



STRATEGY TO LIFT THE COMBATIVE SPIRIT IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN THE COMPETITIVE ARENA

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Abstract:

Learning is under the process for a sea change in the current curriculum world calling for state-of-the-art tactics for imbuing the right inputs in the aspirer's mind. The term student has universal meaning to it. It does not confine to specific areas of interest. It transcends time and space. For anyone who studies is a student. India was the home for variance in the education system. The transitional history of class rooms ranged from indoor to outdoor and smart to ultra modern virtual class rooms. Multi level linguistics to micro level subjects figured in the scheme of curricula. Skill training or imparting rigorous coaching on the desirable skills formed the latest adds on in the curriculum. Nevertheless the tendency to discriminate skill competency coaching as extra or co-curriculum, stand out in the entire scheme of learning process is skill training. The ramified effects of skill training are beyond one's conjecture. 1) Enhancement of employability in an otherwise qualified person 2) Boost in the confidence building level of employers 3) Depletion in the attrition rate as the depression among employees take a sharp descend vis-a-vis the impartment of the new skill training.

In this treatise the masterstroke is skill training enabling an aspirer to fare with Objectiveness, Swiftness, Accuracy and Time management. The acronym OSAT denotes the efficiency level required in an aspirer of competitive examination and the one coined throughout the principal part of this treatise. The fallout of skill training itself is the skilfulness in absorbing the various nuances of the concept. This write up is especially aimed for the aspirer in English linguistics inter alia the other areas in a certain competitive arena like test of reasoning, quantitative analysis, picture perception, logical conclusions etc., A humble attempt has been made to improve the calibration level of the aspirer while taking the English language test in a certain competitive examination. The significance of English language as a crucial paper in all the competitive examinations and the debacle faced by aspirers explains the need for evolving some strategies to get through this predicament to a small extent.

Index Terms: Student, Skill Training, Aspirer, OSAT, Linguistics, Employability & Attrition

Introduction:

Competition is a timeless term. It transgresses time and space. It has been in existence since time immemorial. It is inherent among all living beings. Animals do complete one another to establish their suzerainty for a certain territory or to eke a livelihood. Plants compete for more sunlight and water for photosynthesis. Man is no exception to this rule. The Darwinian Theory of survival of the fittest emanates from the concept of competition. To amass the life supporting materials he engaged in frequent competitions with every ways and means including his own fellow beings. In the passage of time good many developments made his life easy and comfortable. He was prone to more comforts.

As a result 'economics' played a significant role in the determination of his calibration level of material pleasure. Money started ruling the roost. The criteria of success synchronised with the amassment of money. The spontaneity of social

demeanours became proportional with the decibel limit of tinkling of the mint. Economic theories were conceived. Employment became the only source of livelihood. Disparity emerged. Discriminations in the determination of the employability and salary fixation paved way for the option of different avenues to choose. When institutions thrived for supplying goods and services to the society, rate of employment also thrived proportionately. In the key sector areas and essential sector areas where the products are essentially required to functionalise the wheeling of social activities, more employment was generated eventually causing an embarrassment in the demand and supply of employable aspirants. Hence various selection modes were put in the scheme of things.

The present treatise which is entitled 'Strategy to raise the combative spirit in English language in the competitive arena' is about the preparations an aspirer should adopt to face the steep challenge of getting through the competitive examinations. 'Arena' is the oval space in the centre of a Roman amphitheatre for gladiatorial combats. It apparently serves as an analogy with the toughness an aspirer finds to emerge successful in a competitive examination after months of intensive training.

Who is an Aspirer?

One who has an urging on the lookout for possessing something passionately can be termed as an aspirer. In the present context it is the one who has the desirable education, sufficient experience and who conforms to all the standards set by the employer is the aspirer. The problem would begin when the supply exceeds demand colossally. The meaning and scope of competition surfaces. The manpower development experts have evolved techniques from time to time to axe the exodus of aspirers for a prospective job.

