 1
 - Wrong: “Sal applied himself in this new job, arrived early every day, skipped lunches regularly, AND left late every night.”
 - Right: “Sal applied himself in this new job, arriving early every day, skipping lunches regularly, AND leaving late every night.”
 - Example 2
 - Wrong: “Wild pandas roam the forests and eat bamboo all day long.”
 - Right: “Wild pandas roam the forests eating bamboo all day long.”

Watch Out for Linking Verbs—They Can Present Hard-to-See Comparisons (e.g., forms of TO BE (is, are, was, were, etc.), appear, become, feel, grow, seem, smell, taste, turn).

- Wrong: “The bouquet of flowers WAS a giving of love.”
- Right: “The bouquet of flowers WAS a gift of love.”

PRONOUNS

Common pronouns: IT, ITS, THEY, THEM, THEIR

In GMAT-land, a pronoun must refer to an antecedent noun IN THE SENTENCE.

- Wrong: “Despite Beethoven’s traditional status as ladies man, he often dined out alone.”
 - Beethoven does not appear in this sentence—only “Beethoven’s traditional status” appears!
- Right: “Despite his traditional status as a ladies man, Beethoven often dined out alone.”

The antecedent must be unambiguous.

When you put the antecedent in the place of the pronoun, the sentence should make sense.

- Wrong: “Although the term ‘supercomputer’ may sound fanciful or exaggerated, IT is simply an extremely fast mainframe.”
- Right: “Although the term ‘supercomputer’ may sound fanciful or exaggerated, IT simply REFERS TO an extremely fast mainframe.”

Pronoun Case

- Subject (I, he, who)
- Object (me, him, whom)
- Possessive (My, his, whose): Avoid the use of possessive subjects.

*****The Deadly Five: Third Person Personal Pronouns: IT/ITS, THEY/THEM/THEIR**

- The most common pronoun mistakes involve the 3rd person personal pronouns.
 - **Be especially wary of THEIR since it is often used in everyday speech to refer to singular subjects.**
- Examples:
 - Wrong: “Whenever a student calls, take down THEIR information.”
 - Right: “Whenever a student calls, take down HIS or HER information.”
 - Right: “Whenever students call, take down THEIR information.”

*****Demonstrative Pronouns: THIS, THAT, THESE and THOSE**

- You may use these pronouns as **adjectives in front of nouns**:
 - “New nano-papers incorporate fibers that give THESE MATERIALS strength.”
- You may use **THAT or THOSE to indicate a “New Copy”** or copies of the antecedent.
 - “The money spent by her parents is less than THAT spent by her children.”
 - THAT and THOSE must agree in number with the antecedent:
 - Wrong: “Her company is outperforming THOSE OF her competitors.”
 - Right: “Her company is outperforming THE COMPANIES OF her competitors.”
- **Contrast:** Other pronouns such as **IT mean the same actual thing**:
 - “The money spent by her parents is more than IT was expected to be.”

Other Pronouns

- **THERE:** Means “in that place.”
 - Wrong: “Antarctic oil may be worth drilling for, if wells can be dug THERE.”
 - Right: “Oil in Antarctica may be worth drilling for, if wells can be dug THERE.”
- **Reflexive Pronouns: ITSELF, THEMSELVES, ONE ANOTHER, EACH OTHER**
 - Used to refer directly back to the subject.

- “The panda groomed itself.”
- **Reciprocal Pronouns: EACH OTHER, ONE ANOTHER**
 - Used to indicate interaction between parties.
 - Not interchangeable with THEMSELVES.
 - Wrong: “The guests at the party interacted with THEMSELVES.”
 - Right: “The guests at the party interacted with ONE ANOTHER.”
- **SUCH and OTHER/ANOTHER**
 - Often combined with another noun to indicate an antecedent.
 - SUCH means “like the antecedent”.
 - “After the land use agreement surfaced, the commission decided to subject any SUCH contracts to debate in the future.
 - OTHER/ANOTHER means “additional of the same type” but not necessarily exactly alike.”
 - “After the land use agreement surfaced, the commission decided to subject any OTHER contracts to debate in the future.
- **ONE v. THEY/THEM**
 - ONE: Means an indefinite copy or indicates a single, indefinite part of a collection.
 - “After walking by the chocolates so many times, Roger finally had to eat ONE.”
 - THEY/THEM: Indicates definite selection of an entire object or collection.
 - “After walking by the chocolates so many times, Roger finally had to eat THEM.”
- *****DO SO v. DO IT**
 - **DO SO: Functions as a “pro-verb”** because it can refer to an entire clause or action, including a verb, its objects, and its modifiers. This pro-verb **can appear very far from its antecedent** (often at the end of a sentence).
 - “Dhalsim did not eat dinner quickly, but his brother DID SO.”
 - Alternatively: ““Dhalsim did not eat dinner quickly, but his brother DID.”
 - **DO IT:** The pronoun IT **must refer to an actual noun antecedent**.
 - “Dhalsim failed to do the homework, but his brother did IT.”

