

The **ACT** Course Book

ENGLISH, READING, & WRITING

SAMPLE

Focusing on the Individual Student



Copyright Statement

The ACT Course Book, along with all Summit Educational Group Course Materials, is protected by copyright. Under no circumstances may any Summit materials be reproduced, distributed, published, or licensed by any means.

Summit Educational Group reserves the right to refuse to sell materials to any individual, school, district, or organization that fails to comply with our copyright policies.

Third party materials used to supplement Summit Course Materials are subject to copyright protection vested in their respective publishers. These materials are likewise not reproducible under any circumstances.

Ownership of Trademarks

Summit Educational Group is the owner of the trademarks "Summit Educational Group" and the pictured Summit logo, as well as other marks that the Company may seek to use and protect from time to time in the ordinary course of business.

ACT is a trademark of ACT, Inc.

All other trademarks referenced are the property of their respective owners.

Copyright ©2015 Summit Educational Group, Inc. All rights reserved.

ISBN: 978-0-578-16061-0

CONTENTS

TEST-TAKING FUNDAMENTALS

About the ACT	2
Your Commitment	3
ACT Structure	4
Content	5
Scoring	6
Knowing Your Limits	8
General Tactics	10

ENGLISH OVERVIEW

The English Test	14
Format	15
Attractors	17
Setting Your Goal	18
Working Through the English Test	20
General Tips	21

ENGLISH – USAGE AND MECHANICS

Pronouns	24
Subject-Verb Agreement	28
Verb Tense	30
Adjectives versus Adverbs	32
Idioms	32
Diction	34
Fragments	38
Run-Ons	40
Parallelism	42
Modifiers	44
Periods	48
Semicolons	50
Colons	50
Commas	52
Apostrophes	56

ENGLISH – RHETORICAL SKILLS

Main Idea	66
Intent	68
Organization	70
Addition	72
Deletion	74
Transitions	76
Style	80
Wordiness	82
English Practice	88

READING OVERVIEW

The Reading Test	130
Format	131
Attractors	132
Setting Your Goal	134
Working Through the Reading Test	136
General Tips	137

READING

Active Reading	140
Paired Passages	142
Literary Narrative or Prose Fiction Passages	146
Social Science Passages	147
Humanities Passages	148
Natural Science Passages	149
Answering the Questions	152
Anticipating the Answer	153
Process of Elimination	158
Detail Questions	162
Generalization Questions	164
Main Idea Questions	166
Comparative Relationship Questions	168

Cause-Effect Questions	170
Voice Questions	172
Method Questions	174
Contextual Meaning Questions	176
Inference Questions	178
Reading Practice	184
WRITING OVERVIEW	
The Writing Test	218
Format and Scoring	219
Working Through the Writing Test	221
General Tips	222
WRITING	
Analyzing the Issue	226
Assessing Perspectives	228
Preparing to Write	230
Introduction	234
Supporting Paragraphs	238
Prove	242
Disprove	246
Compare	250
Conclusion	254
Proofread	258
Writing Effectively	260
Writing Practice	268
ANSWER KEY	302

Pronouns

(3-6 per test)

Pronoun questions often require you to determine whether a pronoun should be singular or plural, and they often test your knowledge of apostrophes. Challenging pronoun questions involve ambiguous pronouns that must be replaced with specific nouns.

- ❑ Pronouns can be used as subjects, objects, or possessives.

SUBJECT	OBJECT	POSSESSIVE
I	me	my, mine
you	you	your, yours
he, she	him, her	his, her, hers
we	us	our, ours
they	them	their, theirs
who	whom	whose
it	it	its
one	one	one's

- ❑ A pronoun must clearly refer back to the noun or nouns it represents.

Oscar mentioned that his sisters are older than he is.

- ❑ If there is no noun or multiple nouns that a pronoun can refer to, use a specific noun instead.

A seat belt should be worn to protect (*it/a passenger*) from potential injuries.

Most pearls aren't found by divers but are cultivated in farms. (*These/Pearls*) vary in price depending on their quality and origin.

- ❑ To check for the correct pronoun in a compound phrase, ignore the rest of the group.

Incorrect: My father gave presents to my brother and I.

Correct: My father gave presents to... ...me.

