Method Test Prep ACT Series: ACT English Grammar Rules

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About the English section

- Most predictable section on the ACT
- All multiple choice testing on various rules of grammar and organization.
- Broken up into 6 passages. Most questions can be answered by only reading the corresponding sentence.
- Must move quickly – 75 questions in 45 minutes
- You will get a separate English score with the essay factored in it (essay does not count for much)
The rule is simple: if the subject is singular, it must be followed by a singular verb; if the subject is plural, it must be followed by a plural verb.
Subject-Verb Agreement

Where it gets tricky:

- The ACT will disguise the subject by using prepositional phrases and unnecessary clauses.

Examples:

- The research by the scientists **conclude** that drinking coffee is correlated with higher life expectancy.

- The committee, made up of eight members, **vote** on the budget this week.
Subject-Verb Agreement

Helpful hints:

- Always check any form of the verb “to be” (is/are, was/were, has/have been)
- Replace singular subjects with “it” and plural subjects with “they”
1. The point of running the drills were becoming more apparent to the athletes on the team.

   A. NO CHANGE
   B. are becoming
   C. was becoming
   D. have been becoming
Subject-Verb Agreement

5. The decisions rendered by United States Supreme Court give the states powers not possessed by the federal government.

A. NO CHANGE
B. gives
C. have gave
D. had been giving
Redundancy and Unnecessary Information

- Less is more.

- If some answers are significantly longer than others, check to make sure you *need* all the extra information. If not, the answer is wrong.
Redundancy

the arch, the final section was hoisted up. Over three decades and more than thirty years of planning and building had come to a conclusion, and the tallest monument in the United States was now complete.

G. as the crowd cheered, the final section was hoisted up and welded to the two legs of the arch.
H. as the crowd cheered, welded to the two legs of the arch, the final section was hoisted up.
J. the final section was hoisted up as the crowd cheered and welded to the two legs of the arch.

43. A. NO CHANGE
   B. decades amounting to more than thirty years
   C. decades—over thirty years—
   D. decades

44. Which of the following alternatives to the underlined portion would be LEAST acceptable in terms of the context of this sentence?
After a certain age, many Americans I know would balk, refuse, and hesitate at the idea of adding a year or two to what they regard as their actual age.

With 'from' the preceding sentence, the sentence would primarily lose:

F. its personal and reflective tone.
G. an element of humor.
H. details that illustrate the contrast.
J. the preference expressed by the writer.

29. A. NO CHANGE  
B. balk and hesitate  
C. refuse and balk  
D. balk
Unfortunately, the code talkers sometimes faced dangerous peril from their own side. Many code talkers needed bodyguards to protect them from other American...
Redundancy

The court determined that the school board had failed to show that wearing jeans actually inhibited the educational process, which is guided by authority figures.

37. A. NO CHANGE
   B. process, which has undergone changes since the 1970s.
   C. process, a process we all know well.
   D. process.
Punctuation

- **Apostrophes** – Used in contractions (that’s = that is) and to indicate possession (“the man’s shirt is white”)

- **Semicolons** – Used to separate two independent clauses (“we lost our game last night; we were devastated”). For the purpose of the ACT, you can treat it like a period.

- **Colons** – Used to start a list, or to separate two clauses in which the second explains the first (“The ACT is very predictable: the same rules are tested on each test.”)

- **Commas** – Used whenever there should be a pause in a sentence. Use after introductory clauses, and to offset “unnecessary clauses.” Do **not** use to break up one idea, and do **not** use to separate independent clauses.
Punctuation

to significant underlying cultural values. The practice of
advancing a person’s age seems to me to reflect the value a
society places on life experience and longevity. Their idea

22. F. NO CHANGE
   G. on
   H. at
   J. DELETE the underlined portion.

23. A. NO CHANGE
    B. persons’ age
    C. persons age
    D. person’s age,

24. F. NO CHANGE
    G. One’s
    H. Its
    J. This
Punctuation

had seen fairies. They had even taken photographs that showed several of the tiny sprites, some dancing in a ring in the grass, some fluttering in front of the girl’s faces.

Many people were excited when they heard about

48. F. NO CHANGE
G. girls’ faces.
H. girls faces.
J. girls face’s.
speaker also raises money. It's impossible to predict which

people will dig into their pockets or if they were to open their purses, and I've stopped trying to guess.

8. F. NO CHANGE
   G. It’s
   H. Its’
   J. That’s

9. A. NO CHANGE
   B. would have opened
   C. open
Punctuation

popular for more than a century. The music is mainly
instrumental—the bands generally consist of guitar, bass
guitar, saxophones, accordion, and drums.

