

PARAJUMBLES - CONCEPT, TYPES, AND APPROACH

Tips and Tricks for solving Para jumbles

Paragraph jumble or jumbled paragraph is one of the most important question types in Bank entrance exams. Para jumbles test your understanding of thought flow. In simple words they test are you able to identify a coherently formed paragraph.

Paragraph jumbles come in different sentence lengths.

1. 5 sentence
2. 6 sentence

Since there are 5 questions linked to a single paragraph jumble, solving it is important. These questions can be solved by following specific strategies. So let us understand the strategies and solve some questions.

How We Should Not Solve a Paragraph Jumble

Since there is time constraint, we should NEVER read the sentences again and again without quickly identifying the connections between the sentences. Test setters generally pickup sentences from newspaper articles, books or magazines and hence each sentence has a link to another. Hence it is absolutely necessary to identify the links between sentences.

How Should We Solve The Paragraph Jumble

The proven technique or strategy to solve is to identify the links between the sentences and arrive at a coherent paragraph. To identify the links, we need to identify the key- words. One effective way is to identify MANDATORY PAIRS.

So let us understand what all mandatory pairs are there and how we can identify them.

Important Mandatory Pairs

Pronoun

Generally, the paragraph jumble will mention a noun first and then use pronouns to point at it. So, we need to simply identify those sentence pair that does that.

For instance:

- A. He was carrying his jacket and walked with his head thrown back.
- B. As Anette neared the lamp, she saw a figure walking slowly.
- C. For a while Michael walked on and she followed twenty paces behind.
- D. With a mixture of terror and triumph of recognition she slackened her pace.

Since B mentions that Anette saw a figure. So that makes B the first statement. Now read A. It says that HE was carrying his jacket. So that makes BA a mandatory pair. Next is D as she has recognized the figure. And in C the name of the figure is mentioned.

Chronology/ Time reference

Many a times there is a logical/ time bound event chain present in the paragraph jumble. It could be a series of events, steps etc. We can identify the beginning /start of the event and then find the next event and so on.

For instance:

- A. Four days later, Oracle announced its own bid for PeopleSoft, and invited the firm's board to a discussion.
- B. Furious that his own plans had been endangered, PeopleSoft's boss, Craig Conway, called Oracle's offer —diabolical, and its boss, Larry Ellison, a —sociopath.
- C. In early June, PeopleSoft said that it would buy J.D. Edwards, a smaller rival.
- D. Moreover, said Mr. Conway, —he could imagine no price nor combination of price and other conditions to recommend accepting the offer.
- E. On June 12th, PeopleSoft turned Oracle down.

First sentence is C as it shows the first event in EARLY JUNE, when PeopleSoft announced its plan. Next sentence is A as FOUR DAYS LATER, ORACLE announced ITS OWN plan. B shows that the plan made PeopleSoft boss unhappy. He said something and in next sentence D added by saying MOREOVER. Then on 12th JUNE PeopleSoft turned down the offer.

Another example

- A. Then two astronomers—the German, Johannes Kepler, and the Italian, Galileo Galilei— started publicly to support the Copernican theory, despite the fact that the orbits it predicted did not quite match the ones observed.
- B. His idea was that the sun was stationary at the centre and that the earth and the planets move in circular orbits around the sun.
- C. A simple model was proposed in 1514 by a Polish priest, Nicholas Copernicus.
- D. Nearly a century passed before this idea was taken seriously.

C is the obvious start as it introduces the idea that in 1514, a simple model was suggested. B then explains the idea proposed by Nicholas Copernicus. Then in D —nearly a century passed indicates the time link. A uses — then and thus follows D.

Parts of Speech

Parts of speech such as conjunctions, adjectives and pronouns can also be used to identify the links between sentences.

For instance

- A. To avoid this, the QWERTY layout put the keys most likely to be hit in rapid succession on opposite sides. This made the keyboard slow, the story goes, but that was the idea.
- B. A different layout, which had been patented by August Dvorak in 1936, was shown to be much faster.
- C. The QWERTY design (patented by Christopher Sholes in 1868 and sold to Remington in 1873) aimed to solve a mechanical problem of early typewriters.
- D. Yet the Dvorak layout has never been widely adopted, even though (with electric typewriters and then PCs) the anti-jamming rationale for QWERTY has been defunct for years.
- E. When certain combinations of keys were struck quickly, the type bars often jammed.