(*He/Him*) and his cousin went shopping for stereo equipment.

- ❑ Don't use *that* or *which* when referring to people. People are always *who* or *whom*.

Mark Twain expressed his belief that politicians were generally frauds (*that/who*) did not know more than a tiny fraction of what they claimed to know.

- ❑ The pronoun "who" always refers to the subject. The pronoun "whom" always refers to an object.

In order to determine whether a pronoun is a subject or object, try plugging in an easier pronoun (such as "he/him") and see which works best. If the objective-case pronoun ("him") works best, use the objective case for the pronoun in question ("whom"). This is called the "M test," because many object pronouns have the letter *m*.

- ❑ If a pronoun follows a preposition, such as "to" or "for," it is an object.

Jamie was a respected reporter (*who/whom*) would speak honestly about the facts.

To (*who/whom*) should the committee award the prize if no one deserves it?

Humility is only had by people (*who/whom*) realize and appreciate their own limitations.

PUT IT TOGETHER

On most weekends, Jess's sister visits her, and they gossip and cook. It's usually the same conversations and rumors, and it's always the same recipe. For them, the ritual is key. Flour and lard fill a large bowl on the kitchen table. Jess adds salt and baking powder and then tells her younger sister to help mix. As her₁ and her sister work, the dough seems to come alive under their fingers. Last, they add the warm water: just enough to hold the dough together. The recipe is simple and ancient. Their grandmother used to assure them that anybody has the skills to make something as easy as tortillas. Jess rolls pieces of dough into balls. As she presses it₂ into a flat circle, Jess can almost feel the ghosts of her grandmother's hands folding around her own, guiding her. She knows, from memory of so many traditional meals at home, the exact thickness the dough should be. Her motions are careful, rhythmic, exactly as the women in her family have always done. Her sister watches and copies, with a bit of clumsiness. Someday, Jess and her sister will become mothers and teach the recipe to its₃ own daughters. For now, they are more focused on memories of their grandmother, whose₄ cooking had been the symbol of their heritage as they had grown up.

1. A. NO CHANGE
B. it
C. she
D. they
2. F. NO CHANGE
G. that
H. this one
J. one
3. A. NO CHANGE
B. they're
C. their
D. it's
4. F. NO CHANGE
G. of whose
H. whom
J. her

Try rereading the sentence with each answer choice.

While an iron pan heats on the stove, Jess sips her coffee.

She then places two of the raw tortillas in it. In a moment,
5
there is the familiar smell of smoke. She imagines watching
her future children as they try to make their own tortillas for
the first time. And she feels as though her grandmother is
watching over her now, with love and pride.

5. A. NO CHANGE
B. that
C. them
D. the pan

What does "it" refer to?

SAMPLE

Main Idea

(2-4 per test)

The main idea is the central point, opinion, or purpose of a passage or a portion of a passage. Every part of a passage should contribute to the passage's main idea.

Many Rhetorical Skills questions will require an understanding of the passage's main idea. These questions often ask you to make revisions to the passage, and these edits should reinforce and be relevant to the main idea.

- ❑ Before you can answer a main idea question, you may need to reread part of the passage.

Steroids have been a controversial topic in baseball for a while now. The recent discovery of steroid use in baseball has had a distinct, negative effect on the way the game is being played. The data accumulated over recent years, along with the rising number of athletes who admit to using steroids, suggest a direct connection between steroids and rising home-run totals. As players continue to set new records, the achievements of older athletes are forgotten to history. The popularity of steroid use has cast doubt on many professional baseball players. This hurts the reputation of the players and the sport, and it is discouraging to fans. However, despite the problems with steroids, is there any way to effectively prevent their usage?

Given that all the choices are true, which one best indicates the focus of this paragraph?

- A. NO CHANGE
- B. baseball becomes more popular as a sport.
- C. there is debate over the legitimacy of athletes' accomplishments.
- D. it gets harder to keep track of the numbers.

What is the main idea of the paragraph?

Which answer choice is most closely related to this main idea?

