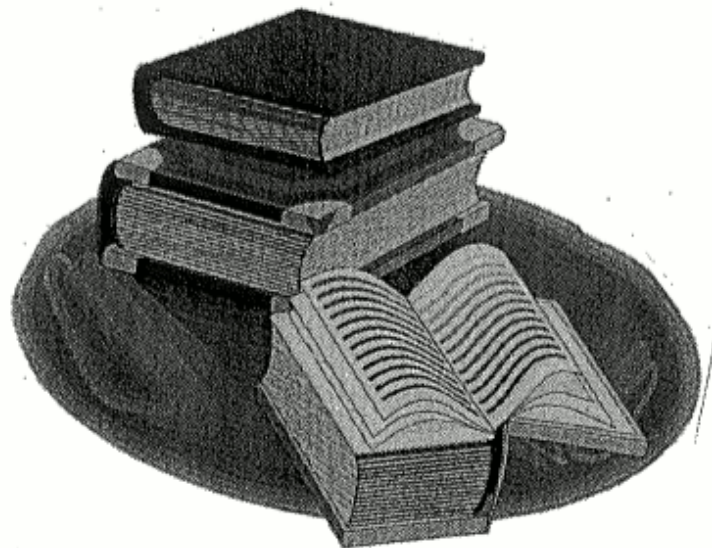


Preparing Students for the ACT

In

English and Reading



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ACT Reading Test Quick Review

This ACT Reading Test Quick Review provides the user an easy, effective way to review strategies for the Reading ACT. This review is in no way inclusive of all the challenges that may appear on the ACT.

I. General Information

- A. The ACT Reading Test presents four prose passages that test students' ability to read college-level material. The test gives ten multi-choice questions from each of the following types of passages that are always properly identified and appear in this order on the ACT: Prose Fiction, Social Science, Humanities, and Natural Science.**
- 1. Prose Fiction—**excerpts from novels or short stories
 - 2. Humanities—**art, music, philosophy, theater, language architecture, dance, ethics, film, language, literary criticism, radio, television
 - 3. Social Studies—**history, political science, economics, anthropology, archaeology, business, economics, education, geography, psychology, sociology
 - 4. Natural Sciences—**biology, microbiology, chemistry, physics, physical science, anatomy, astronomy, botany, ecology, geology, medicine, natural history, physiology, zoology
- B. The Reading Test requires students to read four passages and answer 40 questions in thirty-five minutes.**
- C. The third test in the ACT four-test series, the Reading Test questions mandate that students refer to what is exactly stated and be able to reason to find implied meanings within the passages. The questions do NOT test the students' knowledge of material outside the passage.**
- D. The successful Reading Test students are able to read for main idea, important details, and proper sequence. In addition, students must be able to understand the author's audience and purpose, generalizations, comparisons or contrasts, cause and effect relationships, and vocabulary context clues.**

II. Strategies—You should not decide to use these strategies on the ACT Reading Test unless you have used them in practice situations and know that they work for you. Obviously, you would use a new technique to kick a game-winning field in the district championship game; likewise, practice the techniques before using them on the all-important ACT Reading Test.

A. Choose the order in which to read the passages. Even though the passages are always presented in the same order—Prose Fiction, Social Science, Humanities, and Natural Science—you do not have to tackle the passages in the given order. Through practice, decide what passage for you is the easiest. Then, tackle the easiest passage first. For example, if you consistently miss the fewest questions on the Social Science passage, then read that passage first.

Likewise, if you find the Natural Science passage to be the easiest, you should read that passage first. Next, the student determines the second easiest passage. Only through testing and practice testing can the student determine which passages to read in what order.