The nomenclature of this technique is competitive examination. It entails different testing patterns like numerical aptitude, test of reasoning, picture perception etc. One would wonder to digest the logic of testing the general knowledge of one who aspires for a last grade job. Isn't enough to test whether the person is physically fit, mentally sound and merely literate? Here lies the application of the manpower developers' schemes to shear the anticipation of an aspirer whose IQ is abysmally low. Ultimately one is able to comprehend the need for competitive examinations to merely shear away the numbers in the applications for a given vacancy.

Selection Mode:

The employing organisation resorts to various kinds of selection mode to find out the right person for the job. Right from evaluating the CV to the intricate grilling of the candidate in the name of interview consumes pressing times in the yearning for selecting the right person. At the CV assessment level one quarter of the applicants can take a back track. The fortunate ones who are called for interview are subjected for more cruising and stunning selection levels like group discussions and one to one interview. Employing establishments begin their selection procedure with a screening test that includes a written test. Armed with cut off marks system a considerable no. of aspirers is destined to bow down to their attempt of being placed.

Only those who are well versed in communication and soft skills can ensure a berth among the achievers. In the Government and public sector both written and oral abilities are being put to test. In the written segment English language inter alia numerical aptitude, GK, test of reasoning is given more significance. The primary objective of the present treatise is to offer certain inputs to the aspiring community in the English language for grabbing government posts. The recruiting agencies in the public sector more or less follow a uniform system in the written examinations.

Public Sector Recruiting Agencies:

The premier recruiting agencies in India are Union Public Service Commission and the state affiliates in state public service commissions which are instituted as constitutional entities to take up the task of filling the civilian jobs in both union and state governments. Whereas UPSC is designated with the task of recruiting the A class civil service officers in the cadre of IAS, IPS, IFS, IES, IRS, IMS etc., state public service commission's recruit personnel for the states. On the basis of a flawless system the service commissions do the herculean task in the most meticulous way. Staff Selection Commission is another recruiting agency designated to recruit B class officers in the central cadre. Railway Recruitment Board fills the vacancies in railway department. Thousands of vacancies in different cadres are filled every year. The selection processes are more or less identical. They have generally 4 tier system. A) Skill of English language B) Numerical Aptitude or Quantitative Analysis C) General Knowledge and D) Test of Reasoning.

Inputs for Successful Output:

The aspirer should equip oneself to train the mind in such a way as to gain Objectivity, Swiftness, Accuracy and Time Management. Thus OSAT should work as the winning shot. Objectivity is more important. It paves the way for confining oneself to practice with an invigorating spirit. The very thought that an opportunity to gain entry into a government service particularly central cadre calls for rigorous training. Swiftness is the speed. The aspirer should always feel the negative marks as a Damocles Sword hanging overhead and can fall anytime if one simply carries away with callousness. The rate of accuracy or correctness can be ascertained only by one who should be like a pragmatist. The importance of as many mock tests as possible warrants for the aspirer to do away with mistakes and to gain control in solving more number of questions. Time management is co-related with mind control. If only the aspirer composes himself he can efficiently manage time. The aspirer should keep all negative features like nervousness, fear, timidity etc at bay well in advance.

Conquering the English Language Test:

The author of this paper has made a modest attempt of introducing some major heads in the English language skill test where the aspirers would get a head in the subject. Some aspects have been worked out here for the aspiring candidates to grasp. These are enumerated as under in six sections.

- ✓ Mechanics: Capitalization and Punctuation
- ✓ Sentence Structure
- ✓ Agreement
- ✓ Modifiers
- ✓ Paragraph development.

The above concepts facilitate a superficial understanding with the help of the following check list. At the outset we shall see the mechanics of English language. Capitalization and punctuation contribute to the trivial way to incorrigible errors.

1) Mechanics-Capitalisation and Punctuation:

Capitalization Checklist:

- ✓ The first word of every sentence → Yes, we do carry the matching bed skirt.
- ✓ The first word of a quoted sentence (not just a quoted phrase) → And with great flourish, he sang, "O beautiful for gracious skies, for amber waves of grain!"
- ✓ The specific name of a person (and his or her title), a place, or a thing (otherwise known as proper nouns). Proper nouns include specific locations and geographic regions; political, social, and athletic organizations and agencies; historical events;

documents and periodicals; nationalities and their language; religions, their members and their deities; brand or trade names; and holidays.

