

## ACT English

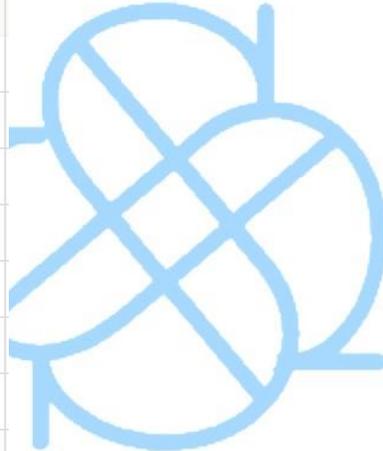
From Simple Studies, <https://simplestudies.edublogs.org> &simplestudies.inc on Instagram

The ACT English section consists of 75 multiple choice questions in 45 minutes. The English section comprises of 5 passages with different topics, ideally with 15 questions per passage.

On the ACT English section, the student is supposed to look at the underlined parts of the passage that correspond to the question numbers and choose the best answer.

### ACT English scoring chart:

Scale Score	English Raw Score
36	75
35	73-74
34	71-72
33	70
32	69
31	68
30	67
29	66
28	64-65
27	62-63
26	60-61
25	58-59
24	56-57
23	53-55
22	51-52
21	48-50

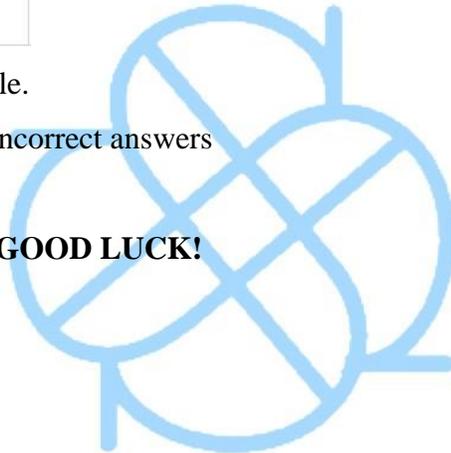


20	45-47
19	42-44
18	40-41
17	38-39
16	35-37
15	33-34
14	30-32
13	29
12	27-28
11	25-26
10	23-24

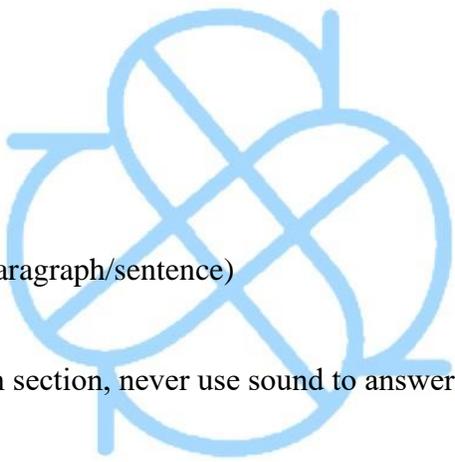
\*36 is the highest score possible.

\*\*No points are deducted for incorrect answers

**KEEP PRACTICING AND GOOD LUCK!**



## Topics Tested:

- Subject Verb Agreement
  - Clauses
  - Punctuation
  - Contractions
  - Possessives
  - Non-essentials
  - Pronouns
  - Verb Tense
  - Modifiers
  - Idioms
  - Parallel Structure
  - Comparisons
  - Concision
  - Redundancy
  - Transitions
  - Chronological order (paragraph/sentence)
- 
- Throughout the English section, never use sound to answer a question (Unless it's an idiom question)
  - Always identify the topic of the question (Look at the answer choices to help determine topic)
  - Keep track of the time, the ACT is designed to have a large number of questions in a short period of time

### Subject Verb Agreement:

- A subject, most commonly, is a noun phrase
- A verb is an action

\*To find the simple subject/verb, cross out all non-essentials and modifiers.

\*\*Complex sentences may have more than one subject and verb. Make sure the subject you're looking at matches the verb.

A subject and verb must agree in number and tense:

- Number = singular or plural; Tense = present, past, or future
- To determine if a verb is singular/plural, add "they" or "he/she" in front of it

Ex. "They" talk      **OR**      "She" talk

"They talk" is correct, so talk is a plural verb.

