



# ACT English

## 19 Essential Grammar Rules Cheat Sheet

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## Introduction

The ACT English section often tests a core set of grammar and punctuation rules. Below is a student-friendly guide to 19 commonly assessed rules. For each rule, we provide a brief explanation, examples of incorrect vs. correct usage, and an ACT-style practice question to check your understanding. Use this handout to review and practice these key concepts for the ACT.

### 1. Subject-Verb Agreement

**Explanation:** The subject and verb in a sentence must agree in number (singular subject with singular verb, plural subject with plural verb). Watch out for extra phrases between the subject and verb that can disguise the true subject. Also, be careful with indefinite pronouns (each, everyone, neither, etc.) – these are grammatically singular and take singular verbs. Always identify the actual subject and make sure the verb matches it in number.

- **Incorrect:** *The bouquet of roses are on the table.* (The subject *bouquet* is singular, but verb *are* is plural.)
- **Correct:** *The bouquet of roses is on the table.* (Singular subject *bouquet* with singular verb *is*.)

**ACT-Style Practice Question:**

The bouquet of roses **are** on the table.

- A. NO CHANGE
- B. have been
- C. is
- D. were

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## 2. Verb Tenses and Consistency

**Explanation:** Use the correct verb tense based on the time frame, and keep tenses consistent unless there's a logical reason to change. The ACT will give clues like “*yesterday*,” “*today*,” or “*by next year*” to indicate the needed tense. Make sure not to shift tenses within a sentence or paragraph unexpectedly. If describing two past events, use **past perfect** (had **verb**) for the earlier event when needed. Always check the surrounding context for time indicators.

- **Incorrect:** *Yesterday, she **runs** five miles to train for the race.* (The word *yesterday* indicates past, but *runs* is present tense.)
- **Correct:** *Yesterday, she **ran** five miles to train for the race.* (Past tense *ran* matches the past time frame.)

### ACT-Style Practice Question:

Yesterday, she **walks** to school to meet her friend.

- A. NO CHANGE
- B. walk
- C. walked
- D. walking

  
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### 3. Pronoun Agreement and Clarity

**Explanation:** A pronoun must agree with its **antecedent** (the noun it replaces) in number and gender, and it should clearly refer to a specific noun. Singular nouns need singular pronouns, and plural nouns need plural pronouns. The ACT often tests sentences where a singular noun is incorrectly referred to with *they/their* or where it's unclear *who/what* the pronoun refers to. To fix an ambiguous pronoun, replace it with the specific noun or restructure the sentence for clarity.

- **Incorrect:** *Each of the players must bring **their** own equipment.* (The antecedent *Each* is singular, but *their* is plural.)
- **Correct:** *Each of the players must bring **his or her** own equipment.* (Singular pronoun **his or her** matches singular *Each*. Alternatively: "All players must bring their own equipment," making both plural.)
- **Incorrect (Ambiguous):** *When Sam talked to Alex, **he** was upset.* (Who was upset, Sam or Alex? The pronoun **he** is unclear.)
- **Correct (Clarified):** *When Sam talked to Alex, **Sam** was upset.* (Replaced **he** with the specific person to avoid confusion.)

#### ACT-Style Practice Question:

Every student on the committee must submit **their** vote by Friday.

- A. NO CHANGE
- B. his or her
- C. their own
- D. its

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## 4. Pronoun Case (Subject vs. Object; Who vs. Whom)

**Explanation:** Pronouns change form depending on their role in a sentence. Use **subject pronouns** (I, he, she, they, who) when the pronoun is the doer of the action, and **object pronouns** (me, him, her, them, whom) when the pronoun receives the action or follows a preposition. A common mistake is in compound structures (e.g., "Anna and I" vs "Anna and me"). To test, try the sentence with just the pronoun: "The prize was given to **me**" (correct) vs. "to **I**" (incorrect). For **who vs. whom**: *who* is used as a subject, *whom* as an object. If you can replace it with *he/they*, use **who**; if you'd replace with *him/them*, use **whom**.

