
Live ELA Review: High Yield Topics in English & Reading

ACT English Review

Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson, you will be able to:

- Distinguish between correct and incorrect punctuation usage, verb tense, and pronoun case in a given sentence
- Ensure agreement between subjects and verbs, as well as pronouns and antecedents
- Use adjectives and adverbs to correctly modify or describe other words
- Identify and correct improper idiom usage, run-on sentences, and sentence fragments
- Place modifiers into sentences to convey intended meaning
- Recognize proper and improper use of parallelism
- Maintain a consistent level of style and tone in a passage
- Identify and correct wordiness and awkward sentence construction
- Choose effective transition words and phrases based on context

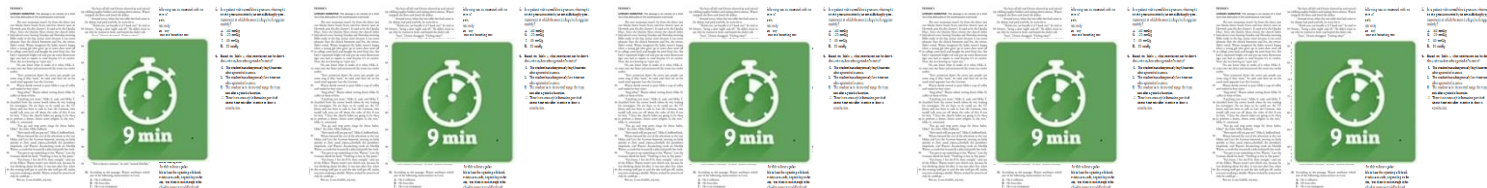
Understanding the Test

What is ACT English all about?

The English test is always first.



It will be 45 minutes long and consist of 75 questions distributed over 5 passages.



This means you have 9 minutes to spend on each passage and its 15 questions.
Speed and accuracy are key!

Understanding the Test

What is ACT English all about?

The English Test contains passages on a variety of topics, written in a variety of styles.

Don't worry! Your strategy will remain the same regardless of the topic or style.

Some questions will ask about underlined portions, while others will ask about a section of the passage or the passage as a whole.

The English Test includes three reporting categories:

- Conventions of Standard English
- Knowledge of Language
- Production of Writing

Punctuation

Commas

Use **commas** to separate elements in a series or modifying elements

My most interesting classes this year are physics, calculus, and U.S. history.

Use a **comma with a coordinating conjunction** to separate independent clauses within a sentence

I work on Mondays, and I have soccer practice on Tuesdays.

Use a **pair of commas** to add parenthetical (nonessential) phrases and clauses

Azara found, much to her delight, that the hours she spent studying were worth the effort.

Use a **comma** to set off an introductory or modifying phrase

After school, Mindy has to go straight to work.

Punctuation

Hikers, typically, find, that the climb takes at least three hours.

1

1. A. NO CHANGE
- B. Hikers typically, find
- C. Hikers typically find
- D. Hikers, typically find

Punctuation

Semicolons and Apostrophes

Use a **semicolon** to join independent clauses (without a coordinate conjunction)

Fall is my favorite season; watching the leaves change and going to football games makes me happy.

Use a **semicolon** to separate items in a complex list

When my friends came over for breakfast, I served eggs, bacon, and toast; cereal, grits, and oatmeal; and strawberries, mangoes, and apples.

Use an **apostrophe** to show possession, replace one or more letters in a contraction, or form the plural of single letters and numbers

After Skylar took the ACT, he went to his friend's house to celebrate.

Punctuation

Even the parts of a chili vary₂ the seeds and veins of a pepper are hotter than the flesh.

- 2. F. NO CHANGE
- G. vary but
- H. vary,
- J. vary;

Punctuation

Colons

Use a **colon** before a list if the information before the list is an independent clause

Before driving to the test center, I checked that I had packed what I needed: extra pencils, a pencil sharpener, my calculator, a snack, and everything else on my list.

Use a **colon** between an independent clause and information that modifies or adds to it

As I stood in front of the painting, I wondered: who decides what qualifies as art?

Use a **colon** to precede direct quotations, business salutations, and titles

As Martin Luther King Jr. once said: "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere."

Punctuation

Not all visitors, however, have been so welcome, years ago, an escaped
3
convict made his way to her mountain retreat and threatened her.

3. A. NO CHANGE
B. welcome; since
C. welcome:
D. welcome, although,

Grammar and Usage

Subject-Verb Agreement

The **subject** and **verb** of a sentence must match in person. Subjects and verbs can use first person, second person, or third person.

I am playing golf. You are playing golf. They are playing golf.

The subject and verb of a sentence must also match in number. Subjects can be singular or plural, and verbs must be adjusted to match.

She works really hard at practice. They work really hard at practice.

Grammar and Usage

While most vegetables taste similar from one species of the plant to another, the chili pepper, backbone of the incendiary cuisine of the Southwest, varies immensely. Each species have a different size, shape, color, and heat.

4

- 4. F. NO CHANGE
- G. having
- H. has
- J. OMIT the underlined portion

Grammar and Usage

Pronouns

The correct **pronoun** case must be used to match the noun that the pronoun is replacing.

He made dinner for himself because his parents were working late.

Know how to use **relative pronouns**, including who, whom, that, and which.

I would be happy to write to the person who interviewed you. To whom should I address the letter?

Smoothies that have strawberries and raspberries are my favorite. Smoothies are often made with a variety of ingredients, which can make them a healthy breakfast option.

Pronouns must agree with the nouns they are replacing.

The students go to their homes after school.

Grammar and Usage

The words of a novel or poem are literally “bound” within there pages.

Reading silently and alone, we are apt to neglect the dynamics of
cadence and tone that give rise to some of the more enjoyable moments
in literature.

5. A. NO CHANGE
B. its
C. one's
D. these

Grammar and Usage

Adjectives and Adverbs

Adjectives describe nouns.

