

Format of the Common Recruitment Examination (CRE)

The information below is taken from the HKSAR Government website. For more details on the CRE exam, such as the grade requirements and FAQs, go directly to the CRE link.

<http://www.csb.gov.hk/english/recruit/cre/949.html>

There are **no** past papers or mock exams made available to candidates for this examination. It is therefore recommended that you do GRE and GMAT practice tests, which are of a similar level to the CRE.

Format of the CRE Examination	
	Multiple Choice Questions
Reading Comprehension	20
Error Identification	10
Sentence Completion	10
Paragraph Improvement	10

Reading Comprehension

In this section candidates ability to comprehend a written text is tested. There will be 20 multiple choice questions based on two non-technical passages.

Skills that are tested include:

- Reading for gist (the general information)
- Identifying main points
- Drawing inferences (forming an opinion or believing something is true based on the information you have)
- Distinguishing facts from opinions
- Interpreting figurative language (a figurative word or phrase is used in a different way from its usual meaning e.g. Of course, John was using the term "massacre" figuratively.

Error Identification

In this section candidates need to identify language errors. They may be lexical, (relating to words) grammatical or stylistic.

Example:

The sentence below may contain a language error. Identify the part (underlined and lettered) that contains the error or choose 'E No error' where the sentence does not contain an error.

Irrespective for the outcome of the probe, the whole sorry affair has already cast a shadow over this man's hitherto unblemished record as a loyal servant to his country.

- A Irrespective for
- B sorry
- C cast
- D hitherto
- E No error

Answer : A

Sentence Completion

In this section candidates need to fill in the blanks with the best options given. The questions focus on grammatical use.

Example :

Complete the following sentence by choosing the best answer from the options given.

This market research company claims to predict in advance _____ by conducting exit polls of selected voters.

- A the results of an election will be
- B the results will be of an election
- C what results will be of an election
- D what the results of an election will be
- E what will the results of an election be

Answer : D

Paragraph Improvement

In this section, two draft passages are provided. For each passage, questions are set to test candidates' skills in improving the draft. The focus of the questions is on writing skills not power of understanding.

Examples :

The sentences below are parts of the early draft of two passages, some parts of which may have to be rewritten. Read the passages and choose the best answer to the question.

(7) It may be that a few of the products we have described are not available in some countries. (8) But it is possible to place an order via the Internet. (9) They will be dealt with promptly and efficiently.

1. Which version of sentence (8) provides the best link between sentences (7) and (9)?

- A Furthermore, it is possible to order via the Internet.
- B The Internet can be used in such circumstances.
- C Orders can, however, be placed via the Internet.
- D Sentence (8) as it is now. No change needed.

Answer : C

(3) Mistakenly believing that smoking is a sign of maturity those in authority must act today to protect our citizens of tomorrow.

2. Which is the best revision of sentence (3)?

- A It is a mistake to believe that smoking is a sign of maturity. Those in authority must act today to protect our citizens of tomorrow.
- B It is a mistake to believe that smoking is a sign of maturity, those in authority must act today to protect our citizens of tomorrow.
- C Mistaken in their belief that smoking is a sign of maturity those in authority must act today to protect our citizens of tomorrow.
- D Those in authority should act today. Our citizens of today are mistakenly believing that smoking is a sign of maturity. They must be protected.

Answer: A

How can I best prepare for the CRE?

This booklet will provide tips on exam strategies and tasks to help you improve your grammar, and reading comprehension, as well as increase your vocabulary. It is important to note that just practising exam techniques will not guarantee that you can successfully get a good grade. You will also need to work on improving the different skills required in the exam. Here are some suggestions on how you can best prepare for the CRE.

Make a study plan

- Decide how much time you are willing to spend on preparing for the exam.
- Put together a timetable on how, what and when you will study.
- Be specific about the amount of time you want to spend and types of task you want to do.
- Vary the tasks you do.
- Take mini-breaks between your studying.
- Don't spend too much time on one particular task.
- Do a practice test after you have worked on a particular skill rather than before.
- Keep a record of the tasks you find particularly difficult so that you know what you need to work on.
- Make sure that you choose the right form of test preparation that matches your capabilities.

Sample Study Plan

Day	Time	What	Where
Mon	1 hr	Reading for main ideas	Kaplan TOEFL iBT 2007-8 Edition p. 248 – 252
Tues	1 hr	Guessing words from context – practice	http://web.jjay.cuny.edu/~esl-rc/HTML/act/exmenu_Rvocab.html
	¾ hr	Reading own article	Newsweek or The Economist
Wed	½ hr ½ hr	Error Identification: Prepositions Word choice	http://www.gmatutor.com idioms.html http://a4esl.org/q/h/vocabulary.html
Fri	1 hr	Error Correction Sample questions	GMAT Verbal Review p. 234 - 254
Mon	1 ¼ hr	Understanding Inference	Building Skills for the TOEFL Test by C. King & N. Stanley p. 316 - 336
Wed	1 hr	Paragraph Improvement: Using Connectives	Writing Clearly by J. Lane & E. Lange Connectives p. 164 - 177
Thur	1 ¼ hr	Grammar Practice: Subject/verb agreement Parallelism	Writing Clearly by J. Lane & E. Lange p. 183 – 193 Building Skills for the TOEFL Test p. 149 – 161 & p. 225 - 265
Fri	1½ hr	Practice Tests	http://www.kaptest.com Click GRE → Practice for the GRE → sentence completion and reading comprehension

Blank Study Plan

Day	Time	What	Where

Keep a vocabulary record

- If you prefer to see things written down use note cards or a small note-book to record new vocabulary.
- If you are an auditory learner (like to learn by listening to things) then use an MP3 player to record new words and their meanings.
- Set yourself a daily target of at least 10 – 15 new words to learn.
- Make sure you revise any new words/phrases on a regular basis so that you get to learn and remember them.