***Helping Verbs Can be Used as Pro-Verbs (BE, DO, HAS/HAVE)

- **Can be used to stand for longer verbs or verb phrases.**
 - “I have never seen an aardvark, but my father HAS.”
- **The first instance of the verb should match the helping verb in tense.** If you need to change tenses, repeat the whole verb in the new tense.
 - Wrong: “I have never seen an aardvark, but last year my father DID.”
 - Right: “I have never seen an aardvark, but last year my father saw one.”

Placeholder IT (used when we want to move complicated subjects to the end of a sentence).

- Rule: Placeholder IT is perfectly legitimate to use.)
- Examples
 - Used to postpone infinitive subjects.
 - “IT is futile TO RESIST temptation.”
 - Used to postpone THAT-clause subjects.
 - “IT gave us encouragement THAT we scored at all.”
 - Used to postpone infinitive or THAT-clause objects.
 - “She made IT possible for us TO ATTEND the movie.”

Avoiding Pronouns Altogether

- ***Using a GENERIC SYNONYM may be preferable to repeating the noun.**
 - Example 1

- Wrong: “After roasting the deer, the hunter started a fire and then searched for a tree to hand IT from.”
 - Problem: IT could refer to either “deer” for “fire”
- Right: “After roasting the deer, the hunter started a fire and then searched for a tree to hand THE DEER from.”
- Better: “After roasting the deer, the hunter started a fire and then searched for a tree to hand THE MEAT from.”
 - i.e., deers provide a type of meat.
- Example 2
 - Right: “Nano-papers incorporate fibers that give THESE MATERIALS strength.”
 - i.e., Nano-papers are a type of material.

Nuances of Pronoun Reference: Key considerations:⁴

- Number: The antecedent must agree in number (singular or plural).
- Gender: The antecedent must agree in gender (masculine, feminine, neuter).
- Repeats: Presumed to refer to the same antecedent (i.e., every IT and ITS should refer to the same thing).
- Proximity: The pronoun should normally refer to the closest eligible antecedent.
- Case: The pronoun and antecedent should agree in case if they are in parallel structure.
 - i.e., antecedent and pronoun should serve similar functions in their respective clauses.
 - e.g., if the antecedent is the subject of one clause, the pronoun should be the subject of the other.

⁴ This concept is not that big of a deal, so feel free to ignore. I’ve included here for completeness and for the ultra-paranoid.

MODIFIERS

Pay particular attention to opening modifiers, which appear at the beginning of a sentence!⁵

Position of Noun Modifiers

- **A NOUN and its MODIFIER should TOUCH each other.**
 - Wrong: “Jim biked along an old dirt road to get to his house, which cut through the woods.”
 - Right: “To get to his house, Jim biked along an old dirt road, which cut through the woods.”
- **If the noun being modified is not in the sentence → DANGLING MODIFIER error!**
 - Wrong: “Resigned to the bad news, there was no commotion at the office.”
 - Right: “Resigned to the bad news, the office workers made no commotion at the office.”
- **A present participle (-ING form) at the beginning of a sentence often leads to a dangling modifier error.**
 - Wrong: “Using the latest technology, the problem was identified.”
 - Right: “Using the latest technology, the engineer identified the problem.”

Exceptions to the Touch Rule (i.e., necessary or short phrases between antecedent and pronoun)

- **A “Mission-Critical” Modifier Falls Between** (often an OF-phrase that defines the noun). In these cases, the modifier modifies the entire noun phrase.
 - “An ice sheet covers 80 percent OF THE SURFACE OF GREENLAND, an area roughly the size of Alaska.”
 - “He had a way OF DODGING OPPONENTS that impressed the scouts.”
- **A Short Non-Essential Phrase Falls Between and is Set Off by Commas.**
 - “I love dogs, such as corgis, that eat a lot of food.”
- **A Very Short Predicate Falls Between, Shifting a Very Long Modifier Back.**
 - Right: “A new CEO has been hired who will transform . . .”
 - Wrong: “A new CEO who will transform . . . has been hired.”
- **The Modifier is Part of a Series of Parallel Modifiers, One of Which Touches the Noun.**
 - “In heraldry, the term “tincture” refers to a color emblazoned on a coat of arms and labeled with a with a special French word.”

