

ACT PREP MANUAL
SUPREX LEARNING
2016

This manual is to be used in conjunction with *The Real ACT Prep Guide, 3e* (2011).

TEST FORMAT AND CONTENT

The ACT consists of four multiple-choice tests and an optional Writing Test; each test is designed to measure academic achievement in a major area of high school study: English, mathematics, reading, science, and writing. You will be required to finish in about three and a half hours (over four hours if you choose to complete the Essay). The English, mathematics, reading, and science are multiple-choice questions, each having four answer choices. The Writing Test includes one prompt about which you will be required to plan and write a one- to two-page (front and back) persuasive essay.

TEST	NUMBER OF QUESTIONS	TIME
English	75	45 mins
Mathematics	60	60 mins
Reading	40	35 mins
Science	40	35 mins
Writing	1 writing prompt	40 mins

SCORING

On the ACT, you will receive one point for each correct response and no points for each incorrect or omitted response. In order to find your raw score for each test, you count all the questions you answered correctly. Then these raw scores are converted to scale scores in order to standardize the scores for all versions of the ACT. The scale scores range from 1 (low) to 36 (high) for each of the four tests. The individual test scale scores are then averaged to determine a Composite score.

The scaled score correlates with an approximate percentage of correct answers as follows:

Approximate ACT Percentile Rank	Scaled Score	Percentage of Questions Correct
99%	33	90%
90%	28	75%
74%	24	63%
49%	20	53%
28%	17	43%

(www.act.org, 2015)

Notice that to earn a score of 20 (the national average), you need to answer only about 53 percent of the questions correctly. Also notice that a score of 28 places you in the top 10% of those taking the test, and a score of 33 places you in the top 1%!

In addition to the scores in the each of the tests and the composite score, the ACT also computes subscores in the following categories:

ENGLISH TEST -- Usage/Mechanics, Rhetorical Skills

MATHEMATICS TEST – Pre Algebra/ Elementary Algebra, Algebra/ Coordinate Geometry, Plane Geometry/ Trig

READING TEST – Social Studies/ Sciences, Art/ Literature

SCIENCE TEST

The most recent version of the ACT (beginning in September 2015) also includes the following subscores:

- A **STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) score** based on the student's overall performance in the Math and Science Reasoning tests, which helps students determine their strengths in the fields of math and science to better guide their college and career goals.
- An **English Language score** based on overall performance in the English, Reading and Writing tests, that allows students to compare their performance to others who have taken the test.
- A **Progress toward Career Readiness Indicator** enabling students to view their progress towards career readiness
- A **Text Complexity Progress Indicator** based on the student's performance on all of the writing passages, which will give students a measure of their preparedness for the complex texts they are likely to encounter in college and future careers.

The Writing Test is scored separately. Under scoring conditions, two trained raters score each Writing Test essay based on the Six-Point Holistic Scoring Rubric, included in this manual in the Writing section. Each essay is read by two independent readers and given three scores by each reader: one score for the student's performance with (1) Ideas and Analysis, (2) Development and Support, and (3) Organization and Language Use as displayed in his or her written essay. Score differences between the two raters of more than one point will be evaluated by a third reader to resolve discrepancies. The separate scores given by the two raters are then added together, yielding three separate subscores ranging from 2 to 12. ACT also uses the overall score, combined with the English and Reading scale scores, to calculate the English Language score. This Combined score is reported on a scale of 1 - 36.

Sample Student Score Report (act.org)

The ACT[®] Student Report

ACT, Inc.—Confidential Restricted when data present

ANN C TAYLOR (ACT ID: -54116290)

WHEAT RIDGE SR HIGH SCHOOL (061-450) | APR 2016 NATIONAL

Composite Score **21**

U.S. Rank 56% | State Rank 58%

Test Results

	Score	U.S. Rank	Scores in Relation to Benchmarks
English	24	74%	
Usage/Mechanics	12	72%	
Rhetorical Skills	12	71%	
Mathematics	19	47%	
Pre-Algebra/Elem. Algebra	11	57%	
Algebra/Coord. Geometry	10	51%	
Plane Geometry/Trig.	09	39%	
Reading	23	66%	
Social Studies/Sciences	12	67%	
Arts/Literature	11	58%	
Science	18	32%	
Writing	25	79%	
Ideas and Analysis	10		
Development and Support	08		
Organization	07		
Language Use and Conventions	08		

Composite and Subscores: ACT test scores and the Composite score range from 1 to 36; subscores range from 1 to 18. Your Composite score is the average of your scores on the four subject tests. Subscores do not necessarily add up to your score for a subject test.

ACT College Readiness Benchmarks: If your scores are at or above the ACT benchmark scores, you will likely be ready for first-year college courses.

U.S. Rank and State Rank: Your ranks tell you the approximate percentages of recent high school graduates in the U.S. and your state who took the ACT and received scores that are the same as or lower than yours.

Interpreting Your Scores: Test scores are not precise measures of your educational development. ACT scores reported are the midpoint of a score range that represents your educational development at the time you took the ACT. For example, the score range is plus or minus one point for the Composite score. You will find more information about interpreting your scores in the *Using Your ACT Results* booklet provided with this report and at www.actstudent.org.

Writing: The score ranges from 1 to 36. Writing domain scores range from 2 to 12. Domain scores do not necessarily add up to your score for the Writing test.

ELA	24	70%	
STEM	19	40%	
Understanding Complex Texts			
Proficient			
Progress Toward Career Readiness			
You are making progress toward a Gold level on the ACT NCRC.			