C mentions a problem that the qwerty keyboard aimed to solve. E explains the problem in details. A mentions that to avoid THIS [i.e. Type bars often jammed]. Qwerty provided a SLOW but sure way. B tells that a faster [in comparison to QWERTY] keyboard was built. D says that YET [despite the faster keyboard designed by Dvorak] the DVORAK keyboard has not been adopted widely.

Obvious Openers

Sometimes you may find that a sentence has no previous link and introduces the idea of the paragraph jumble.

Such sentence can introduce a concept, be a definition, describe an event, state an observation. In short, it will be the Obvious opener of the paragraph.

A good way to find such sentence would be to look at the first letter of the option and read only that sentence to gauge whether the sentence is an obvious opener or not.

For instance

Since then, intelligence tests have been mostly used to separate dull children in school from average or bright children,

- A. so that special education can be provided to the dull.
- B. In other words, intelligence tests give us a norm for each age.
- C. Intelligence is expressed as intelligence quotient, and tests are developed to indicate what an average child of a certain age can do: what a 5- year-old can answer, but a 4-year- old cannot, for instance.
- D. Binet developed the first set of such tests in the early 1900s to find out which children in school needed special attention.
- E. Intelligence can be measured by tests.

Now according to the options, we have 3 sentences that can be obvious opener. As you can see D says SUCH tests. That means either it should define what tests or a statement prior to it should define the tests as we use SUCH when we have mentioned beforehand something about the word. Since D does not mention that, some other statement should and hence D cannot be obvious openers. C looks attractive as an obvious opener as it says the intelligence is expressed as intelligence quotient and tests are developed. Now for one moment let us consider this option. Then what about E, which also introduces the idea that intelligence can be measured by tests. Since it does not have a word such as THUS, HENCE it cannot be conclusion it can be only at the start of the paragraph or not in the paragraph at all. That means E is START of the idea. Hence E is the obvious opener.

Using conjunctions to find links

There are certain words – firstly, secondly, then, however, consequently, on the other hand, etc. – which show how the idea given in the paragraph jumble flows from start to finish. We can identify these words and then look for the sentence that comes before or after these sentences.

Some commonly used linking words we can use are: Cause and Effect: Words or phrases explicitly indicating that one thing causes another or logically determines another.

For example:

- accordingly • in order to • because • so...that
- consequently • therefore • given • thus
- hence • when...then • if...then

Continuing Idea Words:

These words or phrases support a given sentence, idea or example. Sentences containing these words will generally not be the opening sentence. These sentences will follow immediately the sentence supported.

For example:

- furthermore • additionally • also • and • indeed
- besides • as well • too • likewise • moreover

Contrast words:

We can also look for words that indicate a contrast between two ideas or statement,

For example:

• although	• nonetheless	• on the contrary	• notwithstanding
• even though	• instead of	• despite	• in spite of
• however	• in contrast	• Nevertheless	• while

For Instance

- When it appeared last April at the Scripps Research Institute in La Jolla, California, scientists thought it had spoiled their experiment.
- Within an hour of its formation, it had commandeered the organic material in a
- thimble-size test tube and started to make copies of itself.
- Yet its behavior was astonishingly lifelike.
- Then the copies made copies.
- But this snippet of synthetic RNA -- one of the master molecules in the nuclei of all cells -- proved unusually talented.
- The molecule was not alive, at least not in any conventional sense.

Explanation:

A cannot be the start point as it uses —it. Since — ‘it’ is a pronoun, it should point at something. Since A does not tell what —‘it’ is, A should come after a sentence that defines what —‘it’ refers to. Same is the case with B. C, D and E use a contrasting word and thus have to be placed after another sentence. That leaves F as the start. F states that the molecule was not alive. C then continues it by contrasting it by stating that —yet its behavior was life like. Now it is clear that we are talking about molecule and thus A will come after A. A states that scientists thought that the molecule had spoiled their experiment. E will come after it as it states —‘but’ and states that the molecule was talented. B comes after E by describing the talent i.e. making its copies. In D it is written that —‘then’, which means after the action described in E, copies made copies.

