

4 Correction of Common Errors (Nouns)

The students of the English Grammar commit blunders while speaking or writing English. They do so because they lack the rudiments of the English Grammar. They are not fully familiar with the subtle points of the English Grammar. Thus they fail to leave an everlasting impression on the minds of readers or listeners through their conversation or writing. In the chapters to follow, we have mentioned typical errors committed by students while using the Part of Speech—Nouns, Pronouns, Adjectives, Determiners, Adverbs, Verbs, Prepositions, Conjunctions and Interjections. They can avoid the errors if they grasp the underlying grammatical rules thoroughly.

1. The cattles are grazing in the field. (Incorrect)

The cattle are grazing in the field. (Correct)

Note: Some nouns have the same singular and plural forms; as, cattle, cannon, deer, sheep, swine, etc.

2. He gave us two dozens mangoes. (Incorrect)

He gave us two dozen mangoes. (Correct)

Note: Some nouns when used after numerals have the same form in the plural as in the singular; as, pair, dozen, gross, score, thousand, etc.

But we say: Hundreds of people gathered outside the Prime Minister's Office.

3. Your spectacle is fine. (Incorrect)

Your spectacles are fine. (Correct)

Note: Some nouns are used in the plural and always take plural verbs; as, scissors, spectacles, trousers, etc.

4. Mathematics are a difficult subject. (Incorrect)

Mathematics is a difficult subject. (Correct)

Note: Some nouns are plural in form but they are used as singular; as, mathematics, news, summons, the United States of America, etc.

5. The gentry of the town was invited. (Incorrect)

The gentry of the town were invited. (Correct)

Note: Some collective nouns are in singular form but they are used as plurals; as, people, gentry, clergy, etc.

6. The sceneries of Kashmir are charming. (Incorrect)

The scenery of Kashmir is charming. (Correct)

Note: Some nouns are generally used in the singular form; as, advice, poetry, abuse, furniture, luggage, scenery, etc.

7. (a) He is very fond of vegetable. (Incorrect)

He is very fond of vegetables. (Correct)

(b) He is very fond of fruits. (Incorrect)

He is very fond of fruit. (Correct)

Note: 'Vegetables' is always used in the plural form but 'fruit' in singular unless different kinds of fruits are meant. The word 'fruits' means reward as well.

For example—He enjoyed the fruits of all his hard work.

8. (a) My hairs are black. (Incorrect)

My hair is black. (Correct)

(b) He has black and grey hair on his head. (Incorrect)

He has black and grey hairs on his head. (Correct)

(c) This tank teems with fishes. (Incorrect)

This tank teems with fish. (Correct)

(d) There are different kinds of fish in the sea. (Incorrect)

There are different kinds of fishes in the sea. (Correct)

Note: 'Hair' and 'fish' are used both in singular and plural forms.

9. (a) The jury is divided in their opinions. (Incorrect)

The jury are divided in their opinions. (Correct)

(b) The jury was unanimous in their decision. (Incorrect)

The jury was unanimous in its decision. (Correct)

Note: Some nouns are used both in the singular and in the plural; as, crowd, jury, government, etc. We use a singular verb with a collective noun when it is thought to be one whole, otherwise a plural verb.

10. He gave me ten-rupees note. (Incorrect)

He gave me a ten-rupee note. (Correct)

Note: The correct expressions are a ten-rupee note, a threefoot ruler, a seven-year old child, a five-year plan and so on.

11. Death lays her icy hands on the rich and the poor alike. (Incorrect)

Death lays his icy hands on the rich and the poor alike. (Correct)

Note: Lifeless objects known for strength and violence are said to be of the Masculine Gender, when they are personified; as, sun, winter, death, etc. Lifeless objects known for beauty and gracefulness are said to be of the Feminine Gender, when they are personified; as, moon, Nature, peace, etc.