#### Example Problems:

1. The use of caramel and cheddar are going to be banned.  
A. NO CHANGE  
B. is  
C. were  
D. have been

The correct answer is B. Caramel and cheddar are both singular subjects and should have the singular verb is.

2. There was a number of citizens who felt that city officials had not taken appropriate precautions.

- A. is
- B. will be
- C. were
- D. DELETE UNDERLINED PORTION

The correct answer is C. A number of citizens, a plural subject, matches were, which is a plural verb.

## **Clauses:**

### **Independent clause:**

- clause that stands by itself
- has a subject-verb pair

Ex. Waiting for the dentist to examine my teeth is boring.

Two IC's can be connected using:

- ;
- :
- , fanboys
  - Never separate two independent clauses with a comma
  - IC's starts with nouns, pronouns, and adverbs

### **Dependent clause:**

- clause that provides detail and cannot stand on its own.

Ex. Because I can't wait for the ice cream truck.

### **Sentence Fragments (Ex. from Prepscholar):**

Sentence fragments can happen when:

- A sentence doesn't have a verb
  - Ex. Incorrect: Grace, after driving two miles. Correct: Grace, after driving two miles, needed a break.
  - Fix by adding a verb.
- A sentence doesn't have a subject
  - Ex. Incorrect: Parked the car. Correct: Joel parked the car.
  - Fix by adding a subject and changing the verb into the correct form.
- A sentence with a -ing or -ed verb and no helping verb
  - Ex. Incorrect: The children watching television. Correct: The children were watching television OR The children watched television.

- Fix by adding a helping verb OR change the verb to another form.
- A sentence begins with a DC/subordinating conjunction and has no IC
  - Ex. Incorrect: Since he wanted to go to the carnival. Correct: Since he wanted to go to the carnival, he took a day off work.
  - Fix by adding an IC.
  - Ex. Incorrect: After he parked the car. Correct: He parked the car.
  - Fix by taking out the subordinating conjunction.

Chart of subordinating conjunctions

after	although	as	because	before	ever since	if
in order	just as	since	so that	though	unless	until
when	whenever	where	whether	whereas	whichever	while

Chart from Prepscholar

Run- on Sentences:

Fix by:

- Making two sentences
- , FANBOYS
- ;
- ; conjunctive adverb
- Make one clause a DC

\*Example of conjunctive adverb: however

## **Punctuation:**

Comma uses - in a list or to connect two thoughts.

- A, B, and C
  - The Oxford comma is generally preferred over no comma
- DC, IC
- IC, FANBOYS IC
  - FANBOYS is a mnemonic device to remember coordinating conjunctions
    - F = for
    - A = and
    - N = not
    - B = but
    - O = or
    - Y = yet
    - S = so

**Ex.** She had to buy coffee, green beans, and tomatoes.

**Ex.** I went to buy my favorite pants, but I didn't like the store's style.

**Ex.** Because I couldn't wait for the ice cream truck, my aunt read me my favorite book.

Semicolon uses -

- IC; IC
- IC; transition, DC
- City1, State 1; City 2, State 2; etc.

**Ex** (from grammar-monster). I knew these streets; however, they've changed.

Colon uses -

- : definition
- General description: list
- : IC
- : quotation

**Ex.** At the store, I picked up the supplies I needed for my painting: paintbrushes, paint, and easel.

**Ex.** In school, I discovered a new subject: linguistics.

Period use - Comes at the end of a statement.

Question mark use - Comes after the question is asked/stated.

**Ex.** “Did you do all of the housework,” she asked?

- A. NO CHANGE
- B. “Did you do all of the housework?,” she asked
- C. “Did you do all of the housework?” she asked.
- D. “Did you do all of the housework,” she asked.

- Choice A, B, and D are incorrect because they place commas in unnecessary places. In addition, the person quoting the woman is not asking the question, so the comma doesn't come after “she asked”. Choice C is correct because the question mark comes right after the question, which means no comma is needed.