Be the Master of Paragraph Jumbles

The most effective way to solve paragraph jumbles is to be mechanical in finding links or mandatory pairs. You will find that finding links will give you greater accuracy than any other strategy. And remember PRACTICE at least 100 questions to ace paragraph jumbles.

- Follow the general to specific rule, this means that you should move from an introductory sentence to one that gives the details.
- Try to find sentence which introduces a topic or person or idea. This will be the opening sentence.
- You could also try to find the closing sentence; this sentence will generally be a concluding statement.
- It will not introduce a new idea but conclude what has already been mentioned.
- The next trick which is really helpful in solving Para jumbles is to make mandatory pairs.
- Mandatory pairs are sentences which will necessarily come together. The key to solving Para jumble questions is identification of these connected pairs of statements.

For mandatory pair identification, be on the lookout for:

1. Nouns and pronouns reference: Nouns or subjects mentioned in a statement can be replaced by a

pronoun in the next statement. Be always on the lookout for such pairs.

2. Subject matching: two statements based on the subject form a pair.
3. Time sequences: in general, if a given set of statements contains reference to time based events, make sure maintain a particular order that is past-present- future or vice-versa.
4. Transition words such as: as

● also	● as well as	● besides	● furthermore	● in addition
● likewise	● moreover	● similarly	● consequently	● hence
● for one thing	● above all	● aside from	● besides	● in other words
● instead	● next	● on one hand	● rather	● in conclusion
● meanwhile	● then	● soon	● after all	all in all
● to sum up		● on the other hand		

Types of Parajumble Questions

Para-jumbles broadly fall in three categories. In each category, the jumbled sentences are coded with an alphabet (usually A, B, C and D).

1. 4/5 sentences are given in a random order and you have to unjumble all of them. Toughest of the lot!
2. The opening sentence + 4/5 sentences are given and you have to rearrange the group of 4/5 sentences, having been given prior knowledge of the thought that starts off the flow of the discussion.
3. 4/5 sentences + the closing sentence is given and you need to correctly sequence 4/5 sentences so that they flow into the last sentence.
4. Opening sentence + 4/5 Sentences + Closing Sentence are given. Easiest of the lot. You know where the story starts and where it ends. You only have to figure out the screenplay in between!

The smartest approach

- A. The best approach to solving PJ questions is the 'free fall' one. That is, develop a high reading speed and scan all 4-5 sentences. Try to get a feel of what the passage is about.
- B. At this point you need to decide whether this particular paragraph is one which you are comfortable with or not.
- C. If you decide to go ahead, then scan the answer options. Are they of any help?

If, for example the options are,

a) BDAC b) BCAD c) CABD d) CBDA

Then you know for sure that this paragraph has to start either with B or C. A quick look at B and C will tell you which one looks like a better opening sentence and already your choices will be halved.

Similarly, with options,

BDCA b) CDBA c) DCAB d) ACDB

Then we know that it has to end with either B or A. So, browse sentences A and B and see if any one of them look like a concluding sentence.

There might be other indicators to keep an eye out for. For example, if three of the five options start with A and the other two with C/B/D there is a good probability that A is the starting sentence.

If, say, a link CB occurs in more than 2 options then it is something worth paying attention to.

Para jumbles strategies to save time and increase accuracy

Strategy 1:

Once upon a time long ago... / ...and they lived happily after: Identify the opening/closing sentence using what we discussed above. Either the tone of the paragraph or the option elimination method.

Strategy 2:

Where's the interlock dude? Identify links between two sentences and try to see if that link exists in multiple answer options (a sure way to know that you are on the right track). A combination of 1 and 2 will take you home most of the time.

Strategy 2a:

Make it 'personal'. Look out for personal pronouns (he, she, it, him, her, you, they). Personal pronouns always refer to a person, place or thing.

Therefore, if a sentence has a personal pronoun without mentioning the person, place or object it is referring to, mark it in your head and scan the paragraph for the original person, place or object that it refers to.

For example, if you go back to the opening jumbled paragraph of this article, the third sentence starts with 'it'. We now need to figure out what 'it' refers to and the sentence containing the original 'it' will come before this sentence.