12. I shall go by the 7.30 o'clock train. (Incorrect)

I shall go by the 7.30 train. (Correct)

13. We had a good play of hockey. (Incorrect)

We had a good game of hockey. (Correct)

14. We should help the poors.

We should help the poor.

Note: When an adjective is preceded by the definite article

'the', it becomes a plural noun.

15. The road is closed for repair. (Incorrect)

The road is closed for repairs. (Correct)

16. The magistrate passed an order for his arrest. (Incorrect)

The magistrate passed orders for his arrest. (Correct)

17. We have finished three-fourth of this book. (Incorrect)

We have finished three-fourths of this book. (Correct)

18. I have many works to do. (Incorrect)

I have much work to do. (Correct)

Note: 'Work' is an uncountable noun. When it is written 'works', it means factory.

19. There is no place in this compartment. (Incorrect)

There is no room in this compartment. (Correct)

20. Give me some blotting. (Incorrect)

Give me some blotting paper. (Correct)

21. She is one of the best girl in the class. (Incorrect)

She is one of the best girls in the class. (Correct)

22. The chair's legs are broken. (Incorrect)

The legs of the chair are broken. (Correct)

Note: In case of lifeless things, possession is shown by using the word 'of'.

23. The ship sank and all his passengers were drowned. (Incorrect)

The ship sank and all her passengers were drowned. (Correct)

Note: Some nouns are always used in the Feminine Gender; as, ship, country, etc.

24. The old man was knocking at the door of Death. (Incorrect)

The old man was knocking at Death's door. (Correct)

Note: Observe the use of possessive case with the following—Death's door, duty's call, a kilogram's weight.

25. He spent the last summer vacations with his uncle. (Incorrect)

He spent the last summer vacation with his uncle. (Correct)

26. She has two fifty-paisas coins. (Incorrect)

She has two fifty-paisa coins. (Correct)

27. All the family members were present. (Incorrect)

All the members of the family were present. (Correct)

28. Good night, Sir, I am glad to see you. (Incorrect)

Good evening, Sir, I am glad to see you. (Correct)

29. He has an urgent work. (Incorrect)

He has an urgent piece of work. (Correct)

30. Peculiar plurals of some words

Singular

Brother

Genius

Plural

(i) Brothers (sons of the same father)

(ii) Brethren (fellow men)

(i) Genii (spirits)

(ii) Geniuses (men of exceptional intelligence)

(a) We should never desert our comrades and brothers. (Incorrect)

We should never desert our comrades and brethren. (Correct)

(b) Shakespeare, Milton and Dante are the three great genii who remain unsurpassed. (Incorrect)

Shakespeare, Milton and Dante are the three great geniuses who remain unsurpassed. (Correct)

31. I had no rupees. (Incorrect)

I had no money. (Correct)

Note: The word 'money' is used while talking about wealth. But we can say—

I have a rupee.

I gave him two rupees.

32. He enjoyed the theatre. (Incorrect)

He enjoyed the play. (Correct)

Note: Theatre is a special building or place for the performance of plays. Thus, we enjoy the play, not the theatre.

(a) I prefer gas cooks to electric ones. (Incorrect)

I prefer gas cookers to electric ones. (Correct)

(b) I saw a daughter on the road. (Incorrect)

I saw a girl on the road. (Correct)

33. (a) My husband is a very good cooker. (Incorrect)

(b) My husband is very good cook. (Correct)

Note: 'Cook' is a person who cooks food. 'Cooker' is an apparatus wherein food is cooked.

34. Don't trust him; he is a cheater. (Incorrect)

Don't trust him; he is a cheat. (Correct)

Note: The word 'cheat' is used in the British English whereas the word 'cheater' is used in the American English. As the British English is flawless, the word 'cheat' is appropriate.

35. (a) My girl is too young to marry. (Incorrect)

(b) My daughter is too young to marry. (Correct)

Note: Girl is a female child whereas daughter is a female child in relation to her parents.