Ways of learning and recording vocabulary

<http://lc.ust.hk/~sac/advice/english/vocabulary/V1.htm>

<http://elc.polyu.edu.hk/ELSC/material/Vocabulary/Kvocab.htm>

http://www.sheppardsoftware.com/vocabulary_tips.htm

Read extensively

- The more you read the larger the vocabulary you will have.
- Reading regularly will help improve your overall reading skills as well as improve your grammar.
- Read about things you are interested in.
- Read material that challenges you.
- Read articles from journals such as The Economist and Newsweek.
- Read documents from the HK SAR website:
www.news.gov.hk/en/category/ontherecord/

Resources for building up your vocabulary

100 top words for Advanced Learners	http://www.zozanga.com/vocabulary/100wordsforadvancedlearners.htm
Vocabulary Builder	http://www.univsource.com/vbbeta.php
Vocabulary Enhancers	http://www.vocabularyenhancer.com/
English Vocabulary in Use (Advanced)	In the Vocabulary section in the SAC Author: M. McCarthy & F. O’Dell
Vocabulary Success 3 rd Edition	In the Vocabulary section in the SAC Author: M. Bromberg & C. Gale
Vocabulary for the GRE	In the TESTS:TEOFL section in the SAC Cracking the GRE 2007 Edition p. 99 - 135

General Test-Taking Suggestions

Before the exam

- Make sure you are familiar with the different question types so that you do not waste time working out what you need to do during the actual exam.
- Do as many practice tests as you can from GRE, GMAT and/or TOEFL practice books and on-line sites.
- Work on your reading speed.
- Work on particular areas of grammar you feel you are weak at.

During the exam

- Bring a watch and make sure you note the time limit for each section.
- Use your time wisely. Pace yourself in order to make good progress.
- Read all the test directions carefully and make sure you do exactly what is required.
- Read each question carefully and thoroughly.
- Before you answer a question determine exactly what is being asked, then eliminate the wrong answers and select the best choice.
- Do not spend too much time on any one question.
- Always check your answers and do not leave any unanswered ones.
- Always have a good reason for changing your answer: your first response is often the correct one.

Test Practice Resources

The books below can be found in the SAC under the following sections:

Tests: Other Examinations

Cracking the GMAT 2007/8 Edition

GMAT Review 11th Edition

GMAT Verbal Review

Cracking the GRE 2007 Edition

Tests: TOEFL

Cambridge Preparation for the TOEFL Test

The Official Guide to the New TOEFL iBT

Building skills for the TOEFL TEST by Carol King & Nancy Stanley

On-line Practice Tests

http://www.testprepreview.com/gmat_practice.htm

<http://www.kaptest.com/>

Click on GRE then click on 'Practice for the GRE'. There are practice tests for sentence completion and reading comprehension.

<http://www.crossia.com/>

p. 20 - 33

Reading Comprehension Question Types

Main Ideas	<p>These questions require you to locate the main idea of the passage.</p> <p>You may be asked in this kind of question to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• identify the author's primary purpose or objective in writing the passage• identify the main idea of the passage• select a title which best describes the content of the passage
Explicit Test Questions	<p>These questions measure your ability to locate specific information in the passage.</p> <p>You may be asked about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• facts cited in the passage• the specific content• details that support the main idea
Logical Structure	<p>These questions require you to analyse and evaluate the organization and logic of a passage.</p> <p>You may be asked:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• how a passage is organized – does it define, describe, compare or contrast, show cause and effect, or present a new idea?• to identify assumptions• the reason behind the author's use of any particular supporting details
Inference	<p>These questions ask about ideas that are not explicitly stated in a passage but implied or hinted by the author.</p> <p>You may have to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• read between the lines and take the relevant statements made by the author one step beyond their literal meanings• recognise an alternative interpretation of a statement made by the author
Tone	<p>These questions ask you to evaluate the style of writing or the tone in which the author presents the ideas.</p> <p>You may be asked:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• to select a word that describes the tone of a passage – critical, objective or questioning• to identify the author's attitude• to identify whether the passage is subjective or objective

How to prepare for the Reading Comprehension

Important Reading Strategy

SKIM the passage and the questions to get a quick general understanding.

SCAN the passage to locate the information you need to answer each question.

What is skimming and scanning?

Skimming is used to quickly identify the main ideas of a text. Skimming is done at a speed three to four times faster than normal reading.

Scanning is a technique used when you know what you are looking for, so you are concentrating on finding a particular answer. Scanning involves moving your eyes quickly down the page seeking specific words and phrases. When you are scanning to locate some specific information, it is not necessary to read and understand every word in the passage. You only need to understand enough to answer the question.