- **Incorrect:** *The committee thanked my colleague and I.* (I is used incorrectly as an object.)
- **Correct:** *The committee thanked my colleague and me.* (Use **me** as the object of "thanked".)
- **Incorrect:** *Who did you invite to the meeting?* (In this question, **who** is actually receiving the action invite.)
- **Correct:** *Whom did you invite to the meeting?* (Use **whom** as the object of *invite*. Test: "You did invite **him**," so **whom** is correct.)

### ACT-Style Practice Question:

The scholarship committee will interview my friend and I next week.

- A. NO CHANGE
- B. me
- C. myself
- D. mine

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## 5. Relative Clauses and Pronouns (That vs. Which vs. Who)

**Explanation: Relative pronouns** introduce clauses that describe a noun. Use **who** for people, **that** and **which** for things. It's important to know if the clause is **essential** or **nonessential**:

- **Essential clauses** provide crucial information and are **not set off by commas**. Use **that** for things in essential clauses (and you can use **who** for people).
- **Nonessential clauses** add extra information and **should be set off with commas**. Use **which** for things in nonessential clauses (and **who** for people), and remember **which** generally follows a comma.

If you see "which" without a comma, or "that" with a comma, it's likely wrong on the ACT. Also, do not use **which** to refer to people (use *who* instead).

- **Incorrect:** *The car **which** I bought last year is already needing repairs.* (No comma, but using **which** for an essential clause.)
- **Correct:** *The car **that** I bought last year is already needing repairs.* (Essential clause identifying the car – uses **that**, no commas.)
- **Incorrect:** *My brother **that** lives in California, is a chef.* (For a person in a nonessential clause, use **who** with commas, not **that**.)
- **Correct:** *My brother, **who** lives in California, is a chef.* (Nonessential extra info about *my brother*, properly set off with commas.)

### ACT-Style Practice Question:

Students **which** study consistently often see better results on the ACT.

- A. NO CHANGE
- B. which study consistently,
- C. who study consistently
- D. that study consistent

## 6. Adjectives vs. Adverbs

**Explanation:** **Adjectives** describe nouns or pronouns, while **adverbs** modify verbs, adjectives, or other adverbs. Using the wrong form is a common error. After **linking verbs** (such as forms of *to be*, feel, taste, smell, look, etc.), use an **adjective** to describe the subject, not an adverb. For action verbs, use adverbs to describe how the action is done. A quick tip: many adverbs end in “-ly” (happily, quickly), whereas adjectives do not (happy, quick), but watch out for irregular forms (good vs. well).

- **Incorrect:** *He did **good** on the test.* (“Good” is an adjective, but here it modifies the verb *did*.)
- **Correct:** *He did **well** on the test.* (“Well” is the adverb form to modify *did*.)
- **Incorrect:** *The soup tastes **deliciously**.* (*Tastes* is a linking verb here, so use an adjective.)
- **Correct:** *The soup tastes **delicious**.* (Adjective **delicious** describes the soup, the subject.)

### ACT-Style Practice Question:

Despite being nervous, Maria performed **good** in the audition.

- A. NO CHANGE
- B. goodly
- C. well
- D. nicely

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## 7. Comparisons and Superlatives

**Explanation:** Use the correct form of adjectives/adverbs when making comparisons.

**Comparative** forms (usually ending in “-er” or using *more*) compare two things, while **superlative** forms (ending in “-est” or using *most*) compare three or more. Also, avoid common errors: never use double comparisons (*more better*, *most fastest* are incorrect).

- For **two** items, use the comparative (-er or *more*).
- For **three or more**, use the superlative (-est or *most*).

Additionally, comparisons should be logical: compare similar things. (E.g., compare one person’s score to another person’s score, **not** to the person themselves.)

- **Incorrect:** *Between the two runners, Ava is the **fastest**.* (With two people, use the comparative form.)
- **Correct:** *Between the two runners, Ava is the **faster**.* (Comparing two, so use **faster**.)
- **Incorrect:** *Joe’s test score was higher than **any student** in the class.* (Implies Joe is not a student. Should compare scores to scores.)
- **Correct:** *Joe’s test score was higher than **that of any other student** in the class.* (Compares Joe’s score to others’ scores.)