David's favorite college has an excellent engineering program.

Adverbs describe adjectives, verbs, and other adverbs. Many adverbs end in -ly.

My A.P. Calculus teacher is extremely intelligent.

Conjunctive adverbs can be used to transition between or introduce clauses and sentences. These adverbs do not always end in -ly.

After school, Hadley spends two hours at soccer practice. Meanwhile, her brother Javier works on his homework in the library.

Grammar and Usage

On each wing, all flighted birds have ten primary flight feathers, each one shaped slight different.

6

- 6. F. NO CHANGE
- G. slight differently.
- H. slightly differently.
- J. slightly more differently.

Sentence Structure and Formation

Run-on Sentences

A **complete sentence** has a subject and a verb, and expresses a complete thought.

I studied for the ACT, so I got a higher score.

An **independent clause** is a simple, complete sentence.

I studied for the ACT.

A **dependent clause** has a subject and a verb, but does not express a complete thought.

So I got a higher score.

A **run-on sentence** is a sentence that involves more than one independent clause and does not use proper punctuation or connections.

I studied for the ACT, I got a higher score.

Sentence Structure and Formation

Fleer Corporation, now only one of countless bubble gum manufacturers, makes four million pieces of bubble gum a day selling them in fifty countries.

7

7. A. NO CHANGE
B. as they are sold
C. and sells them
D. that is sold

Sentence Structure and Formation

Sentence Fragments

A **sentence fragment** is an incomplete sentence: a sentence that is missing a subject, verb, or complete thought.

Because Tyler went home after the game.

When a portion of a **noticeably short or long sentence** is underlined, check for a sentence structure error related to run-on sentences and sentence fragments.

Sentence Structure and Formation

He fled but they recaptured and imprisoned.

8

8. F. NO CHANGE
G. recaptured and imprisoned him.
H. was recaptured and imprisoned.
J. they sent him back to prison after being recaptured.

Sentence Structure and Formation

Modifiers

Adjectives can only be used to modify nouns, so **adverbs** should be used to modify adjectives, verbs, and other adverbs.

Sandra has a new car that she drives really carefully.

Words and phrases can be used as **introductory modifiers** when set off by a comma. The object that is being modified must be the first noun introduced after the comma.

With an ear-splitting noise, the fire alarm went off and the class filed outside for the fire drill.

On the ACT, you have to not only identify the correct adjective or adverb to be used, but also determine the **correct placement** within the sentence.

All modifiers should be placed near the objects they modify. When the modifiers are too far away or closer to another noun, the sentence is incorrect as written.

Sentence Structure and Formation

Cisneros felt decided out of place.

9

9. A. NO CHANGE
B. deciding
C. decidedly
D. decidedly and

Sentence Structure and Formation

Parallelism

Parallelism requires that words, phrases, and clauses that have the **same purpose** use the **same form**. When an underlined segment includes **a list or a conjunction**, look for a parallelism error.

Andres was excited for the snow day but was disappointed that he wasn't allowed to drive anywhere.

Parallelism applies to **adjectives**, **nouns**, **verbs**, **adverbs**, and all other grammatical elements.

Sophia enjoys hiking, rock climbing, and mountain biking.

Sentence Structure and Formation

White clouds mist up from the sea, you can see sunlight shimmering on
the snowy slopes of Mt. Fuji.

10

10. F. NO CHANGE

G. also shimmering sunlight

H. and a shimmering sunlight

J. and sunlight shimmers

Choosing Appropriate Language

Recognizing Tone

Other questions test the consistent use of tone throughout the passage.

To answer tone questions, ask yourself:

Is the passage positive or negative?

Is the author subjective or objective?

Is the passage written formally or informally?

Each passage must use words and phrases that fit the overall tone. Ask yourself:

What is the typical tone of this word or phrase?

Does this word or phrase match the general tone of the passage?

Choosing Appropriate Language

Now that the Navajo code is no longer used, the code talkers, whose secret work saved American lives, can finally receive public recognition for their actions.

11

11. A. NO CHANGE
B. hush-hush actions
C. concealed, hidden efforts
D. doings, kept under wraps,

Sentence Construction

Avoiding Redundancy

To avoid redundant writing, evaluate whether any part of the current underlined portion is repetitive and, therefore, unnecessary.

Repetitive: In addition to his job, Micha also volunteers at the animal shelter.

Concise: In addition to his job, Micha volunteers at the animal shelter.

Sentence Construction

Unfortunately, the code talkers sometimes faced dangerous peril
from their own side.

12

12. F. NO CHANGE
G. hazardous
H. risky
J. OMIT the underlined portion.

Organization

Transition Words and Phrases

Transitions are used to introduce, connect, and conclude ideas.

To answer transition questions, ask yourself:

What type of connection is the author trying to convey?

Use context clues from the paragraph and passage to determine the appropriate transition word or phrase. Transition words can:

Introduce a new assertion

Specify a cause-and-effect relationship

Advance a related idea

Differentiate between contrasting ideas

Introduce an example or supporting thought

Sort ideas based on time

Conclude or summarize a paragraph or passage

Organization

Sometimes a Salvation Army volunteer boards the subway train with sandwiches and juice to give to the needy. “Put your pride to the side!” the volunteer shouts, and I’ve seen many people put out their hands. The speaker also raises money. It’s impossible to predict which people will dig into their pockets or open their purses, and I’ve stopped trying to guess.

