

English Language for Competitive Exams
Prof. Aysha Iqbal
Department of Humanities and Social Sciences
Indian Institute of Technology, Madras

Week – 11
Lecture – 53
Grammar: Words & Expressions

We will continue with grammar. Today's title is words and expressions, but words and expressions of what kind that is what we are looking at, not to be confused with vocabulary and word meanings, but how words are formed, how words and expressions are used in grammatical context, in written context, in spoken form.

We are going to do countable and uncountable nouns; we will be doing ordinals which are like cardinal and ordinal numbers, which is an integral part of your written communication. We will be doing quantifiers, approximations, emotive words, that words that express some kind of emotion all right. And then compound words, compound words as distinguish from compound sentences. So, we need to have that distinction very clear.

(Refer Slide Time: 01:25)



So, let us look at the slide here, first slide. Please take a look at it uncountable nouns in English, just an overview it is not a complete exhaustive list, I am very sure that if you

look it up you will get plenty of words and you will be surprised that. So, far you have been trying to make plurals of these words, but actually these words can be used as you know as singular as well as plurals, they are not countable. For example, words such as accommodation, advice, baggage, behavior, bread, cash, clothing, crockery, countryside you cannot say accommodations. Whether you have one accommodation or whether you have changed several accommodations over the years it is still remains accommodation.

Look at the slide please, advice, advice is used here as a noun, when it becomes a d v i s e, it is a verb. My father advised me to become an engineer. I got a good advice from my friends. That is so noun and verb change in the spelling. So, we never say gave me very good advices pieces of advice is the way you look at it when you change it into plural. We never say I lost my baggage's at the airport, you lost your baggage. You do not say is students should be on the best behaviors, whether it is one or thousand it is always behavior. You do not say I eat breads, every morning I eat bread whether one or 2 or more than that. I do not say I am carrying cashes with me, you always say whether it is small amount or huge amount it is always cash. Clothing is another tricky word. So, simple in spelling and meaning, but people get so confused. So, we do not say clothings, we say cloth and clothes, but clothing remains as it is. Crockery and country side again, crockery cutlery we do not say crockeries and country sides country as in rural area.

(Refer Slide Time: 03:57)

- Tea
- Sugar
- Water
- Air
- Rice
- Knowledge
- Beauty
- Anger
- Fear
- Love
- Money
- Research
- Safety
- Evidence

Please look at the slide here the next slide. I have tried to bring in as much as possible when you say tea, I drink tea every morning. So, whether you want or I drink tea throughout the day. So, you do not say I drink teas throughout the day, but if you go to a restaurant and order for tea. So, you would always say 2 teas please. That is the difference, there you are there you mean 2 cups of teas for different 2 people. One tea 3 coffees please, but you do not say I drink lots of coffees. Sugar again whether little sugar more sugar, it is sugar or you say sugar cubes, and the British also use the expression lumps of sugar or sugar lumps.

Water is always in plural or as it is unchanged it is uncountable. You may say litters of water, but not waters. Same goes for air same go for rice do not say rices and wheats, not is again important. We hardly ever say knowledges or educations. It is always my father had to pay for the education of 3 children, you do not have to say 3 educations for 3 children. Beauty is beauty you do not, but when you say beauties you mean several sometimes people use the word beauties in the context of cars as well. So, that car is the beauty. So, all these beauties are they yours. So, many cars you possess. So, in that context you can say beauty, but beauty by it itself is uncountable.

Same goes for anger, fear all these are emotive words, please pay attention to that. Love, money again we never say moneys we never say we always say money, little money, lots of money. Research yeah in certain context we can say conducting several researches, but you have to look it up in what context. Safety, safety first not safety is first, gathered lots of evidence, evidence always not evidences.

(Refer Slide Time: 06:47)

Uncountable nouns

- progress, news, luck, fun, work
- water, rice, cement, gold, milk
- weather, thunder, lightning, rain, snow
- furniture, equipment, rubbish, luggage
- money, permission, research, traffic, travel.

Take a look at this slide please, and go through the words which are uncountable in written and spoken context. We do not say progresses, we do not we never say newses, these are important words please keep in mind. We do not say lucks funs or works, when we say works it is in a very different connotation or context look what a works electrical works, but not I have lot of works to do. Water rice cement gold milk all these elements of different kinds you do not say we do not count them. Weather thunder lightning rain snow and never say furnitures, whether there is not in furniture less furniture only one piece of furniture. It is always pieces of furniture and we absolutely do not say equipments. Your laboratory your laboratory has lots of equipment not equipments. Rubbish luggage like baggage money permission research traffic travel all these things are uncountable.