Strategy 2b:

Look for 'Poriborton' (Change, in Mamata Banerjee's tongue). Certain words called 'transition words' help the author to shift from one thought flow to another. In other words, they usher in change. Some transition words that appear regularly are --- hence, besides, simultaneously, in conclusion, etc. While you practice PJs whenever you come across a transition word--- note it down. Make a list!

Strategy 2c:

Demonstrate! Look for demonstrative pronouns --- this, that, these, those, etc. Again, if you look at our opening paragraph, the first line starts with 'for this' --- now we know that we need to figure out what

'this' refers to and the sentence containing the original 'this' will come before this sentence.

Strategy 3:

Sometimes the events mentioned in the paragraph can be arranged in a chronological order making it easy for you to identify the sequence. Example,

- A. Alexander Bain, Scottish clockmaker, patented the electric clock.
- B. The next development in accuracy occurred after 1656 with the invention of the pendulum clock.
- C. Clocks have played an important role in man's history.
- D. Spring-driven clocks appeared during the 15th century, although they are often erroneously credited to Nuremberg watchmaker Peter Henlen around 1511.

It is quite obvious by studying the chronology what the sequence should be.

Strategy 4:

The Chota Rajan Approach. Sometimes you will find that for some terms in the paragraph both the full form and the abbreviation have been used. For Example, IMF --- International Monetary Fund, Charles Dickens --- Dickens, Dr Manmohan Singh --- Dr Singh. In these cases where both the full form as well as the abbreviation is present in different sentences, then the sentence containing the full form will obviously come before the sentence containing the abbreviation.

Strategy 5:

What an Idea Sirji! If there are two sentences, one containing an idea and another giving examples of the same idea then the sentence containing the idea should come before the sentence containing the examples. But they need not necessarily be exactly side by side.

Example,

- A: Russia possesses the largest stockpiles of weapons of mass destruction in the world.
- B: 489 missiles carrying up to 1,788 warheads and 12 submarines carrying up to 609 war-heads form a looming threat.

A will come before B in this case, even though there might be sentences in between.

Strategy 6:

An article of faith. It is highly unlikely that the definite article 'the' will be part of an opening sentence. If 'a/an' and 'the' both are used for the same noun then the sentence containing 'the' will come after the sentence containing a/an.

Myths on Para jumbles

Paragraph jumbles, or as they are fondly called, para jumbles, are sets of connected statements in some random order, which when unjumbled, create a meaningful paragraph. There aren't any straight-forward approaches to solving Para Jumbles. With as many approaches as you can possibly think of, each Para jumble has a unique solution.

There are many myths on Para Jumbles that make them mind-boggling!

Myth 1: Para jumbles are the most difficult questions in the English section.

The truth: They really aren't! We hope these tips will help you believe it.

Myth 2: "Oh, options are the only saving grace!"

The truth: Para Jumbles can very well be solved without options.

Myth 3: "You don't need to be good in vocabulary for Para Jumbles."

The truth: Sorry, vocabulary can actually help go a long way in solving the Para Jumble.

Each Para Jumble can make use of one or more of these tips for solving. Do note that these tips should be applied depending on the unique Para Jumble question posed to you. Some problems can be solved by taking articles as a cue, while some may need pronouns as a guide.

Here are a few tips to successfully solve Para Jumbles:

1. **Look for the sentence that clearly introduces a person, place, committee, or concept in the Para Jumble. That will most likely be the opening sentence.**

Here is an example:

- a) He was looking forward to opening up the presents in the solitude of his room.
- b) Sanjay's birthday was celebrated with a big bash.
- c) But the guests insisted he open them up right there.
- d) Several people arrived at his home bearing gifts, both big and small.

Introductory Line:

Clearly the first line must be statement B. This is because the whole passage talks about gifts and guests and what happens at birthdays. So, the first sentence must necessarily introduce the person whose birthday it is. He is referred to by his name in this sentence whereas the remaining sentences refer to him as 'he'. This is another indication that sentence B is the opening line.

Central Theme

Always spot the central theme of each Para Jumble. The flow of the story/dialogue goes a long way in piecing together the paragraph in the correct order.

