

ACT: English

1. One-Paragraph at a Time

- ◆ This method allows the "just right" amount of material: not too much as to overwhelm and not too little as to lack enough context to answer rhetorical questions.
- ◆ You will answer 75 questions in 45 minutes...this breaks down to approximately 30 seconds per question if you allow 90 seconds for reading each passage. If a question is taking too long just give a best guess; save your time for easier questions.

2. Review Grammar Rules

- ① **SENTENCE STRUCTURE:** Avoid fragments and comma splices (run-on sentences). Two independent clauses may be made into two sentences, separated by a semi-colon if they are closely tied together in intent, or separated by a comma followed by a conjunction.
- ② **PUNCTUATION:**
 - ◆ Commas are used
 - in a series (to separate interchangeable nouns or adjectives—*note that a comma before "and" is optional*)
 - after an introductory word/phrase/dependent clause
 - before a coordinating conjunction (for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so) connecting two independent clauses
 - to enclose non-essential clauses/phrases
 - ◆ Semi-colons separate two independent clauses. Colons are placed after a complete sentence but may be followed by either a full sentence or a fragment such as a list or explanation.
 - ◆ An em dash (—) may replace a colon or semi-colon when the tone desired is casual and/or emphatic. An en dash (–) denotes a span of time or a range of numbers.
- ③ **BE CONSISTENT:** ●subject-verb agreement ●verb tense should remain consistent ●a pronoun must always match its antecedent ●items in a list must be parallel in structure (noun, noun, noun, ING, ING, ING) ●(N)either...(n)or, Not only...but (also), As...as—when one word in each pair appears, the other must be present as well
- ④ **MODIFIERS:** Always place modifiers as close as possible to the noun they modify or use a subordinating conjunction for clarification; a "dangling modifier" is missing its noun.
- ⑤ **TRICKY WORDS:** ◆THAN = COMPARISON, THEN = SEQUENCE OF EVENTS
 - ◆WHO = SUBJECT, WHOM = OBJECT PLACED AFTER A PREPOSITION, WHICH REFERS TO THINGS,
 - ◆WHO'S = WHO IS, WHOSE = POSSESSIVE FORM OF "WHO" ◆IT'S = IT IS, ITS = POSSESSIVE FORM OF "IT"
 - ◆THEY'RE = THEY ARE, THEIR = POSSESSIVE FORM OF "THEY", THERE = A PLACE

3. It Is Not Just About Grammar...Brush-up on your Rhetorical Skills Too

- ① **TRANSITIONS:** Reason through how the portion before and after the transition are related, then read and narrow down answer choices accordingly, plug in your answer and reread.
- ② **WORDINESS/REDUNDANCY/FORMALITY:** Shorter is better (as long as it is grammatically correct). ACT values writing which is concise, specific, and formal. Always avoid redundancy.
- ③ **RELEVANCE:** Omit information which is not related to the main idea of the sentence or paragraph, but keep information which clarifies an important point or introduces a key, necessary detail.
- ④ **MACRO LOGIC:** These questions ask you to move sentences around. Reread the paragraph after choosing placement and make sure your choice logically flows after what comes before and connects to what comes after.