English Language Arts (ELA): An average of your English, Reading, and Writing scores. The score ranges from 1 to 36.

Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM): An average of your Math and Science scores. The score ranges from 1 to 36.

Understanding Complex Texts: Measures level of proficiency on a subset of items in the Reading test assessing the ability to identify the central meaning and purposes for a range of increasingly complex texts.

Progress Toward Career Readiness: Based on your ACT Composite score, Progress Toward Career Readiness is an indicator of your potential level of achievement on the ACT National Career Readiness Certificate™ (ACT NCRC®). The ACT NCRC is an assessment-based credential that certifies skills critical to your future education and career success.

Learn how ACT NCRC performance relates to job skill requirements at www.act.org/workkeys/briefs/files/NCRCRequirements.pdf.

This information is not to be considered a substitute for actual performance on the ACT NCRC.

Your College Reports

At your direction, your scores from this test date are being reported to the colleges shown below. College planning information is provided for the first four choices you listed when you registered or tested. Check with colleges for recent changes in information. Note: Your GPA was calculated from the grades you reported.

College Name (Code)	Profile of Enrolled 1st-Year Students				Approximate Annual Tuition and Fees		Percentage of 1st-Year Students Receiving Financial Aid	
	ACT Composite Score	High School Class Rank	High School GPA	Preferred Program of Study Availability	In-state	Out-of-state	Need-based	Merit-based
UNIVERSITY OF OMEGA (9521) OMEGA, CO WWW.UNIVERSITYOFOMEGA.EDU	MIDDLE 50% BETWEEN 18–24	MAJORITY IN TOP 50%	2.76	4-YR DEGREE	\$5,600	\$12,000	67%	20%
ALPHA UNIVERSITY (9059) UNIVERSITY CENTER, IA WWW.ALPHA.EDU	MIDDLE 50% BETWEEN 21–26	MAJORITY IN TOP 25%	3.12	4-YR DEGREE	\$9,000*	\$15,000*	85%	27%
BETA COMMUNITY COLLEGE (8866) CLARKSTON, CO WWW.BETACC.EDU	MIDDLE 50% BETWEEN 18–21	MAJORITY IN TOP 75%	2.49	PROGRAM AVAILABLE	\$4,000	\$4,000	58%	18%
MAGNA COLLEGE (8905) PLAINVIEW, OH WWW.MAGNA.EDU	MIDDLE 50% BETWEEN 21–26	MAJORITY IN TOP 50%	2.71	4-YR DEGREE	\$8,500	\$14,000	90%	35%

Student Information

Composite Score	Class Rank	Calculated GPA	Selected Major
21	TOP 25%	3.29	ACCOUNTING

For more information on college and career planning, interpreting your scores, and sending additional score reports, go to www.actstudent.org.

A dash (—) indicates information was not provided or could not be calculated. * Institution provided cost information that may reflect more than tuition and fees.

College and Career Planning

Many people consider several possibilities before making definite career plans. Before you took the ACT, you had the opportunity to respond to questions about your educational and career plans. Use this information to consider possibilities that you may like to explore.

Interest Inventory Results

YOUR RESULTS INDICATE A PREFERENCE FOR WORKING WITH PEOPLE AND DATA.

SEE MAP REGIONS 2, 3, 4

THE SHADED REGIONS SHOW CAREER AREAS HAVING WORK TASKS YOU PREFER.

RELATED CAREER AREAS:

COMMUNICATIONS & RECORDS
EMPLOYMENT-RELATED SERVICES
FINANCIAL TRANSACTIONS
MANAGEMENT
MARKETING & SALES
REGULATION & PROTECTIONS

College Major Selected

ACCOUNTING

THIS MAJOR PRIMARILY INVOLVES WORKING WITH DATA AND THINGS.

RELATED MAJORS:

BANKING & FINANCIAL SUPPORT SERVICES
BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION & MGMT, GEN
FINANCE, GENERAL
FINANCIAL PLANNING & SERVICES
INSURANCE & RISK MANAGEMENT
INVESTMENTS & SECURITIES
PURCHASING/PROCUREMENT/CONTRACTS MGMT
SMALL BUSINESS MANAGEMENT/OPERATIONS

Occupational Field Selected

INSURANCE & RISK MANAGEMENT

SEE MAP REGION 2

THE OCCUPATIONAL FIELD YOU CHOSE IS IN CAREER AREA C: MANAGEMENT

RELATED OCCUPATIONS:

ASSOCIATION EXECUTIVE
FINANCIAL MANAGER
FOREIGN SERVICE OFFICER
GENERAL MANAGER/TOP EXECUTIVE
HOTEL/MOTEL MANAGER
MANAGEMENT CONSULTANT
PROPERTY/REAL ESTATE MANAGER