13. A. NO CHANGE
B. Therefore, the
C. In conclusion, the
D. In other words, the

ACT English Review

Learning Objectives

Now that you have completed this lesson, you should be able to:

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ACT Reading Review

Learning Objectives

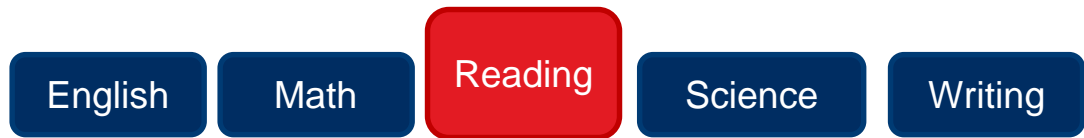
By the end of this lesson, you will be able to:

- Distinguish main ideas and themes from supporting details
- Recognize cause-effect relationships, sequences of events, comparisons, and contrasts
- Build a passage roadmap to keep track of important references
- Identify the author's voice and point of view in a passage
- Define unfamiliar words based on their context
- Determine the function of a sentence or paragraph
- Make inferences based on specific textual references
- Identify and analyze arguments made by an author

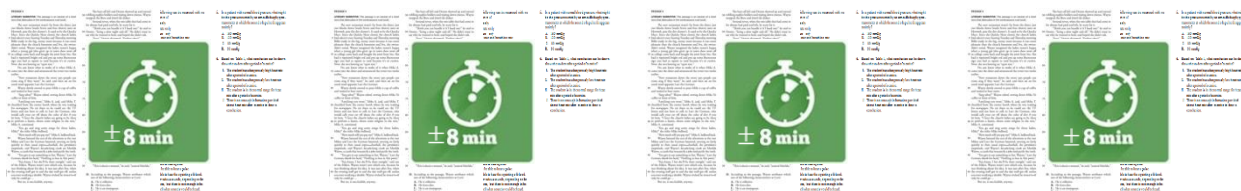
Understanding the Test

What is ACT Reading all about?

The Reading test is always third, right after the break.



It will be 35 minutes long and consist of 40 questions distributed over 4 passages.



This means you have **JUST UNDER 9 minutes** to spend on each passage and its 10 questions.

Does that sound like you have to read efficiently and aggressively?....IT SHOULD!

Understanding the Test

What is ACT Reading all about?

The Reading test contains passages about Social Studies, Humanities, and Natural Sciences, and Literary Narratives.

The same reading techniques will apply to every type of passage!

ACT Reading tests your ability to:

- determine an author's main idea
- find and interpret important details
- make inferences based on written text
- analyze the author's voice and methods

Main Ideas and Supporting Details

Big Picture vs. Finer Points

Reading on the ACT and in college will require you to distill a passage down to its **main idea** or **theme**. The main idea/theme has two components:

"What?" (topic)

"What about it?" (main idea/theme)

To determine the topic, ask yourself:

"What is the passage about?"

To determine the main idea/theme of the passage, ask yourself:

"What aspect of the topic is being discussed?"

If you note the topic and main idea/theme while reading, you'll be well prepared to answer the questions following the passage.

Main Ideas and Supporting Details

Big Picture vs. Finer Points

Knowing the big picture is an important part of answering questions on the ACT. However, it is just as important to be able to quickly locate **specific details**.

These questions will include line numbers or keywords that can be used to quickly identify the question type and locate the information in the passage.

The correct answer will usually be paraphrased and found near the location referenced in the question stem.

Be careful! Don't choose an answer choice using only the keywords within; read the entire choice and make sure it correctly answers the question.

Main Ideas and Supporting Details

HUMANITIES: This passage is adapted from Indira Ganesan's essay "Resisting my Family History," which appeared in *Glamour* magazine (©1994 by The Condé Nast Publications Inc.).

Though I'd been born there, I didn't want to go to India. What I wanted was to knock on a Broadway producer's door and say, "I'm brown, I'm talented, let me write you a play." My parents, however, believed I needed to embrace my Indian past. I wanted only to escape it, as I wanted to escape anything that spoke to me of tradition or old-fashioned ideas. I was too cool for India.

1. The passage states that instead of traveling to India after graduating from high school, the narrator had hoped to:
 - A. attend college in New York.
 - B. become a playwright.
 - C. travel in the U.S. with her friends.
 - D. act in a Broadway play.

Main Ideas and Supporting Details

I attended a wedding. I watched some of the funeral preparations following the death of my great-uncle. I climbed 500 steps to reach a Jain temple where a priest gave me a blessing that translated roughly as “You will have seven years of good luck followed by seven years more of the same.” During a ten-day tour of famous temples, I saw a snake charmer in a parking lot and visited an entire city of priests and ascetics. They let us into a temple’s sanctum sanctorum, where we saw the God image in all its splendor.

2. Information in the sixth paragraph supports the narrator’s claim that:
 - F. her trip to India was an adventure.
 - G. she was missing out on a superlative year in the U.S.
 - H. everyone in India knew she was American.
 - J. she was determined to dislike India.

Commonly Tested Concepts

Cause-Effect Relationships

The ACT Reading Test may ask you to identify the details of a cause-effect relationship.

Pay attention to these relationships as you read and highlight them in your notes.

As you read, be on the lookout for cause-effect transition words.

as a result because of due to hence

in response to thanks to thus

Commonly Tested Concepts

In India I had the unswerving consideration of my relatives, 25 of whom I met in my first six months. I remember our meals together, and the preparations: the pile of freshly shredded coconut—white, flaky, fragrant with milk, the way sweet dough for *jellabies* would be dropped in hot oil and bob up to perfection. In America I picked at pizza and baked ziti on the school lunch menu; in India I feasted. There were scores of delicious meals, piles of snacks in tins, water always available in an earthen vessel in the kitchen.

And still I felt I was missing out on a superlative year in America, and I was determined to dislike India. I dragged my aunt to see a Steven Spielberg movie and felt it superior to Indian films, even though they managed to reduce me to tears.

3. The passage suggests that the narrator dragged her aunt to a Steven Spielberg movie because:
- A. the narrator refused to attend Indian movies.
 - B. her aunt did not know who Steven Spielberg was.
 - C. the narrator was determined to cling to the American culture she left behind.
 - D. the narrator wanted to prove that Indian values were just as important as American values.

