

ACT English Test

Basic Details

- It's the first of 4 tests. 45 min 75 Questions
 - **Not** enough time for a minute per question. For some, you won't need a minute anyway.
 - The question formats take on **patterns**.
 - The more practice with the types of questions, the better.
 - You will also be more aware of "*trick statements*" such as "which of these is NOT..."
 - Content: 2 types--Usage/Mechanics and Rhetorical Devices
 - Usage/Mechanics: Punctuation; Grammar; Syntax (sentence structure)
 - Rhetorical Devices: Writing strategies; Organization; Style (appropriate word or phrase)

General Advice

- The English test is to cover that which you should already know--you are asked to apply the rules of grammar and writing.
- Everything that is NOT underlined is assumed to *be* correct.
- You will do a combination of reading the questions and passages at the same time.
- If you can't get the answer relatively quickly, note it and move on.
- You are **not penalized** for guessing. So, FILL IN EVERY BUBBLE!
 - Eliminate answers that you know are wrong.
- Redundancy (unnecessary repetition) is a big deal; go for the *shortest answer*.
- Sentence fragments are *never* the right answer.
 - What do you need to make a sentence? Subject and Predicate (verb)
- If something sounds wrong, it likely could be. Take the time to "say" the answer in your head (of course).
- Don't be afraid of the answer "NO CHANGE." About 30% of the time it is correct!

Top 10 Rules

- **Run-Ons and Fragments.**
 - If a sentence is lacking a subject and our predicate, then it is a *fragment*. This is incorrect.
 - If a sentence has two (or more) independent clauses put together without appropriate punctuation, then it is called a *run-on*. This is also incorrect.
- **Verbs--subject/verb agreement and verb tenses.**
 - Find the subject of the sentence and make sure the verb matches it.
 - Note--the ACT tests on all forms of verbs: past, present, future, past perfect, present perfect, future perfect tenses.
- **Punctuation.**
 - Commas
 - Apostrophes
 - Colons
 - Semicolons
 - Dashes
 - Periods
 - Question Marks
 - Exclamation Points
- **Idioms.**
 - These are expressions native to the English language. You will be tested on knowing the appropriate format for the more common ones.
- **Wordiness.**
 - Again, go for the shorter answer, and keep it simple.
- **Parallel Structure**
 - When items are in a series, make sure they are in the same form.

- **Pronouns.**
 - Pronouns must have a clear antecedent.
 - Mrs Larson = She
 - Mrs Larson (antecedent) She (pronoun)
 - If the antecedent is unclear, the noun needs to be put into the sentence.
- **Modifiers: Adjectives, Adverbs, and Modifying phrases.**
 - Modifiers are words or phrases that describe things.
 - Adverbs modify verbs
 - Adjectives modify nouns
 - Be aware that many sentences start with a modifying phrase followed by a comma.
 - The subject following must be the thing being modified.
- **Word Choice.**
 - You will be tested on the most precise word choice.
 - There will be one correct answer.
- **Organization and Strategy.**
 - You will be asked questions about the order and focus of sentences or paragraphs.
 - You will be asked about adding, revising, or deleting sentences.
 - You will be asked how a sentence fits with the audience, purpose, and focus of a paragraph as a whole.