The World-of-Work Map

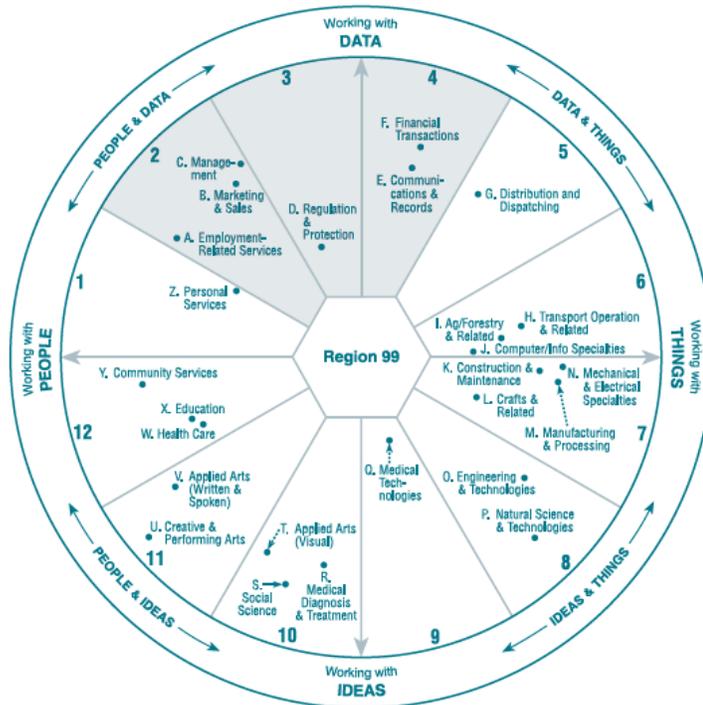
(Your Interest Inventory results are shaded.*)

Four Basic Work Tasks: All college majors and occupations differ in how much they involve working with four basic work tasks: working with **People** (care, services), **Things** (machines, materials), **Data** (facts, records), and **Ideas** (theories, insights). These four basic work tasks are the compass points on the World-of-Work Map.

Regions and Career Areas: The map is divided into 12 regions, each with a different mix of work tasks. The map shows the locations of 26 occupational fields, called Career Areas (A–Z). Each Career Area contains many occupations that share similar work tasks.

*If no regions are shaded, you did not answer enough interest items to permit scoring.

For more information about your college and career planning, visit www.actstudent.org or check the booklet provided with this report.



Answer the following questions based on the Sample Score Report above.

1. What was the composite score for this student? _____
2. In which subject test did this student receive the highest score? _____
3. In math, this student needs the most help with which concept? _____
4. Did this student take the optional writing test? _____
5. Did this student send her scores to any four-year colleges? _____ professional schools? _____ community colleges? _____

6. What was this student's US Percentile Rank for STEM questions? _____
 7. How is the "Understanding Complex Tasks" rated? _____
 8. When did this student take the ACT? _____
 9. Name one profession that this student has a proficiency for, according to this score report.

 10. Does this student show a higher proficiency for working with people, ideas, data, or things?

 11. This student scored above average on which test(s) on the ACT?

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My Goals

Test	Previous ACT or Pre-test Scores	Desired Score	How many more questions do I need to answer correctly? What other steps should I take to reach my goal?
English			
Math			
Reading			
Science			
COMPOSITE			
Writing			

Actions I am taking/ will be taking to reach my goal scores:

1. **Taking an ACT prep course at Suprex Learning**
2. **Completing all assigned practice problems**
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

I commit that I will follow this plan until _____ when I take the ACT. I know that, while my tutor will help and encourage me, the final responsibility for my success will rest on my willingness to practice on the skills and strategies that I learn.

Student

signature

Tutor signature

Tutor email

ENGLISH TEST

Content Covered

On the ACT English Test, you have 45 minutes to read five passages, or essays, and answer 75 multiple-choice questions about them – an average of 15 questions per essay. The ACT is designed to measure your ability to accomplish the wide variety of decisions involved in revising and editing a given piece of writing. You will not be tested on spelling. Grammar, usage, and vocabulary are tested only within the context of the essay.

One question can test several kinds of writing errors. Based on ACT statistics, about one-third of the questions test your ability to write concisely, about another one-third of the questions test for logic and sense, and the remaining one-third test grammar rules and punctuation.

You will receive an overall score for the whole test, and this score will be averaged with the other three test scores to determine the Composite score. You will receive two subscores: one for Usage/Mechanics questions, and one for Rhetorical Skills. If you choose to take the Writing Test, you will also receive an English Language score, combining English, Reading, and Writing scores.

Format

Questions on the English Test fall into two categories:

- **Usage/ Mechanics (punctuation, grammar and usage, sentence structure)**

These 40 questions refer specifically to a marked portion of the essay. You will be asked to decide on the best choice of words and punctuation for the marked portion. The first answer choice will be “NO CHANGE,” which means that the passage is best as written. In some questions, you will also have the option of deleting the marked portion.

1. Punctuation Questions involve identifying and correcting misplaced, missing, or unnecessary punctuation marks. You will need to know not only the rules of punctuation but also the use of punctuation to express ideas clearly.

You can usually recognize these questions by looking at the answer choices. The words in every choice will be identical but the commas or other punctuation will vary. It is important to read the choices carefully in order to notice the presence or absence of commas, semicolons, colons, periods, and other punctuation.

EX:

Around this time the polka music and button accordion played by German immigrant railroad workers; left their mark on waila.

3. (A) NO CHANGE
(B) workers
(C) workers;
(D) workers,

2. Grammar and Usage questions involve editing a sentence based on the rules of grammar and usage. The passages on the ACT English test will contain the most common grammar and usage errors:

a. Grammatical Agreement – subject/verb, pronoun/antecedent, adjectives/adverbs

b. Verb Forms

c. Pronoun forms and cases

d. Comparative and superlative modifiers

e. Idioms

EX:

While having the appearance[3] to be a simple game, checkers is actually quite complicated. Mathematically there are about 500 quintillion possible ways to win the game. Despite this, checkers continues to be mostly a fun game for those who play it, even at the competitive level. Checkers was first played in the twelfth century.[4] Some of the classic moves used in competitions have names like the Goose Walk, Duffer's Delight and the Boomerang. With names like these, it seems that even a serious game[5] has its own sense of humor.