### ACT-Style Practice Question:

Between Carla and Ben, Carla is the **smartest** in mathematics.

- A. NO CHANGE
- B. most smart
- C. smarter
- D. more smarter

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## 8. Parallel Structure (Parallelism)

**Explanation: Parallel structure** means items in a series or pairs of ideas have the same grammatical form. ACT English frequently tests lists or comparisons to ensure each part is structured similarly. If one item in a list is a noun, the others should be nouns; if one is a phrase starting with "to" (infinitive), the others should be in the same form, etc. Also, correlative pairs like **either...or**, **not only...but also** should link parallel elements (e.g., both sides might be noun phrases, or both clauses).

- **Incorrect:** *In her free time, Maria likes **hiking, painting, and to cook**.* (Two gerunds **hiking, painting** and one infinitive **to cook** – not parallel.)
- **Correct:** *In her free time, Maria likes **hiking, painting, and cooking**.* (All three items are gerunds ending in **-ing**, which is parallel.)
- **Incorrect:** *He **not only** enjoys football **but also** playing basketball.* (After **not only** we have a verb **enjoys**, but after **but also** we have a gerund **playing** – mismatch.)
- **Correct:** *He **not only** **enjoys** football **but also** **enjoys** playing basketball. –or– He **not only** enjoys football **but also** basketball.* (Each side of the pair is structured the same way.)

### ACT-Style Practice Question:

For exercise, I enjoy jogging, swimming, and **to bike**.

- A. NO CHANGE
- B. biking
- C. bike
- D. ride a bike

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## 9. Misplaced and Dangling Modifiers

**Explanation:** A **modifier** is a word or phrase that describes something. For clarity, modifiers should be placed next to the word they describe. Two common errors occur with modifiers:

- A **misplaced modifier** is too far from the word it describes, causing confusion.
- A **dangling modifier** is a descriptive phrase that isn't clearly attached to any specific word in the sentence (often at the beginning of a sentence, describing something not actually stated).

### Misplaced Modifier:

- **Incorrect:** *The waiter served a dessert to the guest **that was covered in chocolate**.* (Grammatically, this reads as if **the guest** was covered in chocolate.)
- **Correct:** *The waiter served a dessert **covered in chocolate** to the guest.* (Now **covered in chocolate** clearly describes the dessert.)

### Dangling Modifier:

- **Incorrect:** *After studying all night, **the exam** felt easy.* (The exam didn't study all night – the doer is missing, so the modifier *After studying all night* is dangling.)
- **Correct:** *After studying all night, **I** found the exam easy.* (Adds the subject **I**, so the modifier now correctly refers to the person who studied.)

Always make sure a descriptive phrase is immediately next to the thing it describes, and if you start a sentence with a phrase, the next noun should be what that phrase is referring to.

### ACT-Style Practice Question:

After reading the novel, **the movie seemed** disappointing.

- A. NO CHANGE
- B. the movie seemed to disappoint after reading the novel.
- C. I found the movie disappointing after reading the novel.
- D. After reading the novel, I found the movie disappointing.

## 10. Sentence Fragments

**Explanation:** A **fragment** is an incomplete sentence punctuated as if it were complete. Every complete sentence needs a subject and a predicate (verb and complete thought). The ACT will test your ability to spot fragments that are missing a main clause. Common types of fragments include:

- Dependent clauses left alone (starting with words like *because, although, which...* but not attached to an independent clause).
- Phrases missing a subject or verb (e.g., "*for example, such as...*" without a main clause).

To fix a fragment, attach it to a nearby sentence or add the missing parts.

- **Incorrect (fragment):** *Because she was late to the meeting.* (Starts with *Because*, so it's a dependent clause expecting a result – not a complete thought.)
- **Correct:** *We began without her **because she was late to the meeting.*** (Now the clause is attached to an independent clause "We began without her.")
- **Incorrect (fragment):** *Hoping to win the championship.* (No subject – who is hoping?)
- **Correct:** *The team was **hoping to win the championship.*** (Added a subject and verb to complete the thought.)