Steps to approach the multiple choice questions

The reading comprehension has 20 multiple choice questions for you to answer.

Multiple choice questions consist of two parts:

The stem – the statement or question.

The choices – there are usually 3 – 5 options to choose from.

- Read each question carefully and be sure that you understand exactly what is being asked.
- Read the stem as if it were an independent, free standing statement.
- Highlight/underline the key words.
- Decide what you will need to read to answer the question. For example is the question asking you for a particular detail that you need to find in the text? If so, you will need to scan the text. Or is the question asking you for an answer which requires a global understanding of the whole text, in which case you will need to skim the passage?
- Once you have decided the best strategy for dealing with the question, you will need to proceed to read the text in the appropriate manner.
- Whatever strategy you choose, you should analyze the passage carefully before answering the questions.
- Read ALL the choices before making a decision. Even if the first choice matches the answer you anticipated, there may be a *better* answer.
- Eliminate choices that are obviously wrong.
- Beware of words like 'not', 'but', 'except'. Mark these words because they specify the direction and limits of the answer.
- If there are two or more options that could be the correct answer, compare them to each other to determine the differences between them, and then relate these differences with the stem to deduce which of the choices is the better one.
- Mark questions you are not sure of and go on to the next one.
- Before the time is up, if you are still unsure of any unanswered question, make an educated guess.

Identifying Main Ideas

In most reading passages there is a topic, plus main ideas and supporting details. The 'topic' is the broad, general theme or message. The 'main ideas' are the 'key concepts' being expressed. And the 'details' are what support the main ideas by expressing how, what, why, where or when. Being able to locate the topic, main idea(s) and supporting details will help you to understand the points the author wants to express. And identifying the relationship between them will increase your comprehension.

Identifying Main Ideas	
How can I identify a main idea question?	Questions will include: Which one of the following best expresses the <i>main idea</i> of the passage? The author's <i>primary purpose</i> is to The <i>primary purpose</i> of the passage is to ... The passage is <i>primarily concerned with</i> which of the following? The passage <i>deals</i> mainly with ... Which of the following most accurately <i>states</i> the main idea of the passage? What is the <i>main theme</i> in the passage? What is the <i>subject</i> of the passage?
Where do I look for the answer?	In the introduction paragraph In topic sentences In summary sentences In the conclusion

Task: Read the following passage and choose the most appropriate answer.

Many trees in temperate zones make one growth ring each year. For the entire period of a tree's life, a year-by-year record or ring pattern is formed that reflects the climatic conditions in which the tree grew. Adequate moisture and a long growing season result in a wide ring. A drought may result in a very narrow one.	What is the main theme of this passage? a) Why tree rings are used to determine climatic changes. b) How the climate affects tree rings. c) A temperate climate has an effect on tree rings. d) Tree rings change annually.
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The correct answer is B because it illustrates the correct cause and effect relationship.

Time to practice

Now that you are more familiar with the strategies you can use to identify main ideas, go to the following resources and website to practice:

1. <http://www.testprepreview.com/modules/readingmainidea.htm>

In the TESTS:TOEFL section in the SAC

2. Building Skills for the TOEFL TEST by C. King & N. Stanley p. 293 – 307 & p. 314

3. Kaplan TOEFL iBT 2007-8 Edition p. 248 - 252

Drawing Inferences

When you read a passage some details are not stated explicitly but they can be understood from the other details that are stated.

Task: Read the following passage:

If you were born in November, the yellow gemstone topaz is your birthstone. It was used as a charm against evil spirits during the 12th Century. It was believed that if a person tied the stone to a thread made of donkey's hair and hung it over the left arm; the evil spirits would be driven away. The Hindus believed that if the topaz was worn above the heart, it would keep a person from being thirsty. Christian tradition perceived the stone as a symbol of honour.

Which of the following inferences can you draw from this paragraph?

- A. Only superstitious people wear topaz.
- B. The topaz is a valuable gemstone.
- C. There are many superstitions associated with topaz.

The correct answer is C, because the passage gives several examples of superstitions associated with topaz, without explicitly stating the fact.

Drawing Inferences	
What is an inference question?	An inference question asks about ideas or meanings not explicitly stated but implied or hinted by the author.
How do I answer an inference question?	Read between the lines and answer by taking the relevant statements made by the author one step beyond their literal meanings.
How can I identify the question as an inference one?	Language used in the questions include: It can be inferred from the passage that .. The passage/author suggests that ... The passage/author implies that ... The passage supports which one of the following statements ... Which of the following conclusions could most properly be drawn?

Time to practice

Now that you are more familiar with the strategies you can use to identify inference, go to the following website or resource books in the SAC to practice:

1. http://web.jjay.cuny.edu/~esl-rc/HTML/act/exmenu_Rinfer.html

In the Tests: TOEFL section in the SAC

2. Building Skills for the TOEFL TEST by C. King & N. Stanley p. 316 – 336
3. Kaplan TOEFL iBT 2007 -8th Edition p. 430 – 432 & p. 437 – 442
4. Cambridge Preparation for the TOEFL Test by J Gear & R. Gear p. 349 – 368

Distinguishing Facts from Opinions

When you are reading it's very important to be able to detect when authors are presenting facts and when they are expressing their opinions so that you can form opinions of your own. As you read an author's views, you should ask yourself if the author is presenting you with an established **fact** or with a personal **opinion**. Since the two may appear close together, even in the same sentence, you have to be able to distinguish between them.