Commonly Tested Concepts

Sequences of Events

Sequence questions ask about the order in which events happen and require an understanding of the passage as a whole.

Be careful! The order in which events are written about is NOT necessarily the order in which they occurred—beware of flashbacks!

Keep an eye out for keywords that signify order or chronology.

before

during

after

prior

first

then

later

last

that morning

that night

while

finally

Commonly Tested Concepts

PROSE FICTION: This passage is adapted from the short story “Ghirlandaio” by Francine Prose (©1993 by Francine Prose).

Kenny was right behind me in line, and as we pushed toward the narrow bus door, he whispered, “Can we still go see it?” It took me a while to think what he meant, though for days it was all I had thought of.

What he meant was the Ghirlandaio painting, which he’d heard about from me. I offered to take him to see it. It would be easy, I said—I knew the museum so well we could sneak off and get back before anyone noticed.

Commonly Tested Concepts

Kenny stared at the painting. Then very softly he said, “Wow. Disgusto.”

“Disgusto” was the word, all right. And yet I felt strangely hurt, protective of Ghirlandaio’s old man, as if he and his grandson were relatives of mine and Kenny had passed judgement on my family, on my life, on those afternoons when I stood here with my father pretending that this was something compelling and beautiful and not what it was: disgusto.

4. The passage suggests that the narrator was first introduced to the Ghirlandaio painting:
- F. in a classroom art lesson given by Miss Haley.
 - G. in an art book presented to her by her parents.
 - H. on a previous visit to the art museum.
 - J. on the museum trip with Kenny and her classmates.

Commonly Tested Concepts

Making Comparisons and Contrasts

You will also be asked to identify similarities and differences between parts of the passage.

These questions do not require any prior knowledge—the answers are directly in the passage.

As you read, be on the lookout for elements that are commonly compared and contrasted.

character traits

theories

mood

effect(s) of specific events

opinions

tone

Identify the elements being compared and contrasted and eliminate the answer choices that are not supported by evidence in the passage.

Commonly Tested Concepts

PROSE FICTION: This passage is adapted from the title story of *Only the Little Bone*, a collection of short stories by David Huddle (©1986 by David Huddle).

The whole time I work I wait to see where the screw-up is going to come. I imagine what my colleagues will be saying about me in the hallways. Did you know that Bryant built his shelves so they tilt? Did you know that Bryant's books rejected the color he painted his shelves? But the screw-up doesn't appear. I paint the shelves red, and they look O.K. (Granddaddy Bryant once painted yellow a whole row of company houses he built.) I paint a chair blue and red, and it's a little silly-looking, but it picks up the blue of the carpet and the red of the shelves. The vision isn't nearly as impressive as I thought it would be, but then what vision ever is?

Commonly Tested Concepts

We plan-makers are accustomed to things turning out not-quite-as-good-as-we-had-in-mind. Our world view includes the “diminished excellence” component. Diminished excellence is a condition of the world and therefore never an occasion for sorrow, whereas flawed competence comes out of character and therefore is frequently the reason for the bowed head, the furrowed brow. Three months later, when I try to turn the heat off in my office, I discover that I have placed one of the shelf uprights too close to the radiator to be able to work the valve. The screw-up was there all along, but in this case I am relieved to find it. I am my grandfather’s grandson after all.

5. In the last paragraph, a comparison is made between “diminished excellence” and “flawed competence.” From the narrator’s point of view, the conditions are different because one is:
 - A. a source of sorrow while the other is a source of pride.
 - B. based in the family while the other is based in the self.
 - C. inherent in the environment while the other is inherent in the individual.
 - D. a sign that the individual can improve the world while the other is a sign that the individual can’t.

Creating a Roadmap

Active Reading and Effective Note Taking

Reading, understanding, and answering questions about multiple passages in a short amount of time can be daunting.

Taking notes on the main idea, relationships within the passage, and other important clues will help you quickly answer the questions and move on to the next passage.

Your roadmap won't have all the answers and should not include specific details but it should tell you where to find them.

Use the topic and scope of the passage to help determine its purpose. The **purpose** is why the author is writing. Questions that ask you to determine the author's purpose will usually include incorrect choices that are too broad or too narrow.

*Is the author mainly trying to prove a point? Or to rebut someone else's point?
Is the author explaining a situation? Or just presenting facts neutrally?*

Creating a Roadmap

Active Reading and Effective Note Taking

Some questions will ask about the **main idea** of either the passage as a whole or one paragraph in particular. These questions are easily identified using the key phrases “main idea” or “main argument.”

What opinion, viewpoint, or single sentence sums up the passage?

What does each individual paragraph add to the discussion?

To answer questions about specific details, be sure the answer you choose is relevant to the question being asked, not just generally related to the topic at hand.

What is the author’s specific subject matter in this passage? In this paragraph?

What is (and is not) included in that discussion?

Creating a Roadmap

NATURAL SCIENCE: This passage is adapted from the Preface to neurologist Oliver Sacks' collection of essays *An Anthropologist on Mars* (©1995 by Oliver Sacks).

Nature's imagination, as Freeman Dyson likes to say, is richer than ours, and he speaks, marvellingly, of this richness in the physical and biological worlds, the endless diversity of physical forms and forms of life. For me, as a physician, nature's richness is to be studied in the phenomena of health and disease, in the endless forms of individual adaptation by which human organisms, people, adapt and reconstruct themselves.

Creating a Roadmap

10 Defects, disorders, diseases, in this sense, can
play a paradoxical role, by bringing out latent powers,
developments, evolutions, forms of life, that might never
be seen, or even be imaginable, in their absence. It is
the paradox of disease, in this sense, its “creative”
15 potential, that forms the central theme of this book.