(Refer Slide Time: 08:08)

Read the following

- She has long brown **hair**.
- My mother is getting a few **grey hairs** now. (refers to individual hairs)
- A **knowledge** of French is essential.
- **bits of news**
- She is reading the news (~~and not newses~~)
- *Can I have **two teas** and **one coffee**, please? (two cups of tea and one cup of coffee ...?)*

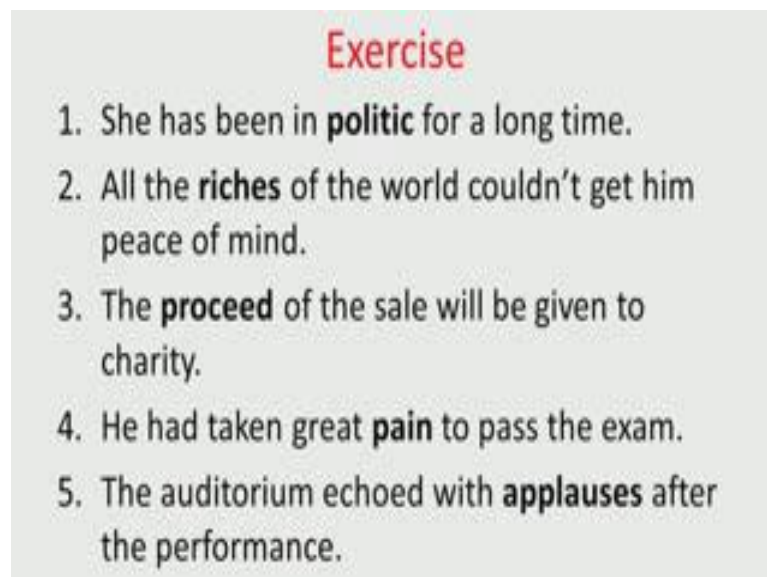
Look at the slide here. She has long brown hair. Whether is scan not hair or thick hair it is always hair not hairs, but when you say my mother is getting a few grey hairs now, it refers to individual hairs. So, then in that context you can say grey hairs, but my mother has grey hair. So, it is hair not gray hairs. My mother is getting lots grey hairs or a few grey hairs, knowledge of French is essential. Bit is of news not newses knowledge is of language is not there we is inaccurate knowledge of French she is reading the news and not the newses. Can I have 2 teas not and one coffee. So, in this context you can say teas, but not otherwise. Here what you mean is 2 cups of tea and one cup of coffee.

(Refer Slide Time: 09:13)

- *She's been studying hard and has made **a lot of progress**.*
- *There's **no work** to do here, so you can go home if you like.*
- ***This milk's** a bit old, don't drink it.*
- ***a knowledge of statistics and basic computing**.*
- *They want **two teas** and **one coffee**. (two cups of tea and one cup of coffee)*

Please look at the slide here. She has been studying hard and has made a lot of progress not progresses. There is no work to do here. So, you can go home if you like, you do not say works is over work is over. This milks a bit old do not drink it a knowledge of a statistics and basic computing statistics by it itself is plural, whether in in whatever context you want. So, it has an mathematics again. Mathematics is also the way you do not make it plural. Remember there are some nouns that use a plural. Form some nouns always have plural form, but they are uncountable because we cannot use numbers with them. For example, I bought 2 pairs of spectacles not I bought 2 spectacles. How many when we say how many sugars do you want in your tea, which means how many spoon fulls or sugar cubes or sugar lumps in that context sugars is okay.

(Refer Slide Time: 10:38)



Exercise

1. She has been in **politic** for a long time.
2. All the **riches** of the world couldn't get him peace of mind.
3. The **proceed** of the sale will be given to charity.
4. He had taken great **pain** to pass the exam.
5. The auditorium echoed with **applauses** after the performance.

Look at the slide here now. And this is an exercise for you will solve it, but please try to solve this on your own. She has been in politic for a long time all the riches of the world could not get him peace of mind. The proceed of the sale will be given to charity. He had taken great pain to pass the exam. The auditorium echoed with applauses after the performance take a moment.

