

# THE ACT-ENGLISH SECTION

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# Tips and Tricks

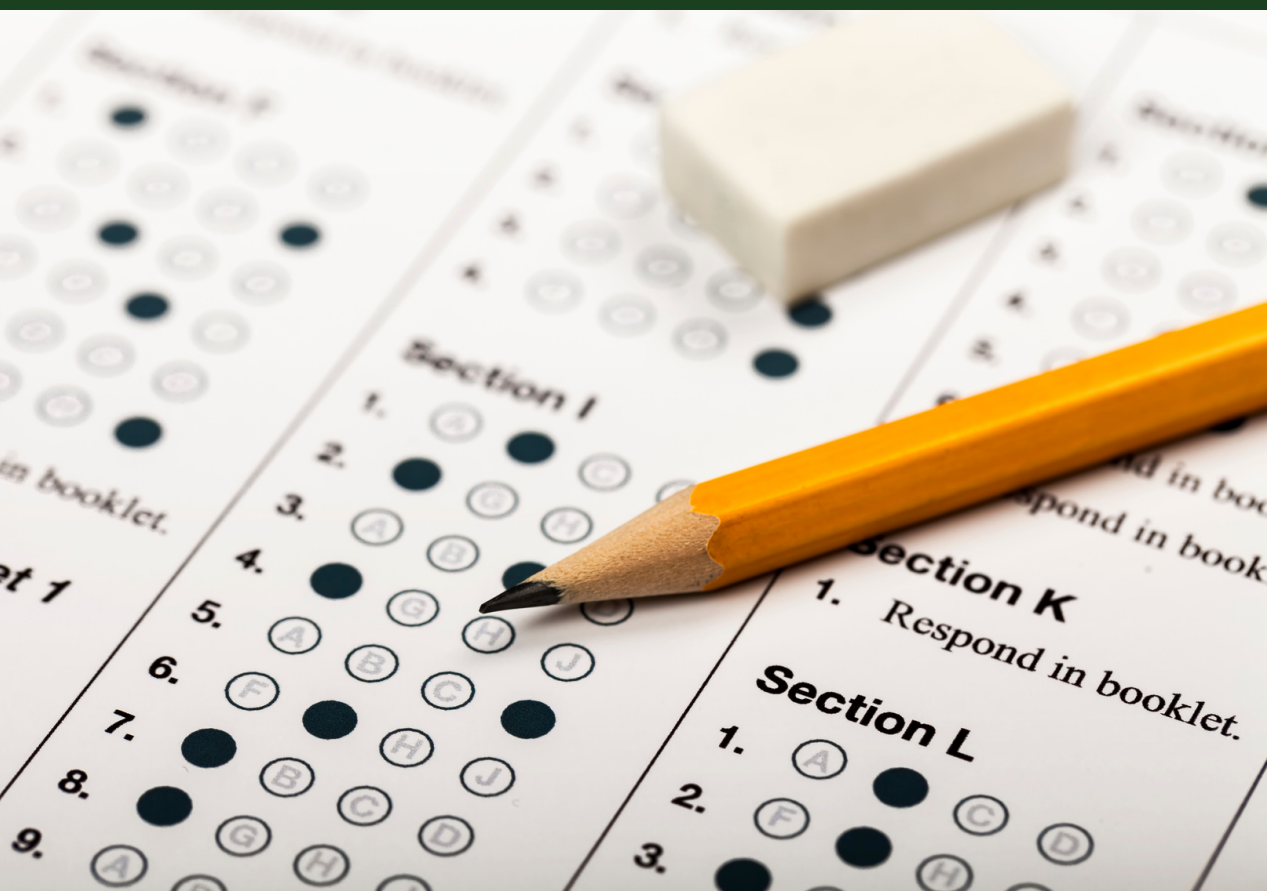
**The English section is 45 minutes with 75 questions.**

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1. The ACT strongly prefers short, clear sentences. In fact, the ACT hates anything unnecessary (words, commas, etc), so here's your rule of thumb: When in doubt, take it out.

2. Semicolons function like Periods. They both separate two independent clauses on the ACT, they are the same. They will never make you choose between two answer choices that are identical except for the period or the semicolon. If they do, then **BOTH** answer choices are wrong

3. On every question there is only one right answer. EVER. That means that if you see two answer choices that seem equally right, then those two answer choices are equally wrong.



4. Know the difference between Independent and Dependent clauses!

**Independent clauses** have a subject and verb and can stand alone as a sentence.

Xavier spent time prepping for his college entrance exams.

**Dependent Clauses** cannot stand alone and often times starts with a subordination conjunction (*because*)

***(Tip: if you start a sentence with a subordinating conjunction, a comma is needed mid-sentence!)***

*Because he worked so diligently,*

**Lets Practice together:** Part of the following sentence is underlined; beneath the sentence are four ways of phrasing the underlined material. Select the option that produces the best sentence. If you think the original phrasing produces a better sentence than any of the alternatives, circle choice A.

Samuel was nervous when he went to college; not sure if he would fit in.  
Your paragraph text

- A. NO CHANGE
- B. college. Not sure
- C. college not sure
- D. college; he was not sure

The answer here is D. Why? “Samuel was nervous” is an independent clause while “he was not sure if he would fit in” is also an independent clause. Reason? Each have a subject and a verb, and they can stand alone.

**Lets Practice together:** Part of the following sentence is underlined; beneath the sentence are four ways of phrasing the underlined material. Select the option that produces the best sentence. If you think the original phrasing produces a better sentence than any of the alternatives, circle choice A.

A new study of over 100,000 participants has found no significant correlation between IQ and hair color, most scientists were not surprised.

- A. NO CHANGE
- B. color; most scientists
- C. color, most scientists;
- D. color most scientists

The answer here is B. Why? “A new study...has found no correlation” is an independent clause while “scientists were not surprised” is also an independent clause.

Reason? Each has a subject and a verb, and they can stand alone.

**Hot tip: isolate the subject and verb in your mind, then ask the question, are they able to stand alone?**

**If not, you either have a mistake or a dependent clause**



**Lets Practice together:** Part of the following sentence is underlined; beneath the sentence are four ways of phrasing the underlined material. Select the option that produces the best sentence. If you think the original phrasing produces a better sentence than any of the alternatives, circle choice A.

I'm going to get a summer job; but mostly because my mom wants me to, not because I want to.

A. NO CHANGE

B. job. But

C. job, but

D. job but

The answer here is C. Why? “I’m going to get a summer job” is an independent clause while “but mostly because my mom wants me to” is NOT an independent clause

Therefore: since a semi-colon separates independent clauses, the best answer is to use a comma

**Hot tip: To be a sentence, there must be at least one independent clause! If you identify that first, you have a chance of seeing what is correct or in error surrounding that independent clause!**