

Battle of wills: On the U.S. war on Iran

The U.S. should **lift** its **blockade** so that Iran can open the Strait of Hormuz

The U.S. war on Iran **has** turned into a battle of wills in the Strait of Hormuz and the Gulf of Oman, **marked** by **duelling** naval blockades and **stalled** diplomacy. **Iran**, which has effectively restricted the free flow of traffic through the Strait of Hormuz since the U.S. and Israel attacks on February 28, **has** refused to ease its control over the **critical** waterway. The U.S. **insists** that **its blockade** of Iranian ports **will stay in place** until a deal is reached. Last week, Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi travelled to Pakistan, which **mediated** the first round of direct talks on April 11, but Iran declined further direct talks with Washington. The White House had earlier said it would send special **envoy** Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner to Islamabad, but President Donald Trump cancelled their trip after Mr. Araghchi left the Pakistani capital. Mr. Trump has repeatedly said that Iran wants a deal. Yet, Tehran continues to refuse talks with the U.S., **citing** Israel's attacks on Lebanon and America's blockade in the Gulf of Oman. On paper, a ceasefire is in place in Lebanon, and Mr. Trump said earlier this month that Israel was "**prohibited**" from attacking the country, but Israeli air strikes have continued. He has also indicated no **urgency** to lift the blockade, **betting** that **sustained** economic pressure will force Iran to change its position.

The only **silver lining** is that the Iran **ceasefire**, announced on April 8, **is** still holding. Despite Mr. Trump's threats, he has **held fire** even after Iran **seized** ships in the Persian Gulf. **Tehran**, too, despite warning **retaliation** over a U.S. **seizure** of an Iranian tanker, **has** not followed through. Both sides have remained **diplomatically** engaged through Pakistan. The alternative to diplomacy is **disaster**. The U.S. and Israel **bombed** Iran for 40 days but failed to secure a favourable **strategic** outcome, and the global economic **fallout** of this illegal war is now being felt. For **diplomacy** to succeed, Mr. Trump and the Iranian leadership should adopt a phased approach. Rather than acting as if the war has not changed the region's strategic realities, the U.S. should offer **tangible concessions** to Iran in return for compromises on **core** issues. Iran has **demonstrated** a measure of **deterrence** by **asserting** control over the Strait of Hormuz. But if it continues to **disrupt** commercial traffic, further damaging the global economy, it risks **squandering** the **goodwill** it enjoys as the **underdog**. A practical first step would be **reciprocal de-escalation**: the U.S. lifting its blockade and Iran reopening the Strait to commercial shipping. This would also **reinforce** the **fragile** ceasefire and build confidence, **paving the way for** the next round of direct talks on **outstanding** issues, including the nuclear programme.

- Red/blue coloring of words in the sentence indicates subject verb relationship; where 'red' denotes 'subject' and 'blue' denotes 'verb'.

[Practice Exercise]

Vocabulary

1. **Will** (noun) - determination, resolution, resolve, persistence, grit इच्छाशक्ति
2. **Lift** (verb) - revoke, rescind, cancel, withdraw, annul हटाना (प्रतिबंध आदि)
3. **Blockade** (noun) - siege, obstruction, barrier, encirclement, barricade नाकाबंदी
4. **Marked** (verb) - characterize, distinguish, indicate, identify, denote चिह्नित/विशिष्ट होना
5. **Duell** (verb) - contend, clash, battle, feud, vying द्वंद्व/मुकाबला करना
6. **Stalled** (adjective) - halted, obstructed, hindered, delayed, interrupted रुका हुआ/ठप
7. **Critical** (adjective) - crucial, vital, essential, pivotal, decisive महत्वपूर्ण/नाजुक
8. **Insist** (verb) - assert, maintain, contend, stipulate, persist जोर देना
9. **In place** (phrase) - established, set up, arranged, functional, existing लागू/व्यवस्थित
10. **Mediate** (verb) - arbitrate, intercede, moderate, intervene, negotiate मध्यस्थता करना
11. **Envoy** (noun) - messenger, ambassador, delegate, emissary, representative दूत
12. **Cite** (verb) - quote, mention, refer, adduce, instance हवाला देना
13. **Prohibit** (verb) - forbid, ban, bar, veto, disallow निषिद्ध करना/रोकना
14. **Urgency** (noun) - exigency, insistence, priority, seriousness, gravity तात्कालिकता/अत्यावश्यकता
15. **Bet** (verb) - speculate, wager, gamble, reckon, expect दांव लगाना/भरोसा करना
16. **Sustained** (adjective) - continuous, prolonged, steady, constant, unrelenting निरंतर/सतत
17. **Silver lining** (noun) - an advantage or something positive that can be found in every bad situation आशा की किरण
18. **Ceasefire** (noun) - truce, an agreement between two groups to stop fighting each other युद्धविराम
19. **Held fire** (phrase) - delayed or stopped an anticipated action (often military) हमला करने से रुकना
20. **Seize** (verb) - capture, confiscate, grab, snatch, annex जब्त करना/पकड़ना