Thus while one may be horrified by the ravages of
developmental disorder or disease, one may
sometimes see them as creative too—for if they destroy
particular paths, particular ways of doing things, they
20 may force the nervous system into making other paths
and ways, force on it an unexpected growth and
evolution. This other side of development or disease is
something I see, potentially, in almost every patient;
and it is this which I am especially concerned to
25 describe.

Creating a Roadmap

Similar considerations were brought up by A.R. Luria, who studied the long-term survival of patients who had cerebral tumors or had suffered brain injuries or strokes—and the ways, the adaptations, they used to survive. He also studied deaf and blind children as a very young man (with his mentor L.S. Vygotsky). Vygotsky stressed the intactness rather than the deficits of such children:

Creating a Roadmap

35 A handicapped child represents a qualitatively
different, unique type of development. ... If a blind
child or a deaf child achieves the same level of
development as a normal child, then the child with
a defect achieves this *in another way, by another*
40 *course, by other means*; and, for the pedagogue,
it is particularly important to know the uniqueness
of the course along which he must lead the child.
This uniqueness transforms the minus of a
handicap into the plus of compensation.

Creating a Roadmap

That such radical adaptations could occur demanded,
45 Luria thought, a new view of the brain, a sense of it not
as programmed and static, but rather as dynamic and
active, a supremely efficient adaptive system geared for
evolution and change, ceaselessly adapting to the
needs of the organism—its need, above all, to construct
50 a coherent self and world, whatever defects or
disorders of brain function befell it. That the brain is
minutely differentiated is clear: there are hundreds of
tiny areas crucial for every aspect of perception and
behavior. The miracle is how they all cooperate, are
55 integrated together, in the creation of a self.

Creating a Roadmap

This sense of the brain's remarkable capacity for the most striking adaptations, not least in the special (and often desperate) circumstances of neural or sensory mishap, has come to dominate my perception of my patients and their lives. So much so, indeed, that I am sometimes moved to wonder whether it may not be necessary to redefine the very concepts of "health" and "disease," to see these in terms of the ability of the organism to create a new organization and order, one that fits its special, altered disposition and needs, rather than in the terms of a rigidly defined "norm."

Creating a Roadmap

Sickness implies a contraction of life, but such contractions do not have to occur. Nearly all of my patients, so it seems to me, whatever their problems, reach out to life—and not only despite their conditions, but often because of them, and even with their aid.

The study of disease, for the physician, demands the study of identity, the inner worlds that patients, under the spur of illness, create. But the realities of patients, the ways in which they and their brains construct their own worlds, cannot be comprehended wholly from the observation of behavior, from the outside.

Creating a Roadmap

With this in mind, I have taken off my white coat,
80 deserted, by and large, the hospitals where I have
spent the last twenty-five years, to explore my subjects'
lives as they live in the real world, feeling in part like a
naturalist, examining rare forms of life; in part like an
anthropologist, a neuroanthropologist, in the field—but
85 most of all like a physician, called here and there to
make house calls, house calls at the far borders of
human experience.

Author's Voice and Method

Deciphering Attitude and Tone

The author's **attitude** and **tone** are expressed through the author's choice of words and punctuation. Ask yourself:

*Is the author expressing disapproval?
Compassion? Admiration? Criticism?*

The answer to the question *must* be supported by **evidence** in the passage, although the evidence may come from outside the cited lines or part of the passage.

Avoid extreme answers unless they are clearly supported.

The author's **method** is a combination of the main idea and the purpose of the passage. Ask yourself:

*What strategies or devices does the author use throughout the passage?
What would happen to the author's goal if a particular example or detail was omitted from the passage?*

Author's Voice and Method

Deciphering Attitude and Tone

What is the **tone** or **voice** of each example?

While these findings represent significant progress in scientific understanding of trachoma and preventative measures, there is still a substantial gap between the current state and the goal of complete eradication of trachoma by 2020. Education and further study are both needed.

Persuasive

In high school I had edited an underground newspaper, bought my first copy of *The Village Voice*, read *The New York Times* regularly. I believed I was a feminist. In India I was unsure of my role. Above all, I was deeply worried I'd be married off, that I'd be forced to become a housewife, horror of horrors, and would lose my freedom.

Ironical

Author's Point of View

Determining the Author's Perspective

The author's **tone** is sometimes referred to as the author's **voice** and will provide important clues to the author's perspective.

Is the passage's overall atmosphere, or "vibe," positive or negative? Objective or judgmental? Delighted or upset?

Questions that ask about the author's **point of view** or **perspective** and the intended audience require you to think about the passage as a whole. Before answering these types of questions, be sure to identify the author's **purpose**.

If the topic is the "What?" and the main idea/theme is the "What about it?", then the purpose is the "Why?"

Some possible **purposes** on the ACT include to prove, to demonstrate, to educate, and to illustrate.

Before determining the purpose of the passage, consider the main idea, the author's tone, and the author's point of view.

Author's Point of View

Determining the Author's Perspective

What authorial **purpose** do you sense in each example?

The hope is that the Tardkiss study might help researchers create techniques to protect other organisms, not just micro ones, from extreme conditions found in space—perhaps, eventually, even human beings.

To reveal facts or ideas (informational/expository)

Given these examples and the species-specific nature of frog calls, greater scrutiny and examination of unexpected calls is to be encouraged.

To convince the reader of a point of view (persuasive)

Mixed Practice

6. The author's main purpose in lines 56 – 71 is to show:
- F. how he has come to think differently about the brain.
 - G. why sickness often causes a contraction of life.
 - H. when he made new discoveries about the brain.
 - J. which of his subjects helped him redefine the term “norm.”

Words and Phrases in Context

Inferring the Meaning of Unfamiliar Vocabulary

Some ACT questions ask what a specific word or phrase from the passage means based on the **context** of the passage. Memorizing vocabulary is not necessary to master these questions.

Can I break this word apart into roots, prefixes, and/or suffixes?

Have I seen or heard this word (or something similar) before?

Can I use the modifiers and relationships in the passage to help?