- ✓ The abbreviation for proper nouns. Government agencies are probably the most frequently abbreviated. Remember to capitalize each letter. The job in IBM makes me feel very secure.
- ✓ Adjectives (descriptive words) derived from proper nouns. Ex: America (proper noun) → the American (adjective) flag
- ✓ The pronoun I.
- ✓ The most important words in a title → Last March, I endured a twenty-hour public reading of A Tale of Two Cities.

Punctuation Checklist:

Periods:

- ✓ At the end of a declarative sentence (sentence that makes a statement) → Today, I took a walk to nowhere.
- ✓ At the end of a command or request → Here's a cloth. Now gently burp the baby on your shoulder.
- ✓ At the end of an indirect question → Jane asked if I knew where she had left her keys.
- ✓ Before a decimal number → Statisticians claim that the average family raises 2.5 children.
- ✓ Between dollars and cents → I remember when \$1.50 could buy the coolest stuff.
- ✓ After an initial in a person's name → You are Sir James W. Dewault, are you not?
- ✓ After an abbreviation → On Jan. 12, I leave for Africa.

Question Marks:

- ✓ At the end of a question → Why do you look so sad?
- ✓ Inside a quotation mark when the quote is a question → She asked, "Why do you look so sad?"

Exclamation Points:

- ✓ At the end of a word, phrase, or sentence filled with emotion → Hurry up! I cannot be late for the meeting!
- ✓ Inside a quotation mark when the quote is an exclamation → The woman yelled, "Hurry up! I cannot belate for the meeting!"

Quotation Marks:

- ✓ When directly quoting dialogue, not when paraphrasing → Hamlet says, "To be, or not to be. That is the question."
- ✓ For titles of chapters, articles, short stories, poems, songs, or periodicals → My favorite poem is "The Road Not Taken."

Semicolons:

- ✓ Between two independent clauses (an independent Clause is a complete thought. It has a subject and a predicate.) → Edward joined the basketball team; remarkably, the 5'4" young man excelled at the sport.
- ✓ Between elements in a series that uses commas → The possible dates for the potluck dinner are Thursday, June 5; Saturday, June 7; or Monday, June 9.

Colons:

- ✓ Between two complete ideas when the second idea explains the first. → Keri pushed her dinner away: She had eaten on the car ride home.

- ✓ Before a list → Grandma brought Chloe's favorite three sweets: chocolate kisses, Tootsie dolls, and a Snickers bar.
- ✓ Between titles and subtitles → Finding Your Dream Home: A Buyer's Guide.
- ✓ Between volumes and page numbers → Marvel Comics 21:24
- ✓ Between chapters and verse → Job 4:12
- ✓ Between hours and minutes → It's 2:00 a.m.—time to sleep.

Apostrophes:

- ✓ Where letters or numbers have been deleted—as in a contraction looked at my father and whispered, "It's (It is) okay to cry every so often."
- ✓ At the end of a name where there is ownership (remember to also add an s after the apostrophe if the word or name does not end in an s already) → Mary Jane's horse sprained his ankle during practice.

Punctuation:

Commas:

- ✓ Between items in dates and addresses → Michael arrived at Ellis Island, New York, on February 14, 1924.
- ✓ Between words in a list → The University hired a woman to direct the Bursar's, Financial Aid, and Registrar's offices.
- ✓ Between equally important adjectives (be careful not to separate adjectives that describe each other) → The reporter spoke with several intense, talented high school athletes.
- ✓ After a tag that precedes a direct quote → David whined, "I am famished."
- ✓ In a quote that precedes a tag and is not a question or an exclamation → "I am famished," whined David.
- ✓ Around nonessential clauses, parenthetical phrases, and appositives (A non essential or non restrictive clause is a word or group of words that are not necessary for the sentence's completion; a parenthetical phrase interrupts the flow of a sentence; and an appositive is a word or group of words that rename the noun preceding them) → Matt's mother, Janie (appositive), who has trouble with directions (nonessential clause), had to ask for help.
- ✓ After introductory words, phrases, and clauses → hoping for the best, we checked our luggage.
- ✓ Before conjunctions (Conjunctions are words that link two independent clauses together) → Drew wanted to experience ballroom dancing before his wedding, so he signed up for lessons at a local hall.