Absolute Phrases (touch rule does not apply): Composed of a noun + a noun modifier.

- These phrases do not modify what they touch; rather, they modify the main clause in some way.
 - “His head held high, Owen walked out of the store.”
 - “Owen walked out of the store, his head held high.”
- Do not use WHICH when a Absolute Phrase will work.
 - Wrong: “Scientists detected high levels of radiation at certain crash sites around the world, which suggests . . .” (i.e., WHICH modifies “world”)
 - Right: “Scientists detected high levels of radiation at certain crash sites around the world, results that suggest . . .”
- You may use an “-ING” form as an alternative.
 - Wrong: “Scientists detected high levels of radiation at certain crash sites around the world, AND THIS suggests . . .”

⁵ If you don’t understand why I wrote this rule like this, you need to study harder!

- Right: “Scientists detected high levels of radiation at certain crash sites around the world, suggesting that . . .”

*****Modifying Nouns with Relative Pronouns** (WHICH, THAT, WHO, WHOSE, WHOM, WHERE, WHEN)

- **WHO and WHOM must modify people.** WHICH must modify things.
- **THAT cannot modify people.**
 - Wrong: “The scientists THAT made the discovery were rewarded.”
 - Right: “The scientists WHO made the discovery were rewarded.”
- **WHOSE can modify either people or things.**
 - Right: “. . . the town WHOSE water supply was contaminated.”
- **WHERE can modify a physical place, but not a metaphorical place.**
 - Wrong: “We had an arrangement WHERE he cooked and I cleaned.”
 - Right: “We had an arrangement IN WHICH he cooked and I cleaned.”
- **WHEN or IN WHICH can be used to modify an event or period of time.**

Essential vs. Non-Essential Noun Modifiers

- **Use of Commas**
 - Put commas between non-essential modifiers and their nouns.
 - Do not put commas between essential modifiers and their nouns.
- **WHICH vs. THAT**
 - Use WHICH (with commas) if the modifier is non-essential.
 - Use THAT (and no commas) if the modifier is essential.

Subgroup Modifiers: Used to describe a part of a larger group.

- **Three rights ways:**
 - “This model explains all known subatomic particles, SOME only recently discovered.”
 - “This model explains all known subatomic particles, SOME OF WHICH WERE only recently discovered.”
 - [“This model explains all known subatomic particles, SOME OF WHICH THEM only recently discovered.”] **[NEED TO FIX THIS BULLET (DOESN'T SEEM RIGHT), BUT I SOLD MY BOOK!]**
- **Three wrong ways:**
 - “This model explains all known subatomic particles, OF WHICH SOME WERE only recently discovered.” (awkward)
 - “This model explains all known subatomic particles, SOME OF THEM WHICH WERE only recently discovered.” (wordy)
 - “This model explains all known subatomic particles, SOME OF WHICH only recently discovered.” (needs to be “SOME OF WHICH WERE”)

Position of Verb Modifiers (touch rule does not apply) (i.e., modifiers that answer questions about “how,” “when,” “where,” and “why”)

- Verb modifiers can be placed much more freely than noun modifiers.

WHICH Can Only be Used to Modify NOUNS (use Present Participles (-ING form) to Fix)

- **WHICH CAN only be used to modify nouns** (i.e., use WHICH only to refer to the noun immediately preceding it—never use it to refer to an entire clause).
 - Wrong: “Crime has recently decreased in our neighborhood, which has led to a rise in property values.”
- **Fix #1:** Turn the first part into a noun phrase:

- Right: “The recent decrease in crime in our neighborhood has led to a rise in property values.”
- **Fix #2:** Use a present participle (-ING form)
 - Right: “Crime has recently decreased in our neighborhood, leading to a rise in property values.”
- *****Always test WHICH clauses to make sure which refers to a noun immediately preceding the WHICH.**

What Out for Modifiers Trying to Modify Possessive Nouns

- Examples:
 - Wrong: “Unskilled in complex math, Bill’s score on the exam was poor.”
 - Right: “Unskilled in complex math, Bill did not score well on the exam.”
- Watch out for possessive nouns paired with abstract nouns such as “development”
 - Wrong: “Only in the past century has origami’s development, a ceremonial activity invented millennia ago, into a true art form taken place.”
 - Right: “Origami—a ceremonial activity invented millennia ago—has developed into a true art form only in the past century.”

