

ACT Prep

Reading

Wuth
LEARNING SERIES

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ACT Prep

Reading

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Dear Student,

Are you worried about the ACT Reading test?

Raise your hand if...

- you think reading comprehension tests are hard.
- you don't think you will get a good score on the ACT Reading section.



- you think multiple choice tests are tricky because sometimes more than one choice looks correct.



- you have NOT been taught test-taking strategies for reading tests.



- you are willing to try something new.



Even though reading comprehension tests are hard, and tricky, and most of you have NOT been taught *how* to take them, I'm absolutely positive that you can get the score you'd like.

Here's how:

1. Believe that you **CAN** improve your reading comprehension skills.
2. Believe that you **WILL** read faster when your reading skills improve.
3. Be willing to try a new approach.
4. Be willing to complete **ALL** of the pages in this book.

That's it. If you complete this book with the intention of improving – which means you are really trying and not just going through the motions – you will master the skills you need to do well on the ACT Reading test. You **CAN** get the score you desire.

Cathy Guth

Because some colleges and universities have adopted a test-optional admission policy, you may be wondering if you should even take the ACT test. **Yes! Now more than ever, an ACT score can give you an advantage over other students who are competing with you for admission and academic scholarships.** Have you ever heard a teacher say “I’m looking for extra effort”? Preparing for and taking the ACT takes extra time and effort. It’s an excellent way to demonstrate your willingness to do more than what is expected, to go beyond the minimum requirements. **Submitting a high ACT score will make a positive impression on college admission committees and academic scholarship committees.** Let’s get started:

Set a goal: What scores would you like to achieve?

Composite	English	Math	Reading	Science

Monitor your progress: Record your scores from each practice test you take. Keep practicing until you reach your goals.

English Test	Scale Score	Did you finish in 45 minutes?
<i>Preparing for the ACT</i> 2018-19		Yes, I answered all 75 questions. No, I had _____ questions left.
<i>Preparing for the ACT</i> 2015-16		Yes, I answered all 75 questions. No, I had _____ questions left.
<i>Preparing for the ACT</i>		Yes, I answered all 75 questions. No, I had _____ questions left.

Math Test	Scale Score	Did you finish in 60 minutes?
<i>Preparing for the ACT</i> 2018-19		Yes, I answered all 60 questions. No, I had _____ questions left.
<i>Preparing for the ACT</i> 2015-16		Yes, I answered all 60 questions. No, I had _____ questions left.
<i>Preparing for the ACT</i>		Yes, I answered all 60 questions. No, I had _____ questions left.

Reading Test	Scale Score	Did you finish in 35 minutes?
<i>Preparing for the ACT</i> 2018-19		Yes, I answered all 40 questions. No, I had _____ questions left.
<i>Preparing for the ACT</i> 2015-16		Yes, I answered all 40 questions. No, I had _____ questions left.
<i>Preparing for the ACT</i>		Yes, I answered all 40 questions. No, I had _____ questions left.

Science Test	Scale Score	Did you finish in 35 minutes?
<i>Preparing for the ACT</i> 2018-19		Yes, I answered all 40 questions. No, I had _____ questions left.
<i>Preparing for the ACT</i> 2015-16		Yes, I answered all 40 questions. No, I had _____ questions left.
<i>Preparing for the ACT</i>		Yes, I answered all 40 questions. No, I had _____ questions left.

Determine the **author's purpose**.
Decide *why* the author wrote each paragraph.

The key to understanding an entire passage is to figure out *why* the author wrote each paragraph. When you know *why* an author wrote a paragraph, it's easier to figure out the **main idea**.

Read this paragraph.
Why did the author write these words?

Butterflies and moths undergo complete metamorphosis. To grow into an adult, they go through four stages: egg, larva (caterpillar), pupa, and adult. Depending on the type of butterfly, the life cycle of a butterfly may take anywhere from one month to an entire year.

1. **Why** did the author write the above paragraph? **What is the author's purpose?**
- A. to compare butterflies and moths
 - B. to state that the time it takes a butterfly to complete its life cycle varies
 - C. to explain the meaning of metamorphosis
 - D. to describe the life cycle of a butterfly and moth

Let's discuss each answer choice:

- Answer choices will always use words from the paragraph. This paragraph is about butterflies and moths, but the paragraph **does not compare**. **Cross off choice A.**
- Choice B states a fact from the paragraph. The correct answer to an author's purpose question will not focus on single details. **Cross off choice B.**
- This paragraph does not give a definition. It talks about the metamorphosis of a specific insect. **Cross off choice C.**
- Choice D is correct. Notice how the correct answer does not include supporting details.