If I pretend the cited word or phrase is missing, what could I substitute instead?

These questions will cite words or phrases from a specific place within the passage. Focus on gaining context by reading the sentences found before and after the cited line or lines.

These questions can be more challenging because they require that you think more broadly about the word or phrase in question. Avoid common definitions!

Words and Phrases in Context

Inferring the Meaning of Unfamiliar Vocabulary

Many Jews believe the dead do not pass to a (1) *beatific* afterworld but to dust. Jews bury all of their dead in simple wooden coffins containing no metal, including no nails, to ensure that the dead and their wrappings will fully disintegrate into the earth. The traditional Jewish funeral is quite (2) *succinct*, but the rituals for the bereaved extend for some time. Following a Jewish burial, the family of the dead “sit shiva” for seven days; for 30 days after (3) *interment*, family members avoid celebratory events, and for the rest of the year, children of the departed say mourning prayers daily or weekly. After this designated year of mourning finishes, mourning is, interestingly, (4) *proscribed*, with the exception of a few anniversary days each year.

1. beatific: *blissful; heavenly*
2. succinct: *brief; short*
3. interment: *burial*
4. proscribed: *forbidden*

Mixed Practice

7. As it is used in line 16, the word *ravages* most nearly means:
- A. paradoxical features.
 - B. creative adaptations.
 - C. fatal nature.
 - D. destructive actions.

Mixed Practice

8. As it is used in line 43, the word *compensation* most nearly means:
- F. payment.
 - G. differentiation.
 - H. disposition.
 - J. adaptation.

Mixed Practice

9. The word *miracle* in line 54 refers most specifically to the ways in which:
- A. brain function disorders are cured.
 - B. unique handicaps are compensated for.
 - C. different areas of the brain work together.
 - D. the creative potential of disease is revealed.

ACT Reading Review

Learning Objectives

Now that you have completed this lesson, you should be able to:

- Distinguish main ideas and themes from supporting details
- Recognize cause-effect relationships, sequences of events, comparisons, and contrasts
- Build a passage roadmap to keep track of important references
- Identify the author's voice and point of view in a passage
- Define unfamiliar words based on their context
- Determine the function of a sentence or paragraph
- Make inferences based on specific textual references
- Identify and analyze arguments made by an author

Answer Key

Hikers, typically, find, that the climb takes at least three hours.

1

1. ~~A.~~ NO CHANGE
B. Hikers typically, find
C. Hikers typically find
D. Hikers, typically find

Answer Key

Even the parts of a chili vary₂ the seeds and veins of a pepper are hotter than the flesh.

2. ~~F.~~ NO CHANGE
G. vary but
H. vary,
J. vary;

Answer Key

Not all visitors, however, have been so welcome, years ago, an escaped
3
convict made his way to her mountain retreat and threatened her.

3. ~~A.~~ NO CHANGE
B. welcome; since
☒ C. welcome:
D. welcome, although,

Answer Key

While most vegetables taste similar from one species of the plant to another, the chili pepper, backbone of the incendiary cuisine of the Southwest, varies immensely. Each species have a different size, shape, color, and heat.

4

4. ~~F.~~ NO CHANGE
G. having
H. has
J. OMIT the underlined portion

Answer Key

The words of a novel or poem are literally “bound” within there pages.

Reading silently and alone, we are apt to neglect the dynamics of
cadence and tone that give rise to some of the more enjoyable moments
in literature.

5. ~~A.~~ NO CHANGE
B. its
C. one's
D. these

Answer Key

On each wing, all flighted birds have ten primary flight feathers, each one shaped slight different.

6

6. ~~F.~~ NO CHANGE
G. slight differently.
H. slightly differently.
J. slightly more differently.

Answer Key

Fleer Corporation, now only one of countless bubble gum manufacturers, makes four million pieces of bubble gum a day selling them in fifty countries.

7

7. ~~A.~~ NO CHANGE
B. as they are sold
☒ C. and sells them
D. that is sold

Answer Key

He fled but they recaptured and imprisoned.

8

8. ~~F.~~ NO CHANGE

G. recaptured and imprisoned him.

H. was recaptured and imprisoned.

J. they sent him back to prison after being recaptured.

Answer Key

Cisneros felt decided₉ out of place.

9. ~~A.~~ NO CHANGE
B. deciding
C. decidedly
D. decidedly and

Answer Key

White clouds mist up from the sea, you can see sunlight shimmering on
the snowy slopes of Mt. Fuji.

10

10. ~~F.~~ NO CHANGE
G. also shimmering sunlight
H. and a shimmering sunlight
J. and sunlight shimmers

Answer Key

Now that the Navajo code is no longer used, the code talkers, whose secret work saved American lives, can finally receive public recognition for their actions.

11. **A.** NO CHANGE
B. hush-hush actions
C. concealed, hidden efforts
D. doings, kept under wraps,

Answer Key

Unfortunately, the code talkers sometimes faced dangerous peril
from their own side.

12

12. ~~F.~~ NO CHANGE

G. hazardous

H. risky

J. OMIT the underlined portion.

Answer Key

Sometimes a Salvation Army volunteer boards the subway train with sandwiches and juice to give to the needy. “Put your pride to the side!” the volunteer shouts, and I’ve seen many people put out their hands. The speaker also raises money. It’s impossible to predict which people will dig into their pockets or open their purses, and I’ve stopped trying to guess.

13. **A.** NO CHANGE
B. Therefore, the
C. In conclusion, the
D. In other words, the

Answer Key

HUMANITIES: This passage is adapted from Indira Ganesan’s essay “Resisting my Family History,” which appeared in *Glamour* magazine (©1994 by The Condé Nast Publications Inc.).

Though I’d been born there, I didn’t want to go to India. What I wanted was to knock on a Broadway producer’s door and say, “I’m brown, I’m talented, let me write you a play.” My parents, however, believed I needed to embrace my Indian past. I wanted only to escape it, as I wanted to escape anything that spoke to me of tradition or old-fashioned ideas. I was too cool for India.

