

English Last-Minute Revision Notes

SscAce

SSC CGL Tier 1 • Rules, traps & vocabulary • 20–25 minute revision

Green = must remember Blue = SSC trap

1 SUBJECT-VERB AGREEMENT

Each / every / either / neither	Take a singular verb. Each of the boys is present. · Neither of the plans was approved. Every man and woman has a role.
One of the ...	One of + plural noun → singular verb: One of my friends is a doctor. One of those who ... → plural verb: He is one of those who work hard.
Either...or / Neither...nor	Verb agrees with the nearer subject. Neither the teacher nor the students were present.
Along with, as well as, together with, with, besides	Verb agrees with the first subject. The captain, along with his players, is ready.
And	Two subjects joined by "and" → plural: Ram and Shyam are friends. One person / one idea → singular: Bread and butter is my breakfast.
Collective nouns	Group acting as a unit → singular: The committee has decided. Members acting separately → plural: The committee are divided. Always plural: police, cattle, people, gentry, poultry — The police are here.
Singular in form	news, mathematics, physics, economics, politics, ethics, measles, innings → singular verb. No news is good news.
SSC TRAP Plural only	scissors, trousers, spectacles, jeans, clothes, goods, belongings, savings → plural verb. But "a pair of scissors is " (pair = singular).
SSC TRAP The number / A number	The number of students is rising. (singular) A number of students are absent. (plural)
SSC TRAP Many a / More than one	Take a singular verb: Many a student has failed. · More than one student has left.
Quantity as a whole	Time, distance, money, weight → singular: Ten kilometres is a long distance.
Fractions / percentages	Verb follows the noun after "of": Two-thirds of the work is done. · 40% of the people are absent.
SSC TRAP Interrupting phrase	Ignore words between subject and verb: The cost of the books is high.

There is / There are	Verb agrees with the noun that follows : There are two books on the table.
Relative pronoun	Verb agrees with the antecedent: He is the only one of the boys who has passed.

2 TENSES

Present Simple	S + V1 (s/es) Habits, facts, schedules, universal truths e.g. She writes daily. The sun rises in the east.
Present Continuous	S + is/am/are + V-ing Action now; fixed near-future plan e.g. They are playing now.
Present Perfect	S + has/have + V3 Past action with present result; just, already, yet, ever, never, since, for e.g. I have finished my work.
Present Perfect Continuous	S + has/have been + V-ing Action started in the past and still continuing (since/for) e.g. He has been studying since morning.
Past Simple	S + V2 Finished action at a definite past time (yesterday, ago, last) e.g. I met him yesterday.
Past Continuous	S + was/were + V-ing Action in progress at a past moment e.g. She was reading when I called.
Past Perfect	S + had + V3 The earlier of two past actions e.g. The train had left before we arrived.
Past Perfect Continuous	S + had been + V-ing Duration up to a past moment e.g. She had been waiting for an hour when he came.
Future Simple	S + will/shall + V1 Decisions, predictions, promises e.g. I will call you tomorrow.
Future Continuous	S + will be + V-ing Action in progress at a future time e.g. At 5 pm I will be travelling .
Future Perfect	S + will have + V3 Action completed before a future time e.g. I will have finished by 6 pm.
Future Perfect Continuous	S + will have been + V-ing e.g. By June, she will have been working here for ten years.

SSC TRAP Since / For	since + point of time; for + period → Perfect tense. He has lived here since 2015 / for ten years.
SSC TRAP Yesterday, ago, last, in 2010	Definite past time → Past Simple, not Perfect. I saw him yesterday. (X have seen)
SSC TRAP Time clauses	After if / when / before / after / as soon as / until, do not use will. I will go when he comes . (X will come)
SSC TRAP No sooner / Hardly / Scarcely	No sooner had he arrived than it rained. · Hardly had he left when the phone rang.
Conditionals	If + V1 → will + V1 · If + V2 → would + V1 · If + had V3 → would have + V3 I wish I were rich. (past subjunctive)
SSC TRAP Stative verbs	know, like, love, believe, want, see, hear, understand — not used in continuous. X I am knowing → ✓ I know .
Bare infinitive	would rather, had better, let, make, help, can, may + V1: He made me laugh .
SSC TRAP Used to	used to + V1 (past habit) · be used to + V-ing (accustomed): I am used to waking early.

