

ACT Series

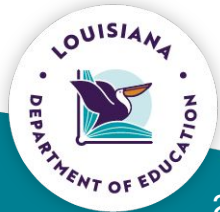
Part Three: ACT English Basics



April 2024

Objectives

- Introduce the basics of the ACT English Test
- Draw correlations between the ACT English Test and the reading and writing ropes
- Connect the skills for the ACT English test to HQIM



English ACT Test Basics

- 75 questions; 5 passages; 45 minutes
 - ◆ Passages are not set in certain genres or orders like the reading test
 - ◆ Focus is on the use of English conventions and use of language
 - ◆ Always the first subtest
- There are 3 reporting categories of questions types:
 - ◆ CSE: Conventions of standard English (roughly 40 questions)
 - ◆ POW: Production of writing (roughly 20 questions)
 - ◆ KLA: Knowledge of Language (roughly 10-12 questions)
- Benchmark Score: 18

Research from ACT

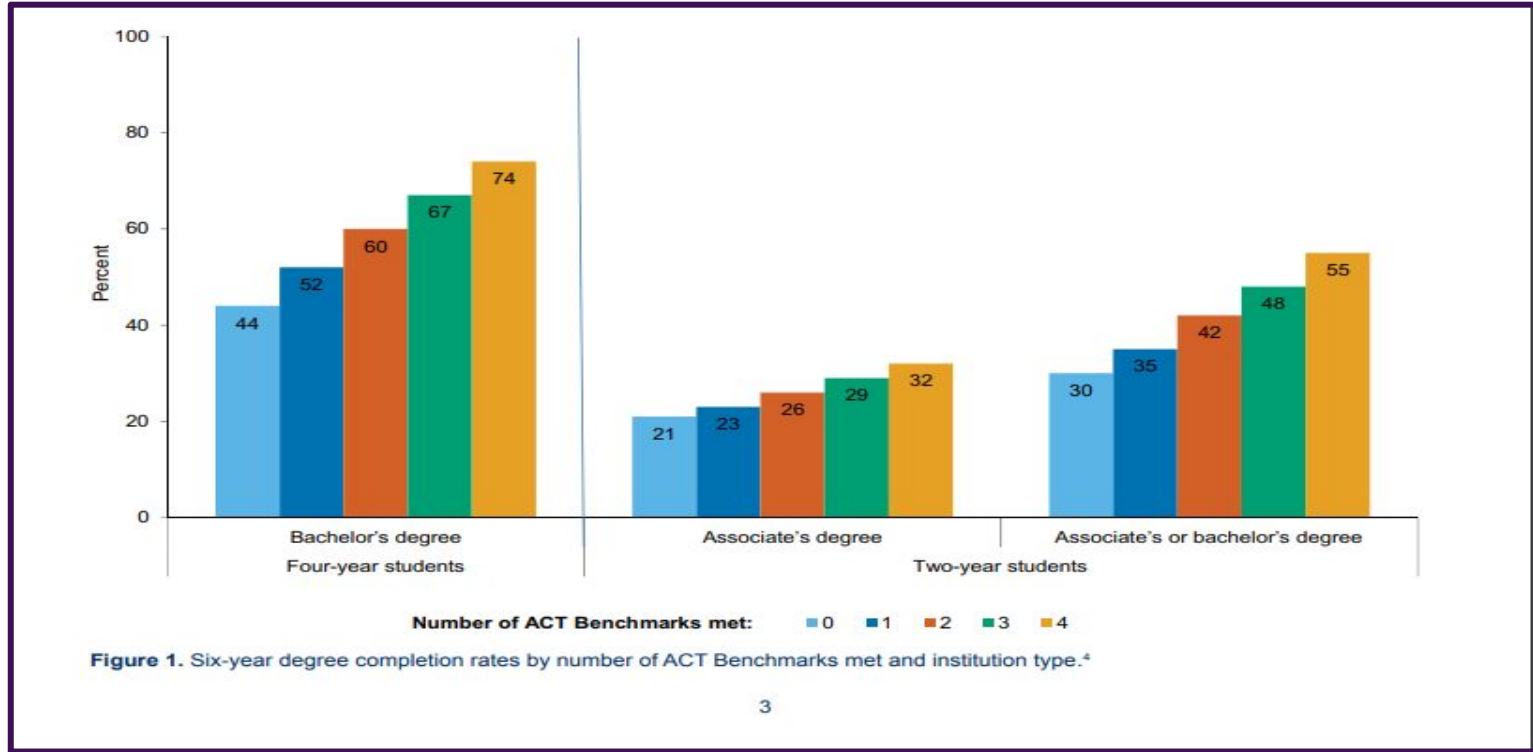
Table 1. ACT College Readiness Benchmarks