2. Follow the activities:

At times, the Para Jumble will have sentences talking about activities. In such cases by just analyzing which activity happens when, the question can be solved very easily. Take this case for example:

- a) He accumulates some capital and goes into a business venture with his sons.
- b) In order to increase his salary he works through the night.
- c) They open shop to create men's garments.
- d) Later he takes the garments and sells it on New York streets.
- e) He takes garments from the sweatshop to finish at home with the help of his wife and older children at night.
- f) A Russian tailor artisan comes to America, takes to the needle trade, works in sweatshop for

small salary.

Central theme:

The struggle of a tailor and his steps to success.

Activity Tracking:

Finding the opening sentence here is cakewalk. Sentence F clearly specifies the person and his work, so it's the opening statement. Now a sequence unfolds.

- a) A man works in a shop to earn his daily bread. He then goes home and works again with his family's help. He then starts working through the night to earn more. Only after having worked day and night does his work get ready for sale.
- b) The sequence just shown should give you hints for part of the answer. After F, the order is E-B-D.
- c) Sentence C speaks of a shop that the man opens. So he has to arrange for the capital first. Hence A will come before C.
- d) Therefore, the logical order is F-E-B-D-A-C.

If the sentences are too lengthy, do not spend a lot of time reading every detail of it. Be vigilant and quick in spotting 'special words' like connectives, articles, pronouns and adjectives.

3. Connectives:

There will be sentences having connectives like:

- although • though • if • until • since
- but • after • alternatively • besides •
then
- yet • because • consequently • notwithstanding
• and
- when • meanwhile • furthermore • however •
for
- whoever • whatever • whenever • nevertheless •
therefore
- moreover • whereas

These sentences are almost never the opening ones. They always refer to people or events mentioned in previous sentences.

For example:

1. Friendly wash by many other smaller brands have challenged the giants by offering prices which attracted the value-conscious Indian consumer.
2. **In fact** unbranded players are offering packs which are twice the size of a branded product with similar or better quality at cheaper prices.

Central theme:

- The tough competition given to FMCG companies by smaller brands.
- Here the connective 'in fact' clearly indicates that sentence B should follow A. Hence the correct order is A-B.

4. Articles:

- Even articles can help to some extent in these questions.
- 'The' is a definite article, whereas 'a' and 'an' are indefinite articles. 'the' is used to denote something or someone specific or when the person or thing for which the article has been used has already been introduced.
- 'A' or 'an' are used while introducing something for the first time and also for stating general facts. Like, A hit- and-run case usually has a ten year jail term as punishment in India.

For example:

- A. **A** boy and his friend played all day in the garden near our house.
- B. The next day, I didn't see **the** boy in the garden, though his friend was there.

Central theme:

Boy playing in the garden

In the second sentence, 'the' has been used along with 'boy' because he has already been introduced to the reader in another sentence. Also, here we are talking specifically about that boy. Hence, the correct order is A-B.

5. Pronouns:

Pronouns like he, she, they, it, them, their, him, her etc. are used when the person being talked about has already been introduced. Some Para Jumbles can be tackled by taking pronouns as a guide.

For example:

- A. **They** gathered together the death certificates from residents of the town, going back to as many years as they could.
- B. **Wolf** decided to investigate.
- C. **He** enlisted the support of his students and colleagues from Oklahoma.

Central theme:

An act of investigation

- Since the sentence B clearly states the person, Wolf, it is undoubtedly the opening sentence.
- Next comes sentence C where pronoun 'he' refers to Wolf. It would make no sense if sentence C came before B. Only after Wolf has been introduced, should we use 'he' to refer to Wolf.
- After Wolf has enlisted the support of his friends, we can refer to them as 'they'. So, sentence A is the final one in the passage. Clearly sentence A cannot be used before this because the only one introduced in the first sentence is Wolf and the group of people has only been introduced

in the second sentence. So, we can refer to the group as 'they' only after this second introduction.

- The complete answer is thus B-C-A.

However, in case of pronouns in the first person like 'I', taking cues from them can get baffling. Such Para Jumbles have to be solved using other approaches.

For example:

- A. I am a student preparing for the SBI PO.
- B. I request you to provide some helpful tips to solve the logical reasoning questions.

Central theme:

An SBI PO aspirant and his request.

Here, pronouns can be of no help. It is best to think of it this way: only after introducing yourself can you talk about your need for some helpful tips. Hence, the order is A-B.