**Contractions:**

- It’s — it is
- They’re — they are
- Who’s — who is
- You’re — you are

\*its’ does NOT exist and is always wrong

Contractions are not the same as the following:

- Their — possessive form that indicates possession
- There — refers to a location
- Whose — possessive form that refers to objects and people
- Yours — possessive form to show another’s possessions

**Possessives:**

Singular: <i>Horse</i>	Plural (-es or -s): <i>Horses</i>
Singular Possessive (-’s): <i>Horse’s</i>	Plural Possessive (-s’): <i>Horses’</i>

To check for singular/ plural possessive, add “of the”

- Ex. The horse’s coat was black.
- The coat of the horse was black— Singular Possessive

**Non- essentials (NE):**

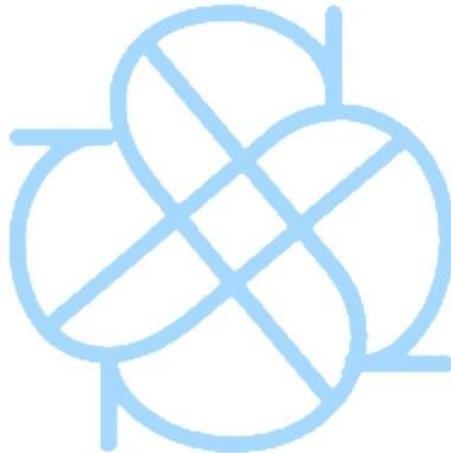
- None-essential is information/detail in a sentence that is not necessary to the meaning of the sentence.

Ex. (from Prepscholar).

Incorrect: The United Kingdom, where the Harry Potter series takes place, is a great place to visit. Correct: The United Kingdom is a great place to visit.

\* NE is taken out and the sentence still makes sense.

- Non-essentials are punctuated by placing two commas, two dashes, or two parentheses around the NE information
- The punctuation around the non-essential is always the same
- NE, normally, start with which, who, where, or when



## Pronouns:

- A pronoun refers to a noun/noun phrase.
- A pronoun must always match its antecedent.
- A pronoun should not have ambiguous antecedents. ( It should be clear what antecedent the pronoun is referring to).
  - An antecedent is a noun a pronoun replaces and must always match in number (singular/plural) with the pronoun.

**Ex.** Correct: Shirley danced to her own music.

- The antecedent, Shirley, refers to the pronoun her.

Incorrect: Shirley danced to their own music.

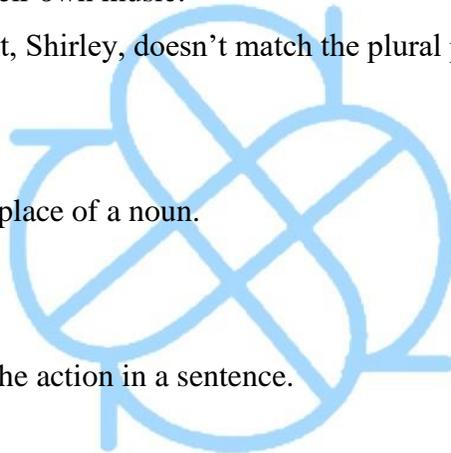
- The singular antecedent, Shirley, doesn't match the plural pronoun their.

## Subject Pronouns:

- Pronouns that take the place of a noun.

## Object Pronouns:

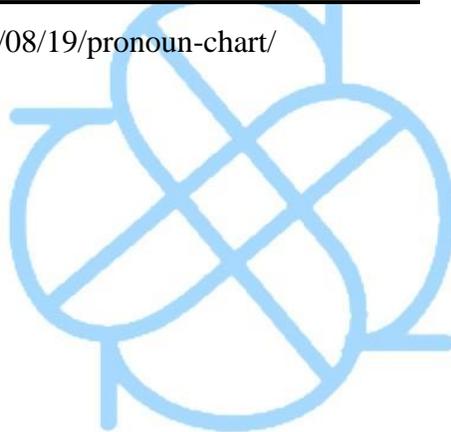
- Pronouns that receive the action in a sentence.