ACT Test Score	College Courses	Benchmark
English	English Composition I	18
Mathematics	College Algebra	22
Reading	American History, Other History, Psychology, Sociology, Political Science, Economics	22
Science	Biology	23
STEM	Calculus, Chemistry, Biology, Physics, Engineering	26
ELA	English Composition I, American History, Other History, Psychology, Sociology, Political Science, Economics	20

“What are the ACT College Readiness Benchmarks”
By Jeff Allen PHD & Justine Radunzel PHD



Research from ACT



3

“What are the ACT College Readiness Benchmarks”

By Jeff Allen PHD & Justine Radunzel PHD



Scoring Keys for Form Z08

Use the scoring key for each test to score your answer document for the multiple-choice tests. Mark a "1" in the blank for each question you answered correctly. Add up the numbers in each reporting category and enter the total number correct for each reporting category in the blanks provided. Also enter the total number correct for each test in the blanks provided. The total number correct for each test is the sum of the number correct in each reporting category.

Test 1: English—Scoring Key

Key	Reporting Category*		
	POW	KLA	CSE
1. A			
2. J			
3. C			
4. G			
5. C			
6. F			
7. B			
8. H			
9. C			
10. F			
11. C			
12. H			
13. B			
14. F			
15. B			
16. J			
17. A			
18. G			
19. D			
20. H			
21. C			
22. H			
23. A			
24. G			
25. C			
26. H			
27. D			
28. G			
29. D			
30. G			
31. C			
32. J			
33. B			
34. F			
35. A			
36. G			
37. D			
38. H			

Key	Reporting Category*		
	POW	KLA	CSE
39. D			
40. J			
41. A			
42. J			
43. A			
44. H			
45. D			
46. J			
47. B			
48. J			
49. B			
50. F			
51. D			
52. F			
53. A			
54. G			
55. C			
56. F			
57. B			
58. J			
59. D			
60. J			
61. A			
62. F			
63. C			
64. J			
65. C			
66. F			
67. B			
68. G			
69. D			
70. F			
71. D			
72. G			
73. D			
74. F			
75. A			

*Reporting Categories
POW = Production of Writing
KLA = Knowledge of Language
CSE = Conventions of Standard English

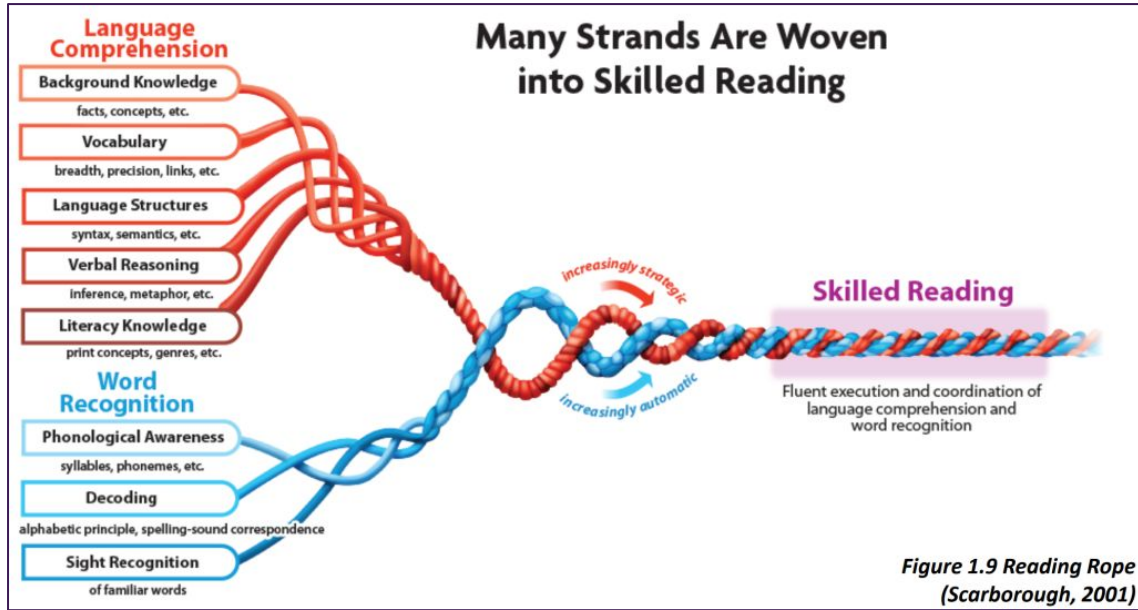
Number Correct (Raw Score) for:	
Production of Writing (POW)	(23)
Knowledge of Language (KLA)	(12)
Conventions of Standard English (CSE)	(40)
Total Number Correct for English Test (POW + KLA + CSE)	(75)