3 ARTICLES

A	Before a consonant sound , singular countable: a university, a European, a one-rupee note, a user, a unique idea.
An	Before a vowel sound : an hour, an honest man, an umbrella, an MBA, an SSC officer, an X-ray.
The	Specific / known noun · unique things (the sun, the Earth) · superlatives (the best) · ordinals (the first) Rivers, seas, oceans, mountain ranges (the Ganga, the Pacific, the Himalayas) · newspapers (The Hindu) · the + adjective (the poor) · nationalities (the Indians) · musical instruments (play the guitar) the ... the ...: The more, the better.
Zero article	Plural / uncountable in general: Honesty is the best policy. · Languages, meals, games, subjects: speak Hindi, have breakfast, play cricket, study history Persons, cities, countries: India, Delhi · by + transport: by bus
SSC TRAP Half an hour	✓ half an hour · X an half hour
SSC TRAP Such a / quite a / what a / many a / rather a	Article comes after such, quite, what, many, rather: such a good boy · what a day.

SSC TRAP Few / a few / the few	few = hardly any (negative) · a few = some (positive) · the few = all that are there little = hardly any · a little = some
SSC TRAP School, college, hospital, prison, church, court	No article for the usual purpose: go to school (study), go to hospital (as patient). With a visit: go to the school (to meet someone).
SSC TRAP Names	No article: Mount Everest, Lake Chilika, Asia, Parliament Street. · With the: the USA, the UK, the Netherlands, the Philippines.
Profession	He is a doctor. · She is an engineer.
SSC TRAP Possessive / demonstrative	X the my book → ✓ my book · X a this boy → ✓ this boy
the same · the only	Always take the : the same person · the only son.
A most / the most	A most helpful man (= very helpful) · He is the most helpful man (superlative).

4 PREPOSITIONS

Adjective + preposition

good at	weak in	interested in
keen on	fond of	proud of
ashamed of	afraid of	jealous of
capable of	aware of	guilty of
tired of	full of	free from
absent from	different from	independent of
dependent on	responsible for	famous for
notorious for	angry with (person)	angry at (thing)
pleased with	satisfied with	married to
engaged to	devoted to	addicted to
accustomed to	opposed to	superior to
inferior to	senior to	junior to
prior to	preferable to	similar to
equal to	kind to	loyal to
beneficial to	harmful to	essential for
fit for	eligible for	suitable for

Verb + preposition

depend on	rely on	insist on
congratulate on	prefer X to Y	agree with (person)
agree to (proposal)	apply for	wait for
look for	hope for	long for
die of (disease)	die from (injury)	suffer from
recover from	result in (effect)	result from (cause)
consist of	reply to	listen to
belong to	object to	refer to
complain about	believe in	succeed in
participate in	invest in	specialise in
deal with	cope with	comply with

sympathise with	blame X for Y	accuse X of Y
prevent from	protect from	laugh at
aim at	arrive at (place)	arrive in (city)
divide into / among	fall in love with	

SSC TRAP
No preposition after discuss, enter, reach, resemble, marry, attend, approach, oppose, order, request
~~X~~ discuss **about** → ✓ discuss the issue ·
~~X~~ reached **to** Delhi → ✓ reached Delhi · ~~X~~ resembles **to** → ✓ resembles

SSC TRAP
Superior, inferior, senior, junior, prefer, prior, preferable
 Use **to**, never "than": He is senior **to** me. · I prefer tea **to** coffee.

SSC TRAP
Comprise / consist
~~X~~ comprise **of** → ✓ comprise (no prep) or consist **of**.

Between / among
 between = two (or clear individual relation) · among = many.

Beside / besides
 beside = next to · besides = in addition to.