3. (A) NO CHANGE
(B) appearing
(C) appearing that
(D) appearances show it

EX:

While having the appearance[3] to be a simple game, checkers is actually quite complicated. Mathematically there are about 500 quintillion possible ways to win the game. Despite this, checkers continues to be mostly a fun game for those who play it, even at the competitive level. Checkers was first played in the twelfth century.[4] Some of the classic moves used in competitions have names like the Goose Walk, Duffer's Delight and the Boomerang. With names like these, it seems that even a serious game[5] has its own sense of humor.

3. (A) NO CHANGE
(B) appearing
(C) appearing that
(D) appearances show it

- **Rhetorical Skills (writing strategy, organization, style)**

These 35 questions sometimes refer to a marked portion of the essay; more often, however, they refer to a sentence, several sentences, or a paragraph within the essay, or

the essay as a whole. You will be asked to choose the answer that is “most relevant” or “most acceptable” within the flow of the essay. Sometimes you will be asked to place or delete a sentence in order to create a logical order within a paragraph.

Rhetorical Skills questions assess your ability to make choices about the effectiveness and clarity of a word, phrase, sentence, or paragraph. You may also be asked about the passage as a whole. These questions will test your knowledge and skill in three main areas:

Writing strategy – the choices made and methods used by an author when composing or revising an essay

EX:

Horseback riding requires less skill than many people think. Granted, not just anyone can hop on the back of a horse and maneuver the animal around a racetrack or jumping course, but many people can sit comfortably in a saddle for a short period of time while a horse calmly walks along a wooded trail. (1)

1. The writer wishes to add information here that will further support the point made in the preceding sentence. Which of the following sentences will do that best?

- (A) Saddles are designed for specific purposes, such as pleasure riding, barrel racing, and roping.
- (B) Each year, thousands of people who have never before been on a horse enjoy guided, one-hour trail rides.
- (C) Even experienced riders enjoy the peace and tranquility of a ride through the woods after a long day of training.
- (D) Former racehorses are often used as trail horses when they retire from the track.

Organization – developing logical sequences, categorizing elements, ranking items in order, identifying main ideas, making connections, writing introductions and conclusions, and resolving problems within an essay

EX:

[1] Prior to this, my mother had stated that she and my dad would only be staying with me for three days. [2] As adults, we often have mixed feelings about a visit from our parents—while we are happy to see them, we also hope that their stay is for a definite and short period of time. [3] My parents recently planned a trip to my neck of the woods, and I prepared my humble home for their arrival. [4] They showed up on the appointed day and my mother announced that they would stay for a full week.

2. Which of the following sequences will make this paragraph most logical?

- (A) NO CHANGE
- (B) 1, 4, 3, 2
- (C) 2, 3, 4, 1
- (D) 4, 3, 2, 1

Style – the author’s presentation of the written word, either formal or informal

EX:

While having the appearance[3] to be a simple game, checkers is actually quite complicated. Mathematically there are about 500 quintillion possible ways to win the game. Despite this, checkers continues to be mostly a fun game for those who play it, even at the competitive level. Checkers was first played in the twelfth

century.[4] Some of the classic moves used in competitions have names like the Goose Walk, Duffer's Delight and the Boomerang. With names like these, it seems that even a serious game[5] has its own sense of humor.

3. (A) NO CHANGE
(B) appearing
(C) appearing that
(D) appearances show it
4. (A) NO CHANGE
(B) First played in the twelfth century was checkers.
(C) Checkers was originally from the twelfth century.
(D) OMIT the underlined portion
5. (A) NO CHANGE
(B) crucial that a serious game
(C) that such a serious game
(D) in all seriousness, a game

Skills and Knowledge Required

The ACT English has two question types: **usage and mechanics** and **rhetorical skills**. Usage and mechanics questions test you on punctuation, grammar, word usage, and sentence structure and rhetorical skills questions cover style, strategy, and organization. Now we will look at some of the skills and knowledge you will need to get a high score on the ACT English test.

For Grammar and Usage Questions

a. Grammatical Agreement – subject/verb, pronoun/antecedent, adjectives/adverbs

Subject/verb

- In a sentence, the subject and the verb must match in number: singular subjects must have singular verbs and plural subjects must have plural verbs.
- In order to ensure that you are using the proper subject-verb agreement, you will want to familiarize yourself with tricky sentence structures.
- Phrases or Clauses that fall between the subject and verb
 - Often there are intervening clauses or prepositional phrases that obscure the subject of the sentence. Eliminate these before checking for subject – verb agreement.
- Subjects made up of more than one noun
 - If the subject is compound (using “and”), it is plural
 - If the subject is compound (using “or”), it is singular
- If “either...or” or “neither...nor” is used, you will use the last noun to decide whether the subject is singular or plural.

Neither James nor his *sister* singular

Either James or his *sisters* plural

- Subjects that sound plural but are singular
 - *No one, nobody, someone, everyone, everybody, anyone, anything* are considered singular subjects
 - Subjects that are considered a single entity such as *jury* or *data* are also considered singular.

When dealing with subject-verb agreement, watch for verbs in the underlined portion of the sentence. Do the subject and verb match?