Distinguishing Facts from Opinions	
What parts of a reading passage are likely to be factual?	Exact, specific things that have happened. General truths. Concrete examples. Statistics. History or background information. Scientific information. Physical description.
Determining an opinion	Opinions are vague views or feelings that are not supported by evidence. Opinions leave room for disagreement. An opinion is a mental estimate or conviction that seems true to those holding it but cannot be objectively demonstrated as fact. Opinions often involve abstract concepts and complex moral issues such as right or wrong.
How can I detect an opinion?	Opinions are often expressed by judgmental adjectives (beautiful, brilliant, fair). Opinions are often expressed as comparisons (more, less, most). Extreme words like no, never, only, all , often signal opinions. Opinions are often introduced by verbs and adverbs that suggest some doubt in the writer's mind: It seems he was annoyed. She probably only told us half of the story.

Time to Practice

Now that you are more familiar with the strategies you can use to distinguish between facts and opinions, go to the following websites to practice:

1. http://www.umassd.edu/specialprograms/info_lit/quiz_fo.html
2. <http://www.worsleyschool.net/socialarts/factopinion/factopinion.html>

Understanding Figurative Language

It is possible that in the CRE reading passages, the writer will use figurative language. It is therefore important you understand and recognize when such language is being used. The most common forms of figurative language are given in the table below.

Interpreting Figurative Language		
Term	Definition	Example
Cliche	A word or phrase that has become overly familiar or commonplace	No pain, no gain
Hyperbole	Big exaggeration, usually with humor	mile-high ice-cream cones
Idiom	A speech form or an expression of a given language that is peculiar to itself grammatically or cannot be understood from the individual meanings of its elements	She feels under the weather.
Metaphor	Comparing two things by using one kind of object or using it in place of another to suggest the likeness between them.	Her hair was silk.
Onomatopoeia	Naming a thing or an action by imitating the sound associated with it.	buzz, hiss, roar, woof
Personification	Giving something human qualities	The stuffed bear smiled as the little boy hugged him close.
Pun	An amusing use of a word or phrase that has two meanings, or of words that have the same sound but different meanings.	Public gets first taste of <i>grime</i> and punishment.
Simile	A figure of speech comparing two unlike things that is often introduced by like or as	The sun is like a yellow ball of fire in the sky.

Table adapted from:

<http://www.kidsconnect.com/FigurativeLanguage/FigurativeLanguageHome.html>

Time to Practice

Now that you are more familiar with figurative language go to the following website to do a figurative language quiz:

1. <http://www.quia.com/quiz/449371.html>

Idioms and phrasal verbs

In the Vocabulary section in the SAC

1. Advanced Vocabulary & Idioms by B. J. Thomas
2. English Phrasal Verbs in Use by M. Bromberg & C. Gale

In the Grammar: Grammar Exercises section in the SAC

3. Advanced Learners' Grammar by M. Foley & D. Hall p. 157 - 159

Strategies for working out unfamiliar vocabulary

When doing the CRE exam, it is likely you will come across a number of words you do not know the meaning of. You may not need to understand the exact meaning of an unknown word, unless there is a question directly related to it. However, if you DO need to know the meaning of an unfamiliar word there are various strategies that you can use to work out the meaning for yourself apart from just guessing.

Part of Speech

- Look at the unknown word and identify its part of speech. Is it a noun, verb, adjective or an adverb? Knowing this information can help you decide what the word is 'doing' in the sentence.

Word Root

- Break the unknown word 'dishonest' into its prefix: 'dis', root: 'honest', and suffix: 'y', if possible. This will also help you to understand its part of speech and possibly its meaning.

Definition

- Look for a definition, synonym, example or restatement of the word nearby. Words that signal meaning often include 'is/are', 'means', 'refers', 'that is', 'consists of'. For example: *She is a diligent student. You should follow her example and be as hardworking as she is.* Hardworking defines diligent.

Check the Context

- Are there any clues in the surrounding words or phrases? Look particularly at the words just before and just after the unfamiliar words. They often give information which can be useful in working out the meaning of a word.

Connective Words

- Look at the relationship between the clause or sentence containing the unknown word and other sentences or paragraphs. Sometimes this relationship will be signaled by a linking word, such as "but, as a result, however", which can help you think logically about the meaning and will usually help to give some understanding of the unknown word.

Positive or Negative

- Decide if the unknown word is positive, negative or neither. For example: *She is a very diligent student, unlike her lazy sister.* The word 'unlike' signals there is a contrast between something negative -'lazy' - which indicates that 'diligent' must be positive.

Use Prior Knowledge

- Use any prior knowledge you have of the subject and the ideas in the text as clues to the meanings of unknown words.

Time to Practice

Now that you are more familiar with the strategies you can use to guess unknown words, go to the following website to practice:

http://web.jjay.cuny.edu/~esl-rc/HTML/act/exmenu_Rvocab.html

How to prepare for the Error Identification, Sentence Completion and Paragraph Improvement Section

Steps to approach the Error Identification Section

Look at the example below and follow the instructions.