1. The passage states that instead of traveling to India after graduating from high school, the narrator had hoped to:
 - A. attend college in New York.
 - B. become a playwright.**
 - C. travel in the U.S. with her friends.
 - D. act in a Broadway play.

Answer Key

I attended a wedding. I watched some of the funeral preparations following the death of my great-uncle. I climbed 500 steps to reach a Jain temple where a priest gave me a blessing that translated roughly as “You will have seven years of good luck followed by seven years more of the same.” During a ten-day tour of famous temples, I saw a snake charmer in a parking lot and visited an entire city of priests and ascetics. They let us into a temple’s sanctum sanctorum, where we saw the God image in all its splendor.

2. Information in the sixth paragraph supports the narrator’s claim that:

- F.** her trip to India was an adventure.
- G.** she was missing out on a superlative year in the U.S.
- H.** everyone in India knew she was American.
- J.** she was determined to dislike India.

Answer Key

In India I had the unswerving consideration of my relatives, 25 of whom I met in my first six months. I remember our meals together, and the preparations: the pile of freshly shredded coconut—white, flaky, fragrant with milk, the way sweet dough for *jellabies* would be dropped in hot oil and bob up to perfection. In America I picked at pizza and baked ziti on the school lunch menu; in India I feasted. There were scores of delicious meals, piles of snacks in tins, water always available in an earthen vessel in the kitchen.

And still I felt I was missing out on a superlative year in America, and I was determined to dislike India. I dragged my aunt to see a Steven Spielberg movie and felt it superior to Indian films, even though they managed to reduce me to tears.

3. The passage suggests that the narrator dragged her aunt to a Steven Spielberg movie because:

- A. the narrator refused to attend Indian movies.
- B. her aunt did not know who Steven Spielberg was.
- C.** the narrator was determined to cling to the American culture she left behind.
- D. the narrator wanted to prove that Indian values were just as important as American values.

Answer Key

PROSE FICTION: This passage is adapted from the short story “Ghirlandaio” by Francine Prose (©1993 by Francine Prose).

Kenny was right behind me in line, and as we pushed toward the narrow bus door, he whispered, “Can we still go see it?” It took me a while to think what he meant, though for days it was all I had thought of.

What he meant was the Ghirlandaio painting, which he’d heard about from me. I offered to take him to see it. It would be easy, I said—I knew the museum so well we could sneak off and get back before anyone noticed.

Answer Key

Kenny stared at the painting. Then very softly he said, “Wow. Disgusto.”

“Disgusto” was the word, all right. And yet I felt strangely hurt, protective of Ghirlandaio’s old man, as if he and his grandson were relatives of mine and Kenny had passed judgement on my family, on my life, on those afternoons when I stood here with my father pretending that this was something compelling and beautiful and not what it was: disgusto.

4. The passage suggests that the narrator was first introduced to the Ghirlandaio painting:
- F. in a classroom art lesson given by Miss Haley.
 - G. in an art book presented to her by her parents.
 - H.** on a previous visit to the art museum.
 - J. on the museum trip with Kenny and her classmates.

Answer Key

PROSE FICTION: This passage is adapted from the title story of *Only the Little Bone*, a collection of short stories by David Huddle (©1986 by David Huddle).

The whole time I work I wait to see where the screw-up is going to come. I imagine what my colleagues will be saying about me in the hallways. Did you know that Bryant built his shelves so they tilt? Did you know that Bryant's books rejected the color he painted his shelves? But the screw-up doesn't appear. I paint the shelves red, and they look O.K. (Granddaddy Bryant once painted yellow a whole row of company houses he built.) I paint a chair blue and red, and it's a little silly-looking, but it picks up the blue of the carpet and the red of the shelves. The vision isn't nearly as impressive as I thought it would be, but then what vision ever is?

Answer Key

We plan-makers are accustomed to things turning out not-quite-as-good-as-we-had-in-mind. Our world view includes the “diminished excellence” component. Diminished excellence is a condition of the world and therefore never an occasion for sorrow, whereas flawed competence comes out of character and therefore is frequently the reason for the bowed head, the furrowed brow. Three months later, when I try to turn the heat off in my office, I discover that I have placed one of the shelf uprights too close to the radiator to be able to work the valve. The screw-up was there all along, but in this case I am relieved to find it. I am my grandfather’s grandson after all.

5. In the last paragraph, a comparison is made between “diminished excellence” and “flawed competence.” From the narrator’s point of view, the conditions are different because one is:
- A. a source of sorrow while the other is a source of pride.
 - B. based in the family while the other is based in the self.
 - C. inherent in the environment while the other is inherent in the individual.**
 - D. a sign that the individual can improve the world while the other is a sign that the individual can’t.

Answer Key

NATURAL SCIENCE: This passage is adapted from the Preface to neurologist Oliver Sacks' collection of essays *An Anthropologist on Mars* (©1995 by Oliver Sacks).

Nature's imagination, as Freeman Dyson likes to say, is richer than ours, and he speaks, marvellingly, of this richness in the physical and biological worlds, the endless diversity of physical forms and forms of life. For me, as a physician, nature's richness is to be studied in the phenomena of health and disease, in the endless forms of individual adaptation by which human organisms, people, adapt and reconstruct themselves.

*nature =
rich,
diverse*

auth POV

"The author discusses nature's richness and diversity from multiple perspectives."

What's the expert reader doing?

He's focusing on determining the main idea, tone, and purpose of the passage.

Answer Key

- 10 Defects, disorders, diseases, in this sense, can play a paradoxical role, by bringing out latent powers, developments, evolutions, forms of life, that might never be seen, or even be imaginable, in their absence. It is the paradox of disease, in this sense, its “creative”
15 potential, that forms the central theme of this book.