Practice:

Circle the words that make the sentence grammatically correct:

1. The diner near the dorms which (*houses/house*) the students (*serves/serve*) breakfast all day.

2. The widely recognized red coloring of stop signs everywhere (*alerts/alert*) people who cannot read them to stop.

3. Each team made up of one girl and one boy (*has/have*) to reenact a scene from Romeo and Juliet.

4. Her jewelry, in addition to her diamond bracelets, (*was/were*) stolen by the robber.

5. Neither the employees nor the owner (*cares/care*) about the customer.

6. Beside the bins, where one could smell the stench of rotten eggs, (*was/were*) a pack of philosophy majors gathering cans for recycling.

Adverbs vs. Adjectives

An **adjective** is a word or set of words that **modifies** (i.e., describes) a noun or pronoun. Adjectives usually come before the word they modify.

An **adverb** is a word or set of words that modifies verbs, adjectives, or other adverbs.

Examples:

*He speaks **slowly** (modifies the verb *speaks*)*

*He is **especially** clever (modifies the adjective *clever*)*

*He speaks **all too** slowly (modifies the adverb *slowly*)*

Practice

Correct highlighted words to adjust the grammar of the sentence.

1. The **astonishing** high height from which he fell only made his survival story nothing short of miraculous.
2. The **rapid** changing movements of the tides often catch some sea animals by surprise.
3. She speaks so **loud** that I can tell she thinks of the tides often

➤ *Singular-Plural Noun agreement*

Singular/plural noun inconsistency generally arises because of the problem of gender-specific pronouns. For example, people know, if they think about it, that "everyone" has his or her own idea, but it sounds wordy to say it that way, so people switch to plural, "their", because "they" is gender-neutral (i.e., it can refer to men, women, or a mix of both).

Practice:

Correct highlighted words to adjust the grammar of the sentence.

1. The four kids wanted to become a **superhero**.
2. The teacher gave the students who aced the test **a high-five**.
3. Witness testimony, documents, and a consumer guarantee have been **a key piece** of evidence in many major landmark trials involving corporations and their customers.

b. Verb Tenses

Look for consistency in verb tenses as well as correct usage of each tense. Below are some common verb tenses and explanations of when to use each:

- Simple Past - Used to describe completed events in the past.
 - Example: I *went* to work yesterday.

- Simple Present – Used to describe events in present time or habitual actions.
 - Example: She *goes to work* at 9:00 every day.

- Future – Used to describe events that will likely occur at a later date or time.
 - Example: They *will go* to work tomorrow.

- Perfect Present – Used to describe an action that started in the past and is still true in the present or has an effect on a present state.
 - Example: I *have traveled* to 49 states.

- Perfect Past – Used when one event (event A) occurs before another event (event B), and both are completed actions.
 - Example: By the time I was 12, I *had traveled* to 30 states.

- Perfect Future – Used when event A will occur before event B, and both events are in the future.
- Example: By next year, I *will have traveled to all 50 states*.

Practice

Correct highlighted words to adjust the grammar of the sentence.

1. Although the cheetah holds the record for fastest land animal, many other mammals **outlasted** it.
2. Whenever we **stopped** by the market, my mom always tries to negotiate the prices.
3. By the time we got a seat at Peter Luger we had **waited** for over four hours.
4. I did not get your message because I **turned** off my cell phone to avoid you.
5. Ever since she saw how pandas were gruesomely hunted, Kristie **devotes** her life to panda conservation.
6. Jay, with no care whatsoever, has repeatedly **swam** in the polluted East River.

c. Pronoun Forms and Cases

A **pronoun** is a word used to stand for (or take the place of) a noun. A **pronoun** should refer clearly to one, unmistakable noun which came before the **pronoun**. This noun is called the **pronoun's** antecedent.

Find the pronoun and check if the antecedent agrees in number.

Pronoun Chart					
	Subject Pronouns	Object Pronouns	Possessive Adjectives	Possessive Pronouns	Reflexive Pronouns
1st person	I	me	my	mine	myself
2nd person	you	you	your	yours	yourself
3rd person (male)	he	him	his	his	himself
3rd person (female)	she	her	her	hers	herself
3rd person	it	it	its	(not used)	itself
1st person (plural)	we	us	our	ours	ourselves
2nd person (plural)	you	you	your	yours	yourselves
3rd person (plural)	they	them	their	theirs	themselves

Practice:

Draw a line through incorrect words and write the correct grammatical response above the sentence or words:

- Whenever Jason and Alexander sit down at a buffet, he eats way more food.
- Even if a student gets in early, they still have to maintain good grades during senior year.
- At the police station, they found a pile of cash stashed in her clothes.
- She always takes an hour in the bathroom, and this completely ticks me off!

5. Although it is small and furry, koalas are able to protect themselves from predators by quickly climbing trees.

d. Comparatives vs. Superlatives

A comparative is used when comparing two or more things. Comparatives often use *more* or *as* to show a relationship between the objects that are being compared.

Example: Texas is *more* interesting *than* Oklahoma.

A superlative is used to describe one thing in the highest degree possible. Superlatives often use *the most* before an adjective or adverb.

Example: Suprex is *the most effective* tutoring company in Houston.

Practice

Correct highlighted words to adjust the grammar of the sentence.

1. Between the lion and the tiger, the tiger is the **fiercest** and the **strongest**.
2. China is not only the biggest of all Asian countries but also the one with **more** historical culture.
3. Harry Potter and Frodo Baggins both rise to the challenges in their magical worlds, but I think Frodo has the **most** courage.

e. Idioms and Word Choice

An idiom is a phrase or a fixed expression that has a figurative, or sometimes literal, meaning. An **idiom's** figurative meaning is different from the literal meaning. Pay special attention to use of prepositions in idiomatic phrases.