1. Read the whole sentence carefully.

Irrespective for the outcome of the probe, the whole sorry affair has already cast a shadow over this man's hitherto unblemished record as a loyal servant to his country.

2. Examine each underlined part.

- A Irrespective for
- B sorry
- C cast
- D hitherto
- E No error

3. Eliminate any choices you know are correct by putting a line through them /.

4. If you believe all the choices are correct then choose 'No error' and move onto the next question.

5. If you are not sure, look at each remaining choice and identify whether there could be a possible error in any of these three areas: lexical, stylistic or grammatical.

In the example above the correct answer is **A**.

Explanation:

Irrespective for is a lexical error. The wrong preposition 'for' has been used. Irrespective should be followed by the preposition 'of'.

B – sorry. This is an example of collocation; 'sorry affair'.

C – cast. This is the past participle of the verb 'cast', which is used to form the present perfect tense.

D – hitherto. This is an adverb.

Now try with the example below following the steps above.

1. A foreign language teacher usually only speaks (a) in their mother tongue (b) to let the students to learn (c) the new language naturally (d) . No error (e)

2. Over the past few years (a) football has become (b) increasing (c) more popular as a spectator sport (d) in Hong Kong. No error (e)

1. The correct answer is (c). The modal 'let' should not be followed by the infinitive 'to' but by a verb in the base form, 'learn'.

2. The correct answer is (c). The adverb 'increasingly' should be used here, not an adjective.

Lexical Errors

Possible lexical errors in the Error Identification Section may include:

	Where to go to build up your vocabulary
Wrong use of preposition	<p>For a detailed list of common phrases with prepositions go to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. http://www.gmattutor.com idioms.html <p>In the Grammar: Grammar Exercises section in the SAC</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Advanced Learners' Grammar by M. Foley & D. Hall p. 164 – 167
Wrong word choice	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Self-study English Vocabulary Quizzes http://a4esl.org/q/h/vocabulary.html 2. Top 180 SAT – ACT vocabulary words http://www.vocabulary.com/top144satwords.html 3. 100 top words for Advanced Learners http://www.zozanga.com/vocabulary/100wordsforadvancedlearners.htm 4. Vocabulary Enhancers http://www.vocabularyenhancer.com/ 5. Vocabulary Builder http://www.univsource.com/vbbeta.php <p>In the Tests: TOEFL section in the SAC</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Cambridge Preparation for the TOEFL Test by J. & R. Gear p. 220 - 230
Wrong Collocation	<p>Collocation is a relationship between two words or groups of words that often go together and form a common expression, for example <i>cosmetic surgery</i>.</p> <p>For examples of common collocations go to:</p> <p>On-line Resources</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. http://www.eslflow.com/collocationsandphrasalverbs.html 2. http://elc.polyu.edu.hk/advdicts/collocation.htm
Wrong Word Form	<p>An example of a wrong word form:</p> <p><i>Opulent mansions <u>decorated</u> with <u>elaborate</u> mirrored ceilings <u>became</u> a sign of <u>wealthy</u> and elegance in the late nineteenth century.</i></p> <p>The error is: wealthy.</p> <p>In this sentence 'wealthy' has been used as an adjective but should be a noun, wealth.</p> <p>For practice with word forms go to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. http://esl.about.com/od/vocabularyadvanced/a/a_wordforms1.htm <p>In the Tests: TOEFL section in the SAC</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Building Skills for the TOEFL TEST by C. King & N. Stanley p. 224 – 242 3. Cambridge Preparation for the TOEFL Test by J. & R. Gear p. 213 - 219

Stylistic Errors

Possible stylistic errors in the Error Identification section may include:

	Examples
Wordy, confusing or awkward sentences	<p>Good sentence structure avoids constructions that are wordy, confusing or awkward.</p> <p>Example: The <u>request for (a) a suggestion box (b)</u>, to which <u>was responded with one (c)</u>, has <u>not yet resulted (d)</u> with a suggestion. <u>No error (e)</u>.</p> <p>The correct answer is (c). The phrase <u>responded with one</u>, is very awkward and makes the sentence confusing.</p> <p>Example: Tonight's show <u>by the senior class (a)</u> was the first time <u>some parents, (b)</u> many of them very young to have them, have seen <u>them (c)</u> perform in front <u>of a crowded room (d)</u> full of people. <u>No error (e)</u></p> <p>The correct answer is (c). The pronoun 'them' has been used 3 times in one sentence. It is therefore very confusing trying to identify who exactly 'them' refers to.</p>
Unnecessary repetition	<p>A phrase that contains two or more adjectives or adverbs that express the same idea or meaning is not acceptable in formal English. To find any examples of repetition in the error identification section, you need to recognize words that can have the same meaning.</p> <p>Example: 1. A coma is a <u>deep state (a)</u> of unconsciousness <u>from which (b)</u> a patient cannot <u>be roused (c)</u> by ordinary, <u>common (d)</u> means. <u>No error (e)</u>.</p> <p>The correct answer is (d). <u>Common</u> means the same as ordinary, so there is unnecessary repetition.</p>

