

ACT ENGLISH

1. Parts of Speech

Verbs- action words, state of being

Nouns- people, places, objects, ideas

Pronouns- replace or refer the nouns

Relative pronouns- describe nouns

Prepositions- indicate time or place

Adjectives- modify/ describe nouns and pronouns

Adverbs- modify/ describe adjectives, verbs, and other adverbs; usually end in "ly"

Conjunctions- indicates the relationship between clauses, phrases, and words

2. Apostrophes

Uses:

- possession of singular or plural nouns
- contraction of verbs

It's v/s Its

It's = contraction= it is

Its= possessive of it; used before a noun

It's'= does not exist

(Plural of its is their)

They're v/s Their v/s There

There= place

Their= possessive of they; used before a noun

They're = contraction= they are

Who's v/s Whose

Who's= contraction= who is

Whose= possessive of who; used before a noun; used for both people and things

Possession of a singular noun: -'s (bird's eye= eye of one bird)

Possession of a plural noun: -s' (birds' eye= eye of birds)

3. Sentences and Fragments

Building a sentence= noun + conjugated verb

a) Independent Clause (IC)

b) Prepositional Phrase- begins with a preposition- denoting time or place- used before a noun

c) Pronoun as a subject-

Group Pronouns- some, most, many, others, several, few

Pronoun + of them - IC

Pronoun + of which- DC

Pronoun + of whom- DC

d) Adverbs

e) Non-Essential Clauses (NEC)- surrounded by commas, dashes or parenthesis; sentence makes complete sense even without it or by removing it (extra information: doesn't contribute to the main idea)

Which doesn't start with 'w-word', the NEC is called an Appositive

f) Participles and Gerunds-

Participles- words created from verbs used as adjectives to modify nouns

Gerunds- ends in "ing"; requires a linking verb

g) Conjunctions-

Coordinating Conjunctions- For And Nor But Or Yet So (FANBOYS)

Used to join two ICs

IC, FANBOYS IC

Subordinating Conjunctions- Used to join ICs and DCs

Followed by a comma

4. Joining and Separating Sentences-

Period= Semicolon= Comma + FANBOYS

for joining two ICs

To join an IC and a DC, use a comma

Strong transitions (ST)=

However Instead

Therefore Meanwhile

Consequently Moreover

Nevertheless

When transition is used in between two ICs.

IC. ST, IC. London is an old city. However, it does contain modern buildings.

IC; ST, IC. London is an old city; however, it does contain modern buildings.

When transition is used in the middle of one IC, use commas around the transition word.

For ex: London is an old city. It does , however, contain modern buildings.

5. Non-Essential (NEC) and Essential Clauses (EC)

NEC= which, surrounded by commas or dashes, sentence makes complete sense without it

EC= that, not surrounded by commas, sentence makes no complete sense without it. (also, use of the word 'that' is optional. For example: the book lying on the table is mine.)

Common NEC words

However In fact

Moreover On the other hand

Case of who: whether the information that follows 'who' is NEC or EC, will depend on the context.

Title Name

Name ,Title,

One of many- EC

Only the/ Only one- extraordinary, last, worst, best, first, most, superlative- specific something- NEC

The current PM of India, XYZ, (there is only one;thus, we do not need to identify the name)

The ex PM of India XYZ... (there are many- one of many- name needs to be specified and identified)

The best-selling novel, XYZ, sold for.... (there is only one;thus, we do not need to identify the name)

His book XYZ... (there are many- one of many- name needs to be specified and identified)

6. Additional Comma uses and misuses

Uses: where to use a comma-

- a) To separate items on a list X,Y, and Z
- b) To separate adjectives whose order can be reversed (smart, hardworking)
- c) After a close- parenthesis where a comma would be necessary
- d) After introductory words or phrases