21. **Retaliation** (noun) - revenge, vengeance, reprisal, retribution, counterattack
प्रतिशोध/बदला
22. **Seizure** (noun) - confiscation, capture, apprehension, grab, annexation जब्ती/पकड़
23. **Diplomatically** (adverb) - tactfully, politely, sensitively, strategically, judiciously
कूटनीतिक रूप से
24. **Disaster** (noun) - catastrophe, calamity, tragedy, cataclysm, debacle आपदा/विनाश
25. **Bomb** (verb) - shell, blast, blitz, attack, strike बमबारी करना
26. **Strategic** (adjective) - tactical, planned, calculated, deliberate, vital रणनीतिक
27. **Fallout** (noun) - repercussion, consequence, aftermath, result, effect दुष्प्रभाव/नतीजा
28. **Diplomacy** (noun) - statesmanship, negotiation, politics, tact, international relations कूटनीति
29. **Tangible** (adjective) - concrete, palpable, physical, touchable, substantial वास्तविक/ठोस
30. **Concession** (noun) - compromise, allowance, surrender, grant, yield रियायत/छूट
31. **Core** (adjective) - central, fundamental, basic, essential, primary मुख्य/मूल
32. **Demonstrate** (verb) - show, exhibit, manifest, display, evidence प्रदर्शित करना
33. **Deterrence** (noun) - discouragement, prevention, inhibition, prevention, check निवारण/अवरोध
34. **Assert** (verb) - declare, proclaim, maintain, emphasize, affirm दावा करना/बल देना
35. **Disrupt** (verb) - disturb, interrupt, disorder, upset, agitate बाधित करना
36. **Squander** (verb) - waste, dissipate, lavish, misuse, fritter गँवाना/बर्बाद करना
37. **Goodwill** (noun) - benevolence, friendliness, kindness, favor, amity सद्भावना
38. **Underdog** (noun) - victim, loser, small fry, weaker party, disadvantaged कमजोर पक्ष
39. **Reciprocal** (adjective) - mutual, complementary, correlative, shared, joint पारस्परिक
40. **De-escalation** (noun) - reduction, lessening, cooling, abatement, decrease तनाव में कमी
41. **Reinforce** (verb) - bolster, strengthen, fortify, support, underpin सुदृढ़ करना

42. **Fragile** (adjective) - delicate, brittle, frail,
weak, vulnerable नाजुक/कमजोर

43. **Pave the way for** (phrase) - to create a
situation in which it is easier for something
to happen मार्ग प्रशस्त करना

44. **Outstanding** (adjective) - unresolved,
unsettled, pending, remaining, unpaid
बकाया/अनसुलझा

Summary of the Editorial

1. The U.S.–Iran conflict has become a standoff centered on the Strait of Hormuz and Gulf of Oman.
2. Both sides are enforcing naval blockades, escalating tensions.
3. Iran has restricted traffic through the Strait of Hormuz after U.S. and Israeli attacks.
4. The U.S. continues its blockade of Iranian ports until a deal is reached.
5. Diplomatic efforts have stalled despite mediation attempts by Pakistan.
6. Iran has refused direct talks with the U.S., citing ongoing hostilities and blockade.
7. U.S. leadership believes economic pressure will force Iran into negotiations.
8. Israeli air strikes on Lebanon continue despite claims of a ceasefire.
9. A ceasefire involving Iran, announced on April 8, is still holding.
10. Both sides have shown restraint despite provocations like tanker seizures.
11. Diplomacy remains active through indirect channels, especially via Pakistan.
12. The war has failed to achieve clear strategic success and has hurt the global economy.
13. Continued conflict risks worsening economic instability worldwide.
14. A phased diplomatic approach with mutual concessions is necessary.
15. De-escalation—U.S. lifting its blockade and Iran reopening the Strait—can rebuild trust and enable further negotiations, including on nuclear issues.