In / on / at
 in = month, year, season, city · on = day, date · at = clock time, small place, night

By / until
 by = deadline (finish **by** 5) · until / till = continuing up to (wait **until** 5)

In time / on time
 in time = before the last moment · on time = exactly punctual

Since / for / during / within
 since + point · for + period · during + event · within + limit of time

5 ERROR DETECTION CHECKLIST

1 Subject-verb	Find the real subject; ignore phrases in between. Check each / either / neither, nearer-subject and first-subject rules.
2 Tense	Time words decide the tense (yesterday, ago, since, by next week). Keep sequence: past main clause → past subordinate clause. X I have seen him yesterday.
3 Article	a / an by sound · the with superlatives and unique nouns · none with general abstract nouns.
4 Preposition	Fixed combinations (Section 4). X discuss about · X prefer A than B.
5 Pronoun	Case: between you and me · Let him and me go · who (subject) / whom (object). each other (two) · one another (more than two). Reflexive (myself ...) only with a matching subject.
6 Conjunction	X Though ... but / yet → use one only. · Unless + positive verb (X unless ... not). · Lest ... should. · Not only ... but also. · Both ... and. · Hardly/Scarcely ... when · No sooner ... than.

7 Adjective / Adverb
 Adjective → noun; adverb → verb/adjective. She sings **well**. · He looks **happy** (linking verb + adjective).
 hard / hardly · late / lately · near / nearly (different meanings).

8 Parallelism
 Keep the same form in lists. ~~X~~ She likes singing, dancing and to swim → ✓ swimming.

9 Comparison
 Of two → comparative; of many → superlative: He is the **taller** of the two. Compare like with like: The climate of Shimla is cooler than **that of** Delhi.
~~X~~ more better, most unkindest · one of the + superlative + **plural** noun.

10 Redundancy
~~X~~ return back, repeat again, reverse back, revert back, more better, free gift, advance planning, past history, close proximity, join together, new innovation, final outcome.

SSC TRAP
Elder / older · Further / farther · Fewer / less
 elder = family order (no "than") · older = age · further = additional · farther = distance · fewer = countable · less = uncountable

SSC TRAP
"No error"
 Choose "No error" only after checking all four parts.

6 ACTIVE & PASSIVE VOICE

Present Simple	V1 → is/am/are + V3 She writes a letter. → A letter is written by her.
Present Continuous	is/am/are + V-ing → is/am/are being + V3 She is writing a letter. → A letter is being written .
Present Perfect	has/have + V3 → has/have been + V3 She has written a letter. → A letter has been written .
Past Simple	V2 → was/were + V3 She wrote a letter. → A letter was written .
Past Continuous	was/were + V-ing → was/were being + V3 She was writing a letter. → A letter was being written .
Past Perfect	had + V3 → had been + V3 She had written a letter. → A letter had been written .
Future Simple	will + V1 → will be + V3 She will write a letter. → A letter will be written .
Future Perfect	will have + V3 → will have been + V3 She will have written it. → It will have been written .

Modal verbs	can / could / may / might / must / should / would + V1 → modal + be + V3 He can do it. → It can be done by him. Modal + have + V3 → modal + have been + V3: He should have done it. → It should have been done .
Imperative	Order: Open the door. → Let the door be opened . Negative: Do not touch the wire. → Let the wire not be touched . Request: Please help me. → You are requested to help me.
Questions	Who wrote this? → By whom was this written? Did he do it? → Was it done by him? Is she singing a song? → Is a song being sung by her?
Two objects	He gave me a book. → I was given a book by him. / A book was given to me by him.
Pronouns	I → me · he → him · she → her · we → us · they → them (as agent, after "by").
SSC TRAP Not "by"	Fixed passive prepositions: surprised at , interested in , pleased with , satisfied with , known to , filled with , covered with , married to . He is known to everyone. (X known by everyone)
SSC TRAP No passive	Intransitive verbs and have (possession), resemble, lack, suit, fit: X A car is had by him.
Continuous forms	Perfect continuous and future continuous tenses are rarely converted in exams.

7 DIRECT & INDIRECT SPEECH

Tense changes (past reporting verb)

Direct	Indirect
am / is / are	was / were
has / have	had
Present Simple (V1)	Past Simple (V2)
Present Continuous	Past Continuous
Present Perfect	Past Perfect
Past Simple	Past Perfect
Past Continuous	Past Perfect Continuous
Past Perfect	No change
will / shall	would / should
can / may	could / might
must	had to (or no change)

Time & place changes

Direct	Indirect
now	then
today	that day
tomorrow	the next / following day
yesterday	the previous day / the day before

Direct	Indirect
last night	the previous night
next week	the following week
ago	before
this / these	that / those
here	there
come	go
thus	so