Time to Practice

Unnecessary Repetition	<p>In the Tests: TOEFL section in the SAC</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Building Skills for the TOEFL TEST by C. King & N. Stanley p. 266 – 271 2. In-A-Flash. Grammar for the TOEFL TEST by M. Broukal p. 149 - 152
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Grammatical Errors

Possible grammatical errors in the Error Identification, Sentence Completion, and Paragraph Improvement sections may include the following structure problems:

	Examples
Subject + Verb agreement	<p>Every sentence contains at least one clause. A clause is a group of words that has a subject and a verb. Check the verb in the sentence agrees with the subject.</p> <p>Example: On Sundays, <u>shopping malls</u> (subject) in Hong Kong <u>are</u> (verb) extremely crowded. 'Shopping malls', the subject is plural so the verb must be plural as well.</p> <p>Every student at CityU <u>is</u> entitled to their own locker. (✓) 'Every' is a singular pronoun so must take the third person form 'is'.</p> <p>All CityU students <u>has</u> to take the CCIV course. (X) 'All' is a plural pronoun, so must take the plural form 'have'.</p> <p>For practice:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/599/01/ <p>In the Tests: TOEFL section in the SAC</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">2. Building Skills for the TOEFL TEST by C. King & N. Stanley p. 147 - 1613. Cambridge Preparation for the TOEFL TEST by J. Gear & R. Gear p. 184 – 189 & p. 204 <p>In the Writing section in the SAC</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">4. Writing Clearly by T. Lane & E. Lange p. 183 – 193
Run-on sentences	<p>A run-on sentence contains two or more independent clauses that run together without proper punctuation or connectors.</p> <p>Example: David Beckham is still an idolized footballer; most of his fans believe he's the world's best. (✓) David Beckham is still an idolized footballer most of his fans believe he's the world's best. (X)</p> <p>A semi-colon is required between the two clauses.</p> <p>For practice with run-on sentences:</p> <p>On-line resources</p> <p>http://web.jjay.cuny.edu/~esl/Links_grammar_run-ons.htm http://www.eslus.com/LESSONS/ GRAMMAR/ COMBINE /S1.htm</p>

<p>Fragment sentences</p>	<p>Grammatically correct sentences should be complete. In a complex sentence there will be at least two clauses; a main clause and a subordinate clause. A subordinate clause is dependent on the main clause for its meaning. It begins with a word such as <i>after, when, if, because or which</i> and CANNOT function independently as a sentence. Parts of a sentence that are disconnected from the main clause, as in the example below, are called fragments.</p> <p>Example: After the end of the match. (X) After the end of the match, we went to the pub. (✓)</p> <p>Main clause: we went to the pub Subordinate clause: after the end of the match</p> <p>For practice with fragment sentences: In the Tests: TOEFL section in the SAC</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Building Skills for the TOEFL TEST by C. King & N. Stanley p. 163 – 166 & p.183 -189 2. Cambridge Preparation for the TOEFL Test by J. & R. Gear p. 230 - 232
<p>Parallelism</p>	<p>To make sure a sentence has good parallel structure, you need to check that the phrases, clauses, verbs and other sentence elements parallel each other.</p> <p>Example: In her spare time, Amy writes poetry, plays tennis and dances. (✓) All the verbs in the example above have the same structure.</p> <p>In her spare time, Amy writes poetry, playing tennis and dancing. (X) In this example 'writes' is in the present simple but 'playing' and 'dancing' are in the gerund and so the verbs do not parallel each other.</p> <p>For practice with parallelism: On-line resources</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/623/01/ 2. http://www.esflow.com/AcademicWritng.html <p>In the Tests: TOEFL section in the SAC</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Building Skills for the TOEFL TEST by C. King & N. Stanley p. 255 – 265 <p>In the Grammar: Grammar Exercises section in the SAC</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Advanced Learners' Grammar by M. Foley & D. Hall p. 338

<p>Correct Usage</p>	<p>There are several words that are commonly used incorrectly.</p> <p>Example: Among/Between – ‘Between’ is used to refer to relationships involving two objects. ‘Among’ is used to refer to relationships involving more than two objects. Advice – a noun and Advise – a verb Affect – a verb, which means to influence. Effect – when used as a noun means ‘the result’ and when used as a verb means ‘to cause to happen’.</p> <p>For a list of more examples of easily confused words go to: In the Tests: TOEFL section in the SAC Building Skills for the TOEFL TEST by C. King & N. Stanley p. 284 - 289</p> <p>It is also important to identify words that may be used with countable nouns, non-countable nouns or both. Countable/Uncountable nouns Example: <u>Less</u> people nowadays are choosing to retire early. (X) The word ‘people’ is a plural countable noun so must take the adverb ‘fewer’. I have spent <u>less</u> time working-out recently. (√) ‘Time’ is uncountable so the adverb ‘less’ is used.</p> <p>For practice with correct usage: In the Tests: TOEFL section in the SAC 1. Building Skills for the TOEFL TEST by C. King & N. Stanley p. 204 – 223 & p. 282 – 284 2. Cambridge Preparation for the TOEFL Test by J. & R. Gear p. 220 - 227 In the Grammar: Grammar Exercises section in the SAC 3. Advanced learners’ Grammar by M. Foley & D. Hall p. 264 -267</p>
<p>Dangling Modifiers</p>	<p>A dangling modifier is a word or phrase that modifies a word not clearly stated in the sentence. A modifier describes, clarifies, or gives more detail about a concept. If modifiers are not positioned clearly they can cause illogical references or distort the meaning of the statement.</p> <p>Example: Having finished the homework, the TV was turned on. (X) "Having finished" is a participle expressing action, but the doer is not the TV set (the subject of the main clause). Since the doer of the action expressed in the participle has not been clearly stated, the participial phrase is said to be a dangling modifier.</p> <p>For practice with dangling modifiers: 1. http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/597/01/ 2. http://writingcenter.cnu.edu/handouts.htm#Dangling%20Modifiers</p>