Practice Exercise: SSC Pattern Based

1. **Which of the following statements is/are FALSE according to the author's perspective?**
 - I. The preservation of the current maritime status quo is essential for Iran to retain its underdog status. [Editorial Page]
 - II. A comprehensive agreement on nuclear ambitions must precede any efforts toward port de-escalation.
 - III. The mediation provided by the neighboring South Asian state remains the primary conduit for contact.
 - A. Only I
 - B. Only II
 - C. Both I and II
 - D. Both II and III
2. **What is the central idea of the passage?**
 - A. The necessity of military dominance to resolve maritime territorial disputes.
 - B. The inevitable failure of third-party mediation in modern regional conflicts.
 - C. The urgency of a phased diplomatic exchange to avert global economic ruin.
 - D. The importance of maintaining aggressive blockades to secure political deals.
3. **Which of the following correctly identifies the tense used predominantly in the first paragraph to describe the ongoing state of the conflict?**
 - A. Past Perfect
 - B. Present Perfect
 - C. Future Continuous
 - D. Past Continuous
4. **Which of the following statements is/are TRUE based on the author's logic?**
 - I. The current economic attrition is a deliberate strategy intended to compel a shift in stance.
 - II. The geographical control of the waterway is an effective tool of deterrent for the local power.
 - III. The cessation of hostilities in Lebanon has been strictly observed by all participating entities.
 - A. Only I
 - B. Only II
 - C. Both I and II
 - D. Both II and III
5. **What is the author's assessment of the 40-day military campaign conducted by the alliance?**
 - A. It was a necessary precursor to establishing a position of regional authority.
 - B. It represented a failed attempt to achieve meaningful political leverage through force.
 - C. It successfully demonstrated that kinetic warfare is superior to diplomatic mediation.
 - D. It was a coordinated effort to protect the global economy from maritime disruptions.
6. **Direction: The sentences given below are in a jumbled order. Arrange them (A, B, C, D) in the most logical order to form a coherent paragraph.**
 - A. This functional layout is anchored by a central philosophy displayed in the house—that family is what truly transforms a structure into a home.

- B. Shaan's Mumbai residence is a thoughtfully designed triplex that prioritizes intention and comfort over mere opulence.
- C. Consequently, the integration of dedicated work studios alongside casual seating areas allows the professional and personal lives of the family to blend organically.
- D. The multi-level structure supports this sentiment by using different floors to cater to diverse emotional and functional needs, such as work and rest.
- A. B-A-C-D
B. A-B-D-C
C. B-D-A-C
D. B-A-D-C
7. **From the alternatives given below, select the correct meaning of the idiom.**
A bigger bang for one's buck.
- A. To begin to put forth more effort in some area
B. To be very healthy
C. To make money quickly and/or without effort, often through dishonest, unscrupulous, or ethically dubious means
D. Greater value for the amount of money one is spending
8. **Match the word with its closest synonym. Word: Solace**
- A. Comfort
B. Sorrow
C. Anger
D. Distress
9. **Which of the following words is the closest synonym of the word "special"?**
- A. Common
B. Ordinary
C. Unique
D. Usual
10. **Select the correct alternative to fill in the blank with the correct preposition in the following sentence.**
Nobody wants to part _____ their money.
- A. with
B. from
C. on
D. away
11. **There are four underlined words in the sentence given below. One of them is misspelt. Choose the option with the misspelt word.**
The minister described the reforms as indispensible, transformative, and strategic, though some critics called them premature.
- A. indispensible
B. transformative
C. strategic
D. premature
12. **Choose the correctly spelt word from the given options.**
- A. Ocasional

- B. Occasional
C. Occasional
D. Ocasionnal
13. **Choose the word that is the antonym of Pleasure.**
A. Enjoyment
B. Delight
C. Happiness
D. Pain
14. **A part of the following sentence is underlined. Choose the option that can replace the underlined part to improve the sentence. If you feel Options A, B, or C do not improve the sentence, then choose Option D: "No improvement required."**
We must ensure that all the stakeholders are in the same page before beginning the negotiations.
A. on the same page
B. on the same plate
C. in the same boat
D. No improvement required
15. **Which of the following options is the most suitable conversion of the following sentence into Passive Voice?**
They say she writes beautiful poems.
A. It is said that she writes beautiful poems.
B. She is say to write beautiful poems.
C. It says she writes beautiful poems.
D. She said to writes beautiful poems.
16. **Choose the most suitable one-word substitution for the following.**
A person who studies plants.
A. Zoologist
B. Botanist
C. Biologist
D. Horticulturist
17. **Which of the following idiom given in the alternatives has the meaning?**
Describing the shortest, most direct path between two points, measured in a straight line and disregarding any obstacles like roads, rivers, or mountains.
A. Pull a crow with one
B. As the crow flies
C. Stone the crows
D. Crow about something
18. **Choose the word that is most opposite in meaning to "accompany".**
A. Escort
B. Follow
C. Abandon
D. Attend
19. **Select the correct alternative to fill in the blank with the correct preposition in the following sentence.**

The children ate pancakes _____ burgers for breakfast today.