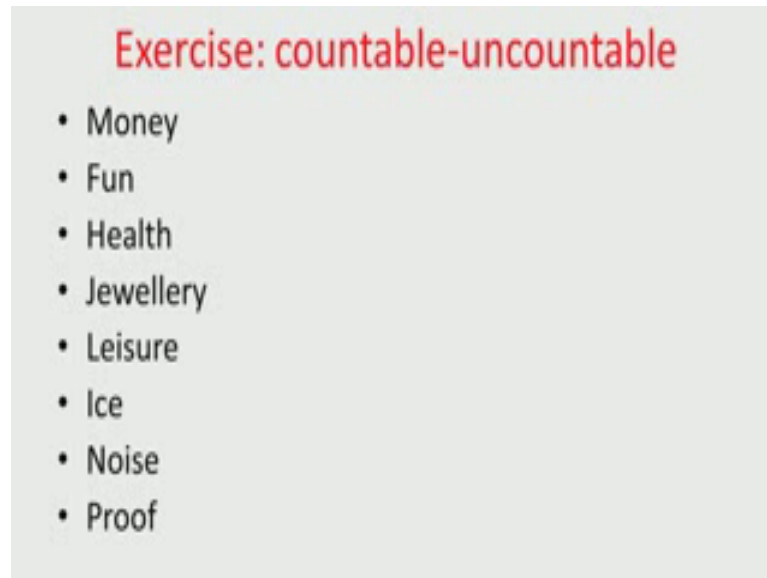
(Refer Slide Time: 11:17)

Answers

1. She has been in **politics** for a long time.
2. All the **riches** of the world couldn't get him peace of mind. correct
3. The **proceeds** of the sale will be given to charity.
4. He had taken great **pains** to pass the exam.
5. The auditorium echoed with **applause** after the performance.

And look at it. Look at the answers correct form is she has been in politics for a long time, of politics always within is all the riches you do not say all the, so the sentence itself is correct you say all the riches of world. In that context you can use, but when you say the rich all over the world, the rich all over the world have this complaint that they are being over text. So, when you this means, you mean the very rich people, the rich people. So, you do not say the richest people. All the riches of world could not get him peace of mind, correct the proceeds of the sale will be given to charity. So, the word is proceeds, he had taken great pains, I am in pain, but you take great pains, it is a idiomatic expression. So, he had taken great pains to pass the exam. And the auditorium echoed with applause after the performance. Applauses always in singular.

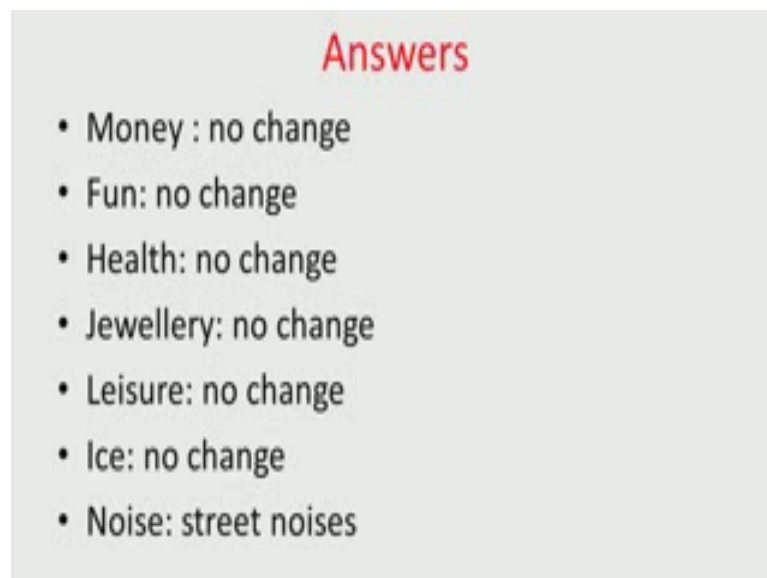
(Refer Slide Time: 12:24)



Exercise: countable-uncountable

- Money
- Fun
- Health
- Jewellery
- Leisure
- Ice
- Noise
- Proof

(Refer Slide Time: 12:50)



Answers

- Money : no change
- Fun: no change
- Health: no change
- Jewellery: no change
- Leisure: no change
- Ice: no change
- Noise: street noises