36. The weather of Ranchi suits me. (Incorrect)

The climate of Ranchi suits me. (Correct)

Note: Climate denotes the general atmospheric conditions of a country whereas weather is the conditions at a particular time.

37. This is the cause why I don't like it. (Incorrect)

This is the reason why I don't like it. (Correct)

or

This is why I don't like it. (Correct)

Note: 'Why' is never used after 'cause'. The word 'of' is used after 'cause'; as, 'What was the cause of the accident?'

38. (a) He lost a quantity of books. (Incorrect)

He lost a number of books. (Correct)

(b) We had a large number of money. (Incorrect)

We had a large amount of money. (Correct)

Note: 'Quantity or amount' is used with an uncountable noun.

39. Sorry, Mr., I can't come. (Incorrect)

Sorry, Mr. Sen, I can't come. (Correct)

Sorry, Sir, I can't come.

Note: 'Mr. or Mrs.' is never used alone. It is always used with a name.

40. Do you like his new dress? (Incorrect)

Do you like his new clothes/suit? (Correct)

Do you like her new dress/clothes?

Note: 'Dresses' are generally worn by girls and ladies. The word 'clothes' means garments such as trousers, dresses, shirts, etc. worn on the body.

41. (a) He got two breads. (Incorrect)

He got two loaves of bread. (Correct)

(b) I eat a bread daily. (Incorrect)

I eat bread daily. (Correct)

I eat a loaf of bread daily.

Note: 'Bread' is an uncountable noun. It is to be used with a numeral; always say—a loaf/a piece of bread.

42. (a) He applied for teachery. (Incorrect)

He applied for teachership. (Correct)

He applied for the post of teacher.

(b) I work for the upliftment of my village. (Incorrect)

I work for the uplift of my village. (Correct)

(c) He applied for lecturership. (Incorrect)

He applied for lectureship. (Correct)

(d) I got a freeship. (Incorrect)

I got a free studentship. (Correct)

Note: There is no word 'teachery' in the dictionary. 'Uplift' in itself is a noun. The suffix ment is not added to it to make it a noun. 'Teacher' in itself is a noun. It is wrong to add ship to it to make it a noun. Similarly, the correct word is free studentship, not 'freeship'.

43. (a) It is a nice poetry. (Incorrect)

It is a nice poem. (Correct)

(b) Quote the poem from heart. (Incorrect)

Quote the poem from memory. (Correct)

Note: 'Poetry' means the art of a poet or poems in general. It is an uncountable noun whereas 'poem' is a countable noun. 'Get by heart' is an idiom which means 'learn something'. But the thing which has been learnt is revised with the help of memory. So, 'quote from memory' is appropriate.

44. Please give me all informations. (Incorrect)

Please give me all information. (Correct)

Note: The word 'information' is an uncountable noun. It has no plural form. Neither is 'a' or 'an' used before it.

45. (a) I need some cardboards for this. (Incorrect)

I need some cardboard for this. (Correct)

(b) Our children need some educations. (Incorrect)

Our children need some education. (Correct)

(c) I need some new equipments. (Incorrect)

I need some new equipment. (Correct)

(d) I took some foods to eat. (Incorrect)

I took some food to eat. (Correct)

Note: 'Cardboard', 'education', 'equipment' and 'food' all are uncountable nouns. When there is much food, we say— a lot of food.

45. (a) We went there on horsebacks. (Incorrect)

We went there on horseback. (Correct)

(b) We heard some good musics. (Incorrect)

We heard some good music. (Correct)

(c) The news are bad today. (Correct)

The news is bad today. (Incorrect)

Note: 'Horseback', 'music' and 'news' all are uncountable nouns.

46. Two peoples were in the garden. (Incorrect)

Two people were in the garden. (Correct)

Note: 'People' is itself in plural. When it means a nation, it is treated singular. 's' is added to it to make it plural; as, the peoples (= nations) of Europe

47. (a) In their free times, they played tennis. (Incorrect)

In their free time, they played tennis. (Correct)

(b) During their lesson times the children made a lot of noise. (Incorrect)

During their lesson time the children made a lot of noise. (Correct)

Note: 'free time' and 'lesson time' are uncountable. So, they can't be used in plural.