- B. Research shows that most students find that the Prose Fiction passage to be the easiest; next, the Social Studies. Of course, each student should make that determination as quickly as possible to construct a strategy plan.**
- C. Write 1, 2, 3, or 4 beside the reading passages in the order that you plan to attack the passages. Read the passages in that order; carefully, match the passage with the correct section of the answer sheet.**
- D. The ACT Reading Test for many students becomes really boring; therefore, you will have to discover a way to remain focused during this third test of the ACT series. Naturally, your mind will begin to become sluggish after taking the 45-minute English and 60-minute math tests. If you are given a break before the Reading Test, be certain**

to eat an energizing snack to give your brain more power to sustain you during this third test.

- E. Read each passage carefully. Since the Reading Test is the third test and the reading passages tend to be boring for a majority of test takers, you must find a way to remain engaged in the task at hand. Naturally, you will be using your sense of sight; however, if you can also involve your sense of touch by writing, then your mind will be more apt to focus and to remain focused. Practice to see which one or combination of the following suggestions will help you to remain engaged with your reading:**
- 1. Write a topic next to each paragraph to provide an easy reference when you are answering the questions.**
 - 2. Underline or circle important words as you read. That you underline or circle the same words as another student is NOT important. The intent is help ensure that your mind does not wonder as you read these notoriously boring ACT Reading Test passages.**
 - 3. Take notes in the margins of the passages as an easy reference to the passage's content. CAUTION: Taking extensive notes will limit your thirty-five minute time allowance that passes all too quickly.**
 - 4. Starring the main idea sentence will give you an easy reference to the main idea question.**
- E. Test preparation strategists' views differ on reading the questions before reading the passages. Yes, more time is required to read the questions before reading the passages. In fact, you turn forty questions into eighty questions. However, most students find reading the questions first beneficial because they know more before they begin reading. Definitely, reading the answer choices before reading the passage is a waste of time.**
- F. Reading each passage completely is important to understanding relationships of ideas.**
- G. Do NOT spend too much time on any one passage or on any one question. Pacing yourself is essential to success on the ACT Reading Test. Basically, you have 2-3 minutes to**

read each passage and 35-41 seconds to answer each question.

- H. Students who have difficulty completing all four passages and questions during the thirty-five minute time limit because they have a slow reading speed and average comprehension may want to consider the following:

Take the time to read carefully and methodically your two proven, easiest passages. If you answer each of those twenty questions correctly to those two passages, your ACT Reading score will be 18.

If you spend more time on three passages and answer all of those thirty questions correctly, your score will be 28.

Perhaps if you have difficulty completing all four passages and answering all forty questions successfully, you may want to focus on three passages. Then, when time is running out, guess completely on the last ten questions for the passage that has proven to be the most difficult. However, if you have time, skim your last selected passage, make educated guesses where possible or random guesses if needed. Since the ACT does not penalize you for guessing, you should answer all questions. Do NOT leave any answers blank.

When you spend more of your time on three passages and then move quickly through the fourth even random guessing, the odds are that of the last ten questions, you may even guess some of them correctly—adding to your score!

- I. In your test booklet, circle the numbers of the questions to which you want to return if time permits. If you do not mark those questions in some way, you will waste time finding them as time runs out. Again, do NOT leave any answers blank.

- J. You may want to use a plus (+) or minus (-) system to return to questions that you know that you can answer successfully if you have more time. A plus symbol (+) by a question indicates that if you have valuable seconds at the end, you will return to that question; a minus symbol (-) indicates that you will need valuable minutes to answer that particular question.**

DO NOT make any stray marks on your answer sheet!

- K. Read all of the answers to each question before selecting the best answer. Eliminate known incorrect answer choices before guessing. Answers will be based on what each passage states exactly or implies. All necessary information for answering the questions will be in the passages.**

Return to the part of the passage most likely to contain the answer. The question implicitly mentions the part of the passage about twenty-five percent of the time. The question may identify a particular paragraph by number or the item may refer to particular lines in the passage. As a result, you know exactly where to look for the answer.

L. Practice—Practice—Practice! If you familiarize yourself with the content and format of the ACT Reading Test, you will be more successful. Remember that this test measures knowledge and skills necessary at the college level. Do NOT view the actual ACT as a practice to determine the strategies to use on test day. Your guidance counselor will have practice materials or locate an ACT Preparation course to provide more intensive, inclusive materials.