Look at this exercise, countable uncountable nouns. Try to work it out take a moment. Money fun health jewelry leisure ice noise proof. And here are your answers. Money it there is no change fun no change, health always no change, jewelry we do not say lots of jewelries, we do not say beautiful sceneries. So, no change leisure, we can say leisure facilities leisure activities, but otherwise leisure is leisure no change, ice no change, and noise lot of noise or I hear lot of street noises, but otherwise by it itself no change. From here we will move on to ordinals and cardinal numbers. Remember cardinal numbers are simple 1 2 3 4 to till infinity. These are the cardinal numbers. Ordinal numbers are

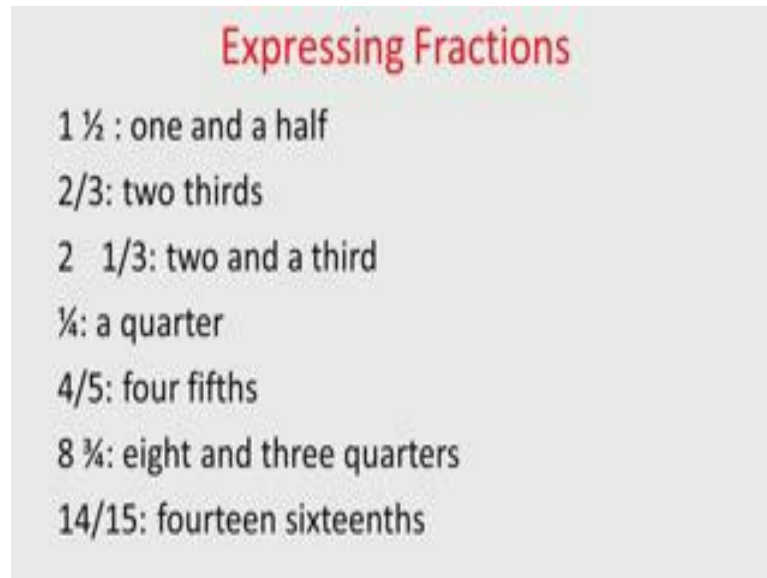
formed by adding s d or r d or t h to the cardinal numbers for example, we say first second third and so on.

(Refer Slide Time: 13:57)



Now, please take a look at this spelling, this slide. Many a times students do mistakes while writing these spellings these words. Spellings are important. Fifth eighth twelfth look at the pay attention to the way it is written; twentieth, fortieth, hundredth, fifty, fourth. So, I am just giving you some basic examples. If you have any doubt about your spelling abilities, then do not always rely on the spell check on your computer try to improve your spelling skills.

(Refer Slide Time: 14:39)



Expressing Fractions

- $1 \frac{1}{2}$: one and a half
- $\frac{2}{3}$: two thirds
- $2 \frac{1}{3}$: two and a third
- $\frac{1}{4}$: a quarter
- $\frac{4}{5}$: four fifths
- $8 \frac{3}{4}$: eight and three quarters
- $\frac{14}{15}$: fourteen sixteenths

Look at the slide, here and this is how we express fractions. Especially in communication one and half, two thirds, two and a third, this is not twenty-one by three, but two and a third. A quarter, please look at the spelling of quarter four fifths eight and three quarters fourteen sixteenths. So, this is the way we write fractions.

From here, we move on to do approximation. Now what is approximation? Some it may happen while doing, while writing an essay for competitive purpose. You want to express some data or statistics. You are or may be you are interpreting a chart or a graph. Now, you are not too sure whether the information that is given to you is exactly that. Exactly 78,000 or just about the in between falling somewhere between 78 and 79, what do you do that? You approximate see you say around 78,000 or almost 78000. Those words are called approximated words.

(Refer Slide Time: 16:10)

Approximation

- **About** four years
- **Around** a thousand rupees
- **Approximately** four hundred thousand
- **More than** 5 metres long
- **Below** 30,000 feet
- **Only** 30 rupees
- Children **under** 14
- **At least** 3 hours
- **Less than** 20 miles
- **More or less** 6 times

So, look at the slide here. I am just giving you examples when you are not exactly sure about the numbers the data this is the way to express it. For instance, you say about four years, around a thousand rupees approximately four hundred thousand, more than 5 meters long, below 30,000 feet, only 30 rupees' children under fourteen. So, it is not exactly 14, it could be any range below 14 are not allowed, at least 3 hours this movie may be longer, but at least 3 hours do not expect it to be less than 3 hours, less than 20 miles more or less 6 times. So, these are the expressions that you use while trying to express approximation.

