Para Jumbles: Identifying Opening and Closing Sentences

Identifying the correct opening and closing sentences is one of the most effective techniques for solving Para Jumbles in the CAT examination.

Instead of trying to arrange all sentences simultaneously, first identify:

1. The opening sentence: Where does the discussion logically begin?
2. The closing sentence: Where does the discussion naturally end?

Once these two positions are identified, the remaining sentences become easier to arrange.

1. Identifying the opening sentence

An opening sentence introduces the subject, establishes the context or presents the central idea of the paragraph.

Characteristics of a good opening sentence

Characteristic	Explanation	Example
General statement	Introduces a broad concept	Education plays an important role in social development.
Topic introduction	Names the subject	Artificial intelligence is transforming healthcare.
Definition	Explains a concept	Inflation refers to a sustained increase in the general price level.
Historical background	Introduces a development	The Industrial Revolution began in Britain during the eighteenth century.

General observation	Presents an accepted or debatable idea	Human beings have always sought to understand their environment.
Central proposition	Introduces the main argument	Economic growth does not necessarily guarantee social equality.

A. General-to-specific approach

An opening sentence frequently introduces a broad subject, followed by sentences that explain it in greater detail.

Example:

A. This has increased the demand for specialised medical professionals.

B. Healthcare is an essential component of human development.

C. Advances in medical technology have created new areas of specialisation.

D. These developments have also changed the nature of medical education.

Opening sentence: B

Reason: B introduces healthcare as the broad subject. The remaining sentences develop particular aspects.

B. Avoid sentences that depend on earlier information

Certain expressions usually indicate that a sentence is not the opening sentence.

Expression	Why it is usually not an opener
However	Requires an earlier contrasting idea
Therefore	Usually follows reasoning or evidence
Moreover	Adds to an existing argument

Furthermore	Introduces additional information
Consequently	Indicates a preceding cause
For example	Requires a general statement
This / These / Such	Usually refers to something already introduced
They / It / He / She	Usually requires an antecedent

These are clues rather than absolute rules; some passages can begin with a contrast or a reference when the context is already established.

2. Identifying the closing sentence

A closing sentence completes the discussion by presenting a conclusion, implication, recommendation or final observation.

Characteristics of a good closing sentence

Characteristic	Explanation	Example
Conclusion	Summarises the argument	Thus, education remains a key driver of social progress.
Implication	Explains what follows	This suggests that policy reform must address structural inequalities.
Recommendation	Suggests an action	Governments must therefore invest in sustainable infrastructure.

Generalisation	Draws a broader lesson	The experience demonstrates the importance of institutional accountability.
Final observation	Provides a concluding thought	Ultimately, technology is valuable only when it serves human needs.

A. Conclusion after evidence

Example:

A. Several cities have introduced dedicated cycling lanes.

B. Cycling reduces traffic congestion and air pollution.

C. It also promotes physical activity.

D. Therefore, investment in cycling infrastructure can contribute to healthier and more sustainable cities.

Closing sentence: D

B. Closing sentences should not introduce unexplained new topics

A sentence that suddenly introduces an unrelated subject is unlikely to be the correct conclusion.

For example, after a paragraph discussing renewable energy, a sentence introducing the history of ancient architecture would normally be inappropriate as its ending.

3. Opening versus closing sentences

Feature	Opening sentence	Closing sentence
Main purpose	Introduces the subject	Completes the discussion
Information	Broad or introductory	Derived from preceding ideas

Dependency	Usually independent	Usually depends on earlier sentences
Position	Beginning	End
Common function	Definition, background, proposition	Conclusion, implication, recommendation
Typical words	Generally, historically, in modern society	Thus, consequently, ultimately
Main test	Can the paragraph begin with it?	Does it logically complete the paragraph?