### ACT-Style Practice Question:

She wanted to go for a walk. **Because it was a nice day.**

- A. NO CHANGE
- B. Because it was a nice day, she wanted to go for a walk.
- C. It was a nice day.
- D. she wanted to go for a walk because it was a nice day.

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## 11. Run-On Sentences and Comma Splices

**Explanation:** A **run-on sentence** occurs when two or more independent clauses are joined incorrectly (or just smashed together). A **comma splice** is a specific run-on where two full sentences are joined only with a comma, which isn't sufficient. To fix a run-on, you have a few options:

- Split into separate sentences with a period.
- Use a **semicolon (;)** to join the clauses if they are closely related.
- Use a **comma + coordinating conjunction (FANBOYS - and, but, so, etc.)** to connect the clauses properly.
- Occasionally, you can restructure or use a subordinating word to connect them.

Make sure every independent clause in your sentence is properly linked.

- **Incorrect (run-on/comma splice):** *I love to write, I could do it all day.* (Two independent clauses joined only by a comma.)
- **Correct:** *I love to write<sup>\*</sup>; <sup>\*</sup>I could do it all day.<sup>\*</sup> – or – I love to write, **and** I could do it all day. – or – I love to write. I could do it all day.* (Using a semicolon, or a comma + **and**, or a period to fix the run-on.)
- **Incorrect (run-on):** *She was hungry she made a sandwich.* (No punctuation or conjunction between two sentences.)
- **Correct:** *She was hungry, **so** she made a sandwich.* (Added a comma and **so** to connect the clauses properly.)

### ACT-Style Practice Question:

I love painting, I find it relaxing.

- A. NO CHANGE
- B. I love painting, which I find it relaxing.
- C. I love painting and I find it relaxing.
- D. I love painting; I find it relaxing.

## 12. Comma Usage Rules

**Explanation:** Commas are the most frequently tested punctuation on the ACT. Key comma usage rules include:

- **Lists:** Use commas to separate items in a series of three or more. (Example: *I bought apples, oranges, and bananas.*)
- **Coordinate adjectives:** Use a comma between two adjectives that independently describe the same noun (*a long, challenging project*).
- **After introductory clauses/phrases:** If a sentence starts with a dependent clause or a long phrase, put a comma before the main clause (e.g. *When the movie ended, we left the theater.*).
- **Nonessential information:** Use commas to set off non-restrictive clauses or appositives (extra information that can be removed without changing the meaning).
- **Joining independent clauses:** Use a comma **before a coordinating conjunction** (for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so – FANBOYS) when it links two full sentences. (Example: *I was tired, but I finished my homework.*)

**Avoid unnecessary commas:** Don't put a comma where it doesn't belong, such as between a subject and its verb, between an adjective and the noun it modifies, or before a clause starting with "that".

- **Incorrect (unnecessary comma):** *The famous singer\*,\*\* performed her new song.\** (Comma mistakenly separating subject *singer* and verb *performed*.)
- **Correct:** *The famous singer performed her new song.* (No comma needed.)
- **Incorrect:** *My friend **who lives in Texas**, is coming to visit.* (Missing a comma before **who** or extra comma incorrectly placed – the comma usage is inconsistent.)
- **Correct:** *My friend, **who lives in Texas**, is coming to visit.* –or– *My friend who lives in Texas is coming to visit.* (Use two commas if the clause is nonessential, or none if it's essential.)

### ACT-Style Practice Question:

The outcome of the experiment\*\*,\*\* was surprising to everyone.

- |                   |                    |
|-------------------|--------------------|
| A. NO CHANGE      | C. experiment; was |
| B. experiment was | D. experiment: was |

## 13. Semicolons

**Explanation:** A **semicolon (;)** is used to join two closely related independent clauses **without a conjunction**. Think of it as a soft period – both parts on each side must be able to stand alone as sentences. Common uses of semicolons on the ACT:

- To fix a run-on by replacing a comma or nothing with a semicolon. (Example: *It was late; we went home.*)
- Before a **conjunctive adverb** (however, therefore, moreover, etc.) when connecting two sentences. (Example: *I was nervous; however, I did well.* – note the semicolon before and a comma after **however**.)