From there we will move on to do quantifiers. You know that quantifiers denote quantity or amount. Words such as many-many few-few or several etcetera. So, they are quantifiers some commonly frequently occurring quantifiers. They occur only with plurals. For example, you can say I have found several errors in your works. So, several; many a student is not submitting the assignments on time.

Now please note we say many students are not submitting, but we say many a student is not submitting. There is a difference. Remember the word little is related to mass nouns. Little milk little water also abstracts nouns like help she had very little help from her colleagues. Say whatever little money you have. You should notice that the expression a little a few they mean some.

(Refer Slide Time: 18:26)



A little, a few; that means, there is something it means some, but when you say little or few it means not much. There are some positive connotations with a little, and a few little and few mean not much. So, when you say I got little help from people; that means, there was nothing much, but there was something, but there I did all this with a little help a little automatically or immediately signify that there was not much. So, the difference was in the quantity some and much some and not very little extremely little it does not even matter.

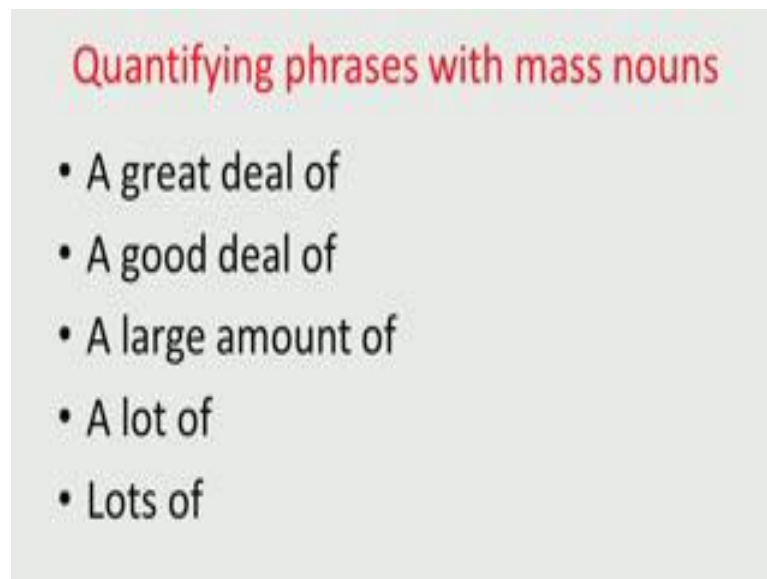
(Refer Slide Time: 19:29)

Quantity phrases with countable nouns

- A great number of
- A good number of
- A large number of
- A lot of
- Lots of
- Plenty of

Let us move on to look at this slide now. These are quantity phrases with countable nouns; always a good idea to use them in your written communication. A great number of a good number of a large number of a lot of lots of plenty of these are the expressions that you can use while expressing your data number related graphs or charts or those types of questions.

(Refer Slide Time: 19:57)



Look at the slide here quantifying phrases to express mass nouns a great deal of a great deal of help a great deal of support a good deal of a large amount of a lot of lots of. From there I will move on to describing emotions, emotive words we are often expected in written communication to describe or report emotive behavior, how we felt about something. This could be related to the quality of service you have received or hospitality that you have received, sometimes you may be asked to express an opinion.

(Refer Slide Time: 20:38)

- Alarmed
- Surprised
- Dismayed
- Furious
- Annoyed
- Taken aback
- Overwhelmed

Look at the slide here and these are some of the words which can come in handy. Look at the slide and look at the words alarmed surprised dismayed furious annoyed taken aback overwhelmed underwhelmed all these are good expressions to use in your communication, wherever you are expected to express emotions or opinion.

