Spot The Error

Five to ten sentences will be given in this part. You can score full marks from this section by using very little time, which is a plus point in Bank PO exam. As you know well time is a deciding factor in the success of Bank PO exam. By reading the sentence once, you can find the answer. But the reading should be done carefully. The sentence will be divided into 4 parts. The error may be in any one part of the sentence and sometimes there will be no error in the sentence, i.e. it will be correct as it is. The error may be of tense, articles, subject-verb agreement, prepositions, idioms, usage or sentence structure.

Go through the following sentences and explanations given below carefully. Learn all the rules and try to find the error in the first reading itself. Byheart all the rules so that if the error is in the first part you should be able to mark the answer by reading the first part itself. Thus you can save your most precious times.

1. People have a right to criticise (1) / but at the same time (2) / each of them (3) / have to remember his duty also (4) / No error (5)
   ➢ In the above sentence the ‘verb’ does not agree with the subject. When ‘each’ or ‘every’ is there in a sentence then the verb after it should be in singular form. Thus the error in this sentence lies in the 4th part. So the answer is (4). ‘has’ should be used in the place of ‘have’.

2. Arun was entrusted with (1) / the task of coordinating yesterday’s programme (2) but due to certain difficulties (3) / he doesn’t do it (4) / No error (5).
   ➢ Here the error is in the tense of the sentence. Here past time is referred (yesterday). So the verb should be in simple past. The answer is (4). ‘did not’ should be used instead of ‘does not.’

3. Watch how careful (1) / the sparrow knits the (2) / straws into one another (3) / to form a nest (4) / No error (5).
   ➢ The error is in the usage of parts of speech. Adverb should be used in the first part of the sentence. Answer is (1). ‘Carefully’ should be used in the place of ‘careful’.

4. Work hard (1) / lest you will (2) / fail in the exam (3) / No error (4).
   ➢ The answer is (2). With ‘lest’ the auxiliary verb used is ‘should’ and not ‘will’. Also remember that ‘lest’ has a negative meaning. So ‘not’ is never used with ‘lest’

5. Amit hates (1) / his brother (2) / drinking everyday (3) / No error (4).
   ➢ The answer is (2). The noun before a gerund (here drinking) should always be in its possessive case. So ‘brother’s’ instead of ‘brother’.

6. This town isn’t very well known (1) / and there isn’t much (2) / to see (3) / so a few tourists come here (4) / No error (5).
   ➢ Here the error lies in the part (4). As the town is not popular nobody comes here. Negative meaning is expressed. So ‘few’ instead of ‘a few’.

7. Wherever they go (1) / Indians easily adapt to (2) / local circumstances (3) / No error (4).
   ➢ Answer (2). With words like adapt prostrate, enjoy, absent, devote etc. reflexive pronoun is added. ‘adapt themselves’ instead of ‘adapt’.

8. I don’t understand (1) / why he is (2) / so angry at me (3) / No error (4).
   ➢ Answer (3). With angry prepositions ‘with’ and ‘at’ can be used. Angry with a person and angry at something. Here angry ‘with’ instead of angry ‘at’.

9. On a holiday (1) / Madhu prefers reading (2) / than going out (3) / visiting friends (4) / No error (5).
   ➢ Answer (3). With prefers ‘than’ is never used. Replace ‘than’ by ‘to’. In the same way ‘to’ instead ‘than’ is used with superior, junior, prior, inferior, senior etc.

10. He has been working on (1) / the problem from a long time (2) / but is still not (3) / able to solve it (4) / No error (5).
    ➢ Answer (2). The error lies in the use of preposition. It should be ‘for’ a long time. So ‘for’ instead of ‘from’.

11. The widely published manifesto (1) / of the new party (2) / is not much different (3) / than ours (4) / No error (5).
    ➢ Answer (4). With ‘different’ the preposition used is ‘from’ not ‘than’. Hence ‘from’ instead of ‘than’.