Make sure not to use a semicolon with a coordinating conjunction (like **and**, **but** – that's what commas are for), and do not use a semicolon if one side is not an independent clause.

- **Incorrect:** *The experiment failed*\*,\*\* the results were inconclusive.\* (Comma splice run-on.)
- **Correct:** *The experiment failed*\*,\*\* the results were inconclusive.\* (Semicolon properly joins two related sentences.)
- **Incorrect:** *I have a big exam tomorrow*\*; because\*\* I didn't study enough.\* (What comes before the semicolon is complete, but **"because I didn't study enough"** is not an independent clause – a semicolon here is incorrect. A comma would be correct in this case, or rewrite the sentence.)
- **Correct:** *I have a big exam tomorrow; I'm a bit nervous about it.* (Both sides are complete sentences.)

### ACT-Style Practice Question:

The storm was intense\*\*; and\*\* caused a power outage in the neighborhood.

- A. NO CHANGE
- B. intense and caused
- C. intense, and caused
- D. intense; it caused

## 14. Colons

**Explanation:** A **colon (:**) is used after an independent clause to introduce an explanation, example, or list. The rule to remember is that the part **before the colon must be a complete sentence**. What comes after the colon can be a list, a single word, or a phrase that explains or illustrates the first part. Common uses:

- Introducing a list. (Example: *I need to buy **three things**: bread, milk, and eggs.*)
- Introducing an explanation or summary. (Example: *She had a secret: she was the one who wrote the note.*)
- Emphasizing a word or phrase at the end of a sentence. (Example: *He had one hobby: **painting**.*)

Avoid using a colon directly after phrases like “such as” or “including,” since those already indicate an upcoming list. Also, do not place a colon if the sentence before it isn't complete (e.g., “My favorite fruits are: apples and oranges” is wrong because “My favorite fruits are” isn't a full sentence by itself).

- **Incorrect:** *The recipe includes\*: eggs, milk, and flour.\** (“The recipe includes” isn't a full sentence on its own, so a colon shouldn't be used here.)
- **Correct:** *The recipe includes **three ingredients**: eggs, milk, and flour.* (Now the part before the colon is an independent clause, and the colon properly introduces the list.)
- **Incorrect:** *She was excited about her new job, **including**: a higher salary and better benefits.* (Using a colon after “including” is unnecessary.)
- **Correct:** *She was excited about her new job, which came with many benefits, including a higher salary and better hours.* (No colon needed after including – the sentence was rephrased to be clear.)

### ACT-Style Practice Question:

I need to pack for the trip\*: clothes, toiletries, and my camera.

- A. NO CHANGE
- B. trip, such as: clothes
- C. trip – clothes, toiletries, and my camera.
- D. trip: clothes and toiletries and my camera.



## 15. Dashes

**Explanation: Dashes (—)** can be used in two main ways on the ACT: as a pair (like parentheses or commas) or a single dash (like a colon).

- **Pair of dashes:** Use two dashes to set off a nonessential clause or extra information, similar to how you'd use parentheses or commas. If a dash is used to start a clause, a second dash should be used to end that clause – you **must use them in pairs** (you cannot mix a dash with a comma; the punctuation on both ends of the clause must match). Dashes add emphasis or an abrupt tone to the aside.
- **Single dash:** A single dash can act like a colon – it follows a complete statement and introduces a dramatic pause, explanation, or list. What comes before the single dash should be an independent clause, just like with a colon.

The ACT might test you on being **consistent** with dashes. For example, if a sentence starts a nonessential phrase with a dash, it should end that phrase with a dash (not a comma).