Possessive Nuances

- Do not choose OF X’S—choose either OF X or X’S.
 - Wrong: “The orca, a relative of the blue whale’s, is found throughout the globe.”
 - Right: “The orca, a relative of the blue whale, is found throughout the globe.”
- Avoid the plural possessive form (-S’)

VERB TENSE (when does the action take place)

Simple Tenses

- **Simple present, simple past, simple future**

Progressive Tenses (-ING form)

- **Used to emphasize the ongoing nature of an action.**
- **Do not use Present Progressive for general definitions;** use the Simple Present instead.
 - Wrong: “Cherenkov radiation is light that particles ARE EMITTING when they ARE TRAVELING . . .”
 - Right: “Cherenkov radiation is light that particles EMIT when they TRAVEL . . .”
- **Do not use Present Progressive to indicate future actions;** use the Simple Future instead.
 - Wrong: “John IS MEETING Harvey for lunch tomorrow.”
 - Right: “John WILL MEET Harvey for lunch tomorrow.”

Present Perfect (HAVE/HAS + Past Participle)

- **Indicates either continued action or continued effect of a completed action.**

Past Perfect (HAD + Past Participle)

- **When two actions occur at different times in the past, the Past Perfect is used for the earlier action and the Simple Past is used for the later action.**
- **You do not always need to use the Past Perfect for earlier actions**—you should only use the Past Perfect **to clarify or emphasize** a sequence of past events.
 - Right: “Laura LOCKED the deadbolt before she LEFT for work.”
 - Right: “Antonio DROVE to the store and BOUGHT some ice cream.”

VERB MOOD

Indicative Mood: Used to express facts and opinions.

- “He goes to the library often.”

Imperative Mood: Used to give orders or give requests.

- “Go to the library.”

Subjunctive Mood

- **Used in Two Scenarios:**
 - To express a **hypothetical condition** (e.g. “**IF I were** a rich man”)
 - Word to look for: IF, AS THOUGH
 - To express a **desire, intention, command, recommendation, request, resolution, or advice.**
 - Words to Look For: ADVISABLE, DESIRABLE, ESSENTIAL, FITTING, IMPERATIVE, IMPORTANT, NECESSARY, URGE, URGENT, VITAL.
- **General Subjunctive Verb Rule:** The triggering verb/word must (almost always) be followed by **THAT and the verb in the sentence must be in its BASE FORM.**
 - “I recommend THAT he RUN all day long.”
- **Rule for Subjunctive IF/Hypothetical Subjunctive:** Use **WERE** rather than **WAS**.
 - “**IF** my mother WERE here now, she would cry.”
 - “Rust deteriorates a steel pipe to such an extent that it will snap easily, AS THOUGH it WERE a twig.
- **The verb TO BE**
 - **Present tense subjunctive:** Use **BE**
 - “The committee recommended THAT the manager BE dismissed.”
 - **Past tense subjunctive:** Use **WERE**
 - “IF I WERE a rich man.”

VERB VOICE

Use active rather than passive voice unless you want to emphasize the action rather than the actor.

- “She passed out and was driven to the hospital.”

COMPARISONS

Comparison Signals: LIKE, UNLIKE, AS, THAN

Like v. As

- **LIKE should be used to compare nouns.**
 - Exception: When LIKE is used as part of a prepositional phrase, it can modify a noun or verb.
 - “He ran **LIKE** the wind.”
 - “I danced the whole **night** away, **LIKE** someone possessed.”
- **AS should be used to compare clauses/verb phrases** (i.e., grammatical elements that contain a verb).

Keep Comparisons Parallel

- **Logically Parallel:** Must compare logically comparable things (i.e., like elements).
- **Structurally Parallel:** Must have similar grammatical structure.

You can often omit words in the second part of a comparison

- **Possessive pronouns** provide an opportunity:
 - “My car is bigger than Brian’s [CAR].”
- You can omit words or even whole clauses **if there is no ambiguity:**
 - “I walk as fast now as [I WALKED] when I was younger.”

Comparative and Superlative Forms

- Use the **Comparative Form** when **comparing two things** (e.g., shorter, more, less, better).
- Use the **Superlative Form** when comparing **more than two things** (e.g., shortest, most, least, best).

Do not compare an adverb that ends in “-LY” by changing the ending to “-ER”. Instead, add “MORE”.

- Wrong: “Adrian runs QUICKLY. He runs QUICKER than Jacob.”
- Right: “Adrian runs QUICKLY. He runs MORE QUICKLY than Jacob.”