# PRONOUN CHART

	SUBJECT PRONOUNS	OBJECT PRONOUNS	POSSESSIVE ADJECTIVES	POSSESSIVE PRONOUNS	REFLEXIVE PRONOUNS
1 <sup>ST</sup> PERSON	I	me	my	mine	myself
2 <sup>ND</sup> PERSON	you	you	your	yours	yourself
3 <sup>RD</sup> PERSON (MALE)	he	him	his	his	himself
3 <sup>RD</sup> PERSON (FEMALE)	she	her	her	hers	herself
3 <sup>RD</sup> PERSON	it	it	its	not used	itself
1 <sup>ST</sup> PERSON (PLURAL)	we	us	our	ours	ourselves
2 <sup>ND</sup> PERSON (PLURAL)	you	you	your	yours	yourselves
3 <sup>RD</sup> PERSON (PLURAL)	they	them	their	theirs	themselves

<http://thewordofjeff.com/2015/08/19/pronoun-chart/>



## **Verb Tense:**

Verbs should remain the same tense throughout a paragraph unless a transition is used.

Present tense is used when talking about current things.

- Ex. walk

### Present Progressive

- “to be” + “ing”
- Ex. am explaining

Present Perfect is used when the action began in the past and is still going on.

- has/have + past participle
- Ex. has brought

Past tense is used when talking about past things.

- -ed or -d is added to the verb
- Ex. walked

Past Perfect is used when describing the action that came first out of the completed actions.

- had + past participle
- Ex. had danced

## **Verb Tense Consistency Examples**

Jack studies science and played soccer.

- A. No change
- B. plays

The correct answer is B. The first verb, studies, is in present tense so the second verb should be in present tense too. Choice A is past tense, so choice B is correct.

### Actual ACT Examples

1. Meanwhile, the runners continue to score. They score, that is, if they were not to be distracted by the grown-ups— or the butterflies.
  - A. NO CHANGE
  - B. they would not have been
  - C. they're not
  - D. they're not to be

From the answer choices, we can tell that we're most likely dealing with a verb tense question because three of the four answer choices are in different verb tenses: "they were," "they would," and "they're." Whenever you have an underlined verb, check for possible verb tense errors. The verbs "continue" in the first sentence and "score" in the second are in the present tense. The shift to the past tense, "were," doesn't make sense given the context. Therefore, to maintain consistency, the verbs should be in the present tense. Immediately, we can get rid of answer choices A and B. Answer choice D is wrong because it unnecessarily adds the infinitive "to be." The correct answer is C.

2. The O'odham in the 1700s first encountered the guitars of Spanish missionaries. In the 1850s the O'odham have borrowed from waltzes and mazurkas of people of European descent on their way to California.
  - A. NO CHANGE
  - B. have been borrowing
  - C. were borrowed
  - D. borrowed

This is an obvious verb tense question. Only the verb is underlined and each answer choice is in a different tense. In the first sentence, the simple past tense verb "encountered" indicates that we're referring to completed actions. However, the present perfect verb "have borrowed" can only be used for an action that is still happening. The context of the sentence implies that the sentence is referring to a completed action and the verb tenses in the two sentences should be consistent.

Once you identify that this is a consistency question, you can immediately eliminate any answer choice that isn't in the simple past tense. After eliminating answer choices, we're left with D.

Here's one final verb consistency example for you. Because tense consistency questions are the most common verb form questions, I want to make sure you fully understand them.

\*examples and explanations from Prepscholar (Berkman)

### **Gerunds**

- add -ing to the end of a verb
- Ex. Swimming

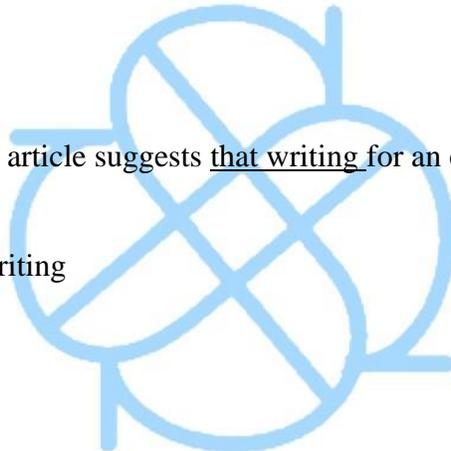
### **Infinitive**

- “to” + the verb
- Ex. To give

**Ex.** The extreme length of this article suggests that writing for an extended period of time.

- A. NO CHANGE
- B. the manner in which writing
- C. that I wrote
- D. which had written

Choice C is correct.



