

Karachi University

BA / ADA Part 1

English Compulsory

Study and Revision Notes

Grammar | Essays | Precis | Comprehension | Letters

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English Compulsory - Study and Revision Notes

Important note: These notes are original study and revision material only. They are NOT official University of Karachi notes, NOT a copy of any textbook, guide book or website, NOT a leaked paper, and they do NOT guarantee any question in the exam. Students should check their own prescribed textbook and syllabus for the exact texts, chapters and paper pattern. Where a short Urdu explanation is given, it is only to help Urdu-medium students understand the English topic - the English subject content itself is in English.

1) Tenses - the backbone of English

A tense shows the time of an action: past, present or future. The most important forms for BA/ADA students are:

- Simple Present: used for habits, facts and routines. Example: She reads every day.
- Present Continuous: an action happening now or around now. Example: She is reading now.
- Present Perfect: an action completed recently, or connected to the present. Example: She has read this book.
- Simple Past: an action finished in the past. Example: She read yesterday.
- Past Continuous: an action in progress at a past time. Example: She was reading when I called.
- Past Perfect: an earlier past action before another past action. Example: She had read the book before the class started.
- Simple Future: an action that will happen. Example: She will read tomorrow.
- Future Continuous and Future Perfect: actions in progress, or completed, at a future time.

Common mistakes to avoid:

1. Do not mix past and present in one sentence without reason.
2. With "since" for a point of time, use Present Perfect; with "for" for a duration, use Present Perfect or Present Perfect Continuous.
3. In "if" sentences about the past, use Past Perfect in the "if" part and "would have" in the main part.

Practice questions:

1. Change to Past Perfect: "He finished his work before I arrived."
2. Correct the sentence: "She is reading since morning."
3. Write one sentence each in Present Perfect, Past Continuous and Simple Future.
4. Why is tense consistency important in a paragraph?

2) Active Voice and Passive Voice

- Active voice: the subject does the action. Example: The teacher checked the papers.
- Passive voice: the subject receives the action. Example: The papers were checked by the teacher.

How to change Active to Passive:

1. Make the object of the active sentence the subject of the passive sentence.
2. Use the correct form of "be" for the tense, plus the past participle of the main verb.
3. The old subject becomes "by + subject" and is often dropped if it is not important.

Examples:

- Present: He writes a letter. / A letter is written by him.
- Past: He wrote a letter. / A letter was written by him.
- Future: He will write a letter. / A letter will be written by him.
- Perfect: He has written a letter. / A letter has been written by him.

Practice questions:

1. Change to passive: "The students cleaned the classroom."
2. Change to active: "The prize was won by Ali."
3. Change to passive: "She will announce the result tomorrow."
4. When is passive voice better than active voice? Give one example.

3) Direct Speech and Indirect Speech (Narration)

- Direct speech: the exact words of the speaker, in quotation marks. Example: He said, "I am busy today."
- Indirect speech: the meaning reported in our own words, without quotation marks. Example: He said that he was busy that day.

Main changes when reporting:

1. Present Simple becomes Past Simple; Present Continuous becomes Past Continuous;

Present Perfect becomes Past Perfect.

2. "Today" becomes "that day", "now" becomes "then", "here" becomes "there", "tomorrow" becomes "the next day", "yesterday" becomes "the previous day".
3. Questions in indirect speech do not use a question mark and do not invert subject and verb. Example: She asked, "Are you ready?" / She asked if I was ready.
4. Commands become "to + verb". Example: He said, "Close the door." / He told me to close the door.

Practice questions:

1. Change to indirect: She said, "I will come tomorrow."
2. Change to indirect: He asked, "Where do you live?"
3. Change to indirect: The teacher said, "Open your books."
4. Change to direct: He said that he had finished his work.

4) Prepositions

Prepositions show the relation of a word to time, place or direction. The most common ones are in, on, at, to, from, with, by, for, of, about, between, among, over, under.

Time: at 7 o'clock, on Monday, in June, in 2026, at night, on time.

Place: at home, on the table, in Karachi, at the college, in the room.

Common combinations to learn as phrases: good at, afraid of, interested in, depend on, agree with, proud of, fond of, angry with a person, angry at a thing, capable of.

