

2021 PSLE ENGLISH SUBJECT-BASED STRATEGIES

Stumping Grammar Questions

Certain questions tend to appear in examinations ever so often. Somehow, students still get them wrong! Here's a little "cheat sheet" of how to approach some of these questions.

"as well as", "together with"

(Question) Adam, together with Adeen, love/loves to play hide-and-seek in the afternoons.

(Question) Adam as well as Adeen read/reads before bedtime.

It is important to note that "as well as" and "together with" are *not the same* as "and".

The first question should be straightforward, since you have been taught to ignore everything between the two commas (*right?*) and hence, the singular "loves" should be used because Adam is the (singular) subject of the sentence.

In the second question, *even though there are no commas*, you should still treat "as well as Adeen" as extra information, remove it, and use the singular "reads" since, again, only Adam is the (singular) subject of the sentence.

"who" vs "whom"

(Question) The boy _____ sits in the corner is my cousin.

(Question) The boy _____ you met in the library is my cousin.

"Who" and "Whom" sometimes confuse even adults (a lot!), so follow the following "pattern" and get these right *every single time*.

If a VERB follows the _____, use "who"

If the _____ is between a noun/pronoun and another noun/pronoun, use "whom"

"... and I" vs "... and me"

(Question) My brother and _____ brought Mother out to her favourite restaurant.

(Question) Mother brought my brother and _____ out to our favourite restaurant.

There are two proven ways to answer this type of question:

Method #1:

Remove “my brother and” and read the sentence using either “I” or “me”

_____ brought Mother out to her favourite restaurant.

Here, “I” is definitely the right option, since “Me brought Mother out to her favourite restaurant.” sounds wrong and *is* wrong.

Mother brought _____ out to our favourite restaurant.

Again, listen to how the sentence sounds when you use “I” and “me”. Which sounds correct?

Method #2:

If the “and _____” is part of the Active Subject of the sentence (the one doing the action), use “I”

[My brother and _____] (Active Subject: doing the action) brought (action) Mother out to her favourite restaurant.

If the “and _____” is part of the Passive Subject/Object if the sentence (the one receiving the action, or not doing the action), use “me”

Mother brought (action) [my brother and _____] (Passive Subject/Object: not doing the action) out to our favourite restaurant.

“No sooner” and “Barely/Hardly/Scarcely”

A favourite of Synthesis and Transformation. Use the table below to help you!

No sooner	had	1 st clause/part of sentence (use the past participle form of the verb)	than	2 nd clause/part of sentence
Barely Hardly Scarcely	had	1 st clause/part of sentence (use the past participle form of the verb)	when	2 nd clause/part of sentence

e.g. The referee blew his whistle. The match started.

No sooner has the referee *blown* his whistle **than** the match started.

Question 8

Infinitive Verb after a Verb of Perception

(Question) Kenneth felt an ant _____ up his arm as he was typing his report on his lap.

When a verb is placed after a verb of perception (see, watch, hear, feel, smell, notice, observe etc.) it must be in the infinitive form, which is the root form of the verb.

e.g.

Raja saw Pauline run after the boy.

I am watching John pick up the ball.

Samantha heard her mother shout at her brother.

Grammar Cloze Questions 30 & 38

Preposition Collocations

A preposition collocation is when a preposition is placed after a specific verb to convey a specific meaning.

e.g.

fight **with** – fight using something or against someone

fight **for** – fight in support of someone or something or to achieve a goal

got **up** – to sit or stand from a lowered position or to wake up

got **on** – to get along with someone or to start to do something

Editing Question 46

Spelling of Different Word Forms

Look for the context given in the sentence of text to choose the appropriate spelling of these words.

Noun	Verb
relief e.g. She breathed a sigh of relief.	relieve e.g. He wanted to relieve her from her pain.
belief e.g. You must respect their beliefs.	Believe e.g. You don't seem to believe them.

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Direct Speech to Reported Speech

When changing direct to reported speech, remember to change time expressions.

Direct Speech		Reported Speech
today	→	that day
yesterday		the day before / the pre
tomorrow		the next day / the following day
(two days) ago		(two days) before
now		then

Paper 1 – Situational Writing

PAC – Purpose, Audience & Context

One key part of getting the Situational Writing right is to showcase a clear understanding of the Purpose, Audience and Context of the writing.

Purpose	The reason you are writing	This should be made clear in the first paragraph of the writing and will determine how you expect the recipient to respond which is usually stated in the last paragraph.
Audience	The recipient	Who you are writing to will determine not only the salutation and greeting but also the tone (mood) and register (formality) of the writing.
Context	The situation	Understand the task you are given and the details of the situation well by reading the stimulus thoroughly.

The Purpose, Audience and Context can usually be easily identified in the task box. E.g.