The highest possible Composite score is 50. The lowest possible Composite score is 1.

Do not list a scale score for that test if any test was completely blank, do not calculate a Composite score.

Scale Score	Raw Scores				Scale Score
	Test 1 English	Test 2 Mathematics	Test 3 Reading	Test 4 Science	
36	74-75	59-60	40	40	36
35	72-73	56-58	39	39	35
34	71	54-55	38	—	34
33	70	53	37	38	33
32	69	52	—	37	32
31	68	51	36	—	31
30	67	49-50	35	36	30
29	65-66	47-48	34	35	29
28	64	44-46	33	34	28
27	62-63	41-43	32	33	27
26	60-61	38-40	31	32	26
25	57-59	35-37	30	30-31	25
24	53-56	32-34	28-29	28-29	24
23	50-52	30-31	26-27	26-27	23
22	47-49	29	24-25	24-25	22
21	44-46	27-28	23	22-23	21
20	41-43	26	22	21	20
19	38-40	24-25	20-21	19-20	19
18	36-37	22-23	19	18	18
17	34-35	18-21	17-18	16-17	17
16	32-33	15-17	16	15	16
15	29-31	12-14	15	13-14	15
14	26-28	10-11	13-14	12	14
13	25	8-9	12	11	13
12	22-24	7	10-11	9-10	12
11	19-21	5-6	9	8	11
10	16-18	4	8	7	10
9	14-15	—	7	6	9
8	12-13	3	6	5	8
7	10-11	—	5	4	7
6	8-9	2	4	3	6
5	6-7	—	3	—	5
4	5	1	—	2	4
3	3-4	—	2	1	3
2	2	—	1	—	2
1	0-1	0	0	0	1





Language structures and vocabulary will play huge roles in the students' success on the English portion of the ACT.

We need to always remember literacy components are deeply interconnected to each other.

Writing Rope

The Strands That Are Woven Into Skilled Writing (Sedita, 2019)

Critical Thinking

- Generating ideas, gathering information
- Writing process: organizing, drafting, writing, revising

Syntax

- Grammar and syntactic awareness
- Sentence elaboration
- Punctuation

Text Structure

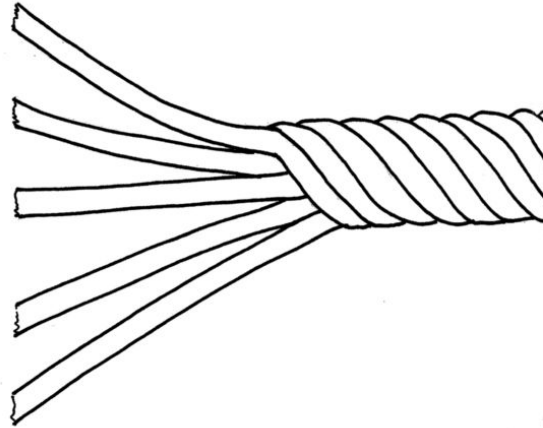
- Narrative, informational, opinion structures
- Paragraph structure
- Patterns of organization (description, sequence, cause/effect, compare/contrast, problem/solution)
- Linking and transition words/phrases

Writing Craft

- Word choice
- Awareness of task, audience purpose
- Literary devices

Transcription

- Spelling
- Handwriting, keyboarding



In addition to the Scarborough's Reading Rope, Joan Sedita has developed a related Writing Rope that showcases all the strands of writing essential for a skilled writer.

