

# ACT English Strategies Practice Test (Sample)

## Study Guide



**Everything you need from our exam experts!**

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# Introduction

Preparing for a certification exam can feel overwhelming, but with the right tools, it becomes an opportunity to build confidence, sharpen your skills, and move one step closer to your goals. At Examzify, we believe that effective exam preparation isn't just about memorization, it's about understanding the material, identifying knowledge gaps, and building the test-taking strategies that lead to success.

This guide was designed to help you do exactly that.

Whether you're preparing for a licensing exam, professional certification, or entry-level qualification, this book offers structured practice to reinforce key concepts. You'll find a wide range of multiple-choice questions, each followed by clear explanations to help you understand not just the right answer, but why it's correct.

The content in this guide is based on real-world exam objectives and aligned with the types of questions and topics commonly found on official tests. It's ideal for learners who want to:

- Practice answering questions under realistic conditions,
- Improve accuracy and speed,
- Review explanations to strengthen weak areas, and
- Approach the exam with greater confidence.

We recommend using this book not as a stand-alone study tool, but alongside other resources like flashcards, textbooks, or hands-on training. For best results, we recommend working through each question, reflecting on the explanation provided, and revisiting the topics that challenge you most.

**Remember:** successful test preparation isn't about getting every question right the first time, it's about learning from your mistakes and improving over time. Stay focused, trust the process, and know that every page you turn brings you closer to success.

Let's begin.

# How to Use This Guide

**This guide is designed to help you study more effectively and approach your exam with confidence. Whether you're reviewing for the first time or doing a final refresh, here's how to get the most out of your Examzify study guide:**

## **1. Start with a Diagnostic Review**

**Skim through the questions to get a sense of what you know and what you need to focus on. Your goal is to identify knowledge gaps early.**

## **2. Study in Short, Focused Sessions**

**Break your study time into manageable blocks (e.g. 30 - 45 minutes). Review a handful of questions, reflect on the explanations.**

## **3. Learn from the Explanations**

**After answering a question, always read the explanation, even if you got it right. It reinforces key points, corrects misunderstandings, and teaches subtle distinctions between similar answers.**

## **4. Track Your Progress**

**Use bookmarks or notes (if reading digitally) to mark difficult questions. Revisit these regularly and track improvements over time.**

## **5. Simulate the Real Exam**

**Once you're comfortable, try taking a full set of questions without pausing. Set a timer and simulate test-day conditions to build confidence and time management skills.**

## **6. Repeat and Review**

**Don't just study once, repetition builds retention. Re-attempt questions after a few days and revisit explanations to reinforce learning. Pair this guide with other Examzify tools like flashcards, and digital practice tests to strengthen your preparation across formats.**

**There's no single right way to study, but consistent, thoughtful effort always wins. Use this guide flexibly, adapt the tips above to fit your pace and learning style. You've got this!**

## Questions

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- 1. Is the following sentence correct? My brother got a medal in track; and he was the fastest runner in the whole state.**
  - A. No, it uses both a semicolon and a conjunction incorrectly.**
  - B. Yes, it effectively separates complete sentences.**
  - C. No, a comma is needed instead of a semicolon.**
  - D. Yes, it correctly uses a semicolon before 'and'.**
  
- 2. What is the error in the sentence: "Each of the dogs have a collar."?**
  - A. Incorrect use of tense**
  - B. Misplaced comma**
  - C. Subject-verb agreement**
  - D. Pronoun reference error**
  
- 3. What distinguishes an independent clause from a dependent clause?**
  - A. An independent clause is a complete sentence; a dependent clause cannot stand alone.**
  - B. An independent clause includes a subject and a verb; a dependent clause does not.**
  - C. An independent clause is always longer than a dependent clause.**
  - D. An independent clause uses commas while a dependent clause does not.**
  
- 4. What is meant by parallel structure in writing?**
  - A. The use of different grammatical structures in a series**
  - B. The use of the same grammatical structure in a series or list**
  - C. The variation of sentences to create interest**
  - D. The repetition of words for emphasis**
  
- 5. What function do topic sentences perform within a paragraph?**
  - A. They serve as a conclusion**
  - B. They introduce the main idea of the paragraph**
  - C. They list all the supporting details**
  - D. They act as transitions between paragraphs**

- 6. What are "homophones"?**
- A. Words that have similar meanings**
  - B. Words that are spelled the same but have different meanings**
  - C. Words that sound the same but have different meanings and spellings**
  - D. Words that are used in poetry**
- 7. Which sentence demonstrates correct comma usage?**
- A. Whenever my daughter goes to her grandma's house she gets ice cream for dessert**
  - B. My daughter gets ice cream for dessert whenever she goes to her grandma's house**
  - C. Whenever it's cold outside, I grab a blanket and a warm cup of tea**
  - D. Recycling reducing our use of natural resources and finding clean energy sources are all important**
- 8. If a sentence contains an interrupting phrase that can be removed, what punctuation might be needed?**
- A. Comma Hugs**
  - B. Semicolon**
  - C. Dash**
  - D. Colon**
- 9. In grammar questions, which one is favored according to the Specific is Best rule?**
- A. Pronouns over nouns**
  - B. Nouns over pronouns**
  - C. Adjectives over adverbs**
  - D. Verbs over nouns**
- 10. What is the effect of using passive voice?**
- A. It makes writing more direct**
  - B. It emphasizes the subject of the sentence**
  - C. It can make sentences less clear and less engaging**
  - D. It adds variety to sentence structure**

## Answers

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1. A
2. C
3. A
4. B
5. B
6. C
7. C
8. A
9. B
10. C

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## **Explanations**

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1. Is the following sentence correct? My brother got a medal in track; and he was the fastest runner in the whole state.

