

# 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.

6.

Which choice most effectively signals the shift from the preceding paragraph to this paragraph?

- E. ☐ NO CHANGE
- F. ☒ Our lives were likewise affected by the phases of the moon.
- G. ☐ A relationship exists between the moon and the tides.
- H. ☐ The moon is a mysterious orb afloat in the sky.

**CORRECT RESPONSE** ^

**The best answer is F.** This is the best introductory sentence because the rest of this new paragraph explains how "the phases of the moon" affected a "complete cycle of tides." The other choices do not logically lead into this explanation of what causes high and low tides.

7.

Choose the best answer.

- A. ☐ NO CHANGE
- B. ☐ Since the moon is
- C. ☒ The moon is
- D. ☐ The moon,

CORRECT RESPONSE ^

**The best answer is C.** This choice creates a structurally sound compound sentence with two complete independent clauses connected by the coordinating conjunction *so*.

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8.

**Choose the best answer.**

- E. ☒ NO CHANGE
- F. ☐ one's
- G. ☐ it's
- H. ☐ its'

CORRECT RESPONSE ^

**The best answer is E.** The possessive pronoun *its* is appropriate here because it refers back to the moon: "[the moon's] gravitational pull."

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9.

**If the writer were to delete the phrase "sixteen hours for a complete cycle of tides" from the preceding sentence (ending the sentence with a period), the essay would primarily lose a detail that:**

- A. ☐ shows how the narrator's interests are different from the mother's interests.
- B. ☐ contradicts a point made earlier in the paragraph.
- C. ☐ helps establish the setting for the essay.
- D. ☒ displays the narrator's knowledge of tides.

**CORRECT RESPONSE** ^

**The best answer is D** because the detailed information about how long it takes to complete a cycle of tides clearly shows that the narrator has specific knowledge of tides.

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10.

**Choose the best answer.**

- E. ☐ NO CHANGE
- F. ☐ brother, and I,
- G. ☐ brother, and I
- H. ☒ brother and I

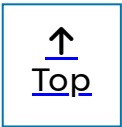
**CORRECT RESPONSE** ^

**The best answer is H** because no punctuation is needed to separate the subject of the sentence (*my brother and I*) from the verb (*joined*).

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