

BASICS:

5 Passages and 75 Questions
 Time: 45 minutes
 Average time per passage: 9 minutes
 Average time per question: 36 seconds

Question Types:

Usage/Mechanics (~40 questions) – deal with grammar, punctuation and sentence structure

Rhetorical Skills (~35 questions) – deal with writing strategies, style and organization

KEY RESOURCES:

[ESM ACT English Curriculum](#)

[ESM ACT Punctuation Tips](#)

[ESM ACT Punctuation Quiz](#)

GENERAL STRATEGY:

1. Read the ENTIRE passage, but stop to answer a question after fully reading the sentence in which it is located.
2. Use the answer choices to determine which grammar rule is tested.
 - a. If two or more rules are tested, start by evaluating the easiest one.
3. Eliminate wrong answer choices based on the rule or rules tested.
4. If you can't eliminate three answer choices, then read the sentence with each remaining answer choice and select the one that sounds the best to you.
5. If you are unsure of the answer choice you selected, circle the question and MOVE ON! If you reach the end of the test and have time remaining, review all of the Rhetorical Skills questions and then check over any question that you circled.

EXTRA TIPS:

1. Take your time! This is the one section of the ACT that most students finish with time remaining, but it is very hard to catch mistakes when reviewing questions at the end of the section.
 - a. If you are finishing your practice tests with more than 5 minutes remaining, try to:
 - i. Read each passage more carefully for its content – this will help you increase your accuracy on Rhetorical Skills questions, which are some of the hardest on the test.
 - ii. Commit to Step 4 of the Basic Strategy!
2. Use your leftover time wisely by:
 - a. Reviewing every Rhetorical Skills question.
 - b. Reviewing any questions that you circled in your booklet.
 - c. Thinking about math formulas in your head to get ready for the next section!
3. Read extra sentences surrounding the sentence of the question when the question is testing:
 - a. Pronoun Usage
 - b. Verb Tenses
 - c. Transition words
4. If two or more answers to a question are grammatically correct, the question is probably testing wordiness or redundancy.
 - a. When in doubt, go with the shortest answer!
5. NEVER choose an answer choice with the word “being”, and be very careful when choosing “having”!
 - a. These cannot stand alone as verbs, and are used incorrectly 99% of the time.
6. For questions testing punctuation usage, evaluate the answer choice that contains a semi-colon first.
7. For comma usage questions, take a long pause when reading a comma in an answer choice. This will help you determine if a break in the sentence is necessary.
8. Memorize “there” vs. “their”, “who’s” vs. “whose”, “its” vs. “it’s”, “who” vs. “whom”, and “could of” (NEVER correct) vs. “could have”. These are quick and easy points!
9. For questions that ask you to re-arrange or insert additional sentences, use pronouns and/or words that are repeated in sentences to help you locate their correct place in the passage.
10. Words such as and, or, also, and than, as well as sentences that contain a list of different actions, often indicate that parallel structure is needed. Make sure that you keep verb and noun forms consistent!
11. If two answer choices are grammatically identical, then neither of them can be the correct answer.

A mentor can change everything.

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