PUT IT TOGETHER

In the wilderness of Africa, an odd little bird is admired by local people. This bird, the honeyguide, is one of the few that can digest beeswax. It has a fondness for bee larvae, but it is unable to break through the exterior of a hive. [1]

Honeyguides search the savannahs, mapping out every hive in a range of hundreds of kilometers. These birds will try to attract the attention of humans and guide them to a beehive. In exchange for the guidance, honey-hunters will make sure to

leave some wax comb for the bird to eat. Thus, the honey-
2
hunters and the honeyguides have developed bonds of
2
cooperation.
2

[1] There are rumors of honeyguides also cooperating with ratels, a fierce type of badger. [2] The ratel is nicknamed the “honeybadger,” and it is known for being fearless, willing to brave numerous bee stings to burst into a hive. [3] Once the ratel consumes its fill of honey, the honeyguide will venture into the opened hive for its own share of wax and larval grubs. [4] Some researchers dismiss the claims of honeyguide interactions with ratel as exaggerated legends. [3]

Whether with humans or badgers, the honeyguide has adopted a behavior that is as fascinating as it is unique. Its dependence on communication with other species is a wonderful testament to the complexity of the natural world.

- Which of the following sentences, if added here, would best reflect the point made in this paragraph?
 - These aren't the only creatures who seek bee hives; humans and badgers treasure hives as stores of food.
 - In order to satisfy its hunger, the honeyguide relies on humans, which the bird leads to the hives.
 - Another major source of nutrients for honeyguides is waxworms, which are actually moth larvae.
 - Surprisingly, honeyguides do not seem to feed on the stores of honey in hives.
- Which of the choices, all true, would best support the claim made in the preceding sentence while remaining consistent with the focus of the paragraph?
 - NO CHANGE
 - But the fact remains that it is more efficient to keep bee yards than rely on finding wild bee colonies.
 - Honeyguides also leave their eggs in other bird species' nests and depend on these other birds to raise their young.
 - Honeyguides are also sometimes called “indicator birds.”
- Which of the following sentences in this paragraph is LEAST relevant to its main focus and, therefore, could be deleted?
 - Sentence 1
 - Sentence 2
 - Sentence 3
 - Sentence 4

Active Reading

- ❑ We do not recommend speed-reading, nor do we recommend reading the questions first. It is difficult enough to understand an ACT passage without trying to keep all the questions in your head at the same time!
- ❑ **Stay engaged.** Do not read passively, waiting for the passage to reveal information to you. Instead, interact directly with the passage and think about what the author saying and trying to accomplish.

Never expect a passage to interest or entertain you. It's your job to get involved.

- ❑ **Map the Passage.** Use your Active Reading skills to develop an organized understanding of a Reading passage by finding the main idea of each paragraph.

Each paragraph generally develops a thought, example, detail, or point. By finding the main idea in each paragraph, you can create an organized map of how the passage works and how the overall main idea is developed.

In addition to helping you organize the information of the passage, Mapping also ensures that you do not lose focus or read through the whole passage without understanding it.

- ❑ Read with your pencil. Make notes that help you understand the reading. You can underline important words and phrases, mark where there are contrasting ideas, note where you have questions or confusion, and jot down ideas.

Use a question mark to identify any part of the passage you don't understand. Often, when you read further, you will find additional information that clarifies the parts that had confused you before.

- ❑ Ask questions while you read:
 - What is the main point of each paragraph? Underline it, or make a note in the margin.
 - How does each paragraph fit into the development of the passage? What does each paragraph accomplish?
 - What is the main idea of the passage as a whole?
 - What is the author's purpose in writing this passage?
 - What is the author's tone/attitude? Look for strong verbs and adjectives.

TRY IT OUT

Map the passage and answer the following questions.

NATURAL SCIENCES: This passage is adapted from “A Sense of Scale” by Erin Bracken.

Despite what you may see in the movies, the natural world contains no giant gorillas or miniscule people. This is because the real world depends upon several guiding rules, one of which is the limit of scaling, or the size of an organism. In all living things, there is a balance between surface area and volume which governs the maximum and minimum size of organisms.