Pronouns	1st person → subject of reporting verb · 2nd person → object of reporting verb · 3rd person → no change. He said, "I am ill." → He said that he was ill.
Rule of tense	Reporting verb in the past → shift the tense back. Reporting verb in the present or future (says, will say) → no change .
Statements	said / said to → said / told: She said to me, "I will help you." → She told me that she would help me.
Wh- questions	Keep the Wh-word; use statement order (no do/does/did); full stop. She said, "Where do you live?" → She asked where I lived .
Yes / No questions	Use if / whether: He said, "Are you ready?" → He asked if I was ready.
Commands	to + V1 / not to + V1: "Close the door." → He ordered me to close the door. · "Don't make noise." → He told them not to make noise.
Requests / advice	"Please help me." → She requested me to help her. · "You should rest." → He advised me to rest .
SSC TRAP Universal truths	No tense change: The teacher said, "The earth moves round the sun." → The teacher said that the earth moves round the sun. Same for habitual facts and proverbs.
Exclamations / wishes	"Alas! I am ruined." → He exclaimed with sorrow that he was ruined. "May God bless you." → He prayed that God might bless me.
Let's	"Let's go." → He suggested that they should go.
Reporting verbs	statement: said, told, stated · question: asked, enquired, wanted to know · command: ordered, commanded · request: requested, begged · advice: advised, urged · warning: warned · greeting: wished, greeted · thanks: thanked
SSC TRAP Say / tell	said to + question → asked · said to + command → ordered / told · said to + request → requested.

8 VOCABULARY

Synonyms & antonyms

Word	Synonym	Antonym
Candid	frank	deceitful
Ephemeral	short-lived	permanent
Ameliorate	improve	worsen
Mitigate	lessen	intensify
Ubiquitous	everywhere	rare
Benevolent	kind	malevolent
Frugal	thrifty	extravagant
Meticulous	careful	careless
Obsolete	outdated	modern
Pragmatic	practical	idealistic
Reticent	reserved	talkative
Verbose	wordy	concise
Vindicate	justify	condemn
Zenith	peak	nadir
Lethargic	sluggish	energetic
Opulent	wealthy	poor
Cacophony	harsh noise	harmony
Deleterious	harmful	beneficial
Insidious	treacherous	harmless
Austere	strict	lavish
Conspicuous	noticeable	hidden
Eloquent	fluent	inarticulate
Hostile	unfriendly	friendly
Jubilant	joyful	sorrowful
Placid	calm	agitated
Tranquil	peaceful	turbulent
Obstinate	stubborn	flexible
Futile	useless	fruitful
Ardent	passionate	apathetic
Impeccable	flawless	faulty
Lucid	clear	obscure
Mundane	ordinary	extraordinary
Prudent	wise	reckless
Tedious	boring	interesting
Awry	askew	orderly
Candour	frankness	deceit

Commonly confused words

Word	Meaning	Word	Meaning
affect	influence (verb)	effect	result (noun) / bring about
accept	receive	except	excluding
principal	head / main	principle	rule / belief
stationary	not moving	stationery	writing material
compliment	praise	complement	completes / goes with
cite	quote	site / sight	place / vision

Word	Meaning	Word	Meaning
advice	suggestion (noun)	advise	to give advice (verb)
council	a body	counsel	advice / advise
device	object (noun)	devise	to plan (verb)
elicit	draw out	illicit	illegal
eminent	famous	imminent	about to happen
emigrate	leave a country	immigrate	enter a country
censor	ban / cut	censure	criticise severely
continual	repeated	continuous	without a break
disinterested	unbiased	uninterested	not interested
ensure	make certain	insure	cover with insurance
farther	distance	further	additional
formally	officially	formerly	earlier
loose	not tight	lose	fail to keep
personal	private	personnel	staff
precede	come before	proceed	go ahead
quiet	silent	quite	fairly / very
raise	lift (needs object)	rise	go up (no object)
weather	climate	whether	if
alternate	every other	alternative	another option
climatic	of climate	climactic	of a climax
waive	give up	wave	hand movement / water
sensible	practical	sensitive	easily hurt / responsive
lessen	reduce	lesson	class / moral
its / it's	of it / it is	whose / who's	of whom / who is