2) Sentence Structure:

- ✓ Fragment: a phrase punctuated like a sentence even though it does not express a complete thought. → Timothy saw the car. And ran.
- ✓ Coordinating Conjunction: a word that when preceded by a comma or a semicolon joins two independent and equal clauses. (and, but, so, or, for, nor, yet) → Dorothy had a beautiful rose garden, and her yard was a profusion of color every summer.
- ✓ Subordinating Conjunction: a word that makes a clause a dependent clause (after, although, as, because, before, if, once, since, than, that, though, unless, until, when, whenever, where, wherever, while) → After the accident, mourners covered the beaches nearest to the tragedy with roses.
- ✓ Conjunctive Adverb: a word that introduces a relationship between two independent clauses accordingly, besides, consequently, furthermore, hence,

however, instead, moreover, nevertheless, otherwise, then, therefore, thus) → On Tuesdays, I play racquetball; otherwise, I would go with you. To construct a sentence: Always have at least one independent clause in the sentence.

- ✓ Join two independent clauses with a semicolon or a comma and a conjunction. → Chaucer was a narrator, and he was a pilgrim in his Canterbury Tales.
- ✓ Do not run two or more independent clauses together without punctuation; that error is appropriately called a run-on. Wrong: Chaucer was a narrator and he was a pilgrim in his Canterbury Tales.
- ✓ Do not separate two independent clauses with just a comma; that error is called a comma splice. Wrong: Chaucer was a narrator; he was a pilgrim in his Canterbury Tales.
- ✓ Do not use a conjunctive adverb (the words accordingly, besides, consequently, furthermore, hence, however, instead, moreover, nevertheless, otherwise, then, therefore, thus) like a conjunction. Wrong: Chaucer was a narrator; moreover he was a pilgrim in his Canterbury Tales.
- ✓ Use a comma after a conjunctive adverb when it follows a semicolon. (See Conjunctive Adverbs)
- ✓ Use a comma after introductory words, phrases, and clauses. (See Subordinating Clauses)
- ✓ Use commas around nonessential clauses. Do not use commas around essential clauses. (See Non Essential and Essential Clauses)
- ✓ Use commas around appositives. (See Appositives)
- ✓ Use commas around parenthetical elements (a word or group of words that interrupt a sentence's flow). → Mrs. Moses, that mean old crone, yelled at little Paula for laughing too loud!

3) Agreement:

Tense Agreement:

Maintain one tense in a complete thought: past tense or present tense. → Incorrect: In the game of hide and seek, Bobby chased Mary and tag her from behind. Correct: In the game of hide and seek, Bobby chased Mary and tagged her from behind. Incorrect: Dusk had just settled when I see a fawn timidly step onto the beach. Correct: Dusk had just settled when I saw a fawn timidly step onto the beach. Do not use of in place of have. You cannot avoid pronouns. Pronouns substitute for nouns. Instead of saying, "Because Janie was late, Janie hopped on Janie's moped, and Janie raced to the wedding," you would say, "Because Janie was late, she hopped on her moped, and she raced to the wedding." In this section, you will not only clarify ambiguous pronouns and assure pronoun- antecedent agreement; you will also grapple with contractions. All too often, certain pronouns and contractions are confused. "The file cabinet drawer snagged on an overstuffed folder; it's now stuck just before its halfway point." It's is a contraction meaning it is, while its a possessive pronoun meaning the drawer's halfway point. The only visual difference between the two is an apostrophe neatly inserted between the t and the s in the contraction.

A Preface to Some Terms Used in Grammar:

Antecedent: In the last example, Janie is the specific noun that she and her replace; so Janie is the antecedent. The presence of the antecedent in a sentence is as important as which pronouns substitute for it.

Contractions: When two words are made into one by omitting letters and using an apostrophe to highlight the omission—that's a contraction.