- A. instead of
- B. because of
- C. owing to
- D. again

20. **Select the option with the correct spelling that can replace the underlined word in the given sentence. If the spelling in the given sentence is already correct, choose Option "No replacement required".**

His actions were considered an anathima to the entire community, leading to his exile.

- A. anethema
- B. anathama
- C. anathema
- D. No replacement required

Comprehension

An Indian billionaire's son has offered to help Colombia get rid of a problem it has grappled with for years - a (1) ___ of hippos linked to notorious drug lord Pablo Escobar. Escobar, who was shot dead by police in 1993, illegally imported (2) ___ animals, including a male and a female hippopotamus - dubbed the "cocaine hippos". Their population grew and Colombia tried various methods of control - including castration - to no avail. It has decided to (3) ___ some 80 of the animals. Anant Ambani - son of Asia's richest man Mukesh Ambani - says he is "willing to receive and care for" the animals at his private Vantara zoo in India's Gujarat state. Colombia has not commented on the offer. In a letter to Colombia's environment minister, the CEO of Ambani's zoo said they were ready to give the herd "lifelong care" in India. The letter, published on the zoo's Instagram account, said "at the heart of this proposal is Vantara's belief that every life matters and that we have a shared responsibility to protect life wherever possible". Escobar kept the hippos at his (4) ___, Hacienda Nápoles - a luxury estate situated about 250km (155 miles) north-west of the capital Bogotá. After his death, the pair were allowed to roam free and multiplied along the basin of Colombia's main river, the Magdalena. Efforts failed to contain the herd's growth, with a lack of predators and the fertile and (5) ___ Antioquia region providing perfect conditions for the native African animal to thrive. Colombian environmentalists say the hippos, believed to be the biggest herd outside Africa, are an invasive species and have pushed away the native fauna.

21. **What should come in the place of blank number (1)?**

- A. herd
- B. pod
- C. pack
- D. drove

22. **What should come in the place of blank number (2)?**

- A. feral
- B. alien
- C. exotic
- D. indigenous

23. **What should come in the place of blank number (3)?**

- A. poach

- B. exterminate
 - C. slaughter
 - D. cull
24. **What should come in the place of blank number (4)?**
- A. fortress
 - B. ranch
 - C. sanctuary
 - D. plantation
25. **What should come in the place of blank number (5)?**
- A. arid
 - B. aquatic
 - C. swampy
 - D. lush

Answers

1. C 2. C 3.B 4. C 5. B 6.D 7. D 8. A 9. C 10. A 11.A 12.C
 13. D 14.A 15.A 16.B 17.B 18.C 19.A 20.C 21.A 22.C 23.D 24.B
 25. C

[Practice Exercise]

Explanations

1. C) Both I and II

False (I): The author explicitly warns that if Iran continues to disrupt commercial traffic, it risks "squandering the goodwill it enjoys as the underdog." In other words, the status quo is actually hurting Iran's reputation, not preserving it.

False (II): The author proposes a "phased approach." He suggests that lifting the blockade and reopening the Strait should be the "practical first step." This de-escalation is meant to "pave the way" for later talks on "outstanding issues, including the nuclear programme." The order is reversed in the statement.

True (III): The passage confirms that Pakistan mediated the first round of talks and explicitly states, "Both sides have remained diplomatically engaged through Pakistan." This makes it the primary current conduit for their indirect diplomacy.

2. C) The urgency of a phased diplomatic exchange to avert global economic ruin.

The passage emphasizes that "the alternative to diplomacy is disaster" and proposes a specific, staged plan to save the economy.

(a) Incorrect: The author argues that military force (bombing) already failed to achieve a strategic outcome.

(b) Incorrect: The author views Pakistan's mediation as a "silver lining," not a failure.

(d) Incorrect: The author suggests lifting blockades as a "practical first step" rather than maintaining them indefinitely.

3. B) Present Perfect

Formed with "has/have" + past participle to show a past action with present consequences. This is the dominant tense in the paragraph (e.g., "war... has turned," "Iran... has restricted," "Araghchi... [has] travelled"). It is used to show that while these events happened, the "battle of wills" and the "stalled diplomacy" are the current reality.

(a) Past Perfect: Requires the auxiliary "had" + past participle (e.g., had turned). While the text uses "had earlier said" once, the majority of the paragraph uses "has turned," "has restricted," "has refused," and "has repeatedly said." These are not Past Perfect.