Six elements of effective writing are included in the English test.

Usage/Mechanics 40 items

Punctuation	10
Grammar & Usage	12
Sentence Structure	18

Rhetorical Skills 35 items

Strategy	12
Organization	11
Style	12

Usage/Mechanics

Punctuation

Punctuation

COMMAS

Use commas to set off introductory phrases, clauses, and words.

1. After the fall of the house of Usher, Roderick and Madeline die.
2. At the movie I saw my friend Steve.
3. After I turned seventeen, my father purchased me a car.
4. To get to the bank, turn left on Oliver Road.
5. Turn left on Oliver Road to get to the bank.
6. Sam, will you please read me the first two lines of the poem?
7. Oh, I know you.
Yes, you are the person to win the title.

Use commas before coordinate or correlative conjunctions that join two independent clauses of a compound sentence.

1. The freshmen will attend the production at the civic center but the sophomores will not attend until spring.
2. John will go to the game but not the party afterward.
3. Not only the dogs but also the cats are receiving treatment for their injuries.
4. Either Anne will do her work better or she will have to accept the consequences.
5. John will go either to the game or to the party afterwards.

Use commas to set off parenthetical expressions or interrupters.

1. **Scott Turnage, who is a gifted student, will receive a scholarship.**
2. **The senior who is gifted will be eligible to receive a scholarship.**
3. **Last summer when I saw Steve he was a junior at LSU.**
4. **The politician, contrary to popular belief, is not radical in his beliefs.**
5. **John lives at 2109 Pargoud Street, Monroe, Louisiana 71201.**
6. **Joan is to arrive at 3:09 P.M., December 13, Monroe, Louisiana, to attend the board breakfast.**
7. **My sister Susan is a freshman at Stanford.**

Susan, my sister, is a freshman at Stanford.

Ernest Hemingway wrote my favorite novel The Old Man and the Sea.

Ernest Hemingway wrote The Old Man and the Sea, my favorite novel.

Use commas to separate items in a list.

1. Howard eats cheeseburgers, shrimp, and tacos.
2. Joan is an intelligent and beautiful and talented young woman.
3. Ralph saw Jane is a bright red suit.
4. The caring, determined student won the competition.

SEMICOLONS—one punctuation mark stronger than the comma!

1. The child was unable to begin the assignment; her friend helped her.
2. John Smith, the Gator running back, broke his arm, to no one's surprise, while he was running along the sideline, and rushed to the hospital, he was x-rayed, splinted, but released to his parents.
3. The sponsor allowed these officers to attend the National Honor Society Convention: John Allister, president; Brian McCall, vice-president; Amy Sylvester, secretary; and Stephen Tyler, treasurer.
4. Before he attended ULM; John chose LSU.

COLONS

Never use a colon after a verb or preposition.

1. The scoutmaster told the trooper to purchase the following items: tent, canteen, backpack, and sleeping bag.
2. John's favorite fruits are: apples, bananas, and oranges.
3. The scientific theory discussed in class made study mandatory: I now study three hours nightly.

DASHES

Use a dash to indicate an abrupt change of thought in a clause.

Captain James might—and according to plans, should—have reinforced the Second Division for the battle.

The title—if, indeed, the poem had a title—has escaped me.

PARENTHESES

Use parentheses to set off explanations or definitions.

- 1. John Wilmuth (1786-1805) helped to establish the American justice system.**
- 2. There is a plethora (large assortment) of information on the web.**
- 3. The atmosphere on Venus the planet is not inhabitable is not like Earth's atmosphere.**

Apostrophes

The main function of the apostrophe is to show possession.

John's car is the red convertible in the parking lot.

The two children's toys are in their separate rooms.

The boys' soccer team has won the state title.

The night's stay at the hotel will cost too much for the club.