Unlike some traditional tribal music, waila does

2. F. NO CHANGE
   G. popular, one might say, for
   H. really quite popular for
   J. popular for the duration of

3. Which of the following alternatives to the underlined portion would NOT be acceptable?
   A. instrumental; in general, the bands
   B. instrumental, the bands generally
   C. instrumental. The bands generally
   D. instrumental; the bands generally
Although her physical contact with the world was limited by caring for her invalid mother and by her own poor health, whose correspondence was extensive: over one thousand letters to upwards of one hundred correspondents. These letters provide insight into her daily life and her poetry.

61. A. NO CHANGE
B. their
C. Dickinson’s
D. who’s

62. F. NO CHANGE
G. extensive, and over
H. extensive; over
J. extensive. Over
Punctuation

[1] When storyteller Mary Carter
Smith practices her art and everybody listens.

31

[2] Wearing a brightly colored African dress, a large

31. A. NO CHANGE
B. Smith, practices her art
C. Smith, practices her art,
D. Smith practices her art,
zebras to the Namaqua people of South Africa. In the mythology, of the Tswana people of South Africa, these same stars represent three pigs.

71. A. NO CHANGE
    B. mythology of the Tswana people, of South Africa
    C. mythology, of the Tswana people, of South Africa
    D. mythology of the Tswana people of South Africa,
Transition Words

- Any time you see transition words (however, because, therefore, on the contrary, etc.), you must read the sentence *before* the underlined portion in addition to the sentence it is in. Then determine the relationship.

- You will often see two transition words/phrases that mean the same exact thing. You can always eliminate these.
In a T-ball league, one needs to do something to keep the score from reaching triple digits in the early going. There’s a rule, therefore, that says the runner must stop when any fielder from the other team picks up the ball and holds it aloft. The rule might seem a good one, but the

54. F. NO CHANGE
   G. instead,
   H. likewise,
   J. meanwhile,
environment. Certainly the school board would be justified in prohibiting students from wearing clothing that was unsanitary, revealing, or obscene.

The court remained unconvinced, therefore, that when wearing jeans would actually impair the learning process of Kevin or of his fellow classmates.

40. F. NO CHANGE
   G. thus,
   H. moreover,
   J. however,

41. A. NO CHANGE
   B. by wearing
   C. wearing
   D. having worn
Active/Passive Voice

- Active voice: The subject is *doing* the action.
  - E.g., “The boy throws the ball”

- Passive voice: The action is being *done* to the subject
  - E.g., “The ball is thrown by the boy”

- **Active voice** is correct 90% of the time.
into the quill stub. After sliding the shaft of the replacement feather over the sturdy, light bamboo stick, glue—just a touch—is applied. The raptor now

72. F. NO CHANGE
G. a touch of glue is applied by the rehabilitator.
H. the application of a touch of glue follows.
J. the rehabilitator applies a touch of glue.
Subject After Comma (Dangling Modifier)

- If the subject is not specified in the opening clause of a sentence, the subject must immediately follow the comma.
Usually begun by the alpha or, dominant, pair of wolves,

the pack is excited in preparation for the hunt partly by

chorus howling. The collective sound of wolves howling

72. F. NO CHANGE
G. alpha, or dominant, pair
H. alpha or dominant pair,
J. alpha or, dominant pair

73. A. NO CHANGE
B. the purpose of chorus howling is to help excite the pack in preparation for the hunt.
C. excitement in the pack is raised, in preparation for the hunt, by chorus howling.
D. chorus howling helps excite the pack in preparation for the hunt.
Who/Whom

- “Who” is the subject form (doing the action), “whom” is the object form.

- Easy check: See if you could replace the word with “I” or “me.” If “I” fits, the word should be “who.” If “me” fits, the word should be “whom.”
such things so much.” Other letters are solemn; speaking

of relatives and friends whom had died.

Perhaps the correspondent who came to know

66. F. NO CHANGE
G. solemn they speak
H. solemn, speaking
J. solemn. Speaking

67. A. NO CHANGE
B. who
C. who they
D. of whom
tortoise was calmly munching a dandelion. [2] Rosie must have heard us talking, because she began to amble over to us. [3] She was over a foot long and about seven inches
So, when he has went to buy a new color television—

owing to the knowledge that his old black-and-white model had finally quit—and the salesperson tried to talk him into buying a model with a remote control, he resisted. He said that he had two good legs and was perfectly capable of getting out of his chair.

However, the salesperson was persistent and, appealing to Grandpa’s TV-viewing habits, described the

3. A. NO CHANGE  
   B. had went  
   C. went  
   D. goes

4. F. NO CHANGE  
   G. due to the understandable fact that  
   H. because  
   J. so

5. Given that all are true, which of the following additions to the preceding sentence (replacing “chair.”) would be most relevant?
   A. chair that was made of black leather.  
   B. chair when he wanted to change the channel.  
   C. chair by the south window in the family room.  
   D. chair where he liked to sit.
Recap

- Try to identify the rule you are being tested on just by looking at the answer choices.
- See if there are any choices you can easily eliminate (its’, would/should/could of, identical choices, etc.)
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