Practice questions:

1. Fill in: She is good ____ English.
2. Fill in: He depends ____ his parents.
3. Correct: "He arrived to the college late." Why is it wrong?
4. Write five sentences using in, on, at, between and among correctly.

5) Articles - a, an, the

- A / An: used for one, general, first mention. Use "an" before a vowel sound, not just a vowel letter. Example: an hour, a university, an honest man.
- The: used for a specific thing, something already mentioned, or something unique. Example: the sun, the book on the table, the River Indus.
- No article: usually before general plural nouns, names of languages, subjects and most

countries. Example: He speaks Urdu. She studies history.

Practice questions:

1. Fill in: He is ____ honest boy.
2. Fill in: ____ sun rises in the east.
3. Why do we say "a university" and not "an university"?
4. Write three sentences: one with "a", one with "an", one with "the".

6) Comprehension - how to answer a passage

A comprehension passage tests understanding, not memory. Read it twice: first for the general idea, then for details.

Method:

1. Read the questions first, so you know what to look for.
2. Read the passage slowly and underline key ideas in your mind.
3. Answer in your own words wherever possible; do not copy long lines from the passage.
4. Keep answers short, clear and to the point.
5. For a title, choose a short phrase that covers the main idea of the whole passage, not one detail.

Practice passage (original, for practice only):

"A good student does not study only before the exam. He studies a little every day, revises his notes, and asks questions when he does not understand. He also takes care of his health, because a tired mind cannot learn well. In this way, small daily effort becomes a big success at the end of the year."

Practice questions on the passage:

1. What does a good student do every day?
2. Why does he ask questions?
3. Why is health important for learning?
4. Give a suitable title to the passage.

7) Precis and Summary Writing

A precis is a short form of a longer passage, keeping only the main ideas, in about one-third of the original length, in your own words.

Rules:

1. Read the passage and find its main idea.
2. Leave out examples, repetitions and unimportant details.
3. Write in your own words, in connected sentences, not in points.
4. Do not add your own opinion.
5. Give a suitable title.
6. A summary is similar but may be a little freer; the same rules of brevity and own words apply.

Practice:

1. Write a precis of the practice passage in Section 6 in about 30 words.
2. What is the difference between a precis and a summary?
3. Why must a precis not contain your own opinion?
4. Write a summary of your daily routine in five sentences.

8) Letter and Application Writing

Letters and applications follow a fixed format. Learn the format once, then use it for any topic.

Informal letter format: Address of sender, date, greeting (Dear...), body in paragraphs, closing (Yours sincerely / affectionately), name.

Formal letter / application format: Address of sender, date, address of receiver, subject, respectful greeting (Respected Sir/Madam), body stating the purpose clearly and politely, request, closing (Yours faithfully), name, class/roll number if needed.

Important topics in general terms: application for leave, application for a fee concession, letter to a friend about your studies, letter to a friend inviting him to visit, application to the principal for a character certificate, letter to a brother/sister about health and studies.

Practice:

1. Write an application to the principal for three days' leave.
2. Write a letter to your friend describing your college life.
3. What is the difference between a formal and an informal letter?
4. Write the subject line for an application for a fee concession.

9) Essay and Paragraph Writing

A good essay has three parts: introduction, body, conclusion.

Introduction: introduce the topic in two or three sentences and state your main point.

Body: two or three paragraphs, each with one main idea, explained with simple examples from daily life.

Conclusion: end with a short, clear message. Do not introduce a new idea in the conclusion.

Useful structure for any essay:

1. What is the topic?
2. Why is it important?
3. What are its advantages and problems?
4. What should we do about it?

Common important essay topics in general terms (write in your own words, do not memorise a copied essay): importance of education, my best friend, my favourite book, the value of time, science in daily life, my aim in life, pollution and its effects, the importance of reading, discipline in student life, uses and abuses of mobile phones, my college life.

Practice:

1. Write the introduction of an essay on "The Value of Time" in three sentences.
2. Write a paragraph on "My Best Friend" in about 80 words.
3. Write a conclusion for an essay on "Importance of Education".
4. Why should an essay not repeat the same sentence again and again?