48. (a) They live in another towns. (Incorrect)

They live in another town. (Correct)

(b) Have you got other letter? (Incorrect)

Have you got other letters?

Have you got another letter?

Note: 'Another' is singular but towns is plural. A singular noun is used with 'another'. On the other hand, 'other' is plural, so a plural noun (letters) is used with it.

49. (a) He hates all mother-in-laws (Incorrect)

He hates all mothers-in-law. (Correct)

(b) I have five brother-in-laws. (Incorrect)

I have five brothers-in-law. (Correct)

Note: The plurals of mother-in-law, father-in-law, brother-in-law, passer-by, etc. are mothers-in-law, fathers-in-law, brothers-in-law, passers-by respectively.

50. (a) They are woman-teachers. (Incorrect)

They are women-teachers. (Correct)

(b) You are ladies doctors. (Incorrect)

You are lady-doctors. (Correct)

(c) You all are houses-maids. (Incorrect)

You all are house-maids. (Correct)

Note: The plural of a compound noun is got by making the plural of the second noun as, boy-friend—boy-friends, fountain-pen—fountain-pens and so on. In case a compound noun contains man or woman as the first noun, its plural is got by making the plurals of both the nouns; as, womenservant—women-servants, women-doctor—womendoctors.

51. (a) We are Adam's and Eve's children. (Incorrect)

We are Adam and Eve's children. (Correct)

(b) Shakespeare and Tennyson's poetry. (Incorrect)

Shakespeare's and Tennyson's poetry. (Correct)

Note: When several words are in apposition, be careful to form their possessive with the 's on the last word only if you are sure that they form a single sense unit and the result is free from ambiguity.

52. (a) I am fond of Keat's poems. (Incorrect)

I am fond of Keats' poems. (Correct)

(b) Do you like Yeat's poetry? (Incorrect)

Do you like Yeats' poetry? (Correct)

Note: Only 's or ' is added to a singular proper noun which ends in 's'; as, Keats' poems or Keats's poems, Hercules' labour or Hercules's labour and so on.

53. (a) Her house's number was not known. (Incorrect)

The number of her house was not known. (Correct)

(b) The bell was of the front door's side. (Incorrect)

The bell was at the side of the front door. (Correct)

(c) It was a walk of five minutes. (Incorrect)

It was five minutes' walk. (Correct)

(d) I spent a holiday of a month. (Incorrect)

I spent a month's holiday. (Correct)

Note: 's is used with the animate; as, cow's milk, a women's college, a men's lavatory, my father's name, the day's name, mother's hat, a child's toy, etc. But 's is used with the inanimate, especially when related to time, distance and money; as, two days' journey, a night's arrival, ten minutes' walk, government's decision, this year's sale, their money's worth and so on.

54. His asset was seized. (Incorrect)

His assets were seized. (Correct)

Note: When the word 'asset' means a quality; it is written in the singular form; as, good health is a great asset. Beauty is her only asset.

55. (a) Do you know the English alphabets? (Incorrect)

Do you know the English alphabet? (Correct)

(b) They are using new machineries. (Incorrect)

They are using new machinery. (Correct)

Note: 'Alphabet' and 'machinery' are not used in their plural forms.

56. (a) What a nonsense to have a picnic today! (Incorrect)

What nonsense to have a picnic today! (Correct)

(b) It is a nice weather. (Incorrect)

It is nice weather. (Correct)

(c) India is making a progress in the field of science. (Incorrect)

India is making progress in the field of science. (Correct)

Note: 'Nonsense', 'weather' and 'progress' are uncountable nouns. 'a' is not used before them. But we can say—a piece of nonsense, a spell of bad weather.