9 ONE-WORD SUBSTITUTIONS

Meaning	Word
One who loves books	Bibliophile
One who loves mankind	Philanthropist
One who hates mankind	Misanthrope
One who hates women	Misogynist
Government by the people	Democracy
Government by a few	Oligarchy
Rule by one with absolute power	Autocracy
All-knowing	Omniscient
Present everywhere	Omnipresent
All-powerful	Omnipotent
That cannot be corrected	Incorrigible
That cannot be read	Illegible
That cannot be heard	Inaudible
That cannot be believed	Incredible
That cannot be avoided	Inevitable
That cannot be defeated	Invincible
That cannot be satisfied	Insatiable
One who walks in sleep	Somnambulist

Meaning	Word
One who speaks two languages	Bilingual
One who eats human flesh	Cannibal
One who does not believe in God	Atheist
One indifferent to pleasure and pain	Stoic
One who pretends to be good	Hypocrite
Fear of closed spaces	Claustrophobia
Fear of heights	Acrophobia
Fear of water	Hydrophobia
Study of ancient remains	Archaeology
Doctor for children	Paediatrician
One who draws maps	Cartographer
One who compiles a dictionary	Lexicographer
Art of beautiful handwriting	Calligraphy
Remedy for all diseases	Panacea
Remedy for poison	Antidote
Place where bees are kept	Apiary
Place where birds are kept	Aviary
Killing of a king	Regicide
Killing of one's father	Patricide
Killing of one's mother	Matricide
Killing of one's brother	Fatricide
A beginner	Novice

10 IDIOMS & PHRASES

Idiom	Meaning
A blessing in disguise	good thing that seemed bad at first
A piece of cake	very easy task
Beat around the bush	avoid the main point
Bite the bullet	endure pain or difficulty bravely
Break the ice	start a conversation in an awkward situation
Burn the midnight oil	work late into the night
Call it a day	stop working
Cry over spilt milk	regret what cannot be undone
Cut corners	do something cheaply or carelessly
Once in a blue moon	very rarely
Hit the nail on the head	say exactly the right thing
Let the cat out of the bag	reveal a secret by mistake
Spill the beans	reveal a secret
Under the weather	slightly ill
Rain cats and dogs	rain very heavily
Pull the plug	end or stop something
Hit the sack	go to bed
Kick the bucket	die
Bury the hatchet	end a quarrel
Cost an arm and a leg	be very expensive
Face the music	accept the consequences
Add fuel to the fire	make a bad situation worse

Idiom	Meaning
At the eleventh hour	at the last moment
Apple of one's eye	a dearly loved person
Bolt from the blue	a sudden surprise
Cold shoulder	deliberately ignore someone
Cry wolf	raise a false alarm
Dark horse	person with unexpected talents
Draw a blank	fail to remember or find
Fish out of water	person in an unfamiliar place
Hand in glove	in close association
In a nutshell	briefly
Leave no stone unturned	try every possible means
Make both ends meet	manage on a small income
Out of the blue	unexpectedly
Show the white feather	show cowardice
The lion's share	the largest part
Throw in the towel	give up
Turn a deaf ear	ignore
Wild goose chase	a useless search

11 SPELLING TRAPS

✓ Correct	X Wrong
Accommodation	Accomodation
Embarrass	Embarass
Occurrence	Occurence
Necessary	Neccessary
Separate	Seperate
Definitely	Definately
Receive	Recieve
Government	Goverment
Environment	Enviroment
Maintenance	Maintainance
Privilege	Priviledge
Conscientious	Consciencious
Surveillance	Surveilance
Millennium	Milennium
Perseverance	Perseverence
Rhythm	Rythm
Questionnaire	Questionaire
Mischievous	Mischievous
Committee	Commitee
Calendar	Calender
Pronunciation	Pronounciation
Independent	Independant
Acquaintance	Acquaintence
Guarantee	Garantee
Harass	Harrass
Exaggerate	Exagerate

✓ Correct	✗ Wrong
Existence	Existance
Supercilious	Supercillious
Indispensable	Indispensible
Consensus	Concensus

12 CLOZE TEST STRATEGY

1 Skim first	Read the whole passage once for theme and tone before touching the options.
2 Read around the blank	Use the sentence before and after. Connectors (but, however, therefore, because, although) show contrast or cause.
3 Predict	Decide the part of speech and a likely meaning before reading the options.
4 Check grammar	Agreement, tense, article and preposition often decide between two close options.
5 Collocation	Choose the word that naturally pairs with its neighbours (heavy rain, make a decision, take a risk).
6 Eliminate	Cross out options that clash in meaning, tone or grammar. Prefer the more precise word.
SSC TRAP 7 Re-read	Put the answer back in and read the full sentence. Spend about 30–40 seconds per blank.