Question Category: Conventions of Standard English (CSE)

- The bulk of the test questions
- Punctuation and grammar is the focus
 - ◆ Commas
 - ◆ Semicolons
 - ◆ Colons
 - ◆ Dashes
 - ◆ Apostrophes
 - ◆ Subject/Verb Agreement
 - ◆ Commonly confused words
 - ◆ Pronoun/Noun agreement (singular vs. plural)
- Writing Rope Strand: Syntax
- Reading Rope Strand: Language Structure



There would likely be no cathedral to visit, for instance, if not for Victor Hugo's epic novel ¹⁹*Notre-Dame de Paris*, commonly known as *The Hunchback of Notre-Dame*. In the late 1700s, during the French Revolution, much of the architectural icon was destroyed. What builders and craftsmen, starting in 1163, had then taken more than ²⁰one hundred fifty years to create

²¹were tumbling into ruins in politically tumultuous times. The population of a city engulfed in chaos chose Notre Dame as one of its targets, defacing statues, breaking windows, and smashing furniture in an attempt to remove any vestiges of royalty and of its religion.

Years later, in 1831, Victor Hugo published his novel, the masterpiece ²²offers a sweeping and brutal look at issues of class and power in France. The first novel to have beggars as protagonists, the book also features the cathedral itself ²³as a central character. So popular was the story that one of its effects was to

spur the restoration of the cathedral, and ²⁴Hugo had portrayed as teetering on the brink of utter deterioration. In addition to being exalted as a monumental work of architecture, the cathedral emerging in ²⁵Hugo's pages as embodying history—history worth preserving with a vengeance. The actual work of restoration was helped ²⁶by Gothic Revival architect

²⁷his name is Eugène Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc.

19. A. NO CHANGE
B. last but not least,
C. in other words,
D. though.
20. F. NO CHANGE
G. than taken more then
H. taken more than
J. taken more then
21. A. NO CHANGE
B. were now
C. was
D. DELETE the underlined portion.
22. F. NO CHANGE
G. reading it
H. which
J. it
23. A. NO CHANGE
B. features, the cathedral itself,
C. features, the cathedral itself
D. features, the cathedral, itself
24. F. NO CHANGE
G. cathedral, which
H. cathedral. In the book,
J. cathedral. The author
25. A. NO CHANGE
B. to emerge
C. emerges
D. DELETE the underlined portion.
26. Which choice best indicates that Viollet-le-Duc played a prominent role in the restoration process?
F. NO CHANGE
G. considered important
H. spearheaded
J. noted
27. A. NO CHANGE
B. whom is
C. who is
D. DELETE the underlined portion.

Commonly confused words

Subject/Verb Agreement

Commas: Connecting dependent and independent clauses

Commas: Connecting essential vs. non-essential information

Commas: Subordinate clauses

Subject/Verb Agreement

of lobster. They preferred using it as fishing bait to

seeing them on their dinner tables. In Europe, however,
lobster was scarce, expensive, and in high demand.

- appears in the preceding paragraph.
- G. makes a new assertion about lobster explained later in the essay.
 - H. reiterates and clarifies the central idea in the second paragraph.
 - J. suggests the colonists actually enjoy lobster.