(Refer Slide Time: 21:04)

Exercise: Fill in the blanks

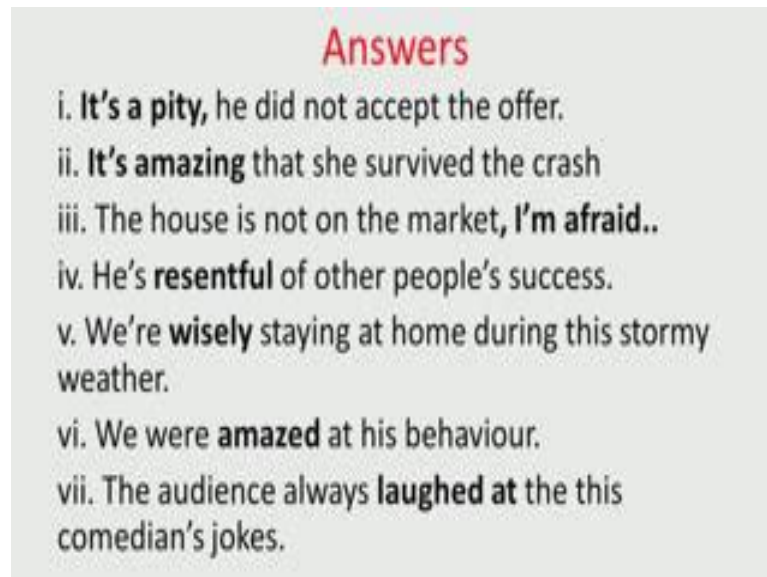
It's a pity, it's amazing, alarmed, resentful, laugh at, wisely, I'm afraid

-, he did not accept the offer.
- that she survived the crash
- The house is not on the market,
- He'sof other people's success.
- We're.....staying at home during this stormy weather.
- We wereat his behaviour.
- The audience always.....this comedian's jokes.

Now, do this exercise take a look at this slide, and fill in the blanks using the words that are highlighted. The words you should use and use one word at for one blank do not repeat. It is a pity it is amazing alarmed resentful laugh at wisely I am afraid. He did not

accept the offer. That she survived. The crash the house is not on the market, comma, he is dash of other people's success. We are dash staying at home during this stormy weather. We were dash at his behavior; the audience always dash this comedian's jokes. Take a moment.

(Refer Slide Time: 22:01)



Here are the answers. Take a look at it. It is a pity he did not accept the offer. It is amazing that she survived the crash; the house is not on the market. I am afraid now look at the way I am afraid is used here it is it comes at the end. It may also come in the beginning I am afraid the house is not on the market or in the market I am not going to sell the house I am afraid it is a nice way of saying I am sorry; can you help me I am afraid I am too busy it is one way of saying no.

Next word he is resentful of other people's success, resent is an resentment is an emotion. We are wisely staying at home during this stormy weather. We were amazed at his behavior the audience always laughed at this comedian's jokes. So, these are emotions. And from there we are move on to compound words. Compound words are those words which are formed with 2 bases. See every word has a base, game is a base word, you can even think of a long word, but this is the base, but let us say background. Backbite, now when you say backbite, it does not exactly mean that you have brought 2 words together and you are saying someone is biting someone's back.

So, there is a difference. So, 2 words come together 2 bases come together, but you do not have to break them apart to look at the meanings. The meanings is not the way you would you. So, it is not back and bite or biting someone's back. So, words such as nightwear sleepwalk or background the all these are compound words they are brought together, but joining 2 words they have different meanings, but when they come together the meaning changes.

(Refer Slide Time: 24:33)

Exercise : Match the following

| | |
|----------|-------|
| • Bee | Quake |
| • Earth | Squad |
| • Firing | Sting |
| • Back | Dream |
| • Dress | Light |
| • Flash | Maker |
| • Day | Ache |

Now, look at the exercise here. Look at the slide please. Match the following and compound words are formed. Remember they are always one word written as one and also sometimes in some cases they may appear as with a hyphen. So, be careful about how you express yourselves. So, on one hand you have bee earth firing back dress flash day and then one the right side you have words such as quake, quake squad sting dream light maker ache. Take a moment and match the words. And let us look at the answers now. It is beesting. So, one-word earthquake, firing squad, backache, dressmaker, flashlight, and daydream, now think daydream. It does not mean that you are dreaming in the days. It is an idiomatic phrase turn off the phrase. It means that trying to do which is not really; we are not working hard enough to achieve that.

So, you just sit there and day dreams, that one day something better would happen, but just day dreaming about it would not make it materialized. So, that is the meaning. So, these are just you know quick pointers and tips that you wanted to give you in today's

class. Please go through all these, you never know in which area you might end up making a mistake that may cause to your marks. So, do go through it whenever you find the time.

Thank you very much.