12. If he has asked me (1) / I would have (2) / definitely taught him (3) / how to ride (4) / No error (5).
    ➢ Answer (1). As ‘would have taught’ is given in the main clause, past perfect tense should be used in
13. The teacher called Ravi (1) / and asked him (2) / to describe (3) / about the incident (4)/ No error (5)
   ➢ Answer (4). With describe about is not used. Delete ‘about’.
14. Hardly had I (1) / reached the station where (2)/I learned about (3) / the powerful bomb explosion (4) / No error (5).
   ➢ Answer (2) Hardly and Scarcely are followed by when and not where. In the same way No sooner is followed by than.
15. Unless you do not listen (1) / to his advice (2) / I am not going (3) / to help you (4)/ No error (5)
   ➢ Answer (1) With unless ‘not’ is never used. ‘you listen’ instead of ‘you do not listen’.
16. Many a student (1) / are frustrated (2) / because of unemployment (3) / No error (4).
   ➢ Answer (2) . ‘Many a’ is always followed by a singular verb even though it conveys a plural sense.
17. The teacher was angry (1) / when he found that (2) / the boy is not there (3) / No error (4)
   ➢ Answer (3). Here the error is in the usage of tense. Same tense should be used. So instead of ‘is’, ‘was’ should be used.
18. None of my friends (1) / are applying (2) / for this job (3) / No error (4).
   ➢ Answer (2) ‘None’ takes a singular verb. So ‘is’ instead of ‘are’
19. The Minister along with his (1) / party colleagues have (2) / been invited to the party (3) / No error (4)
   ➢ Answer (2). When two nouns are joined using the phrase ‘along with as well as, together with, accompanied by’ etc. the verb should agree with the noun mentioned first, ie ‘the minister’. As the ‘Minister’ is singular, the verb should also be singular. Hence ‘has’ instead of ‘have’
20. Several visitors (1) / have been expected (2) / to visit (3) / the place tomorrow (4) / No error (5)
   ➢ Answer (2). ‘Tomorrow’ refers to future. So ‘are’ instead of ‘have been’.
21. On reaching the railway station (1) / he was disappointed to learn (2) / that the train left (3) / No error (4)
   ➢ Answer (3). When two past actions are mentioned in a sentence the first act should be in past perfect tense and simple past tense should be used to denote the second act. So ‘had left’ instead of ‘left’
22. It is high time (1) / that we send (2) / the answer (3) / to the head office (4) / No error (5).
   ➢ Answer (2). With phrases like, ‘it is time’, ‘it is high time’, ‘suppose that’, ‘as if’ etc past tense is used. Hence ‘sent’ instead of ‘send’.
   eg. It is time we played football.
23. People invent (1) / new machines (2) / when they (3)/think independent (4) / No error (5).
   ➢ Answer (3). In some sentence adjective will be used instead of an adverb and vice-versa. Here adjective is used. ‘independently’ is the correct word.
24. You are practising violin (1) / for the last one year (2) / but you show (3) / no improvement whatsoever (4) / No error (5).
   ➢ Answer (1). An act that started in the past and that continues to the present – to denote such an act present perfect continuous tense should be used. So ‘have been practising’ instead of ‘are practising’
25. This is the more difficult (1) / piece of work (2)/ I have ever undertaken (3) / No error (4).
   ➢ Answer (1). ‘more is used in comparative degree. The sentence conveys the idea that it is the toughest work. ie. in superlative degree. So ‘most’ instead of ‘more’.

GO THROUGH THESE EXAMPLES CAREFULLY

➢ The patient died before the doctor arrived (✗)
   The patient had died before the doctor arrived (✓)
➢ The president had spoken for about half an hour when the trouble started (✗)
   The President had been speaking for about half an hour when the trouble started. (✓)
➢ The old man said that he is going to
   Kasi (✗)
   The old man said that he was going to
   Kasi (✓)
➢ The teacher said that the earth moved round the Sun (✗)
   The teacher said that the earth moves round the Sun (✓)
➢ He has written a letter last month (✗ )
   He wrote a letter last month (✓)

➢ There are three types of conditional clauses. The clauses with If or Unless is called conditional clause
and the other part is called main clause. Study their structure well.

I. If he asks me, I will help him. (Here present tense is used in the conditional clause)
II. If he asked me, I would help him. (Past tense is used in the conditional clause)
III. If he had asked me, I would have helped him. (Past perfect tense is used in the conditional clause)

Here type I means that it is likely that he will get help. Type II means it is unlikely and type III is a past condition that can never be realised.

- If he will invite me, I will go (×)
  - If he invites me, I will go (✓)
    - If he had worked hard, he will have passed (×)
    - If he had worked hard, he would have passed (✓)
- He is learning music for the last five years (×)
  - He has been learning music for the last five years (✓)
- My mother has and is still doing good work for charity (×)
  - My mother has done and is still doing good work for charity (✓)
- He behaves as if he was a millionaire (×)
  - He behaves as if he were a millionaire (✓)

‘Were’ is also used with imaginary condition.