39. A. NO CHANGE
B. some
C. these
D. it

#39 is an example of a pronoun/noun agreement question—these questions will always ask about using the correct pronouns in terms of singular vs. plural

went on strike, fed up with the indignity of being forced to eat lobster as often as three times a week. Snippets of quotations are often spun to bolster such stories of colonists' disdain for the crustacean. When welcoming a new boat of colonists in 1622, William Bradford, governor of Plymouth Colony, confessed, some say, to his humiliation at having to serve lobster. But what he expressed was regret over serving it, "without bread or anything else but a cup of fair water." The message was

- 34. F. NO CHANGE
G. the colonists
H. colonist's
J. colonists
- 35. A. NO CHANGE
B. having confessed,
C. and confessed,
D. confessing,
- 36. F. NO CHANGE
G. it "without
H. it. "Without
J. it; "without

All three of these questions are CSE:

- possession/apostrophes
- Selecting verbs
- Using semicolons or commas



Question Category: Production of Writing (POW)

- There are roughly 20-23 of these on every test.
- Think proofreading and editing
 - ◆ Sentence placement
 - ◆ Organization
 - ◆ Adding or deleting information
 - ◆ Relevant information
 - ◆ Transitions
- Writing Rope Strand: Text Structure & Critical Thinking
- Reading Rope Strand: Language structure & literacy knowledge



PASSAGE I

Citizen Scientists Advance Astronomy at Home

Starting in 2007, volunteers around the world began contributing via the Internet to cutting-edge¹ astronomical research. Galaxy Zoo, a website developed at Oxford University, achieved an immediate and extraordinary success, surprising even the astronomers who created it.

Initially, project leaders invited the public to study images gathered by the Sloan Digital Sky Survey (SDSS) in order to classify galaxies as elliptical or spiral.²

POW: Having to determine if information is relevant and whether something should be added are skills students should focus on in their writing.

1. **A.** NO CHANGE
B. world began, contributing
C. world, began contributing
D. world began contributing,

2. At this point, the writer is considering adding the following true statement:

The Alfred P. Sloan Foundation was created in 1934.

Should the writer make this addition here?

- F.** Yes, because it clarifies who is responsible for funding the Sloan Digital Sky Survey.
- G.** Yes, because it indicates that Galaxy Zoo has a long history of foundation support.
- H.** No, because it suggests that the Sloan Digital Sky Survey did not rely on volunteers.
- J.** No, because it blurs the paragraph's focus at this point on the tasks performed by volunteers.

#37 & 38 are good examples of the importance of teaching about author's purpose and only including relevant information in writing.

this: Lobster was plentiful. It was a good source of protein.

37

These stories present an exaggerated truth. 38 With so much lobster and so little else, colonists indeed tired of lobster. They preferred using it as fishing bait to

45. Which choice best concludes the paragraph and essay by forming a specific connection between current attitudes toward lobster and those of the colonists?
- A. NO CHANGE
 - B. People credit the current level of New England lobster populations to a strong history of strict controls to avoid overfishing.
 - C. People say thin-shelled lobster, which does not ship well and is therefore only available on the coast, is the tastiest by far.
 - D. Today, it's also much more likely to show up as an entrée on a plate than as bait on a fishhook.

Instruction on paragraph structure will help with these types of questions—think about how we always want students to refer back to their thesis to conclude.

37. Given that all the choices are true, which one best completes the contrast with the preceding sentence and offers the most logical interpretation of the quotation from Bradford?
- A. NO CHANGE
 - B. Coffee and tea, when available, were popular among the colonists.
 - C. It could be caught quickly and easily.
 - D. Other foods were scarce.
38. If the writer were to delete the preceding sentence, the essay would primarily lose a statement that:
- F. paraphrases the quotation from Bradford that appears in the preceding paragraph.
 - G. makes a new assertion about lobsters that is explained later in the essay.
 - H. reiterates and clarifies the central idea of the second paragraph.
 - J. suggests the colonists actually enjoyed eating lobster.



classifications. Soon after the start of the project, its⁶
managers had to upgrade hardware to handle the

contributions, which proved to be a real challenge.⁷

Project creators are quick to point out that humans
perform some scientific tasks far better than computers
do, even in disciplines such as astronomy, however,⁸ that

rely heavily on technology. 9 The huge database
amassed as part of Galaxy Zoo allowed researchers
to advance their understanding of galaxy formation,

6. F. NO CHANGE
G. some of it's
H. its'
J. it's
7. Given that all the choices are accurate, which one most clearly indicates why the actions described in this sentence were taken?
A. NO CHANGE
B. were reaching 70,000 classifications per hour.
C. turned out to be very helpful.
D. they did successfully.
8. F. NO CHANGE
G. astronomy, on the other hand,
H. astronomy
J. DELETE the underlined portion.
9. If the writer were to delete the preceding sentence, the essay would primarily lose information that suggests:
A. which data collected by Galaxy Zoo was provided by volunteers.
B. what advancements in astronomy depend on increasingly sophisticated technology.
C. why Galaxy Zoo's creators were reaching out to involve citizen scientists.
D. where technologies used in astronomy projects are available to public participants.