Practice

Correct the following sentences.

1. The Olympic athlete was capable in climbing Mt. Everest.

2. The public was opposed against the war.
3. The children were prohibited against playing outside at dark.
4. Unless you comply to those food safety standards, we will shut you down.

➤ **Word choices.**

There are many words in the English language that are commonly confused and misused. Here is a list of some commonly mixed-up word pairs.

Word Pairs

among/between: use among to talk about options within a group of objects; use between to talk about two options

fewer/less: use fewer to describe things you can count (i.e. apples, pens, dollars); use less to describe things you cannot count (i.e. water, rice, money)

further/farther: use further to describe a metaphorical or figurative distance; use farther to describe a physical distance

infer/imply: to infer is to make a guess about something; to imply is to hint at something

lay/lie: lay requires a direct object, lie does not (i.e. I lie down on my bed, but I lay the baby in the crib.)

passed/past: passed is the past tense of the verb *pass*; past can be an adjective, adverb, noun, or preposition, and it often refers to time or movement.

precede/proceed: precede means to go before or in front of something; proceed means to go forward, continue, or carry on

who/whom: who is a subject word; whom is the object of a preposition

then/than: then is an adjective used to talk about time; than is a conjunction used in comparatives

CONVENTIONS USING PUNCTUATION

See rules on pp. 152-153

www.grammarbook.com (rules and online quizzes)

For Rhetorical Skills Questions

As you know, there are three types of rhetorical skills questions: strategy, organization, and style.

1. **Strategy questions** comprise 16% (or 12 questions) of the English section, which comes out to about 12 questions. For most strategy questions, you'll need to determine if a sentence should be added to the passage. In other cases, you'll be asked to look at the passage as a whole and determine the purpose of the passage. Strategy is a broad word, so let's look at some examples of the types of strategy questions you might see.

Additional Details Questions:

Many strategy questions expect you to identify a sentence that provides additional relevant details to the paragraph. For example, you might be asked to select a sentence that provides a specific example, such as in this question:

STRATEGY – ADDITIONAL DETAIL	
<p>[1] When I was a child, I loved to visit my uncle's bakery and spend hours with him in the kitchen. <input type="checkbox"/> Uncle Mick taught me how to measure flour, crack eggs, and whisk egg whites to perfect peaks.</p>	<p>1. The writer wishes to add a sentence that adds sensory details about the bakery kitchen. Given that all of the following statements are true, which one, if added here, would most effectively accomplish the writer's goal?</p> <p>A. The cooling racks were always filled with delicious treats. B. The bakery kitchen was filled with the intoxicating scents of warm vanilla, spicy cinnamon, and bright lemon. C. The kitchen had metal countertops and was pretty big. D. My uncle let me bake with him on Saturdays.</p>

On the ACT, you should always read the question very carefully, but this is particularly true for these types of questions because all of the answer choices could be correct. The question will tell you what type of detail needs to be added. In question 1, the question is specifically asking

for sensory details. All of the answer choices are acceptable sentences, but choice B is the only answer choice that includes sensory details, such as 'warm vanilla' and 'spicy cinnamon.'

Big Picture Questions:

Once in a while, you'll see a question that asks about the purpose of the whole passage. These questions are always the last question of the passage and are always clearly labeled.

STRATEGY - BIG PICTURE

<p>[1] When I was a child, I loved to visit my uncle's bakery and spend hours with him in the kitchen. [B] Uncle Mick taught me how to measure flour, crack eggs, and whisk egg whites to perfect peaks.</p>	<p>5. The writer's goal in writing this essay was to explain the life lessons he learned from Uncle Mick. Did the writer accomplish this goal?</p> <p>A. Yes because the writer connects his experience with the bakery with his adult life. B. Yes because the writer describes his good memories of the bakery. C. No because the writer focuses just on his memories of baking with Uncle Mick. D. No because the writer only talks about childhood.</p>
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Before you start, you can look at the end of the passage to see if there is a big picture question. If there is, read the question and keep it in mind as you read the passage and answer the other questions. This practice will save you time since you do not have to re-read the passage.

PRACTICE

The biologist worked painstakingly for more than a year before her research project yielded any publishable results.

1. Which of the following choices most effectively conveys that the biologist relied on cooperation with other scientists:
 - A. No change
 - B. Needed to discuss methodology
 - C. Planned many experiments
 - D. Needed to order several pieces

The construction site was littered with debris. Scraps of wood, drywall, and various types of nails were scattered on the ground. Even large sheets of roofing materials, some still packaged as they came from the supplier were lying against the unfinished exterior walls. [2]

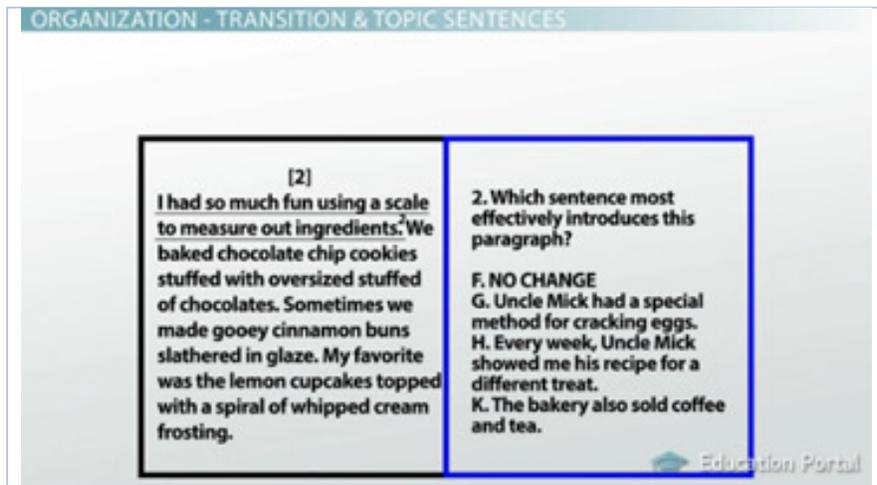
2. The author is considering deleting the following sentence: *Scraps of wood, drywall, and various types of nails were scattered on the ground.* What would be lost if the author made this deletion?