10) Common Errors and Sentence Correction

Learn to spot these common errors:

1. Subject-verb agreement: "He go" is wrong; "He goes" is correct. "They goes" is wrong; "They go" is correct.
2. Double negatives: "I did not see nobody" is wrong; "I did not see anybody" is correct.
3. Wrong preposition: "married with" is wrong; "married to" is correct.
4. Wrong word order in questions: "Where you live?" is wrong; "Where do you live?" is correct.
5. Spelling: practise (verb) and practice (noun) are often confused; check your textbook for the spelling used in your course.

Practice - correct these sentences:

1. She do not like tea.
2. He is senior than me.
3. I have seen him yesterday.
4. They are waiting since two hours.

Revision Checklist

- [] I can use all main tenses correctly and keep tense consistent in a paragraph.
- [] I can change active to passive and direct to indirect speech.
- [] I know the uses of in, on, at, and the common preposition phrases.
- [] I can use a, an and the correctly, including "an hour" and "a university".
- [] I can answer a comprehension passage in my own words and give a title.
- [] I can write a precis in about one-third length, without my own opinion.
- [] I know the format of a formal application and an informal letter.
- [] I can write an essay with introduction, body and conclusion, in my own words.
- [] I can spot and correct subject-verb, preposition and word-order errors.
- [] I have practised all questions in this file without looking at the answers first.

Long-Question Practice (10 questions)

1. Explain the uses of Present Perfect and Past Perfect tenses with two examples each.
2. Change five active sentences into passive voice and explain the rules you used.
3. Change five direct sentences into indirect speech, including one question and one command.
4. Write a precis of a passage of your choice from your textbook in about one-third length, with a title.
5. Write an application to the principal of your college for a character certificate.
6. Write a letter to your friend describing how you spend your holidays.
7. Write an essay on "Importance of Education" in about 250 words, in your own words.
8. Write an essay on "The Value of Time" in about 250 words, in your own words.
9. Write a paragraph on "Discipline in Student Life" in about 100 words.
10. Correct ten sentences containing common errors and explain each correction in one line.

MCQ Practice (20 questions)

1. She ____ to college every day.
A) go B) goes C) going D) gone
2. They ____ playing cricket now.
A) is B) are C) was D) be
3. He ____ his work before I came.
A) finishes B) finished C) had finished D) will finish
4. Change to passive: "She wrote a letter."
A) A letter is written by her. B) A letter was written by her. C) A letter will be written by her. D) A letter has written by her.
5. He said, "I am ill today." Indirect form is:
A) He said that he is ill today. B) He said that he was ill that day. C) He said that he were ill today. D) He said that I am ill.
6. She is good ____ mathematics.
A) in B) at C) on D) to
7. He depends ____ his father.
A) in B) on C) at D) with
8. ____ hour is enough for this work.
A) A B) An C) The D) No article
9. ____ sun rises in the east.
A) A B) An C) The D) No article
10. He is ____ university student.
A) an B) a C) the D) no article
11. Choose the correct sentence:
A) He do not know. B) He does not know. C) He does not knows. D) He do not knows.
12. Choose the correct sentence:
A) Where you live? B) Where do you live? C) Where does you live? D) Where you do live?
13. A precis should be written:
A) In your own words B) By copying the passage C) With your own opinion D) In points only
14. The main parts of an essay are:
A) Only introduction B) Introduction, body, conclusion C) Only body D) Only conclusion
15. In a formal application, the closing is usually:

A) Yours affectionately B) Yours faithfully C) Love D) Bye

16. "She has been reading since morning." The tense is:

A) Simple Present B) Present Perfect Continuous C) Past Perfect D) Future Perfect

17. Change to active: "The book was read by him."

A) He read the book. B) He reads the book. C) He will read the book. D) He has read the book.

18. Choose the correct preposition: He arrived ____ the station late.

A) to B) at C) in D) on

19. A good summary keeps:

A) Only examples B) Only main ideas C) Only repetitions D) Only opinions

20. "I did not see anybody." This sentence is:

A) Wrong, because of double negative B) Correct C) Wrong, because of tense D) Wrong, because of article

MCQ Answers

1. B 2. B 3. C 4. B 5. B 6. B 7. B 8. B 9. C 10. B 11. B 12. B 13. A 14. B 15. B 16. B 17. A
18. B 19. B 20. B