- A. No, it uses both a semicolon and a conjunction incorrectly.
- B. Yes, it effectively separates complete sentences.
- C. No, a comma is needed instead of a semicolon.
- D. Yes, it correctly uses a semicolon before 'and'.

The sentence contains a semicolon before the conjunction "and," which is not the correct usage in this context. A semicolon is used to link two independent clauses that are closely related in content, but when a conjunction follows, a comma should be used instead. Therefore, the sentence should simply use a comma before "and" to connect the two independent clauses ("My brother got a medal in track" and "he was the fastest runner in the whole state"). This illustrates proper sentence structure and conjunction usage, leading to clarity in communication. The correct response highlights that the initial sentence incorrectly employs both a semicolon and a conjunction, making it grammatically inaccurate.

2. What is the error in the sentence: "Each of the dogs have a collar."?

- A. Incorrect use of tense
- B. Misplaced comma
- C. Subject-verb agreement
- D. Pronoun reference error

The sentence contains a subject-verb agreement error. In this context, "Each of the dogs" is a singular subject. The word "each" indicates that the focus is on individual members of the group rather than the group as a whole. Therefore, it requires a singular verb form to maintain proper agreement. The correct phrasing should be "Each of the dogs has a collar." By using "has" instead of "have," the sentence aligns with the grammatical rule that a singular subject takes a singular verb, ensuring clarity and correctness in the construction.

### 3. What distinguishes an independent clause from a dependent clause?

- A. An independent clause is a complete sentence; a dependent clause cannot stand alone.**
- B. An independent clause includes a subject and a verb; a dependent clause does not.**
- C. An independent clause is always longer than a dependent clause.**
- D. An independent clause uses commas while a dependent clause does not.**

An independent clause is defined as a complete thought that can stand alone as a sentence, while a dependent clause, also known as a subordinate clause, cannot stand alone and relies on an independent clause to provide context and complete its meaning. For instance, the phrase "because I was late" is a dependent clause that leaves the reader wanting more information; it does not express a complete thought on its own. In contrast, "I will attend the meeting" is an independent clause that can function independently as a complete sentence. This fundamental distinction is crucial in understanding sentence structure and grammar in the English language. The other options do not accurately characterize the relationship between independent and dependent clauses, focusing on aspects that are not universally true or are too vague. For example, dependent clauses can also include subjects and verbs but still cannot stand alone, making that statement misleading. The length of the clauses does not determine their classification, nor is the use of commas a reliable indicator, as both types can appear in various sentence structures. Hence, the clarity about the completeness of thought is what distinctly identifies an independent clause from a dependent one.

### 4. What is meant by parallel structure in writing?

- A. The use of different grammatical structures in a series**
- B. The use of the same grammatical structure in a series or list**
- C. The variation of sentences to create interest**
- D. The repetition of words for emphasis**

Parallel structure in writing refers to the practice of using the same grammatical structure in a series or list. This technique enhances readability and consistency in writing, making it clearer and more engaging for the reader. When items in a list or series are presented with the same grammatical form, it creates a rhythm and balance, allowing ideas to flow smoothly and highlighting their equal significance. For example, if you were to write, "She enjoys reading, writing, and hiking," all three activities are presented in the same format, which strengthens the connection between them and facilitates comprehension. Using consistent grammatical forms in sentences helps avoid confusion and underscores the relationship between the ideas being presented. Employing parallel structure is crucial in both writing and speech as it contributes to a polished and professional tone.

**5. What function do topic sentences perform within a paragraph?**

- A. They serve as a conclusion
- B. They introduce the main idea of the paragraph**
- C. They list all the supporting details
- D. They act as transitions between paragraphs

Topic sentences play a crucial role in guiding the reader through a paragraph by introducing its main idea. They set the stage for the information that follows and clearly communicate the central theme or point that will be discussed. This helps to create coherence and flow within the text, allowing readers to quickly grasp what the paragraph will cover. For instance, a strong topic sentence typically provides a summary of the supporting details that will be presented, making it easier for the reader to understand the connection between the main idea and the evidence or examples provided. By effectively establishing the main idea at the beginning of the paragraph, topic sentences enhance the overall clarity and structure of the writing.