Misuses: where not to use a comma-

- a) between compound subjects and compound objects
- b) between a subject and a verb
- c) before or after prepositions
- d) between adjectives and nouns
- e) between two adjectives separated by "but" or "yet"
- f) before or around an emphatic pronoun (-self)
- g) around that
- h) adjectives whose order can't be reversed. (I like to listen to african traditional songs)

7. Colons

Uses:

- a) To introduce a list
 - b) To explain, clarify, and define
- IC: list
IC: explanation
IC: clarification
IC: definition

8. Dashes

Uses:

- a) To introduce a list (-=:)
 - b) To explain, clarify, and define (-=:)
- IC- list
IC/DC- explanation
IC/DC- clarification
IC/DC- definition
- c) To create a deliberate pause
 - d) To set off a NEC (2 commas= 2 dashes)

9. Subject Verb Agreement and Tense

- a) Numbers (singular, plural)
 - Look at the answer choices
 - Identify the subject and see whether it's singular or plural
 - Find the verb that agrees with the subject (singular verb takes -s, plural verb doesn't take s)
- Common structure=
Plural with plural
Singular with singular
Compound subjects are plural (**length and breath** of a rectangle **are** not equal.)
~ **subject**, prepositional phrase, **verb**
~ NECs and ECs
~ verb before a subject

b) Verb Tense

It has to remain constant
Compound subject has to be kept plural
Had begun v/s began

10. Pronoun: Agreement and Case

Replace nouns

- a) See if the passage is written as 'you' or 'one' , and follow the same word
- b) People v/s Things

c) Missing or Ambiguous Antecedent

X and Y are the best. They speak English.

Pronoun Case

The pronoun is either being used as a subject or object

11. Adjectives and Adverbs

Adjectives- modify/ describe nouns and pronouns

Adverbs- modify/ describe adjectives, verbs, and other adverbs; usually end in "ly"

Best placement for underlined word= modification with, both, adjectives and adverbs

Comparative: when comparison is between two things. For example: i arrived at party earlier than aveesha. (More early or Earlier)

Superlative: comparison between three or more. For ex: the earliest train to mumbai is at 6AM. (Most early or Earliest)

12. Word pairs and Comparisons

Word pairs (used to compare- similarity, differences)

Maintain the SAME structure

- a) As...as
- b) Not only...but also
- c) Neither...nor
- d) Either...or
- e) From...to
- f) More than (comparative)
- g) Less than (comparative)

Comparing Quantities or Comparing Amounts

Fewer and Many (animal species)

- Used with plural nouns
- Can be counted
- with Quantifiable nouns

Much and Less (animal life)

- Used with singular nouns
- Cannot be counted
- with unquantifiable nouns

That of v/s Those of

Singular and Plural

Maintain the SAME structure; compare things with things and people with people

I like X's **songs** more than **that of Y**.

X's **songs** are more popular than **those of Y**.

13. Modification

Keep them as close as possible to the word, noun, pronoun, or phrase that they are modifying. See who or what the modifiers are modifying.

a) Dangling Modifiers- right after the introductory phrase and modifies the subject

b) Misplaced Modifiers- anywhere in the sentence, separated from the noun/pronoun they are intended to modify.

TIP: if 3 out of the 4 answer choices begin with the same word, the question is testing you for modifier.

14. Parallel Structure

Maintain the SAME EXACT structure

Lists:

Noun, noun, and noun

Gerund, gerund, and gerund

Infinitive, infinitive, and infinitive

Prepositions:

Use the same preposition before and after the conjunction or word pairs.

If one of the answer choices is no 2nd preposition, choose that over choosing a different preposition.

Correct: Not only for...but also for.

Incorrect: Not only for...but also any other preposition other than for.

Correct: Not only for...but also no preposition.

15. Relative Pronouns

Which (**only things**) v/s That (**both things and people**)

Which is only for things and forms a NEC.

That is for both people and things and forms an EC.