- A. Information about how long the building site had been unattended
- B. A description of what materials are needed in construction
- C. A suggestion about how to clean the site
- D. Specific details that provide information about what the site looks like

2. Organization questions on the ACT English test can refer to the logical order of paragraphs in the passage, of sentences in a paragraph, or words in a sentence. Organization questions comprise 15% of questions, about 11 or 12 questions.

Transition or topic sentence questions:

Many organization questions ask you to choose the best topic, or introductory, sentence for that paragraph. Here's an example of how a topic sentence question might look on the ACT.



The correct answer is Choice H. Since the paragraph describes three different types of baked goods, the topic sentence 'Every week, Uncle Mick showed me his recipe for a different treat.' sets up the paragraph for details about the various treats. *Notice that this question also has a different format than many rhetorical skills questions, with the indicated portion underlined.*

A related question type requires you to determine the best sentence to connect two paragraphs in a passage. To determine which transition sentence is best, you have to look for a bridge between two paragraphs. In order to do this, find the main idea in the paragraphs both before and after the transition, then choose an answer.

Types and examples of transition words

Contrast	Conclusion	Comparison	Continuing Argument	Introduce Examples	Suggest better alternative
Although However Still	Then In conclusion Therefore	Likewise Similarly Also	Also Moreover Besides	For example For instance Consider the	Certainly Yet Undoubtedly

Nevertheless On one hand On the other hand Despite Yet But Though However Contrary to In opposition to Whereas	Hence Finally In summary Thus Consequently	Just as...so Just like Between Equivalent to Along the same lines In agreement with Coincidentally	In addition Furthermore Additionally	case of One reason for this is Another reason for this is One example Another example Such as	But Obviously Nevertheless Granted However To be sure Nonetheless Admittedly Still
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Paragraph or Sentence order questions:

You'll also see organization questions that ask you to choose the most logical order of paragraphs within the passage or sentences within a paragraph. Paragraph order questions typically appear at the end of the passage, and the question will clearly state that it is asking about the passage as a whole. Like big picture strategy questions, check the end of the passage for this question before you start reading. If this question is present, you should read the whole passage and evaluate the ideas in each paragraph to determine the most logical order. When you see these questions, all of the paragraphs will be numbered, and you'll be asked to use the numbers to indicate the correct order.

Sentence order questions typically appear at the end of the paragraph. Like for paragraph order questions, the sentences will be numbered. You probably won't see sentence or paragraph numbering unless there is an organization question, so if you see numbers, pay attention to them! To answer sentence order questions correctly, make sure you read the whole paragraph!

Now, read the paragraph below and determine the correct answer.

ORGANIZATION - PARAGRAPH & SENTENCE ORDER

[3]

[1] When we baked cookies, the first thing we did was butter the baking sheets. [2] Finally we took them out of the oven and impatiently waited for them to cool. [3] Then we mixed up the ingredients using the huge mixer.

3. Which of the following sequences of sentences makes Paragraph 3 most logical?

A. NO CHANGE
 B. 1, 3, 2
 C. 2, 1, 3
 D. 3, 1, 2

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The correct answer is B because the sentences contain clue words like 'first', 'then' and 'finally.' Although the questions on the ACT may be trickier, a close reading of the paragraph will allow you to place the sentences in logical order.

When answering questions about paragraph or sentence order, be aware that the numbers always appear before the sentence or paragraph. Read carefully so you don't associate sentences or paragraphs with the wrong number!

Practice

TRANSITION WORD PRACTICE 1: PURPOSE

Directions: Circle the correct answer to each question.

1. Which transition word concludes an argument?

- a. for example b. along the same lines c. hence

2. Which transition word continues an argument?

- a. in summary b. in other words c. admittedly

3. Which transition word adds information?

- a. in addition b. contrary to c. earlier

4. Which transition word compares two arguments?

- a. equivalent to b. however c. otherwise

5. Which transition word contrasts two a

- a. first b. nevertheless c. whereas

TRANSITION WORD PRACTICE 2: USAGE

Directions: Transition words have been left out of the following paragraph. Select appropriate words from the list below and write them in the proper places. Some blanks can have more than one correct word that makes sense. Select the one that you think fits best. There are two extra words to choose from.

While completing this exercise, think about the purpose of each of the transition words in the context of the short essay.

although	in summary	such as	secondly	consider
in my opinion	besides	furthermore	firstly	similar

In most countries today, top sports people, (1)_____ footballers, tennis players and basketball players, get enormous salaries. In a week they often earn more than ordinary people earn in a year. Is this really too much? (2)_____ I don't think so.

(3)_____, the career of a professional sports person is relatively short. They often retire when they are in their mid-thirties. (4)_____, many of them don't even play that long, as they often get injured, which means they have to retire early.