Option (c) Future Continuous: Requires "will be" + verb ending in -ing. The passage is describing the current crisis and recent history, not making predictions about what will be happening at a specific future time.

Option (d) Past Continuous: Requires "was/were" + verb ending in -ing. This tense would be used for "The war was turning..." The author uses the perfect tense instead to emphasize that the change has already occurred and is now the current state of affairs.

4. C) Both I and II

Statement I (True): The passage says Trump is "betting that sustained economic pressure will force Iran to change its position."

Statement II (True): The passage explicitly states "Iran has demonstrated a measure of deterrence by asserting control over the Strait."

Statement III (False): The author notes that "Israeli air strikes have continued" despite the ceasefire being on paper.

5. B) **It represented a failed attempt to achieve meaningful political leverage through force.**

The author states they "failed to secure a favourable strategic outcome," meaning the military force did not achieve its goals.

(a): The author calls the war "illegal" and a "disaster," not a necessary step toward authority.

(c): The author argues for a "phased approach" to diplomacy because the military intervention failed.

(d): The passage says the war itself caused "global economic fallout," rather than protecting the economy..

6. D) **B-A-D-C**

Sentence B, पैराग्राफ की शुरुआत में आएगा क्योंकि यह मुख्य विषय (शान के मुंबई वाले घर) की पहचान करता है। यह रिपोर्ट को एक factual ground प्रदान करता है कि घर की बनावट "triplex" है और इसकी प्राथमिकता "दिखावे के बजाय इरादा" (intention over opulence) है।

Sentence A, Sentence B के बाद आएगा क्योंकि यह "Why" पेश करता है। यह घर के डिज़ाइन के पीछे की मुख्य विचारधारा (Family makes this house a home) को जोड़ता है। यह घर के माहौल को समझने के लिए एक big test है।

Sentence D, Sentence A के बाद आएगा क्योंकि यह उस विचारधारा का विस्तार (elaboration) करता है। यह specific detail देता है कि कैसे अलग-अलग फ्लोर अलग-अलग जरूरतों (काम और आराम) को पूरा करते हैं।

Sentence C, Sentence D के बाद आएगा क्योंकि यह पूरे परिदृश्य को एक conclusion (निष्कर्ष) की ओर ले जाता है। यह बताता है कि इस बनावट का अंतिम परिणाम यह है कि घर के सदस्यों का निजी और पेशेवर जीवन सहजता से आपस में मिल जाता है।

- Sentence B comes at the beginning because it identifies the core subject—Shaan's Mumbai residence. It provides the essential factual ground by establishing the triplex structure and the design's focus on intention rather than luxury.
- Sentence A follows Sentence B because it introduces the "Why" or the guiding principle. It links the physical design to the central philosophy that "family makes this house a home," serving as a critical test of the space's character.
- Sentence D follows Sentence A because it provides an elaboration on how that philosophy is applied physically. It adds specific details about how the multi-level structure serves different functional and emotional needs.
- Sentence C follows Sentence D because it serves as the logical conclusion. It wraps up the narrative by explaining how the combination of studios and living areas allows for an organic blend of professional and personal life.

7. D) **A bigger bang for one's buck** – idiom meaning greater value, benefit, or return for the amount of money spent. **पैसे का अधिक मूल्य / अधिक फायदा।**

8. A) **Solace** (noun/verb) – comfort or consolation in a time of distress or sadness. **सांत्वना / दिलासा।**

Synonym: **Comfort** (noun/verb) – a state of ease and freedom from pain or constraint; relief from grief or distress. **सांत्वना / राहत।**