2. **What is the main idea** of the above paragraph?
- F. The larva stage of a butterfly is also known as the caterpillar stage.
 - G. The life cycle of a butterfly includes four stages: egg, larva, pupa, and adult.
 - H. The pupa stage takes between one month and a whole year.
 - J. There are four types of butterflies and moths.

The **main idea** of a paragraph expresses the **author's purpose**.

Which choice describes the life cycle of a butterfly and moth?

- **Cross off F.** Choice F makes a true statement, but it does not describe a butterfly's life cycle.
- **Cross off H.** This choice makes a claim that is not stated in the paragraph.
- **Cross off J.** Notice how this choice takes a few words from the paragraph and uses them differently. There are **four stages**, not **four types**.

Why did the author write these words?



London attracts around 30 million visitors each year. Instead of walking or riding around the city, some tourists choose to paddle their way past London’s famous landmarks in a kayak. While kayaking down the Thames river, visitors and locals alike gain a unique view of the House of Parliament, London Eye, and St. Paul’s Cathedral. Kayakers can even paddle under the Tower Bridge.

1. **Why** did the author write the above paragraph? **What is the author’s purpose?**

- A. to suggest an alternate way of seeing a city’s top attractions
- B. to list some of London’s famous landmarks
- C. to explain why London attracts 30 million visitors each year
- D. to tell why kayaking is the best way to see London

Think critically as you read through each answer choice:

- Is **alternate way** similar to **instead of**?
- If the purpose is to list famous landmarks in London, why does only one sentence mention landmarks?
- The first sentence clearly states that London attracts 30 million visitors. Does it tell **why**?
- Does the passage compare ways to get around? Does it say that one way is best?

2. **What is the main idea** of the above paragraph?

- F. London streets are not designed to handle 30 million tourists.
- G. Some attractions can only be seen from the water.
- H. Kayaking is better than walking because you can avoid congested streets.
- J. Kayaking is a unique way to do sightseeing in London.



The **main idea** of a paragraph **expresses the author’s purpose**.

Which choice expresses the author’s purpose? Which choice matches your answer for question 1?

Never choose an answer choice that offers information that was NOT stated in the passage:

- Does the passage discuss the design of London’s streets?
- Does the passage mention an attraction that can only be seen from the water?
- Does the passage say why kayaking is better than walking?

Remember: Even if you agree with the information in an answer choice, it can NOT be the correct answer if it wasn’t stated or suggested in the passage.

Some of the words listed on these pages are synonyms. The ACT will never ask you to choose between two words that have very similar meanings. Therefore, if you know the meaning of the words listed on pages 31-33 AND you can recognize synonyms, you will be able to answer **tone** questions correctly.

The first four words in this list are synonyms. The examples in the following two boxes show how knowing vocabulary and recognizing synonyms will help you answer **tone** questions.

If you see two answer choices that mean the same, cross them both off.

- ~~A.~~ Earnest
~~B.~~ Solemn
 C. Carefree
 D. Optimistic

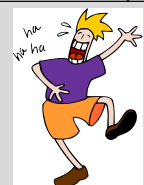
If you think the tone is *serious*, but *serious* is not one of the answer choices, choose a *synonym for serious*.

- F. Adoring
 G. Solemn
 H. Carefree
 J. Optimistic

Review the meaning of these **tone** words. Recognize which words are synonyms.

Words	Definitions
1. serious	earnest, not funny
2. earnest	serious
3. solemn	serious, grave, earnest
4. grave	serious
5. thoughtful	meditative
6. pensive	contemplative, meditative
7. contemplative	reflective, meditative
8. reflective	thoughtful, contemplative
9. objective	based on facts, impartial, unbiased, not influenced by feelings
10. impartial	fair, equitable, objective
11. fair	just, unbiased, impartial
12. biased	one-sided, partisan, prejudiced
13. informative	educational, enlightening, illuminating, instructive
14. instructive	educational, enlightening, illuminating, informative
15. critical	judgmental, faultfinding, disapproving
16. pragmatic	practical, matter-of-fact, logical
17. optimistic	showing hope for the future, promising, upbeat
18. reverent	very respectful
19. adoring	loving, affectionate, devoted
20. affectionate	loving, adoring, devoted, tender
21. compassionate	sympathetic, kindhearted
22. sympathetic	understanding, compassionate, empathetic
23. empathetic	compassionate, humane, understanding
24. absurd	extremely silly, ridiculous
25. farcical	laughable, absurd , ludicrous
26. preposterous	absurd , fanciful
27. ludicrous	comical, ridiculous, hilarious

When I hear something **absurd**, my **abs** hurt from laughing so hard!