Who(m) v/s Which

Who(m) is for people

Which is for things

Who v/s Whom

Who

- Used before noun
- Not used after a preposition

Whom

- Not used before a noun
- Used after a preposition

Pronoun + of whom (pronoun is determined by of)

Whose (**both people and things**)

Possessive of who and which

When- time

Where- place

Preposition + which- can be used instead of where and when (provided the preposition is correct)

Whereby= by which or according to which

It is used to introduce a description of a system, method, or process.

Which is not to be used as a preposition.

RHETORIC

LOOK AT THE ANSWER CHOICES AND READ THE QUESTION VERY CAREFULLY.
NO OVERTHINKING. IDENTIFY THE MAIN IDEA OF THE PASSAGE, PARAGRAPH OR LINE
DEPENDING ON THE QUESTION.

KEEP WITHIN THE SCOPE OF THE PASSAGE GIVEN.

1. Shorter is better: Avoid Redundancy and Wordiness

TIP: If all answer choices are grammatically correct and convey the same main idea, the question is testing you for shorter is better. Pick the shortest answer option.

a) Redundancy- never use two synonyms to describe something when one is sufficient

b) Wordiness- when you have multiple answer choices that express the same information and differ only in length, the shortest answer is generally correct

c) Passive Voice- **ALWAYS** use active voice over passive voice. **AVOID** passive voice at all cost

NEVER delete pronouns and prepositions to make the clause shorter.

2. Diction and Register

Diction is the author's choice of words; Must be idiomatic.

Then (order) v/s Than (with comparing amounts)

Have (should be used with might, should, could, would) v/s Of

Correct preposition usage

See the in the context what the intended meaning is.

Except, not questions are very common. Read the question carefully.

Register is how formal or informal the author's language is. Usually, The ACT comprises of passages of a neutral tone.

Never too/ extremely formal.

Never too/ extremely informal

Never choose a very causally-worded answer.

3. Transitions

Types

Continuers- express a similar idea and show a continuity in action

Contradictors- express different ideas and show opposition

Cause-and-Effect- show one thing as a result of another

a) Transitions within sentences

Identifying the relationship between two parts of the sentence

b) Transitions between sentences

Identifying the relationship between one sentence and the previous sentence or the next sentence

c) Transitions between paragraphs

Identifying the relationship between one paragraph and the previous paragraph or the next paragraph

4. Inserting, Deleting, and Replacing Information

Seeing whether the information is relevant or irrelevant to the passage or to a particular point in the passage, by identifying the main idea.

Identify whether the information is consistent with the overall focus of the paragraph or passage.

First choose yes or no, and then look at the reasons and explanations and choose the most appropriate one depending on the question.

5. Sentence and Paragraph Order

Read introduction and conclusion of the entire passage.

Read two lines above and two lines below for the given sentence.

See if there is something odd or illogical about the order of the sentences or paragraphs.

Sentence Order

Determine the topic of the sentence the question is asking about. **See if it follows logically from the previous sentence and efficiently connects to the following sentence.** Reread where the specific subject being referred to by the question is being mentioned ,and accordingly, place the sentence there.

Paragraph Order

Sentence order on a larger scale.

Reread the concerned paragraph.

Reread the last sentence of the previous paragraph ,and analyse whether it naturally leads into the topic of the paragraph in question. If not, skim through the first and last sentence of each other paragraphs ,and notice where the concerned paragraph fits the best.

Dividing Paragraphs

Recognise where the shift in topic or focus occurs.

6. Suppose the Writer's Goal...

Recognise the main idea.

Distinguish between the main idea and supporting ideas.

Most frequently appearing word.

Reread title, introduction, topic sentence
of each paragraph, and the conclusion.

Specific passages focus on a specific, single topic, person, or event which are repeatedly mentioned. Other topics, people, or events are just in relation to the main idea.

General passages focus on a broad topic or recurring event. Specific topics, people, or events are referred to as in isolation rather than being discussed throughout the entire passage.

Does it fulfil intended goal- yes or no? Why?