<p>Verb Forms</p>	<p>Make sure you check the verbs are used in the correct tense.</p> <p>Present: I go to work by the MTR.</p> <p>Past: I went to work yesterday.</p> <p>Future: I will go to work tomorrow.</p> <p>Present progressive: I'm working at home everyday this week.</p> <p>Past progressive: I was marking exam papers when you rang me.</p> <p>Present perfect: I have worked at CityU for 9 years.</p> <p>Past perfect: By the time I started work at CityU, I had taught in three other countries.</p> <p>Future Perfect: I will have been here for 10 years by the end of next month.</p> <p>Future progressive: I will be writing new exam papers during the summer.</p> <p>Present perfect progressive: I have been studying hard for my Cantonese test.</p> <p>Past perfect progressive: Before I met you, I had been speaking to my friend on the phone.</p> <p>Future perfect progressive: By the end of the year, I will have been working at CityU for 9 years.</p> <p>For practice with verb forms:</p> <p>In the Tests: TOEFL section in the SAC</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cambridge Preparation for the TOEFL Test by J. & R. Gear p. 195 – 197 & p. 203 - 205 <p>In the Grammar: Grammar Exercises section in the SAC</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Advanced Learners' Grammar by M. Foley & D. Hall Refer to p. 3 in the contents page for the specific tenses you wish to study. 3. Understanding English Grammar by T. Hung p. 41
<p>Pronouns</p>	<p>A pronoun can have up to five different forms.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) The subject pronoun – I, you, he, she, it, we, they, who b) The object pronoun – me, you, him, it, us, whom, one c) Possessive adjective – my, hers, yours, its, their, whose d) Possessive pronoun – mine, yours, her, its, theirs, whose e) Reflexive pronoun – myself, yourself, himself, itself, themselves <p>Example:</p> <p>I don't know <u>whose</u> DVD that is. (✓)</p> <p>The party won't be any fun without you and they. (X)</p> <p>The correct pronoun should be <u>them</u>.</p> <p>For practice with pronouns:</p> <p>In the Tests: TOEFL section in the SAC</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cambridge Preparation for the TOEFL Test by J. & R. Gear p. 176 – 180 2. Building Skills for the TOEFL TEST by C. King & N. Stanley p. 203 – 223 <p>In the Grammar: Grammar Exercises section in the SAC</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Advanced Learners' Grammar by M. Foley & D. Hall p. 264 - 267

Steps to approach the Sentence Completion Section

The questions in this section test your ability to recognize the correctness of expression in standard written English. You need to focus on grammatical use and sentence construction. Please also refer back to the previous sections on grammatical errors to help you with this section.

Look at the example below and follow the instructions.

1. Read the whole sentence through for a general sense.

This market research company claims to predict in advance _____ by conducting exit polls of selected voters.

2. Try to think of what words would make sense in the blank before looking at the options.

3. Look at the options below and eliminate any choices you know are incorrect.

- A the results of an election will be
- B the results will be of an election
- C what results will be of an election
- D what the results of an election will be
- E what will the results of an election be

4. Focus on the words directly before and after the blank to give you clues of what option would best fit into the sentence.

In the above example the correct answer is D.

Explanation why A, B, C and E are wrong:

A & B – In these sentences you cannot have 'will be' without a relative pronoun.

C – The article 'the' is missing and 'will be' is in the wrong place, an inversion error.

E – This is an inversion error.

In order to choose the best option for the above example you need to focus on the correct word order and use of inversion. Inversion is where the usual order of words is reversed.

For example: Not only did she win a medal for the 100 m race, but she also won one for the 200.

To understand the basic rules of word order and inversions go to:

In the Tests: TOEFL section in the SAC

1. Building Skills for the TOEFL TEST by C. King & N. Stanley p. 244 – 254
2. Cambridge Preparation for the TOEFL Test by J. & R. Gear p. 207 – 210

In the Grammar: Grammar Exercises section in the SAC

3. Advanced Learners' Grammar by M. Foley & D. Hall p. 290 7 320 - 323

On-line resources

- 4 <http://www.ac-nancy-metz.fr/enseign/anglais/Henry/inversion.htm>

For practice with sentence structure

In the Writing section in the SAC

5. Writing Clearly by T. Lane & E. Lange p. 130 – 143

Steps to approach the Paragraph Improvement Section

In this section, two draft passages are provided. For each passage, questions are set to test candidates' skills in improving the draft. The focus of the questions is on writing skills not power of understanding.