- **Sorrow** (noun) – a feeling of deep distress caused by loss or disappointment; opposite in meaning to solace. दुःख / शोक।
 - **Anger** (noun) – a strong feeling of annoyance or displeasure; unrelated to the meaning of solace. क्रोध।
 - **Distress** (noun) – extreme anxiety or suffering; opposite in meaning to solace, which is the relief from distress. संकट / पीड़ा।
9. C) **Special** (adjective) – better, greater, or otherwise different from what is usual; distinctive. विशेष।
 Synonym: **Unique** (adjective) – being the only one of its kind; unlike anything else. अद्वितीय / अनूठा।
- **Common** (adjective) – occurring or found frequently; widely known – opposite in meaning to special. सामान्य / आम।
 - **Ordinary** (adjective) – with no special or distinctive features; normal – opposite in meaning to special. साधारण।
 - **Usual** (adjective) – habitually or typically occurring or done; not exceptional – also opposite in meaning to special. सामान्य / हमेशा की तरह।
10. A) **with** का प्रयोग होगा क्योंकि “part with” एक सही collocation है जिसका अर्थ है किसी चीज़ को छोड़ना या सौंप देना, विशेषकर जब वह मूल्यवान हो; जैसे –
 Nobody wants to part with their money.
- ‘with’ should be used because “part with” is the fixed phrasal verb meaning to give up or hand over something, especially something one values.
 - ‘from’ – Incorrect; “part from” is used when separating from a person (“parting from a friend”), not when giving up a possession like money.
 - ‘on’ – Incorrect; “part on” is not a standard collocation with this meaning.
 - ‘away’ – Incorrect; “part away” is not a recognised phrasal verb in English.
11. A) The correct spelling of ‘indispensible’ is ‘**indispensable**’, which means absolutely necessary or essential. अनिवार्य / अपरिहार्य।
- **transformative** – Correct spelling; meaning causing a marked change in someone or something. परिवर्तनकारी।
 - **strategic** – Correct spelling; meaning relating to the planning and directing of operations. रणनीतिक।
 - **premature** – Correct spelling; meaning occurring or done before the usual or proper time. समय से पहले।
12. C) The correct spelling is ‘**Occasional**’, which means happening or done infrequently; occurring now and then. कभी-कभी होने वाला।
- **Ocasional** – Incorrect spelling; missing the double ‘c’ (“oc—” should be “occ—”).
 - **Ocassional** – Incorrect spelling; has a double ‘s’ (“ass”) which is wrong; the correct form has double ‘c’ but single ‘s’.
 - **Ocasionnal** – Incorrect spelling; missing the double ‘c’ and has an incorrect double ‘n’; correct form: “occasional” (double ‘c’, single ‘s’, single ‘n’).
13. D) **Pleasure** (noun) – a feeling of happy satisfaction and enjoyment. आनंद / खुशी।
Antonym: **Pain** (noun) – physical or mental suffering; the opposite of pleasure. दर्द / पीड़ा।

- **Enjoyment** (noun) – the state of taking pleasure in something; a synonym of pleasure, not its antonym. आनंद।
 - **Delight** (noun) – great pleasure or joy; also a synonym of pleasure, not its antonym. प्रसन्नता।
 - **Happiness** (noun) – the state of being happy; also a synonym of pleasure, not its antonym. खुशी।
14. A) 'in the same page' के बदले 'on the same page' का प्रयोग होगा क्योंकि सही idiom "on the same page" होता है, जिसका अर्थ है सभी का एकमत होना / same understanding में होना; जैसे— We need to be on the same page before starting the project.
- 'on the same page' will be used instead of 'in the same page' because the correct idiom is "on the same page", which means to have the same understanding or agreement; Like— We need to be on the same page before starting the project.
15. A) **It is said that she writes beautiful poems.**
Active से Passive Voice में बदलने के लिए, कभी-कभी Impersonal Passive structure का प्रयोग किया जाता है, जहाँ "They say" को "It is said" में बदला जाता है। दिए गए वाक्य में "They" Subject है, "say" Verb (Simple Present) है और "she writes beautiful poems" clause है। Passive में बदलने पर "It is said" structure का प्रयोग होता है और बाकी clause same रहता है। इसलिए सही वाक्य होगा — "It is said that she writes beautiful poems."
To change such sentences into Passive Voice, an impersonal construction is often used where "They say" becomes "It is said." Here, "They" (Subject), "say" (Verb), and the clause "she writes beautiful poems" are transformed into "It is said that she writes beautiful poems." Therefore, the correct sentence is — "It is said that she writes beautiful poems."
16. B) **Botanist** – a scientist who studies plants, their structure, growth, and classification; directly matches the given definition. वनस्पतिशास्त्री।
- **Zoologist** – a scientist who studies animals and animal behaviour; not plants. प्राणी विज्ञानी।
 - **Biologist** – a scientist who studies living organisms broadly, including both plants and animals; not exclusively plants. जीव विज्ञानी।
 - **Horticulturist** – a person who practices horticulture, i.e., the cultivation and management of gardens and crops; focuses on growing plants rather than the scientific study of plants. बागवानी विशेषज्ञ।
17. B) **As the crow flies** – idiom meaning the shortest, most direct distance between two points, measured in a straight line regardless of roads or obstacles. सीधी रेखा में दूरी।
- **Pull a crow with one** – means to have a complaint or dispute with someone; unrelated to distance or direction. किसी से झगड़ा / शिकायत करना।
 - **Stone the crows** – an exclamation of surprise or shock; does not relate to measuring distance. आश्चर्य प्रकट करना।
 - **Crow about something** – means to boast or brag about an achievement; unrelated to the meaning of a direct path. किसी बात पर शेखी बघारना।
18. C) **Accompany** (verb) – to go somewhere with someone; to be present at the same time as something else. साथ जाना / साथ रहना।