A popular theme in monster movies is to pick a creature (lizard, human, spider, etc.) and make it absurdly large. However, this trend in Hollywood shows a blatant ignorance of organic biology. The issue can be easily explained in terms of geometry: as size increases, area is squared and volume is cubed. This leads to several issues with scaling. For example, if the dimensions of an organism are made 10 times larger, it gains 100 times more surface area for its lungs, but its body mass increases by 1000 times. Therefore, the organism won’t be able to absorb enough oxygen. Creatures such as King Kong would be too short of breath to put up much of a fight. Another consideration is that of muscle and bone. These materials gain strength based on thickness, or “lateral area,” which also scales at a much lower rate than volume. So, these giant creatures would be so weak they would be unable to move, and would likely break their bones from the pressure of their own weight.

On the other side of the scaling issue are animals such as hummingbirds, which simply cannot get any smaller. Since volume scales more than surface area, smaller animals will have relatively large surface area compared to their size. As surface area is the amount of an organism that is exposed to the outside, these small animals are more susceptible to the effects of environmental temperatures. For tiny animals, the line between health and starvation is a thin one—hummingbirds must eat more than their weight in food each day in order to maintain enough energy and warmth to survive. For Hollywood, the world of shrunken organisms is also problematic. In films such as *Fantastic Voyage* and *Honey, I Shrunk the Kids*, people are miniaturized, more than a hundred times smaller. At one-hundredth normal size, a person loses heat at a rate 10,000 times less, because of their decreased surface area. However, the mass of the body, which generates heat, has decreased by

1,000,000 times. Because of this, it would be a struggle to stay warm enough to stay alive.

As a biologist, I sometimes ignore these facts. It will only ruin movies for me, and others, to note that Godzilla’s skin would burst from the pressure of his immense size, or that a shrunken human would require condensed molecules (making the person as dense as the core of the sun). Sometimes, for the sake of entertainment, we must ignore the limits of reality to fully enjoy the wonders of imagination.

1. What is the main idea of the first paragraph?
2. What is the main idea of the second paragraph?
3. What is the main idea of the third paragraph?
4. What is the main idea of the last paragraph?
5. What is the main idea of the whole passage?

Simplify dense or complex passages by paraphrasing. Can you summarize lines 29-40 in your own words?

TEST-TAKING FUNDAMENTALS

Attractors – p. 17

1. C
2. G
3. C

ENGLISH

USAGE AND MECHANICS

Pronouns

p. 24

a passenger
 Pearls
 He
 who
 who
 whom
 who

p. 26 Put It Together

1. C
2. J
3. C
4. F
5. D

Subject-Verb Agreement

p. 28

was
 is
 want
 is
 are

p. 29 Put It Together

1. C
2. J
3. B
4. J
5. B

Verb Tense

p. 30

has been
 had been

p. 31 Put It Together

1. C
2. H
3. A
4. H

Adjectives versus Adverbs / Idioms

p. 32

delightfully
 careful
 with
 from

p. 33 Put It Together

1. C
2. G
3. A
4. J

Diction

p. 34

except
 accept
 affect
 effect
 than
 then
 loose
 lose
 lay
 lie
 lead
 led
 principle
 principal
 number
 amount
 fewer
 less
 between
 among

p. 35 Put It Together

1. C
2. H
3. C
4. J

Checkpoint Review – p. 36

1. A
2. J
3. B
4. H
5. D
6. F
7. B
8. H
9. C
10. G

Fragments

p. 38

- Cape Cod provides ...
 The journalist traveled ...
 The editor, a stern man, censored ...
 Achilles' mother held him by the heel and ...

p. 39 Put It Together

1. C
2. J
3. B
4. H

Run-On Sentences

p. 40

- ... and I've learned a lot from her

p. 41 Put It Together

1. A
2. H
3. B

Parallelism

p. 42

- elegant, stylish, and expensive
 drab, awkward, and cheap
being aware ...
 ... Tanya does.

p. 43 Put It Together

1. B
2. J

Modifiers

p. 44

- Mike felt that his vacation...
As I looked at the horizon, ominous clouds...

p. 45 Put It Together

1. B
2. H
3. B
4. H
5. B
6. H

Checkpoint Review – p. 46

1. D
2. J
3. D
4. J
5. B
6. H
7. D
8. H
9. B
10. H

Periods

p. 48

- My cat Moxie likes chasing the laser pointer.
 Yesterday she ran into a wall.

p. 49 Put It Together

1. B
2. J

Semicolons and Colons

p. 50

- Mark's job was monotonous; it ...

p. 51 Put It Together

1. C
2. H