Look at the example below and follow the instructions.

Part One

1. Read the directions first carefully.

The sentences below are parts of the early draft of two passages, some parts of which may have to be rewritten. Read the passages and choose the best answer to the question.

2. Next read the short paragraph carefully for the general sense.

(7) It may be that a few of the products we have described are not available in some countries. (8) But it is possible to place an order via the Internet. (9) They will be dealt with promptly and efficiently.

3. Consider all the options before choosing the answer.

4. Use hints from the context to eliminate the wrong options.

1. Which version of sentence (8) provides the best link between sentences (7) and (9)?

- A Furthermore, it is possible to order via the Internet.
- B The Internet can be used in such circumstances.
- C Orders can, however, be placed via the Internet.
- D Sentence (8) as it is now. No change needed.

5. Pay attention to the linking words both in the paragraph and in the options.

(7) It may be that a few of the products we have described are not available in some countries. (8) **But** it is possible to place an order via the Internet. (9) They will be dealt with promptly and efficiently.

- A **Furthermore**, it is possible to order via the Internet.
- B The Internet can be used in such circumstances.
- C Orders can, **however**, be placed via the Internet.
- D Sentence (8) as it is now. No change needed.

The correct answer is C.

In order to choose the best option for part one of the paragraph development section you need to focus on 'linking words/connectors'.

For practice with linking words/connectors:

In the Writing section in the SAC

1. Writing Clearly by T. Lane & E. Lange p. 164 - 177

In the Tests: TOEFL section in the SAC

2. Cambridge Preparation for the TOEFL Test by J. & R. Gear p. 317 & p. 322 - 323

On-line resources

3. http://esl.about.com/library/writing/blwrite_connectors.htm
4. <http://gocsm.net/sevas/esl/gramcheck/8-7.html>

Steps to approach the Paragraph Improvement Section

For this part you need to pay attention to grammar, choice of words and sentence construction. Please also refer back to the previous sections on grammatical errors to help you with this section.

Look at the example below and follow the instructions.

Part Two

1. Read the sentence provided carefully.

(3) Mistakenly believing that smoking is a sign of maturity those in authority must act today to protect our citizens of tomorrow.

2. Identify where you think the error is before looking at the options.

3. Look at each option carefully and eliminate any that are obviously incorrect.

4. Focus on the grammatical structure to help you.

2. Which is the best revision of sentence (3)?

A It is a mistake to believe that smoking is a sign of maturity. Those in authority must act today to protect our citizens of tomorrow.

B It is a mistake to believe that smoking is a sign of maturity, those in authority must act today to protect our citizens of tomorrow.

C Mistaken in their belief that smoking is a sign of maturity those in authority must act today to protect our citizens of tomorrow.

D Those in authority should act today. Our citizens of today are mistakenly believing that smoking is a sign of maturity. They must be protected.

In the above example the correct answer is A.

Explanation for why B, C and D are wrong:

B – This is a run-on sentence. There should be a full stop after 'maturity', not a comma.

C – This is an example of a dangling modifier. 'Those in authority' should refer to what has gone before but does not in this example.

D – There are two errors in this sentence. The 'mistakenly believing' is an incorrect structure and there should be a connector to link sentence (2) and (3) together.

Now try with the example below following the four steps above.

1. Which is the best revision of the underlined part of the sentence below?

What was as remarkable as the development of the CD has been the use of the new technology to revitalize, in better sound than was ever before possible, some of the classic recorded performances of the pre-LP era.

A. The thing that was as remarkable as developing the CD

B. No less remarkable than the development of the CD

C. Developing the CD has been none the less remarkable than

D. Development of the CD as been no less remarkable as

The correct answer is B.

Practice Tests

The practice tests in the GRE, GMAT and TOEFL books, and tests provided on-line, are similar to what you will have to do in the CRE, but not exactly the same. However, by doing these practice tests you will be practising similar skills required in the CRE exam.

In the Tests: Other Examinations section in the SAC

GMAT Verbal Review – the Official Guide

Sentence Correction sample questions p. 235 – 254

Sentence Correction sample questions with answer explanations p. 255 – 307

GMAT Review 11th Edition – The Official guide

Reading Comprehension p. 346 – 393

Reading Comprehension with answer explanations p. 395 – 463

Sentence Correction sample questions p. 638 – 660

Sentence Correction sample questions with answer explanations p. 662 - 727

In the Tests: TOEFL section in the SAC

Building skills for the TOEFL TEST by C. King & N. Stanley

Structure practice p. 427 – 433

Reading Comprehension p. 434 - 444

On-line resources

http://www.testpreview.com/gmat_practice.htm

<http://kaptest.com>

Click on GRE then click on 'Practice for the GRE'. There are practice tests for sentence completion and reading comprehension.

Reading Comprehension

<http://www.testprepreview.com/modules/readingtest2.htm>

Sentence correction

<http://www.testprepreview.com/modules/sentencecorrection.htm>

<http://www.testprepreview.com/modules/writing1section2.htm>

Error Identification

http://education.yahoo.com/college/essentials/practice_tests/sat/

Sentence Completion, Error Identification and Paragraph Improvement

<http://www.crossia.com/> p. 20 - 33