Subjective, Objective, and Possessive Cases: Persons or things (nouns) acting on other things are subjects. Pronouns that refer to these subjects are in the subjective case (I, you, he, she, we, they, who). Persons or things acted upon (in other words, they are not performing the action) are objects. Pronouns that refer to these objects are in the objective case (me, you, him, her, us, them, whom). Subjects or objects that claim ownership of something are possessors. Pronouns that claim their possessions are in the possessive case (my, your, his, her, our, your, whose).

Avoid Ambiguous Pronoun References. The antecedent that a pronoun refers to must be clearly stated and in close proximity to its pronoun. If more subjects than one are present, indicate which subject is the antecedent. When Katherine and Melissa left for England, she promised to write me about all their adventures. Who is she? Katherine or Melissa?

Pronouns Should:

- ✓ Agree in number with their antecedent: Singular antecedents use singular pronouns, and plural antecedents use plural pronouns.
- ✓ Compound antecedents joined by and use plural pronouns. A horse and a donkey make a mule. Even though the horse and the donkey are singular subjects, together they create one plural subject.
- ✓ Compound antecedents joined by or nor use pronouns that agrees with the nearest antecedent. → Neither my one cat nor my four dogs are as difficult to maintain as my one pet fish.
- ✓ Collective nouns use singular pronouns unless it is obvious that every person or thing in the group act individually. The company mandated a universal naptime for all its employees. They felt workers could sustain productivity longer into the afternoon if they rested in the early afternoon. Unless it is a one person operation, a company usually employs many people. However, it is treated like a singular noun. In the first sentence, the singular pronoun it substitutes for company. In the second sentence, individuals in the company feel separately, and so the plural pronoun they replaces the subject.
- ✓ Persons receive the pronouns who, whom, or whose, not that or which.
- ✓ After is, are, was, or were use the subjective case.
- ✓ Pronouns preceding or following infinitive verbs (the plain form of a verb preceded by to) take the objective case. → Billy Jean begged him to play catch, but he did not want to play ball with her at that moment. In the first clause, him is the subject; in the second clause, her is an object. Despite their difference, both take the objective case because of the infinitive to play.

4) Modifiers:

Adjectives and adverbs modify subjects and/or their actions in a sentence. In the sentence, "The orange and striped cat leapt nimbly across the dresser," adjectives and adverbs specify what kind of cat (an "orange and striped cat") and how that cat leapt ("nimbly"). All too often, adjectives and adverbs are confused for one another. However, in this section, you will put each in its proper place and in its proper form. First, you have to know the definition of a modifier: A modifier describes or limits another word. Lily is a subject. Add the word tiger before lily and the subject is modified: It is now a specific type of lily. Pushed is an action word. Add shyly and the action is limited: It is now a gentler action. Put the subject, its action, and the modifiers all together and the sentence reads: Unlike its fierce namesake, the tiger lily pushed its head shyly through the soil.

Types of Modifiers:

- ✓ **Adjectives** modify nouns or pronouns. (Hint: An adjective answers one of three questions: which one, what kind, or how many?)
- ✓ **Adverbs** modify verbs, adjectives, other adverbs, or whole groups of words. (Hint: An adverb answers one of four questions: where, when, how, or to what extent?)
- ✓ **Comparatives** are adjectives and adverbs used to compare two things.
- ✓ **Superlatives** are adjectives and adverbs used to compare more than two things. Follow this guideline and you will do well (well describes the verb to do; therefore it is an adverb!):
- ✓ Always identify whether a modifier describes or limits a sentence's subject or its action.
- ✓ Use good and bad to describe nouns.
- ✓ Use well and badly to describe verbs, except when well means "fit" or "healthy." When well describes a state of being, it is an adjective. → With repetition, you will soon write well. Well describes how the subject writes; it is an adverb. After two months of physical therapy, Bob was well. Well describes Bob's state of being; it is an adjective.
- ✓ Use an adjective after a linking verb. The following words are linking verbs when they express a state of being: look, sound, smell, feel, taste, appear, seem, become, grow, turn, prove, remain, and stay. → Howard leaned over and surreptitiously smelled Lee; she smelled sweet. Surreptitiously describes how Howard sniffed at the other person; in this case, it is an adverb because it describes the act of smelling. Sweet describes Lee; the word smell links the adjective back to the subject.
- ✓ Use the adjective fewer to describe plural nouns and the adjective less to describe singular nouns.
- ✓ Use the word number to describe plural nouns and the word amount to describe singular nouns.
- ✓ Add -er to a modifier or place the word more or less before the modifier to compare two things. This creates a comparison. (Hint: One to two syllable modifiers usually receive the suffix- er; modifiers with more than two syllables use more or less before them.)
- ✓ Add -est to a modifier or place the word most or least before the modifier to indicate the extreme degree of a thing (Hint: One- to two-syllable modifiers receive-est; modifiers with more than two syllables use most or least before them.)
- ✓ Avoid double comparatives or double superlatives. Adding the suffix -er or -est to a modifier and preceding the modifier with more or most is redundant. Lindsey amazed the class with her grammatical skills; she was the smartest person they had ever seen. Lindsey is already the smartest. Most also means smartest—the phrase smartest is redundant.
- ✓ Avoid double negatives unless you mean to express the positive. → Tom hardly did not feel tense whenever he approached grammar. Hardly and did not cancel each other out. The sentence really reads: Tom felt tense whenever approaching grammar.
- ✓ Avoid illogical comparisons. Some words already indicate an extreme degree; like double comparatives and double superlatives, adding the word more or most before such words is redundant.

- ✓ Some women believe Brad Pitt is more perfect than Matt Damon. There are not degrees of perfection; one is either perfect or not perfect. However, one can more nearly approach perfection than someone else

5) Paragraph Developments:

Paragraphs are groups of related sentences that form complete units. They usually support the main ideas of an essay, article, or story; however, every paragraph has an identity and an idea of its own. A paragraph is like a miniature essay. For practice in paragraph development and unity, you will be asked to identify the best topic sentence for a particular paragraph, to find the sentence that best develops a topic, and to eliminate the sentence that does not belong. You will also choose the best order for a group of sentences. The guideline below will help you organize your paragraphs. Since paragraphs and essays are similar in structure, these guidelines can be applied to the organization of an entire essay.

- ✓ Write a paragraph to explore a single idea using a topic sentence near the beginning of the paragraph.
- ✓ Maintain paragraph unity, the logical development of a single idea in a group of related sentences, by using:

A Consistent Organizing Strategy:

Paragraphs not only present ideas, they group detailed information necessary to develop ideas. Organizing strategies arrange that information into logical and easy-to-anticipate patterns. These patterns can be top-to-bottom, left-to-right, near-to-far, then-to-now, beginning-to-ending, general-to-specific, least important-to-most important, least familiar-to-most familiar or simplest-to most complex. Other strategies use stories, descriptions, examples, definitions, categorizations, comparisons and contrasts, or causes and effects to logically organize information. As you become more proficient at writing, you will probably incorporate more than one strategy in a paragraph.

Parallelisms:

By arranging sentences in identical patterns, a writer can convey that two different things are equally important. Patterning sentence structure is called parallelism. → Bob quickly ran to the store; Alex also quickly ran to the store. It was a race to see who was fastest.

Repeated Words or Word Groups:

Though similar to parallelisms, repeated word groups can occur anywhere in a sentence. → Humans still worship trees. Rain or shine, they still marvel at the solstice.

Transitional Phrases or Words to connect sentences and/or ideas → First, Katie gathered the ingredients. Then she assembled the meal.

Important: Try not to shift the number of things, a pronoun's case or a verb's tense in a paragraph unless your organizing strategy requires it.

Conclusion:

The author expects all the aspiring community avowed to meet the linguistic challenge which is one crucial leap to crack the stupendous but the finest accomplishments underlying in the form of competitive examination would find the contents of this paper efficacious, informative and academically studious. Using the aforesaid tips an aspirer can get over the stumbling block that hinders his/her long cherished ambition to emerge a winner in the competitive tests held by any recruiting agencies in the government sector or other from time to time. Systematic learning, practicing as many questions, taking as much mock tests and last but not the least to equip with conviction, dedication and determination.