4. The opening-closing elimination technique

Consider four sentences:

A. Consequently, the development of renewable energy has become a major policy priority.

B. Energy is essential for economic development and modern living.

C. Solar and wind power offer alternatives to conventional fossil fuels.

D. These alternatives can reduce dependence on non-renewable resources.

Step 1: Identify the opener

B introduces energy as the broad topic.

Step 2: Identify the closer

A provides a policy-level conclusion following the discussion.

Step 3: Arrange the remaining sentences

C introduces alternatives, and D explains their benefit.

Correct sequence

B → C → D → A

Introduction → Alternatives → Benefits → Conclusion

5. Special cases: When the rules do not apply straightforwardly

Case 1: A question can be an opening sentence

"Why do some societies achieve faster economic development than others?"

This can introduce a discussion about economic development.

Case 2: A quotation can be an opening sentence

"Knowledge is power."

A paragraph may begin with a quotation and then explain its relevance.

Case 3: A contrast can sometimes open a paragraph

"Although economic growth is widely celebrated, its benefits are not always distributed equally."

This is a perfectly valid opening because it introduces both the subject and the central tension.

Case 4: A closing sentence need not contain a conclusion marker

"The relationship between technological progress and social welfare therefore remains an important question for policymakers."

This can conclude a paragraph even though the word therefore is not essential to its function.

6. CAT practice: Identify the opening and closing sentences

Practice test

5 questions · 5 marks

Question 1. Which sentence is the most appropriate opening?

A. This has made digital literacy an essential skill in modern society.

B. Digital technology has transformed the way people communicate, work and access information.

C. Consequently, educational institutions are introducing computer-based learning.

D. These developments have also influenced employment patterns.

A
B
C
D

Question 2. Which sentence is the most appropriate closing?

A. Forests provide habitats for a wide variety of species.

B. They also regulate the water cycle and absorb carbon dioxide.

C. Deforestation threatens these ecological functions.

D. Protecting forests is therefore essential for maintaining ecological balance.

A
B
C
D

Question 3. Which sentence can best open a paragraph?

A. However, this approach has several limitations.

B. Such changes have affected the entire industry.

C. Democracy is based on the principle of popular participation in governance.

D. Consequently, public trust has declined.

A
B
C
D

Question 4. Which sentence is the best closing sentence?

A. Artificial intelligence is increasingly used in medical diagnosis.

B. Machine-learning systems can analyse large quantities of clinical data.

C. These systems may help doctors identify patterns that are difficult to detect manually.

D. The responsible integration of such technology can therefore improve healthcare decision-making.

A
B
C
D

Question 5. Which sentence is the most appropriate opening?

A. For example, the printing press transformed the spread of information.

B. This invention changed the nature of communication.

C. Technological innovations have repeatedly altered the course of human history.

D. As a result, knowledge became more widely accessible.

A
B
C
D
Submit answers

7. Advanced CAT tips

1. Do not rely on keywords alone: A sentence beginning with "however" is usually dependent, but the actual relationship must be checked.
2. Check noun-pronoun relationships: Identify the noun before accepting a sentence beginning with it, they, these or such.
3. Look for conceptual continuity: The opening and closing sentences must belong to the same central discussion.
4. Avoid premature conclusions: A sentence that sounds conclusive may introduce a new argument that requires further explanation.
5. Read the proposed paragraph as a whole: Grammatical correctness alone does not establish logical coherence.

8. Quick revision checklist

Before selecting the opening sentence

- Does it introduce the topic?
- Is it understandable independently?
- Does it avoid unexplained references?
- Is it broad enough to accommodate the remaining sentences?

Before selecting the closing sentence

- Does it follow logically from the preceding ideas?
- Does it provide a conclusion or final implication?
- Does it avoid introducing an unrelated topic?
- Does it complete the paragraph?

Key CAT principle

Opening = Introduction of an idea.

Closing = Completion of an idea.

Mastering these two positions first can substantially reduce the number of possible arrangements you need to consider in a Para Jumble question.