

ACT Grammar

Flash Tips/Tricks/Rules CRASH COURSE

Grab a laptop to follow along

To get a copy of this slideshow and all of its accompanying links

- 1) Visit my teacher webpage on the Southern Alamance High School website

Or

- 2) Send me an email at kyle_rother@abss.k12.nc.us and I'll shoot you a shared copy.

ENGLISH



45 MINUTES

75 QUESTIONS



13% PUNCTUATION

15% ORGANIZATION

16% GRAMMAR & USAGE

16% STYLE

16% STRATEGY

24% SENTENCE STRUCTURE

What do the questions look like?

The Andean Panpipe

Whether its¹ bright and jaunty or haunting and melancholic, the music of the Andes highlands has a mellow sound unique in the musical world. The instrument responsible for this sound is the antara, or Andean panpipe, known for the hollow-sounding, breathy notes it creates. The antara has its origins in the Incan civilization, once the more richer and more² powerful empire in South America.

The antara consists of a connected row of hollow,

1. Choose the best answer.

- A. NO CHANGE
 - B. they're
 - C. it's
 - D. its'
-

2. Choose the best answer.

- E. NO CHANGE
- F. one of the richest and most
- G. the richest and most
- H. the richer and more

Flash tips:

- 1) You have 45 minutes to answer 75 questions
 - a) Spend 1 ½ minutes reading the passage...
 - b) You'll have about 30 seconds per question.

- 2) Give the passage a quick skim read.
 - a) Understand its purpose
 - b) Make little notes for yourself when something seems off from a basic read (I used to put a little star in places that didn't sound right)
 - c) Read for correctness/punctuation **only when you're asked to.**

- 3) Pay attention to the structure/organization
 - a) If you read about the items in a shopping cart 4 sentences ago, and suddenly there's a random sentence explaining why one of the items was in the shopping cart, there's definitely going to be a question about whether that's placed correctly. Draw a little arrow for yourself where you think it should go.

- 4) **THERE IS NO PENALTY FOR GUESSING. JUST GUESS AND MOVE ON WHEN YOU'RE STUCK!!!**

List of mechanics you can expect to see:

Literature/rhetoric
sections

- Punctuation
 - Commas, apostrophes, dash, colon, semicolon
- Subject-verb agreement
- Commonly misused words
 - Affect vs effect
 - There/their/they're
- Parallel structure

- Verb tense
 - Conjugation (was/were)
- Run-on and fragments
- Misplaced modifiers
- Numbers
- Sentence organization

- Tone/mood
- Author's intent
- Word choice/diction
- Simile/metaphor interpretation
- **Transitions**

Before we begin, resources and links to use to study:

[English grammar 101](#): *Make an account* and practice/read there. There's a ton, because it basically contains ALL grammar rules, but I would focus on the [capitalization/punctuation](#) section and the [clause section](#) (if you have no idea what clauses are...start here in section #10)

Quizlet sets: Click [here](#) for commonly confused words; [here](#) for things to look for and remember going in; and [here](#) for colon, semicolon and comma practice.

[The 8 most common mistakes you make on ACT English](#): For example, the title of this article actually has one. Any numbers between one and ten need to be spelled out. Once you get to 11, you can write the numeral.

Punctuation: Commas

Separating a series (list):

“I want cookies, milk, and ice cream!”



“I want cookies, milk and ice cream!”



Punctuation: Commas

Connecting independent clauses:

“He is a great doctor, but he will retire soon.”



“He is a great doctor, he will retire soon.”



“He is a great doctor he will retire soon.”



RULE: Commas can only separate independent clauses if the comma is followed by a coordinating conjunction!

Two independent clauses without that conjunction would require a semicolon.

Remember **F.A.N.B.O.Y.S**
(For, and, nor, but, or, yet, so)

Punctuation: Commas

Setting off introductory words or clauses

Without her he won't go to Prom.



For example, I love math class with all my heart.



Unless, he decides to play in the big game.



Whatever floats your boat.




Punctuation: Commas

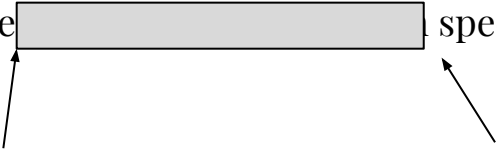
Segmenting appositives

Notice which part of the sentence we don't actually need.

“Mr. Rother  is currently standing in front of the room.”



“That black Corvette  sped down my street again.”



Commas: Quickfire rules

To clear up confusion:

“I saw that she was busy, and prepared to leave.” ✓

“I saw that she was busy and prepared to leave” ✗

“Let’s eat Grandma!” ✗

“Let’s eat, Grandma!” ✓

When addressing someone directly:

“Kyle, get ready for school.” ✓

“Mom, pass the potatoes.” ✓

...but do NOT separate the subject from the verb!!!

✗ “My best friend Jason, is an amazing singer.” ✗

This is called a comma splice, the unnatural segmentation of a sentence, and it is the **most common** mistake purposefully added to the ACT

Commas: Quickfire rules

Writing out the date:

“January, 10, 2020” ❌

“January, 10 2020” ❌

“January 10, 2020” ✅

Separating statements from questions

“Let’s go see a movie, shall we?” ✅

“We should go to the grocery store, what do you think?” ❌

“I’ve never been there before, have I?” ✅

Semicolons vs. Colons



Colons

- Beginning a list with an independent clause.
- Adding emphasis to a final word or clause
- Time
- Integrating a quote by using an independent clause.
- When the second clause explains the first.

- 1) On my trip to the grocery store, I bought some items: a gallon of milk, dog treats, and cereal.
- 2) Emphasis
 - a) “He only knew how to play one instrument: piano.
 - b) “She faced her worst nightmare: an F.”
- 3) 3:15...pretty obvious
- 4) The author notes that art is merely a useless thing in society: “~~~~~.”
- 5) “He couldn’t go to the store: he was sick with the flu.”

Semicolons vs. Colons





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Semicolons

- 1) Separating independent clauses that can join together without a conjunction.
 - a) Related thoughts, but not explanatory.
- 2) Separating items in a list where the use of commas are necessary.

- 1) Independent clauses
 - a) “Tina frequently visited the purse store; she would often buy small handbags.”
 - b) “The carnival is in town; they have an awesome ferris wheel.”
 - c) **Ask yourself: does the second clause explain the first? If yes, *colon*. If not, *semicolon*.**
- 2) “I went to the store and bought silverware, to eat with; a new flowerpot, to decorate my table with; and a bottle of soap, because my last bottle ran empty.”

Colon/Semicolon Practice!

- 1) If there's one punctuation mark that scares me, it's this the comma. 
- 2) I'm so embarrassed by what just happened Jenny declined my proposal in front of a huge crowd! 
- 3) I have a love-hate relationship with grammar I am trying to get better at it. 
- 4) He describes his setting in a positive way “~~~~~.” 

Quickfire: Apostrophes

Noting a possessive

- 1) Most words place the apostrophe before the “s”
 - a) Kyle’s class.
 - b) Rother’s homework.
 - c) Tina’s mindset.

- 2) Words that naturally end with an “s” don’t get a second one, and the apostrophe comes after.
 - a) Atticus’ trial
 - b) Samus’ weapon.

Creating a contraction

It’s

Won’t

Can’t

Super helpful links for further reading and studying:

[The 14 Most Common ACT Grammar Rules that you Must Know](#)

[The Complete Guide to ACT Grammar Rules](#)

[A Better/easier Complete Guide to Punctuation Rules](#)

[*** Practice ACT Tests Electronically ***](#)