6. Adjectives:

Adjectives like 'simpler', 'better', 'cleverer' etc. are comparative. Hence, they always hold a relation to other things. Such adjectives can also be of good help in solving Para Jumbles.

For example:

- A. The solution that you had put up was **good**.
- B. Riya had posted her solution that I found to be **better**.

Central theme:

Solutions posted by two people.

Here, of course, sentence B has to come after A due to the comparative adjective 'better'.

Para Jumble 1:

1. Post offices and Public sector banks could supplement micro-credit institutions in this regard.
2. They are trusted institutions, and have already built-up credit and savings channels for the poor. In a recent paper, Wouter Van Ginneken of the International Labor Organization has argued that micro-finance institutions could play an important role in providing social security.
3. To overcome this weakness, Ginneken suggests that micro-credit organizations should out- source the insurance part of their business.
4. But one problem is that most micro-credit institutions are small and lack expertise in the insurance business.

Central theme:

Micro-finance institutions, how they benefit people, problems faced by them and solution to their problems.

- Sentence C should be the opening sentence because it clearly mentions the name of the person, Wouter Van Ginneken and his argument.
- It is essential to note that the Para Jumble is about the institutions, not Ginneken. Hence, sentence B with pronoun 'they' referring to the institutions should come after C. They go on to give more information about micro-finance institutions.
- Sentences A and D talk about some solutions. So, sentence E which poses the problem should come before them.
- Between A and D, statement D will clearly come first, because it is a suggestion for solving the problem and the method of solving it is in sentence A.
- Therefore the order is C-B-E-D-A.

Para Jumble 2:

1. The former Act imposed severe restrictions on the freedom of the press and the latter forbade the possession of arms by Indians.
2. Many measures of the government provoked widespread agitation.
3. The British government consistently followed a policy of repression after 1857.
4. Two of these were the Vernacular Press Act of 1878 and the Arms Act of 1897.

Central theme:

The repressive policy of the British government.

- Sentence C specifies the people (i.e., the British government) and their policy most clearly. Hence it is the opening one.
- Sentence B should follow C as it talks about the measures adopted in the policy.
- Sentence D should follow B as 'these' in D refers to the measures taken by the government which are Draconian Acts.
- Sentence A again talks about the Acts and uses the words 'former' and 'latter'. These words refer to the Acts mentioned in D. Therefore, logically, A will come after D.
- The logical arrangement of the above Para Jumble is C- B-D-A.

Para Jumble 3:

- A. Here I would like to echo the words of former President of India, Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam — A nation's progress depends about how its people think.
- B. We have to act with conviction to realize our dream.
- C. We Indians have to think as a nation and dream to transform our country into a super power.
- D. It is very unfortunate that economically resurgent India still remains home to the world's largest population of poor, hungry and illiterate people.
- E. Besides these, rapidly increasing population, rampant corruption, exploitation of women, child labour, communalism are some of the issues which need to be worked upon.
- F. Tragically, hunger remains India's biggest lingering problem with an estimated 7000 Indians dying of

hunger every single day.

G. Along with chronic hunger, deep poverty and high illiteracy also continue to blight the lives of millions of our people.

Central theme:

Problems faced by Indians

Locating the opening sentence here is a bit tricky. But on close inspection of some special words, sentence D seems most apt for the opening sentence. That is because of the following:

- Sentence A has 'here' implying 'in this situation'.
- Sentences B and C can't be the opening sentence as we don't give solutions before discussing problems.
- Sentence E has the connective 'besides these'.
- Sentences F and G give detailed views on hunger and illiteracy as problems in India.
- Sentence D hence should be the opening sentence.
- Notice how the process of elimination has been used to spot the opening sentence.
- Sentences F and G should follow next. G after F as it has the connective along with 'chronic hunger'.
- Sentence E again with a connective 'besides these' implying besides hunger, poverty and illiteracy should come after G.
- Sentence A with 'here' meaning 'in this situation of problems...' should follow E. Also Dr. Kalam's quote tells that India's progress depends on how its people think.
- Therefore, Sentence C gives the response to A that we have to think as a nation.
- Sentence B, the only one left, is the concluding one. Therefore, the correct order is D-F-G-E-A-C-B