There **must** be evidence in the passage to support what you infer. An inference is NOT just a logical guess. Your conclusion (your inference) **must** be supported by something in the text.

Read the following excerpt from *Tom Sawyer*.

What a hero Tom was become, now! He did not go skipping and prancing, but moved with a dignified swagger as became a pirate who felt that the public eye was on him. And indeed it was.
 5 He tried not to seem to see the looks or hear the remarks as he passed along, but they were food and drink to him. Smaller boys than himself flocked at his heels, as proud to be seen with him, and tolerated by him, as if he had been the
 10 drummer at the head of a procession or the elephant leading a menagerie into town. Boys of his own size pretended not to know he had been away at all; but they were consumed with envy, nevertheless. They would have given anything to
 15 have that swarthy, suntanned skin of his, and his glittering notoriety; and Tom would not have parted with either for a circus.

1. It can reasonably be **inferred** from the passage that the phrase “food and drink” in lines 6 and 7 refers to:
- A. Looks and words of approval and admiration
 - B. Dignified swagger
 - C. Joy of being the head drummer
 - D. Freedom to do as he pleases

THINK:

- What do **you** know about food and drink? What is **your** real-life experience with food and drink?
- You know that Tom likes his freedom, but **according to this portion of the text**, which of the answer choices does Tom need in the same way you need food and water?

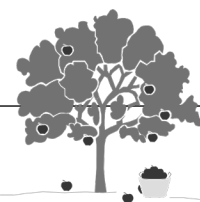
2. It can reasonably be **inferred** from the passage that the boys who were Tom’s age were jealous of Tom because:
- F. They wanted to be Tom’s best friend.
 - G. They wanted to lead the circus.
 - H. They wished their skin would tan dark like Tom’s skin instead of burning and turning red.
 - J. They desired the fame that Tom had for being bad.

THINK:

- Find the word *jealous* in the passage.
- If you can’t find the word *jealous*, look for a synonym.
- Think about your own experiences. Why do you become filled with envy?

The answer to **why** the boys were jealous is found in lines 14-17.

- Cross off F and G. Being his friend and leading a procession were discussed earlier. Find words that tell **why** they *were consumed with envy*.
- Does line 15 mention *suntanned skin*? Yes. Does it mention *burning instead of tanning*? No, so cross off H. Even though you may burn when other people tan or you get jealous of how easily other people tan, an answer choice is wrong if it is not directly or indirectly stated in the text.
- Circle J. Even if you don’t know that *notoriety* means becoming well known for being bad, you can still choose J because you eliminated the other choices.



Question 11

- Focus **only** on the words in quotes.
- Cross off A. The words in quotes do not suggest a challenge to navigate.
- Cross off B. The words in quotes have nothing to do with apple varieties or cataloging.
- Cross off C. The words in quotes do not suggest that something is important.
- *Magnitude* means *greatness of size or amount*. *Magnitude* matches all of the words in quotes.
- **The correct answer is D.**

Question 12

- Never choose an answer that is not supported in the passage. Nothing in the passage suggests that the apples in the store were harvested in Tian Shan. Cross off F.
- Note that the word *likely* is used in choice G.
- Cross off H. No words suggest that one apple is most popular.
- Cross off J. No words suggest that Vavilov wanted to introduce new varieties to producers.
- You have eliminated choices F, H, and J. **The correct answer must be G.**

Question 13

- Be very careful on questions like this. Watch for choices that switch out one word.
- Cross off A. The passage mentioned 157 species of plants, not fruits.
- Cross off B. The passage mentioned 90% of domesticated fruits, not crops.
- Cross off C. The passage mentioned 90% of domesticated fruits, not just apples.
- **The correct answer is D.** Lines 33-35 match exactly with answer choice D.

Question 14

- Skim the passage to find out why he wanted to become an agricultural scientist. (lines 69-73)
- **The correct answer is J.**

Question 15

- Line 80 uses the word *whittle*. What is the last paragraph about? Which answer choice matches the main idea of this paragraph?
- Read choice A. Now read lines 86-89. Skip the words between the two dashes.
- It's a perfect match. **The correct answer is A.** (Remember: once you find an answer that is 100% correct, you can choose it without reading the other choices.)

Question 16

- Read lines 82-83. Replace *named* and *nurtured* with your own words. Which answer matches your words?
- Or try inserting each answer choice into the sentence. Which one makes sense? For example, insert choice F into lines 82-83: *apple varieties have been nominated and encouraged*. Does that make sense? No. Cross off choice F.
- **The correct answer is G.**