57. (a) By means of books knowledges are spread. (Incorrect)

By means of books knowledge is spread. (Correct)

(b) I saw a magic yesterday. (Incorrect)

I saw magic yesterday. (Correct)

Note: 'Knowledge' and 'magic' are uncountable nouns. 'a' is not used before them. Sometimes 'a' is used before knowledge; as,

He has a knowledge (= information about) of the truth.

He has a good knowledge (= information) of London.

58. (a) I like apple more than the orange. (Incorrect)

I like an apple more than an orange. (Correct)

or

I like apples more than oranges. (Correct)

(b) Ripe mango is sweeter than ripe guava. (Incorrect)

A ripe mango is sweeter than a ripe guava. (Correct)

or

Ripe mangoes are sweeter than ripe guavas. (Correct)

Note: The name of a fruit is used both in the singular form and in the plural form. So, 'a' or 'an' is used or it can be used in its plural form.

59. (a) I got the mark for the examination. (Incorrect)

I got the marks for the examination. (Correct)

(b) The teacher gave me full mark in mathematics. (Incorrect)

The teacher gave me full marks in mathematics. (Correct)

Note: The word 'marks' and not 'mark' is always used when a teacher gives them to a student in the examination. 'Full marks' and not 'full mark' is the correct expression.

60. (a) They are called optimist. (Incorrect)

They are called optimists. (Correct)

(b) They are good actor. (Incorrect)

They are good actors. (Correct)

(c) We are a student. (Incorrect)

We are students. (Correct)

Note: 'They are' and 'we are' are plural expressions. They are followed by plural nouns.

61. (a) They could become a lawyer. (Incorrect)

They could become lawyers. (Correct)

(b) We were then a schoolboy. (Incorrect)

We were then schoolboys. (Correct)

(c) Children must become an honest man. (Incorrect)

Children must become honest men. (Correct)

Note: 'They', 'we' and 'children' are plural whereas 'a lawyer', 'a schoolboy' and 'a honest man' are singular. How can so many persons become one particular man?

62. (a) They don't give much benefits. (Incorrect)

They don't give many benefits. (Correct)

(b) He has much children. (Incorrect)

He has many children. (Correct)

Note: 'Much' is used with an uncountable noun; as, much water, much milk, etc. 'Many' is used with a countable noun; as, many boys, many pencils, etc.

63. (a) He went to the picture to see 'Gandhi'. (Incorrect)

He went to the pictures to see 'Gandhi'. (Correct)

(b) Our surrounding was pleasant. (Incorrect)

Our surroundings were pleasant. (Correct)

(c) We were in high spirit. (Incorrect)

We were in high spirits. (Correct)

Note: When the word 'pictures' means Cinema, it is always in plural. 'Surroundings' is always in plural. 'High/Low/Good spirits' is always used in plural. Here, 'spirits' means 'mood'.

64. There are some who calls him a bore. (Incorrect)

There are some who call him a bore. (Correct)

Note: Here, 'some' is plural and 'who' points to 'some' which is the subject of 'call'. Thus 'call' has to be made plural.

65. (a) Nowaday the towns are very crowded. (Incorrect)

Nowadays the towns are very crowded. (Correct)

(b) Sometime I had milk for breakfast. (Incorrect)

Sometimes I had milk for breakfast. (Correct)

(c) His whereabout is still unknown. (Incorrect)

His whereabouts are still unknown. (Correct)

Note: 'Nowadays' is always used in plural. 'Sometimes' moment; as, see me some time tomorrow. Similarly, 'whereabouts' is always used in plural.

66. (a) That pair of shoes are mine. (Incorrect)

That pair of shoes is mine. (Correct)

(b) This pair of scissors belong to me. (Incorrect)

This pair of scissors belongs to me. (Correct)

Note: 'A pair of shoes/shears/scissors/gloves/pants' is always treated singular. A singular verb is used after it. The moment 'a pair of' is removed, it becomes plural and takes a plural verb; as

, His shoes are dirty.

Those scissors belong to me.

His trousers were torn.