*theme:
paradox
of dis. =
+ and -*

- Thus while one may be horrified by the ravages of developmental disorder or disease, one may sometimes see them as creative too—for if they destroy particular paths, particular ways of doing things, they
20 may force the nervous system into making other paths and ways, force on it an unexpected growth and evolution. This other side of development or disease is something I see, potentially, in almost every patient; and it is this which I am especially concerned to
25 describe.

*auth.
sees + of
dis.*

“These two ¶s expand on the second view of nature given in the introductory paragraph by describing the two sides of disease.”

What's the expert reader doing?

He is noting the explicitly-stated main idea of the passage and identifying the author's attitude and tone in paragraph 3.

Answer Key

Similar considerations were brought up by A.R. Luria, who studied the long-term survival of patients who had cerebral tumors or had suffered brain injuries or strokes—and the ways, the adaptations, they used to survive. He also studied deaf and blind children as a very young man (with his mentor L.S. Vygotsky). Vygotsky stressed the intactness rather than the deficits of such children:

*Luria
studies
+ adap.
of
injuries*

“Each supporting paragraph should be directly related to the main idea and purpose of the passage. The fourth ¶ includes a cited paragraph, breaking it into three easily mapped parts.”

What's the expert reader doing?

He's focusing on how each part of this paragraph relates to the main idea.

Answer Key

- 35 A handicapped child represents a qualitatively different, unique type of development. ... If a blind child or a deaf child achieves the same level of development as a normal child, then the child with a defect achieves this *in another way, by another course, by other means*; and, for the pedagogue,
- 40 it is particularly important to know the uniqueness of the course along which he must lead the child. This uniqueness transforms the minus of a handicap into the plus of compensation.

*Vygotsky:
all have
unique
dev.*

- → +

“Quoted paragraphs are easily recognizable due to their indentation. Focus on determining the function of the quote.”

What's the expert reader doing?

He's recognizing that this section of paragraph 4 provides evidence for the author's main idea through Vygotsky's studies.

Answer Key

That such radical adaptations could occur demanded,
45 Luria thought, a new view of the brain, a sense of it not
as programmed and static, but rather as dynamic and
active, a supremely efficient adaptive system geared for
evolution and change, ceaselessly adapting to the
needs of the organism—its need, above all, to construct
50 a coherent self and world, whatever defects or
disorders of brain function befell it. That the brain is
minutely differentiated is clear: there are hundreds of
tiny areas crucial for every aspect of perception and
behavior. The miracle is how they all cooperate, are
55 integrated together, in the creation of a self.

*Luria:
need
new
brain
theory*

“Paragraph 4 concludes by describing the impact of this quote on Luria and its impact on the study of nature.”

What's the expert reader doing?

He's focuses on recording information that will help him easily answer the questions later on.

Answer Key

This sense of the brain's remarkable capacity for the most striking adaptations, not least in the special (and often desperate) circumstances of neural or sensory mishap, has come to dominate my perception
60 of my patients and their lives. So much so, indeed, that I am sometimes moved to wonder whether it may not be necessary to redefine the very concepts of "health" and "disease," to see these in terms of the ability of the organism to create a new organization and order, one
65 that fits its special, altered disposition and needs, rather than in the terms of a rigidly defined "norm."

*auth: L.
and V.
ex. →
new
norm
needed*

"Now that paragraph 4 has provided evidence for the author's main idea, the author states the need for a new normal."

What's the expert reader doing?

He's focusing on the purpose of this paragraph: to explain how the previously given examples support the need for a new norm.

Answer Key

Sickness implies a contraction of life, but such contractions do not have to occur. Nearly all of my patients, so it seems to me, whatever their problems, reach out to life—and not only despite their conditions, but often because of them, and even with their aid.

The study of disease, for the physician, demands the study of identity, the inner worlds that patients, under the spur of illness, create. But the realities of patients, the ways in which they and their brains construct their own worlds, cannot be comprehended wholly from the observation of behavior, from the outside.

*Sickness
≠ no life*

*new
belief:
dis. =
identity
= inside*

“These two paragraphs examine the contrasting belief systems. The current system believes that sickness is a contraction of life while the other believes that studying disease and the inner worlds of patients can actually lead to a better understanding of identity.”

What's the expert reader doing?

He's noting the location of contrasting beliefs regarding sickness and life.

Answer Key

With this in mind, I have taken off my white coat,
80 deserted, by and large, the hospitals where I have
spent the last twenty-five years, to explore my subjects'
lives as they live in the real world, feeling in part like a
naturalist, examining rare forms of life; in part like an
anthropologist, a neuroanthropologist, in the field—but
85 most of all like a physician, called here and there to
make house calls, house calls at the far borders of
human experience.

*auth.
studies
real
lives
now*

“In this last ¶, the author is discussing the impact of the examples and conclusions mentioned in paragraphs 4-7 on his decision to experience disease in the real world.”

What's the expert reader doing?

He's noting how the final paragraph relates to the information that came before it.

Answer Key

6. The author's main purpose in lines 56 – 71 is to show:
- F.** how he has come to think differently about the brain.
 - G.** why sickness often causes a contraction of life.
 - H.** when he made new discoveries about the brain.
 - J.** which of his subjects helped him redefine the term “norm.”

Answer Key

7. As it is used in line 16, the word *ravages* most nearly means:
- A. paradoxical features.
 - B. creative adaptations.
 - C. fatal nature.
 - ☒ D. destructive actions.

Answer Key

8. As it is used in line 43, the word *compensation* most nearly means:

- F. payment.
- G. differentiation.
- H. disposition.
- J. adaptation.

Answer Key

9. The word *miracle* in line 54 refers most specifically to the ways in which:
- A. brain function disorders are cured.
 - B. unique handicaps are compensated for.
 - ☒ C. different areas of the brain work together.
 - D. the creative potential of disease is revealed.