Antonym: Abandon (verb) – to leave someone or something behind; to desert. छोड़ देना / त्यागना।

- **Escort** (verb) – to accompany someone officially or protectively; a synonym of accompany, not its antonym. साथ चलना / अनुरक्षण करना।
- **Follow** (verb) – to go or come after; related to going with or behind someone, not abandoning them. पीछे चलना।
- **Attend** (verb) – to be present at or go to a place or event; similar in meaning to accompany, not its antonym. उपस्थित रहना।

19. A) **'instead of'** का प्रयोग होगा क्योंकि "instead of" एक सही prepositional phrase है जिसका अर्थ है किसी चीज़ के स्थान पर / उसके बदले में; जैसे –

The children ate pancakes instead of burgers for breakfast today.

- **'instead of'** should be used because it is the correct prepositional phrase meaning "as a substitute for" or "in place of" something else, which fits the context perfectly.
- **'because of'** – Incorrect; this phrase means "due to a reason," and would imply burgers were the cause, not an alternative. The sentence is about substitution, not causation.
- **'owing to'** – Incorrect; this also means "as a result of," indicating cause or reason; it does not convey substitution.
- **'again'** – Incorrect; "again" is an adverb meaning "once more," which does not fit the structure or meaning of the sentence.

20. C) The correct spelling of 'anathima' is **'anathema'** which means "something or someone that is strongly disliked or condemned" घोर नापसंद, अभिशाप।

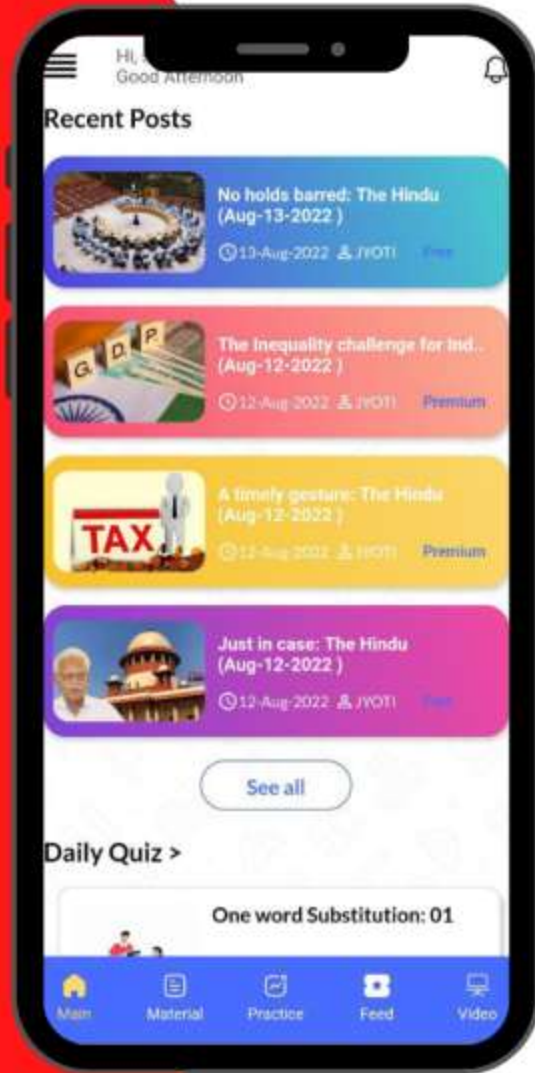
- **'Anethema'** – Incorrect spelling; 'ane-' गलत prefix है। सही spelling में 'ana-' आता है।
- **'Anathama'** – Incorrect spelling; अंतिम भाग '-ama' गलत है। सही ending '-ema' है।
- **'No replacement required'** – Incorrect; मूल वाक्य में 'anathima' गलत वर्तनी है, अतः प्रतिस्थापन आवश्यक है।

21. A) **herd** सही है क्योंकि यह घास चरने वाले बड़े जानवरों (grazing mammals) के झुंड के लिए इस्तेमाल होने वाला सबसे सही शब्द है। Pod एक अच्छा विकल्प था क्योंकि पानी में बैठे हिप्पो को 'pod' कहते हैं, लेकिन जब वे ज़मीन पर एक आबादी (population) की तरह घूमते हैं तो उन्हें 'herd' कहा जाता है। Drove का इस्तेमाल उन जानवरों के लिए होता है जिन्हें इंसान हाँक कर ले जाते हैं। Pack का इस्तेमाल शिकारी जानवरों (जैसे भेड़िए) के लिए होता है।

- herd is correct because it is the standard collective noun for a large group of grazing mammals that live and move together. Pod is a strong distractor because it is technically used for hippos when they are resting in the water, but "herd" is the correct ecological term for them as a land-grazing population. Drove specifically refers to a group of animals being physically driven or moved by humans. Pack is strictly used for carnivorous predators (like wolves or wild dogs).

