

Sample Test Questions

ENGLISH
MATH
READING
SCIENCE
WRITING

English

Test Tips

An actual ACT English Test contains 75 questions to be answered in 45 minutes.

- Be aware of the writing style used in each passage.
- Consider the elements of writing that are included in each underlined portion of the passage. Some questions will ask you to base your decision on some specific element of writing, such as the tone or emphasis the text should convey.
- Be aware of questions with no underlined portions—that means you will be asked about a section of the passage or about the passage as a whole.
- Examine each answer choice and determine how it differs from the others. Many of the questions in the test will involve more than one aspect of writing.
- Determine the best answer. Read and consider all of the answer choices before you choose the one that best responds to the question.
- Reread the sentence, using your selected answer.

Click on letter choices below to view the correct answer and explanations.

ENGLISH

PASSAGE ONE

1	2	3
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DIRECTIONS: In the passage that follows, certain words and phrases are underlined and numbered. In the right-hand column, you will find alternatives for the underlined part. In most cases, you are to choose the one that best expresses the idea, makes the statement appropriate for standard written English, or is worded most consistently with the style and tone of the passage as a whole. If you think the original version is best, choose "NO CHANGE." In some cases, you will find in the right-hand column a question about the underlined part. You are to choose the best answer to the question.

You will also find questions about a section of the passage, or about the passage as a whole. These questions do not refer to an underlined portion of the passage, but rather are identified by a number or numbers in a box.

For each question, choose the alternative you consider best and fill in the corresponding oval on your answer document. Read the passage through once before you begin to answer the questions that accompany it. For many of the questions, you must read several sentences beyond the question to determine the answer. Be sure that you have read far enough ahead each time you choose an alternative.

A Microscope in the Kitchen

I grew up with buckets, shovels, and nets waiting by the back door; hip-waders hanging in the closet; tide table charts covering the refrigerator door; and a microscope was sitting on the kitchen table. Having studied, my mother is a marine biologist. Our household might have been described as uncooperative. Our meals weren't always served in the expected order of breakfast, lunch, and supper. Everything was subservient to the disposal of the tides. When the tide was low, Mom could be found down on the mudflats. When the tide was high, she would be standing on the inlet bridge with her plankton net.

I have great respect for my mother. I learned early that the moon affected the tides. Mom was always waiting for a full or new moon, when low tide would be lower than average and high tide higher than average. The moon being aligned with Earth and the sun when full or new, so its gravity combines with the sun's gravity to create an

even stronger gravitational pull. I knew that it took about eight hours for the tides to change from high to low, sixteen hours for a complete cycle of tides. I didn't have to wait to learn these things in school. In our house they were everyday knowledge.

[1] Often, my brother and I, joined our mother on her adventures into tidal lands.

[2] At the very low tides of the full moon, when almost all the water was sucked away, we found the hideaways where crabs, snails, starfish, and sea urchins hid in order not to be seen.[3] Sometimes we would dig with shovels in the mud, where yellow and white worms lived in their leathery tunnels. 13

For plankton tows, we would stand on the bridge while Mom lowered a cone-shaped net that is often used by marine biologists. Then we would patiently wait. After a while, she would pull up the net, and we would go home. Later, we would see her sitting at the kitchen table, peering at a drop of water through the lenses of her microscope from the bottle—watching the thousands of tiny swimming organisms.

1.

Choose the best answer.

- A. ☒ NO CHANGE
- B. ☐ waiting, by the back door,
- C. ☐ waiting by the back door,
- D. ☐ waiting by the back door

CORRECT RESPONSE ^

The best answer is A. It provides the best punctuation for the underlined portion. The phrase "waiting by the back door" describes the noun *nets* and is essential because it tells which nets the narrator "grew up with." Therefore, no comma should be placed after *nets*. The semicolon after the word *door* is appropriate because semicolons are used between items in a series when one or more of these items include commas.

2.

Choose the best answer.

- E. ☐ NO CHANGE
- F. ☐ would sit
- G. ☒ sitting
- H. ☐ sat

CORRECT RESPONSE ^

The best answer is G. The verb form *sitting* is best here because it creates a parallel structure for all three items in the series: "nets *waiting*," "hip-waders *hanging*," "a microscope *sitting*."

3.

Choose the best answer.

- A. ☐ NO CHANGE
- B. ☐ As my mother's interest is science, she is
- C. ☐ My mother's occupation is that of
- D. ☒ My mother is

CORRECT RESPONSE ^

The best answer is D. It offers the clearest, most concise wording for this sentence. "My mother is a marine biologist," is a clear statement that avoids unnecessary or confusing words.

4.

Which choice would most effectively introduce the rest of this paragraph?

- E. ☐ NO CHANGE
- F. ☐ There seemed to be no explanation for why Mom ran our household the way she did.
- G. ☒ Our household didn't run according to a typical schedule.
- H. ☐ Mom ran our household in a most spectacular manner.

CORRECT RESPONSE ^

The best answer is G. This is a good introductory sentence because the rest of the paragraph explains how the narrator's household "didn't run according to a typical schedule." The paragraph goes on to say that "meals weren't always served in the expected order" and that the mother operated according to the tides, which were not on a typical household schedule.

5.

Choose the best answer.

- A. ☐ NO CHANGE
- B. ☐ was defenseless in the face of
- C. ☒ depended on
- D. ☐ trusted in

CORRECT RESPONSE ^

The best answer is C. It offers the clearest, most concise wording for this sentence. "Everything depended on the tides," is a precise, clear statement that avoids unnecessary or confusing words.

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