	PRESENT TENSE	PAST TENSE
1	be	was/were
2	become	became
3	begin	began
4	bend	bent
5	bet	bet
6	bite	bit
7	bleed	bled
8	blow	blew
9	break	broke
10	bring	brought
11	build	built
12	buy	bought
13	catch	caught
14	choose	chose
15	come	came
16	cost	cost
17	cut	cut
18	deal	dealt
19	dig	dug
20	do	did
21	draw	drew
22	drink	drank
23	drive	drove
24	eat	ate
25	fall	fell
26	feed	fed
27	feel	felt
28	fight	fought
29	find	found
30	fly	flew

\*Make sure to look at irregular verbs (these are just some of them)

### **Modifiers:**

Modifiers are words that describe nouns in the same sentence. Modifiers are generally next to the word/phrase they are modifying.

**Dangling Modifiers:** are placed so that it's unclear what word the modifier is referring to.

Can be fixed by

1. Replacing the noun and fixing any errors that modify the sentence's meaning.
2. Replace the intro phrase with a clause that has the right noun in it.

**Ex.** Walking toward the lake, the dragonflies were dancing in the wind.

Can be fixed by

1. Walking toward the lake, I saw the dragonflies dancing in the wind.
2. As I walked toward the lake, the dragonflies were dancing in the wind.

**Ex.**

Incorrect: Flashing lightning and thunder, the little bunny struggled through the storm.

Correct: Flashing lightning and thunder, the storm raged as the little bunny struggled.

- The lightning and thunder can not modify a bunny; instead, it would modify the storm.

**Misplaced Modifiers:** are placed so that the modifier refers to an unintended word

Can be fixed by

1. Rearranging the modifier

**Ex.** Incorrect: The child ate peculiar alone.

Correct: The peculiar child ate alone.

- Peculiar is an adjective that needs to describe a noun/pronoun.

**ACT Example (from Prepscholar)**

Initiated by a few loud teenagers, the crowd of concert goers quickly joined the heckling in order to drive the band off the stage.

- A. NO CHANGE
  - B. In order to drive the band off stage, the crowd of concert goers quickly joined the heckling.
  - C. The point of the heckling, quickly joined by the crowd of concert goers, was to drive the band off stage.
  - D. The heckling, which the crowd of concert goers swiftly joined, was intended to drive the band off stage.
- How can a few loud teenagers initiate the crowd? They can't! The most logical modifier would be heckling, as a few loud teenagers can initiate heckling.

**ACT Example (from Prepscholar)**

Edgar Allan Poe is revered for his frightening and stylish stories by literary critics, many of which appear in high school textbooks.

- A. NO CHANGE
  - B. by literary critics for his frightening and stylish stories,
  - C. for his frightening and stylish stories, by literary critics,
  - D. by literary critics who deem his stories frightening and stylish,
- It is unclear what appears in high school textbooks when choices A, C, and D are used. Choice C ends with “stories”, which can appear in textbooks, unlike critics and styles.

## **Idioms:**

The only strategy to idiom questions is by sounding the answers out.

- Idioms are expressions that mean something different than the meaning of the words used.

**Ex** (from Prepscholar).

Incorrect: Maria stumbled in her old rocking horse in the garage.

Correct: Maria stumbled upon her old rocking horse in the garage.

- Stumbled in just doesn't make sense. You can't stumble into an object, but you can stumble upon an object.

Incorrect: Loud guard dogs keep burglars in bay.

Correct: Loud guard dogs keep burglars at bay.

- Burglars can't be kept in bay, but they can be kept at bay.

## **Parallel Structure:**

- The repeated use of a grammatical pattern.
- Parallel structure can appear in lists, phrases, and sentences.

**Ex.**

Incorrect: Fiona likes dancing, hiking, and to swim.

- To swim does not have the verb form as dancing and hiking.

Correct: Fiona likes dancing, hiking, and swimming.

- All the verbs have parallel structure.

**Ex.**

Incorrect: LeBron often dunks, steals, and blocking the basketball.