22. C) **exotic** सही है क्योंकि जब किसी दूसरे देश से अजीब और अनोखे जंगली जानवर शौक के लिए मँगवाए जाते हैं, तो उनके लिए 'exotic pets' शब्द का इस्तेमाल होता है। Indigenous का मतलब 'स्थानीय' (native) होता है, जो बिल्कुल उल्टा है। Feral का मतलब पालतू जानवर का जंगली हो जाना है (हिप्पो कभी पालतू नहीं थे)। Alien का मतलब बाहरी प्रजाति है, लेकिन एस्कोबार ने उन्हें 'लगज़री' के लिए मँगवाया था, इसलिए exotic सबसे सटीक है।

- exotic is correct because it is the specific legal and trade term used for unusual, wild animals imported from a distant foreign country (hence the "exotic pet trade"). Indigenous means native to the local area, which is the exact opposite. Feral refers to animals that were once domesticated (like cats or pigs) but have escaped into the wild; hippos were never domesticated. Alien refers to an invasive species, but Escobar imported them as luxury pets, making "exotic" the appropriate term for his illegal imports.
23. D) **cull** सही है क्योंकि इसका मतलब किसी आबादी (population) को कंट्रोल करने के लिए उसमें से कुछ गिने-चुने जानवरों को मारना होता है। Exterminate एक बहुत बड़ा जाल (trap) है—इसका मतलब 'पूरी तरह से जड़ से मिटा देना' होता है, जबकि सरकार सिर्फ "80" जानवरों को मार रही है। Poach का मतलब गैर-कानूनी शिकार होता है (यहाँ सरकार कानूनी काम कर रही है)। Slaughter का मतलब खाने के लिए बेदर्दी से काटना होता है।
- cull is correct because it is the precise wildlife management term for selectively killing a specific fraction of a population to control its size. Exterminate is a massive trap; it means to completely destroy or wipe out an entire population, whereas the government is only targeting "some 80" of them. Poach means to hunt illegally, but the government is doing this legally. Slaughter implies brutal killing for meat or food, lacking the scientific nuance of population control.
24. B) **ranch** सही है क्योंकि अमेरिका और कोलंबिया में जानवरों को रखने वाली बड़ी ज़मीन या एस्टेट को ranch कहा जाता है। Sanctuary का मतलब जानवरों की सुरक्षा के लिए बनाई गई जगह होता है, लेकिन एस्कोबार उन्हें गैर-कानूनी तरीके से शौक के लिए रखता था, बचाने के लिए नहीं। Plantation का इस्तेमाल खेती (जैसे कॉफी/गन्ना) के लिए होता है। Fortress का मतलब सैन्य किला होता है, जबकि यह एक 'लग्जरी एस्टेट' था।
- ranch is correct because it refers to a large farm or estate in the Americas where animals are bred or kept. Sanctuary is a great thematic distractor, but it implies a legally protected, ethical safe haven for rescued animals, whereas Escobar illegally hoarded them. Plantation refers to a large agricultural estate dedicated strictly to crops (like coffee or sugar), not keeping animals. Fortress implies a military stronghold; while Escobar had security, Hacienda Nápoles is specifically described as a "luxury estate" for leisure and animals.
25. C) **swampy** सही है क्योंकि हिप्पो को ज़िंदा रहने और अपना तापमान कंट्रोल करने के लिए दलदली (कीचड़ और पानी वाली) ज़मीन की ज़रूरत होती है। Lush का मतलब हरी-भरी हरियाली होता है, लेकिन इसमें 'कीचड़/पानी' वाली बात शामिल नहीं है। Aquatic का मतलब 'पानी के अंदर रहने वाला' (जैसे मछली) होता है; कोई पूरा इलाका (region) 'aquatic' नहीं हो सकता। Arid का मतलब सूखा (रेगिस्तान) होता है
- swampy is correct because hippos require wet, muddy, marsh-like conditions to submerge themselves and regulate their body temperature. Lush is a strong distractor meaning rich in green vegetation, but it fails to capture the essential water and mud aspect required for hippos. Aquatic means living entirely in the water (like fish); a land region cannot be described as "aquatic," but it can be "swampy." Arid means severely dry, which would instantly kill a hippo population.



Learn Vocabulary Through Reading Articles

English Madhyam