***Do not use a COMPARATIVE ADJECTIVE unless you have the word THAN in the sentence.

- Wrong: “With winter coming, I will have HIGHER energy bills.” (“THAN now” is implied but omitted!)
- Wrong: “I will have HIGHER bills OVER last year.”
- Right: “I will have HIGHER bills THAN last year.”

CONNECTING WORDS

- **Coordinating Conjunctions:** AND, BUT, OR, YET, SO, FOR, NOR
 - **Can link two main clauses to form a grammatical sentence.**
 - **MUST be used along with a comma.**
- **Subordinators:** BECAUSE, ALTHOUGH, BEFORE, AFTER, SINCE, WHEN, IF, UNLESS, THAT, THOUGH, WHILE
 - Make sure the sentence is a complete sentence.

QUANTITY

- **Countable Things v. Uncountable Things**

- Words used for countable things (e.g., cars, hats): NUMBER, MANY, FEW, NUMEROUS
- Words used for uncountable things (e.g., patience, sand): AMOUNT, MUCH, LITTLE, LESS, GREAT
- **Comparative v. Superlative**
- **BETWEEN (used to compare two things) v. AMONG (used to compare more than two things)**
- **THE NUMBER OF (singular) v. A NUMBER OF (plural) v. THE NUMBERS OF (wrong!)**

NUMBERS in COMPARISONS

- **Use “TIMES . . . AS . . . AS . . .” to relate quantities by multiplication.**
 - Wrong: “The man is FIVE TIMES FATTER THAN his son.”
 - Rationale: This technically means the man is six times as fat as his son!
 - Right: “The man is FIVE TIMES AS FAT AS his son.”
- **Use TIMES without AS or THAN to indicate direct multiplication.**
 - “The cost of a ticket is \$12, SIX TIMES the cost ten years ago.”
 - “The concert was attended by 300 people, twice the previous attendance.”
- **Use MORE THAN or LESS THAN to relate two quantities by addition/subtraction.**
 - Wrong: “I am TEN years AS OLD AS you.”
 - Right: “I am TEN years OLDER THAN you.”

MISCELLANEOUS

You need the word THAT after the Reporting VERBS such as: AGREE, CLAIM, CONTEND, DECLARE, FIND, INDICATE, REVEAL, RULE, SHOW, ANNOUNCE, KNOW, HOLD, WARN, ANNOUNCE, REPEAT, STATE, THINK, etc.

- Examples:
 - Wrong: “The study INDICATES the problem is severe.”
 - Right: “The study INDICATES THAT the problem is severe.”
- Exception: THAT is not needed after SAY/SAID (no chance for ambiguity)
 - “The water was so cold that people SAID polar bears would shiver.”

Do not use LIKE to introduce examples; instead, use SUCH AS.

Placement of MORE and LESS: Watch out for ambiguity.

- Ambiguous: “We have even MORE efficient engines than before.”
- Right: “We have even MORE engines that are efficient than before.”
- Right: “We have engines even MORE efficient than before.”

Semicolons as well as “, AND” can be used to separate independent clauses.

- Note that, in GMAT-land, **the comma before AND is NECESSARY.**

Modification of (Proper) Intent

1. **A metaphor is converted to an literal actuality.**
 - a. Wrong: “The puck glided through the air BECAUSE it had been guided by an angel.”
 - b. Right: “The puck glided through the air AS THOUGH it had been guided by an angel.”
2. **Creation of a relationship that could not exist.**
 - a. Wrong: “I thought that the siren on the radio WAS A POLICE CAR approaching from behind.”
 - b. Right: “I thought that the siren on the radio WAS THAT OF A POLICE CAR approaching from behind.”

Participle Phrases: A modifying phrase that starts with a participle.⁶

- Examples:
 - “Bombarded by bullets, the troops retreated.”
 - “Dogs trained by professionals are much more obedient.”
- Rules: If a participle phrase appears:
 - At the beginning of a sentence, it **must touch the noun it is modifying**.
 - In the middle of a sentence, it **must touch the noun it is modifying**.
 - At the end of a sentence separated by a comma, it **can modify either the subject of the sentence or the clause preceding it**.
 - This is one circumstance when the adjectival modifier may appear far from the noun it is modifying.

“BEING” is usually wrong.

- Exceptions:
 - When the use of “being” is grammatically required.

⁶ Rules from Veritas. Need to access validity.

- “I am afraid of being late.”
- “In addition to being a hard worker, I am smart.”
- “Being happy is a wonderful thing.”
- “with + NOUN + being + NOUN COMPLEMENT”
 - “with increased profits being the reason why . . .”
 - “with apples being the only proper substitute . . .”