**6. What are "homophones"?**

- A. Words that have similar meanings
- B. Words that are spelled the same but have different meanings
- C. Words that sound the same but have different meanings and spellings**
- D. Words that are used in poetry

Homophones are defined as words that sound the same but have different meanings and spellings. This definition is essential in understanding their role in language; for example, the words "bare" and "bear" are homophones because they are pronounced identically but represent different concepts and have distinct spellings. Recognizing homophones is crucial in both spoken and written communication to ensure clarity and avoid confusion, especially in contexts like writing and understanding nuances in language. The other options present different aspects of words that may seem similar but do not accurately define homophones. For instance, words that have similar meanings pertain to synonyms, while words that are spelled the same but have different meanings describe homographs. Additionally, the mention of poetry does not relate to the definition of homophones, as it introduces a specific genre rather than a linguistic characteristic. Therefore, the choice that accurately captures the essence of homophones is the one highlighting their shared sound and differing meanings and spellings.

## 7. Which sentence demonstrates correct comma usage?

- A. Whenever my daughter goes to her grandma's house she gets ice cream for dessert
- B. My daughter gets ice cream for dessert whenever she goes to her grandma's house
- C. Whenever it's cold outside, I grab a blanket and a warm cup of tea**
- D. Recycling reducing our use of natural resources and finding clean energy sources are all important

The sentence that demonstrates correct comma usage is the one that states, "Whenever it's cold outside, I grab a blanket and a warm cup of tea." This sentence effectively uses a comma to separate the introductory clause "Whenever it's cold outside" from the main clause "I grab a blanket and a warm cup of tea." In standard English, it is common to place a comma after introductory phrases or clauses to clarify the sentence structure and enhance readability. In this case, the introductory clause sets the condition for the action in the main clause, and the comma helps to signal a natural pause, making it easier for the reader to understand the flow of the sentence. Proper comma usage in this context not only adheres to grammatical conventions but also improves the overall clarity and effectiveness of the sentence. In contrast, the other sentences either lack necessary punctuation or misuse commas in a way that could confuse readers. For example, the first two sentences could benefit from commas to clarify the relationship between clauses, while the last sentence lacks proper structure to effectively convey the list of actions being discussed.

## 8. If a sentence contains an interrupting phrase that can be removed, what punctuation might be needed?

- A. Comma Hugs**
- B. Semicolon
- C. Dash
- D. Colon

When a sentence includes an interrupting phrase that can be removed without changing the core meaning, the use of commas is often necessary to indicate the start and end of that phrase. This technique is commonly referred to as "comma hugs," where commas are placed around the interrupting phrase to separate it from the main clause. For example, in the sentence "The dog, tired from the long walk, lay down," the phrase "tired from the long walk" can be omitted without affecting the primary meaning of the sentence. The commas clarify the structure, helping readers understand that the phrase is additional information rather than an essential part of the sentence. Using other forms of punctuation, like semicolons, dashes, or colons, would not appropriately separate the interrupting phrase from the main clause in the same way. Commas are specifically suited for this purpose, making them the correct choice in this context.

**9. In grammar questions, which one is favored according to the Specific is Best rule?**

- A. Pronouns over nouns**
- B. Nouns over pronouns**
- C. Adjectives over adverbs**
- D. Verbs over nouns**

According to the Specific is Best rule in grammar, the preference is for nouns over pronouns because nouns provide specificity and clarity. When a writer uses nouns, the reader has a clearer understanding of who or what is being referenced, reducing ambiguity. For example, instead of saying "He went to the store," which uses a pronoun, one could specify "John went to the grocery store." This particularity enhances communication, making it easier for the reader to grasp the context and details of the situation being described. In contrast, pronouns can sometimes lead to confusion, especially when multiple subjects or objects are involved. Therefore, the emphasis on using nouns reinforces the importance of clarity and specificity in writing.

**10. What is the effect of using passive voice?**

- A. It makes writing more direct**
- B. It emphasizes the subject of the sentence**
- C. It can make sentences less clear and less engaging**
- D. It adds variety to sentence structure**

Using passive voice can indeed make sentences less clear and less engaging, which is why this option is the best choice. In passive voice, the subject of the sentence receives the action rather than performs it, which can often obscure who is responsible for the action. This lack of clarity can lead to confusion for the reader and may diminish the impact of the writing, making it feel more detached and less dynamic. For instance, instead of stating, "The committee approved the new policy," which clearly indicates who took the action, a passive construction would state, "The new policy was approved by the committee," distancing the action from the committee and weakening the sentence's immediacy. Ultimately, while passive voice can be useful in certain contexts, its tendency to complicate clarity and engagement illustrates why it's important to use it judiciously.

## Next Steps

**Congratulations on reaching the final section of this guide. You've taken a meaningful step toward passing your certification exam and advancing your career.**

**As you continue preparing, remember that consistent practice, review, and self-reflection are key to success. Make time to revisit difficult topics, simulate exam conditions, and track your progress along the way.**

**If you need help, have suggestions, or want to share feedback, we'd love to hear from you. Reach out to our team at [hello@examzify.com](mailto:hello@examzify.com).**

**Or visit your dedicated course page for more study tools and resources:**

**<https://actengstrats.examzify.com>**

**We wish you the very best on your exam journey. You've got this!**

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