

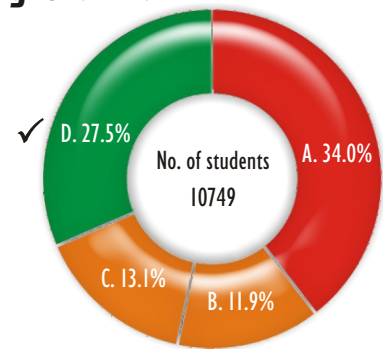
## English: Class: IV Reading for Understanding: Grammar

### Question

The number of books in my room has \_\_\_\_\_ to nearly five hundred.

### Options

- A reached
- B raised
- C become
- D increased



Only 27.5% answered correctly

### Why was the question asked?

Sentences are formed by putting words together in the right order and context to convey an idea, event or description. The verb is the fundamental part of the sentence. Each verb either works with or without certain prepositions. And most verbs can work with several different prepositions, each of which differently affects the meaning of what is said. This question assesses if students are able to choose the correct verb to match the preposition 'to' and complete the sentence in a grammatically correct manner.

### What did students answer?

Out of the 3,903 students, 27% of them chose the correct answer D, '**increased**' and 34% of them chose A, '**reached**', the common wrong answer.

**Possible reason for choosing A:** Students may have found that 'reached' sounds correct to their ears because contextually it means to arrive at something or a place. However, they seemed to have missed the 'to' next to the blank which makes the expression 'reached to nearly five hundred' incorrect, grammatically. It is also likely that once students found this suitable, they did not read the other options to check out their suitability.

**Possible reason for choosing B & C:** Both 'raised' and 'become' are clearly mismatched in the sentence, because of the 'to' following the blank in the sentence. So those selecting these two options may have merely guessed and chosen any option they fancied. Although 'raised' may be correct in meaning, the form of the word is grammatically incorrect.

### Learnings

Colloquial expressions seem to be influencing students so much that most of them do not think twice about the relevance of the chosen word in the given sentence. In addition, students seem to translate from the vernacular when working on a sentence in English. Consequently they select their answers on the basis of superficial meaning and not in relation to the other words in the sentence.

In the given sentence all the words in the options refer to a changing state but only one among them will match with the word 'to' immediately after the blank to make correct grammatical sense. For options A and C to be correct, the word 'to', is unnecessary. For B to be correct, the form of the word should have been 'risen' to combine with 'to' to be grammatically correct.

In a sentence, the preposition 'to' with a verb indicates '**a result of change**' – what somebody or something is changing into. E.g. **Their excitement soon turned to gloom when they saw what they had to climb.** Similarly, in the sentence, **The number of books in my room has increased to nearly five hundred**, the original number of books changed to another number indicated by the word 'increased' in combination with 'to' Those who chose option D, have been able to understand this connection.

### How do we handle this?

In English, some verbs require specific prepositions while some others don't. Since prepositions following the verb affect the verb's meaning, writers must use proper verb-preposition combination in order to communicate clearly.

Saying, "Ravi **believed** Suresh." means something entirely different from saying, "Ravi **believed in** Suresh." Using the wrong preposition may lead to confusing or awkward prose. Demonstrate this difference with 2-3 more verbs in sentences. To help students understand and apply this learning, encourage them to do the exercise given below:

1. Ask students to choose 3-4 verbs. Divide the class into pairs. Ask the ones on your left to write a sentence with the verb and without a preposition. Ask the ones on your right to write a sentence with the same verb followed by a preposition. Ask each pair to show each other their sentences and discuss how the meaning is different. Ask a few pairs to come to the front of the class and explain their sentences by writing them on the board.
2. Do a follow up of this exercise with 'Fill in the blank' exercises using verbs with and without prepositions.

### Useful resource

- Websites:** 1. <http://www.english-zone.com/preps/vp-a.html> (a quiz on phrasal verbs),  
2. [http://www.ehow.com/how\\_2120196\\_explain-prepositions.html](http://www.ehow.com/how_2120196_explain-prepositions.html) (How to explain prepositions)