- If I were you, I would make English the first language in all the schools in India. (✓)
  - Neither Kapil nor his wife were present (×)
    - Neither Kapil nor his wife was present (✓)
  - Either Amit or his parents has done this (×)
    - Either Amit or his parents have done this (✓)
- The old man along with his daughters have gone (×)
  - The old man along with his daughters has gone (✓)
    - The students as well as their teacher has gone to zoo (×)
    - The students as well as their teacher have gone to the zoo (✓)
- One of the widely spread bad habits are the use of tobacco (×)
  - One of the widely spread bad habits is the use of tobacco (✓)
- More than one person have died in the accident (×)
  - More than one person has died in the accident (✓)
- The furnitures were old so he sold everything (×)
  - The furniture was old so he sold everything (✓)
- The police has arrested two students (×)
  - The police have arrested two students (✓)
- We enjoyed very much during the holidays (×)
  - We enjoyed ourselves very much during the holidays (✓)
- Sixty minutes are enough to finish this work (×)
  - Sixty minutes is enough to finish this work (✓)
    - Three - fourths of the land is barren (✓)
- Unless Aruna does not return all the books, she will not be allowed to sit for the examination (×)
  - Unless Aruna returns all the books, she will not be allowed to sit for the examination (✓)
- A number of books are missing (✓)
  - The number of vehicles is increasing day by day (✓)
- Hardly had I reached the station where I learnt about the powerful bomb explosion (×)
  - Hardly had I reached the station when I learnt about the powerful bomb explosion (✓)
- No sooner is followed by ‘than’.
  - No sooner did the Chairman begin speaking than some participants started shouting slogans (✓)
- Wait here until Anish will return (×)
  - Wait here until Anish returns (✓)
- Lest is negative and is never followed by not; it is followed by ‘should’.
  - Take care lest you should fall (✓)
  - Do it carefully lest you should make a mistake (✓)
- ‘Each other’ is used for ‘two’ where as ‘one another’ is used for more than two
- Anil and Ashok hate each other (✓)
  - Amal, Varun and Akash help one another (✓)
You had better not to tell him (✗)
    You had better not tell him (✓)
    I would rather go away (✓)
We shall try to help to raise funds for the club (✗)
    We shall try to help raise funds for the club (✓)
    I bade him go away (✓) (not 'to go')
    It makes my blood boil (✓) (not 'to boil')
Do you know to play the violin (✗)
    Do you know how to play the violin (✓)
It is nothing else than your pride which makes you behave like that (✗)
    It is nothing else but your pride which makes you behave like that (✓)
He hates his brother drinking everyday (✗)
    He hates his brother's drinking everyday (✓)
    She objected to me coming (✗)
    She objected to my coming (✓)
It is nothing else than your pride which makes you behave like that (✗)
    It is nothing else but your pride which makes you behave like that (✓)
He hates his brother drinking everyday (✗)
    He hates his brother's drinking everyday (✓)
    She objected to me coming (✗)
    She objected to my coming (✓)
Do you know to play the violin (✗)
    Do you know how to play the violin (✓)
It is nothing else than your pride which makes you behave like that (✗)
    It is nothing else but your pride which makes you behave like that (✓)
He hates his brother drinking everyday (✗)
    He hates his brother's drinking everyday (✓)
    She objected to me coming (✗)
    She objected to my coming (✓)

The prepositions except and but are followed by an infinitive.

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‘With a view to’ is always followed by a gerund and not by an adjective/infinitive

We go to school with a view to study (✗)
    We go to school with a view to studying (✓)
Whom does he think will win the race? (✗)
    Who does he think will win the race? (✓)
    This is Rishi who I used to know as a boy (✗)
    This is Rishi whom I used to know as a boy (✓)
The matter is strictly between you and I (✗)
    The matter is strictly between you and me (✓)
The climate of Ranchi is better than Gaya (✗)
    The climate of Ranchi is better than that of Gaya (✓)

PRACTICE SET

Directions: Read each of the following sentences to find if there is any error in it. The error, if any, will be in one part of the sentence. The number of that part is your answer. If there is no error, mark (5) as the answer. (Ignore errors of punctuation, if any)

1. If biennials were planted this year, they will be (1) / likely to bloom (2) / next year and (3) / every two years thereafter (4)/ No error (5)
2. The value of the dollar (1) / declines (2) / as the rate of inflation (3) / raises (4) / No error (5)
3. Even though a member has drank (1) / too much (2) / the night before the counsellors at Alcoholics Congress (3) / will try to convince him or her to sober up to stop drinking again (4) / No error (5)
4. The neutron bomb provides the capable of a (1) / limited nuclear war (2) / in which buildings would be preserved (3) / but people would be destroyed (4)/ No error (5)
5. Despite of the pills (1) / which are available (2) / many people still (3) / have trouble in sleeping (4) / No error (5)
6. Before TV the common man seldom never (1) / had the opportunity (2) / to see and hear leaders (3) / express their views (4) / No error (5)
7. Before she died, the daughter of Andrew Jakson (1) / who lives in the family mansion (2) / used to take (3) / tourists through her home (4) / No error (5)
8. Two of the players from the Yankees (1) / has been (2) / chosen to participate (3) / in the all star game (4) / No error (5)
9. John Philip Sousa, who many people consider the greatest composer of (1)/ marches (2) / wrote his music (3) / during the era known as the Gay 90s (4)/ No error (5)
10. The purpose of the United Nations (1) / broad speaking is (2) / to maintain peace and security (3) / and to encourage respect for human rights (4) / No error (5)
11. Many a box of oranges (1) / have been (2) / sent to New Delhi (3) / by enthusiastic Maharashtrians (4) / No error (5)
12. He proved to his own (1) / satisfaction that he was (2) / as shrewed as (3) / if not shrewder than, she (4) / No error (5)
13. Each of the nurses were (1) / scrupulously careful (2) / about personal (3) / cleanliness (4) / No error (5)
14. The child felt (1) / very embarrassed (2) / when his teacher criticized him (3)/ before the entire class (4) / No error (5)
15. I enjoy eating (1) / in good restaurants (2) / and to go to the (3) / theatre afterwards (4) / No error (5).