13 READING COMPREHENSION STRATEGY

Order	Skim the passage (first and last lines of each paragraph) → read the questions → return to the lines mentioned.
Line-based questions	Go back to the exact lines and read one line above and below before answering.
Main idea / title	Ask: what does the whole passage argue? Avoid options that cover only one paragraph.
Tone / attitude	Look for adjectives and verbs: critical, neutral, optimistic, sarcastic, cautionary.
Vocabulary in context	Replace the word in the sentence with each option and keep the one that fits the context.
SSC TRAP Inference	Stay inside the passage. No outside knowledge and no extreme guesses.
SSC TRAP Extreme words	Options with always, never, only, all, completely are usually wrong unless the passage says so.
SSC TRAP Half-correct options	Check every word of the chosen option. A partly right option with one wrong detail is the usual trap.
Time	About 6–7 minutes per passage. Leave a hard question and return if time permits.

Subject-Verb	each / every / either / neither + singular · neither...nor, either...or → nearer subject · along with / as well as / with → first subject · The number is · A number are · Many a + singular · news, mathematics, economics → singular · police, cattle, people → plural
Tense	since + point · for + period → Perfect · yesterday / ago / last → Past Simple · after if / when / before: present for future · No sooner had ... than · Hardly had ... when · stative verbs (know, like) not continuous
Articles	a / an by sound (a university, an hour) · the: unique, superlative, rivers, ranges, newspapers · no article: languages, meals, games, by bus · half an hour · such a · many a
Prepositions	senior / junior / superior / inferior / prefer / prior → to · discuss, enter, reach, resemble, marry, attend → no preposition · angry with (person), at (thing) · die of (disease) · by (deadline), until (continuing) · between (two), among (many)
Pronoun / Conjunction	between you and me · Let him and me go · each other (2), one another (3+) · Though ... (no but / yet) · Unless + positive · Lest ... should · Not only ... but also
Adjective / Comparison	elder / older · farther / further · fewer (count) / less (uncount) · of two: comparative; of many: superlative · X more better · compare like with like (that of)
Voice	Present Cont.: is being + V3 · Present Perfect: has been + V3 · Past Cont.: was being + V3 · Modal + be + V3 · Imperative: Let ... be + V3 · Who wrote? → By whom was ... written?
Narration	Past reporting verb: V1→V2, V2→had V3, will→would, can→could · now→then · today→that day · tomorrow→next day · yesterday→previous day · here→there · this→that · Wh-: no inversion · Yes/No: if / whether · Universal truths: no change
Confusing words	affect (v) / effect (n) · accept / except · principal (head) / principle (rule) · stationary / stationery · compliment (praise) / complement (completes) · cite / site / sight · advice (n) / advise (v) · council / counsel · eminent / imminent · continual / continuous · farther / further · lose / loose · weather / whether
Idioms	blessing in disguise · piece of cake · beat around the bush · bite the bullet · break the ice · burn the midnight oil · once in a blue moon · hit the nail on the head · let the cat out of the bag · under the weather · cost an arm and a leg · at the eleventh hour · bolt from the blue · cold shoulder · wild goose chase · lion's share · turn a deaf ear · leave no stone unturned
One-word substitutes	bibliophile (books) · philanthropist (mankind) · misanthrope (hates mankind) · misogynist (hates women) · omniscient (all-knowing) · omnipotent (all-powerful) · incorrigible · illegible · inaudible · inevitable · invincible · insatiable · somnambulist (sleepwalker) · atheist · hypocrite · panacea · antidote · apiary · aviary · cartographer · lexicographer · regicide · patricide · matricide · fratricide
Spelling traps	accommodation · embarrass · occurrence · necessary · separate · definitely · receive · government · environment · maintenance · privilege · surveillance · millennium · rhythm · questionnaire · mischievous · committee · calendar · pronunciation · independent · acquaintance · guarantee · harass · exaggerate · indispensable · consensus

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