(5)_____ their salaries are very high, they are not much higher than those of other successful people in the entertainment industry. (6)_____ pop singers, actors, or TV personalities, whose professional careers can last for fifty years. Sport today is watched by millions of people, so it should be considered entertainment (7)_____ to the cinema or TV.

(8)_____, I think that top sports people's high salaries are not unfair if you compare them with other people doing similar jobs.

3. Finally, there are a variety of **style** questions on the ACT. Some questions involve selecting the sentence that best fits the writer's style, while others involve choosing a sentence that demonstrates clear and concise writing. About 16% of questions (or 12 questions) are style questions.

Precision	Replacing vague language with something more specific, or removing words or phrases that don't make sense in context
Concision	Eliminating wordy or repetitive phrases
Style and Tone	Recognize and replace language to maintain consistent style or tone
Syntax	Combining two or more sentences to improve flow and cohesion of text

Many style questions will ask you to determine which sentence best fits the style of the rest of the essay. Picture your science textbook. Can you imagine it saying, 'Meiosis is the coolest process ever!?' Probably not. Most textbooks have a more formal, academic style and are unlikely to call something 'cool.' To determine the passage's style, read the paragraph containing the sentence and compare the style with the answer choices.

How to be successful on the ACT English Test

1. Read through the passage at a speed a little slower than usual.
 - a. You should spend about **nine minutes** on each passage.
 - b. Try to listen to your voice in your head so you can “hear” any awkward portions of the passage. These awkward portions are usually where the errors lie.
2. Answer the questions as you read, in order from beginning to end. Do not skip around in the passage.
 - a. Identify the error type (punctuation, grammar, word usage, etc)
 - Look for the most common errors:

Error	Description	Number of questions to expect
Connections	cause and effect, contrasting ideas	16
Verb Tenses	appropriate tense usage in context	13
Punctuation	use of punctuation rules	10
Word Choice	subject-verb agreement, pronoun agreement, modifiers, and idioms	10
Wordiness	redundancy, verbosity	10
Writing Strategy	tone, consistency, adding or deleting information, and purpose	8
Sentence Sense	proper clauses without run-ons or fragments	6
Organization	Logical sequence	2

- b. Read all answer choices. Eliminate any that do not address the issue.
 - c. Choose the best choice and **reread** the sentence to make sure you selected the most correct, concise, and relevant choice.
3. If you are running out of time
 - a. If the question has a stem, choose the answer that seems to best relates to the issue.
 - b. If the question does not have a stem, choose your “letter of the day.” You don’t want to leave it blank, even if you are randomly guessing.

Other English Test Strategies

- **Pace Yourself.** Remember, you have 9 minutes to complete each passage and its questions. Practice this process regularly so the pace and the process becomes familiar.
- **Answer the questions in order, as you read the passage, and do not skip any questions.** If you need to return to a question (not recommended), mark it in your test booklet; however, mark an answer on your answer sheet anyway.
- **Notice the Style.** As you are reading, pay attention to the writing style. Passages will vary from informal to formal, from first-person to third-person point of view, from anecdotal to technical. Identify the style as you read.
- **Consider the context.** It is helpful to have a general sense of the essay as you answer the questions. While you should not waste too much time re-reading portions of the essay, you will find that finding the selected portion and skimming its context can help choose the right answer.
- **Words with Multiple Meanings.** Vocabulary is not expressly tested on the ACT; however, a good vocabulary and awareness of words will help you improve your score. Remember, some words have multiple meanings, so use the context of the passage to determine its meaning.
- **Rhetorical Skills v. Usage/Mechanics.** Familiarize yourself with the format of the Usage questions and how it differs from the Rhetorical skills questions. Typically, the Rhetorical skills questions have a question stem, whereas the Usage questions do not.
- **Look at the Answers.** For a Usage/Mechanics question, it is difficult to identify the error in grammar, syntax, usage, or punctuation error is contained in the passage. Often, you can determine the type of error by looking at the answer choices.
- **Watch out for new mistakes.** Often, in your rush to correct mistakes in the passage, you will create new mistakes. Be observant, especially in questions where the responses have similar wording. One apostrophe or comma can make all the difference.
- **Eliminate wrong answer choices.** You can get a question correct in two ways: by choosing the correct answer choice, or by eliminating all the wrong choices. Even if you cannot eliminate ALL the answer choices, your likelihood of choosing the right answer increases for each wrong choice you eliminate. *One thing: while it is fine to guess a right answer, do not eliminate any choices unless you are SURE.*
- **Check your answer in the sentence.** Do not move from the question until you have reread the portion of the passage, substituting the answer choice you have chosen. Too often you will recognize an incorrect choice when you hear it in context.
- **Big Idea v. Details questions.**
 - Big idea questions refer to the passage as a whole so, before reading, you should scan the end of questions to find them. If you find this type of question, read it carefully so you can pay attention for parts of the passage that address the big idea questions.

- On the other hand, details questions refer to a marked portion of the passage. Therefore, you can answer these questions as they arise while you are reading the passage.
- **Watch Two-part questions.** Some questions ask you to determine not only which option is best but also why it is best. To answer these questions, you have to be especially careful to read all of the answer choices since more than one choice may include your first answer. (see example, Real ACT, p.40)
- **Watch Interrelated questions.** As you are reading the passages on the ACT English test, you may notice that some sentences have more than one marked section. Make sure that you read the entire sentence in this situation because the correction in one part may depend on the correction of the other part. When this happens, you may want to consider the second section before the first section, or you may want to consider the two sections together. (see example, Real ACT, p. 41)