- The sentence is listing three things that LeBron James does with the basketball. The first two things are verbs. The last thing, "blocking," is in the gerund form. A gerund is a verb that acts like a noun and ends in "ing." All three things should be in the same grammatical form.

Correct: LeBron often dunks, steals, and blocks the basketball.

- All the verbs are in the same form.

**ACT example**

As a young woman, she wrote of pining for a valentine and of visiting the Chinese museum in Boston.

- A. NO CHANGE
- B. visiting to
- C. of her visiting to
- D. of her visiting at

For the sentence to be parallel in structure, the phrases before and after the conjunction should have as close to the same construction as possible.

Phrase #1 is "of pining." After breaking down the words in the phrase, we can determine that the construction of that phrase is "OF" + GERUND. Phrase #2, "of visiting," also has the construction "OF" + GERUND. The phrases are parallel. The answer is A. If you're wondering why I didn't include "for a valentine" and "the Chinese museum in Boston," those phrases just provide descriptive information about what she pined for and where she visited; they do not alter the basic construction of the sentence.

\*explanation by Prepscholar (Berkman)

**Comparisons:**

Less is used when the things being compared can not be counted.

Ex. The girl was less intelligent than her friend

- Intelligence cannot be counted so we use less.

Fewer is used when the things being compared can be counted.

Ex. Bob has fewer cars than Jamie.

- Cars are countable objects that can be counted

**Concision:**

- THE SHORTEST ANSWER IS GENERALLY THE CORRECT ANSWER!
- Concise is preferred because it makes the sentence easier to understand.

**Ex.**

Incorrect: Emmy took me to a party that was a very fun time.

Correct: Emmy took me to a very fun party.

**ACT example**

He then wrote an enthusiastic article for Strand Magazine, being the place in which most of his Sherlock Holmes stories had first appeared, and later wrote a book on the subject titled The Coming of the Fairies.

- A. NO CHANGE
- B. in which the magazine where
- C. in which
- D. being where

Choices A and B are redundant. Choice D is the correct answer. It is the most concise and still keeps the meaning of the sentence.

**Redundancy:**

- When a word/phrase is repeated and the meaning of the sentence doesn't change.

Ex. Incorrect: I quickly ran to the bus stop in a speedy manner

This is a redundant sentence as quickly and speedy means the same thing.

Correct: I quickly ran to the bus stop.

### **ACT example**

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

- A. NO CHANGE
- B. hazardous
- C. risky
- D. DELETE the underline portion

- Dangerous and peril are redundant in this sentence. If either one is taken out, the sentence still makes sense. The correct answer is D.

### **Transitions:**

Addition: words that show continuation or elaborate.

Ex.

- Besides
- In addition
- Likewise
- Moreover

Contrast: the first part of the sentence contrasts the second part (negative vs negative).

Ex.

- However
- Nevertheless
- Nonetheless
- Conversely
- Yet

### **Cause and Effect:**

**Ex.**

- Therefore
- As a result
- Accordingly
- Consequently

**ACT example**

1. Snowflakes form from tiny water droplets, following a specific process of chemical bonding as they freeze, which results in a six-sided figure. The rare “triangular” snowflake, similarly, confounded scientists for years because it apparently defied the basic laws of chemistry.

- A. NO CHANGE
- B. for example,
- C. additionally,
- D. however,

- The first sentence contrasts with the second sentence, so we can eliminate choices A and C. Choice B can be eliminated because it’s an addition transition, and we need a cause/effect transition. This means the correct answer is D.

2. Since there’s not much chance that a seven-year- old just learning the game can hit a pitched baseball, the umpire puts the ball on top of a stationary tee, a piece of flexible tubing adjusted to each batter’s height.

- A. NO CHANGE
- B. While
- C. Although

- The sentences have a cause/effect relationship. Choices B and C don’t work because they are contrast transitions, so the correct answer is choice A.

**Chronological Order:**

- These questions check to see if you can determine which information is relevant.

- You can eliminate answer choices just by looking at the yes or no part.

Rearranging Question:

When the question asks to re-order the sentence/paragraph: look at tense, flow of the passage, and noun/pronouns being used.