#7-9 are all POW questions.

Students are having to demonstrate how to effectively and **CONCISELY** write (or in this case edit).

Note: #8 is an example of using transitions correctly



Question Category: Knowledge of Language (KLA)

- Roughly 10-12 questions per test
- Typically focuses on word choice and conciseness
- Writing Rope Strand: Critical Thinking Writing craft
- Reading Rope Strand: Language Structures & vocabulary

Soon, technological innovations would soon allow
New Englanders to profit from their lobster wealth.

40. F. NO CHANGE
G. In short order, technological
H. Before long, technological
J. Technological

Questions #5, #40-41 are all KLA—they're specifically asking for word choice and conciseness

GO ON TO THE NEXT PAGE.



Specialized boats, called smacks, were constructed
to enable lobstermen to catch and hold large numbers of

41. A. NO CHANGE
B. usually referred to in the singular as a smack or in the plural as smacks,
C. which were often referred to by most people as smacks,
D. usually called smacks by most people,

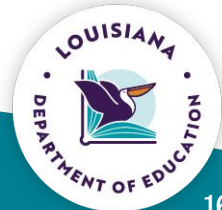
In the case of spiral galaxies, by which participants
were also to note the direction of the galaxy's

rotation, clockwise, or counterclockwise. During
Galaxy Zoo's first year, 150,000 volunteers took a

short online tutorial and began eyeballing the SDSS
images on their own computers and submitting their

classifications. Soon after the start of the project, its
managers had to upgrade hardware to handle the

3. A. NO CHANGE
B. for which participants
C. participants
D. meanwhile,
4. F. NO CHANGE
G. rotation—clockwise
H. rotation clockwise;
J. rotation clockwise:
5. A. NO CHANGE
B. glaring at
C. viewing
D. noticing
6. F. NO CHANGE
G. some of it's
H. its'
J. it's



in such elaborate locations as the journals of the Royal
Astronomical Society. [B] Following Galaxy Zoo's
success are other similar projects, such as Galaxy Zoo:

11. A. NO CHANGE
B. elitist avenues of expression
C. prestigious publications
D. upscale printed material

Every year, thirteen million people visit Notre
Dame de Paris on an annual basis. They wait in long
lines to view the brilliant stained glass of the famed

16. F. NO CHANGE
G. year after year.
H. annually.
J. DELETE the underlined portion and end the sentence with a period.

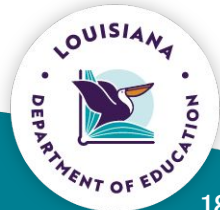
celebrated, eventually gained international cheers.

29. A. NO CHANGE
B. positive feedback.
C. favoritism.
D. acclaim.



Let's Apply it!

- Encourage students while writing to be mindful of the following fundamental aspects of language. As well, it is important to explicitly teach these concepts:
- ◆ Subject/verb agreement
 - ◆ Identifying dependent vs independent clauses
 - ◆ Various functions of commas
 - ◆ Proper usage of semicolons, colons, dashes, and apostrophes
 - ◆ Effective use of transitional words and phrases
 - ◆ pronoun/noun agreement
 - ◆ Paragraph structure



Let's apply it

The HQIM being used in your classrooms via Tier 1 curriculums have many opportunities to practice a variety of the skills mentioned in this presentation. There are also many, many approaches to implement said strategies.

At the next session, I will provide specific examples of approaches to address this. In the meantime, I encourage you to attempt incorporating one or two of these skills into your instruction.

Remember, students need to be told that these are ACT Skills AND skills to ACT skill AND skills that improve their writing. They should always know their purpose for learning.



Thank you!

I appreciate your attention today as we reviewed the basics of the ACT English test.

Please feel free to reach out for further support to louisianaliteracy@la.gov.