16. Each of the maps made to guide (1) / tourists through the parks are (2) / accompanied by a brief commentary discussing (3) / the history of the area (4) / No error (5).

17. Unless they are not escorted by an adult (1) / no child under six (2) / is admitted (3) / to the Natural Science Museum (4) / No error (5).

18. As part of their daily rounds (1) / the interns study the chart (2) / of each patient (3) / who the doctor examines (4) / No errors (5).

19. Neither the teacher (1) / nor the Headmaster (2) / were present (3) / when the D.E.O (3) / came to the school for inspection (4) / No error (5).

20. The king as well as his daughters (1) / were invited (2) / for the archery competition (3) / to be held at the Oklands's ground (4) / No error (5).

21. When the race was over (1) / it appeared that (2) / Michel had ran (3) / the distance in record time (4) / No error (5).

22. Scarcely had the police stopped firing (1) / than the rioters (2) / once again began (3) / throwing stones at them (4) / No errors (5).

23. I am travelling by local train (1) / for the last several years (2) / but have never experienced (3) / such a horrible situation as this (4) / No error (5).

24. If I would have known (1) / what a bad shape the company is in (2) / I would have done something (3) / to save the company (4) / No error (5).

25. In a very harsh tone (1) / he shouted at his servants (2) / and told them that (3) / he does not need their services (4) / No error (5).

26. By arresting the local criminals (1) / and encouraging good people (2) / we can end (3) / hostilities of that area (4) / No error (5).

27. The trust has succeeded (1) / admirably in raising (2) / money for (3) / its future programmes (4) / No error (5).

28. According to one survey (1) / only those forests which were (2) / not under village management (3) / succumbed from fires recently (4) / No error (5).

29. We can't handle (1) / this complicated case today (2) / unless full details are not given (3) / to us right now (4) / No error (5).

30. No country can long endure (1) / if its foundations (2) / were not laid deep (3) / in material prosperity (4) / No error (5).

ANSWERS TO SET

1. (1) ‘are’ instead of ‘will be’
2. (4) ‘rises’ instead of ‘raises’
3. (1) ‘has drunk’ instead of ‘has drank’
4. (1) ‘capability’ and not ‘capable’
5. (1) With despite ‘of’ is not used. So delete ‘of’
6. (1) Seldom has a negative meaning, so delete ‘never’.
7. (2) ‘lived’ in the place of ‘lives’
8. (2) ‘have been’
9. (1) ‘whom’ in the place of ‘who’
10. (2) ‘broadly speaking’ and not ‘broad speaking’
11. (2) ‘has been’. With ‘many a’ a ‘singular verb is used
12. (5) No error
13. (1) With each and every singular verb is used. ‘was’ ‘instead of were’
14. (5) No error
15. (3) ‘going to the’ instead of ‘to go to the’.
16. (2) ‘is’ in the place of ‘are’
17. (1) Unless has a negative meaning. So delete ‘not’
18. (4) Replace ‘who’ by ‘whom’
(19) (3) When 'neither ...... nor' combines two singular subjects, the verb will also be singular. 'Was' instead of 'were'
(20) (2) When as well as combines two subjects the verb agrees with the subject mentioned first. 'was' in the place of were.
(21) (3) 'had run' instead of 'had ran'
(22) (2) With scarcely 'when' and not 'than' is used
(23) (1) 'have been travelling' (Present perfect continuous tense is used)
(24) (1) 'If I had known'
(25) (4) The main clause is in past tense so 'did not' instead of 'does not'
(26) (4) 'in that area' instead of 'of that area'
(27) (5) No error
(28) (4) Replace 'from fires' by 'to fires'
(29) (3) delete 'not'. See explanation for qn. 17
(30) (5) No error