The second function of the apostrophe is to show omission of letters in contractions.

The purpose the story is to show its emotion in the death of Abraham Lincoln.

The teacher announced, "It's time for break."

They're team is the winner of the trophy.

Their the team to win the state championship.

PRONOUN CASE

Review nominative, objective, and possessive case with personal and relative pronouns.

- 1. John is a football player whom I think is a superior athlete.**
- 2. Steven expects to speak to whomever will listen.**
- 3. Janice is as superstitious as me.**
- 4. Who did you speak to at the meeting?**
- 5. That prank caller could be him.**
- 6. Their selling the SUV came as no surprise.**
- 7. Perhaps you and me can go to the dance together.**
- 8. The neighbors who live next door are from Texas.**
- 9. Samantha knows physics as well as he.**
- 10. The professor gave the corrected themes to us, Billy and I.**
- 11. The teacher will choose between Tim and I.**
- 12. Everyone signed the contract except Joan and me.**

ACT PROBLEM

Although I had never met more of the people who walked with me, a few of them I did know well.

- A. NO CHANGE
- B. more of the people whom
- C. most of the people who
- D. most of the people whom

PARALLEL FORM

Alice is a beautiful girl and who is also fun to be with.

Joan has intelligence, charm and has her opinions.

Both knowing the right and to do it became Eleanor's goals.

ACT PROBLEM

Before spring began, the nights were long, cold, and windy.

- A. NO CHANGE
- B. windy, cold, and long
- C. cold, long, and windy
- D. long, windy, and cold

TRANSITIONAL EXPRESSIONS

Can you use them effectively 4-6 times on the English ACT?

My avocation is the theater; in spite of this, I go to plays whenever I can.

Mary's hobby is buying antiques, but she enjoys buying one monthly.

The cost of living is constantly rising; yet workers are demanding higher wages.

ACT PROBLEM

Few took the pictures seriously, therefore Alice did.

- A. NO CHANGE
- B. as a result
- C. hence
- D. but

Style

Idioms

We had waited years to make this journey across Miami land into a ceremonial longhouse made of saplings and earth.

Which of the following alternatives to the underlined portion would NOT be acceptable?

- A. NO CHANGE
- B. among
- C. on
- D. through

Wordiness

Packs of wolves claim sections of land as private hunting and living spaces and will howl to warn away potential intruders, those are usually other wolves.

- A. NO CHANGE
- B. most often these are
- C. and are typically
- D. usually

Redundancy—"repeated again"

Ambiguous pronoun reference—pronouns must have clearly expressed antecedents.

Norman Rockwell was an illustrator and painter who was able to make a living at it.

MODIFIER STRUCTURE PROBLEMS

Misplaced Modifiers—phrases, clauses, or words

John, the waiter, led me to a corner table with a sneer.

The manager told Steve after the meeting to submit a proposal.

My aunt cooked fresh vegetables on an old wood stove that she had picked that morning.

The archeologists found at the site a ceramic pot that they had been digging in for two years.

I only ordered a bowl of soup.

The students just pay one-third of the cost of tuition.

Dangling Modifiers—supply an agent for verb's action

Scoring a touchdown in the last four seconds, the game was won 6—0.

Revision: Scoring a touchdown in the last four seconds, the Mustangs won 6—0.

Having worn the coat, it was impossible to run it.

The course of the lava is charted to order to predict the danger.

By minimizing keyboards, home computers were made more “user friendly.”

In deciding the case, illegally obtained evidence was used.

DICTION ERRORS—WORD CHOICE ERRORS

Irregardless, you will have to remain behind with the other players.

The coach asked us to bring a glove, bat, baseball, etc.

Being that Sam is the youngest, Tom will accompany him to the gate.

Garth commented that he felt kind of tired.

You are suppose to do your work without assistance.

Alice and I had better do this assignment before we forget it.

The growing drug problem between young people distresses Americans.

What will be the most far-reaching affect of this election?

The teacher repeated again the last correct answer.