- **Incorrect:** *My sister – who just graduated college, is moving to Canada.* (Started the aside with a dash but ended with a comma – inconsistent punctuation.)
  - **Correct:** *My sister – who just graduated college – is moving to Canada.* (Uses dashes on both sides of the nonessential clause.)
  - **Also Correct:** *My sister, who just graduated college, is moving to Canada.* (Using commas on both sides is also correct. Just don't mix a comma with a dash.)
- Incorrect:** *He finally faced his biggest fear\*, heights.\** (The part before the comma "He finally faced his biggest fear" is a complete sentence, and what follows is an explanation, which calls for a stronger break like a dash or colon instead of a comma.)
- Correct:** *He finally faced his biggest fear — heights.* (The single dash correctly emphasizes and introduces *heights*, after a complete clause.)

### ACT-Style Practice Question:

My favorite teacher - **who retired last year**, still volunteers at the school.

- A. NO CHANGE
- B. , who retired last year,
- C. who retired last year
- D. – who retired last year –



## 16. Apostrophes (Possessives and Contractions)

**Explanation:** Apostrophes are used for **possessives** and **contractions**. On the ACT, the two common issues are forming possessives correctly and distinguishing between possessive pronouns and similar-looking contractions.

- To form a possessive of a noun:
  - For a singular noun, add **'s** (even if the noun ends in s: *James's book* is acceptable, though *James' book* might also appear; ACT usually expects **'s** for singular).
  - For a plural noun ending in s, add just an apostrophe after the s (students → students').
  - For an irregular plural not ending in s, add 's (children → children's).
- For **contractions**, the apostrophe replaces missing letters (can't = cannot, you're = you are, it's = it is).

Be careful with pronouns: pronouns like **its, your, their, whose** do **not** take an apostrophe for possession. **It's, you're, they're, who's** do have apostrophes, but they mean **it is/has, you are, they are, who is**. For example, **its** (no apostrophe) is possessive, whereas **it's** means "it is".

- **Incorrect:** *The puppy wagged **it's** tail.* (**it's** = "it is," which doesn't fit here.)
- **Correct:** *The puppy wagged **its** tail.* (**its** is the possessive form, meaning belonging to it.)
- **Incorrect:** *All of the **students** papers were graded.* (As written, *students* is plural but not possessive. It needs an apostrophe to show the papers belong to the students.)
- **Correct:** *All of the **students'** papers were graded.* (Added an apostrophe to make *students'* possessive.)

### ACT-Style Practice Question:

All the **students** assignments were completed ahead of time.

- A. NO CHANGE
- B. student's
- C. students'
- D. students's

## 17. Commonly Confused Words

**Explanation:** The ACT often tests words that sound or look similar but have different meanings. You need to choose the word that correctly fits the context. Here are a few frequently confused words:

- **Than vs. Then:** *Than* is used for comparisons; *Then* is used for time or sequence. (She is taller **than** I am. Finish your homework, **then** watch TV.)
- **Effect vs. Affect:** *Effect* is usually a noun meaning result; *Affect* is usually a verb meaning to influence. (The **effect** of the storm, to **affect** someone's mood.)
- **Your vs. You're:** *Your* is possessive (your book); *You're* = you are (you're late).
- **Their vs. There vs. They're:** *Their* is possessive (their car); *There* refers to a place or is used with "to be" (there is); *They're* = they are.
- **Whose vs. Who's:** *Whose* is possessive (whose jacket?); *Who's* = who is.
- **Lose vs. Loose:** *Lose* (with one "o") is a verb meaning to misplace or not win; *Loose* (with two "o"s) is an adjective meaning not tight.
- **Lead vs. Led:** *Led* is the past tense of *lead* (the verb). *Lead* (pronounced like "led") is also a noun for the metal.
- **Fewer vs. Less:** *Fewer* is used with countable items; *Less* with uncountable quantities. (Fewer dollars, less money.)

Always read the sentence carefully and think about the meaning. If all answer choices are different words, that's your clue a commonly confused word is being tested.

- **Incorrect:** *She has more trophies **then** her sister.* (**then** relates to time, but a comparison needs **than**.)
- **Correct:** *She has more trophies **than** her sister.*
- **Incorrect:** *I **could of** finished the project earlier if I hadn't procrastinated.* ("Could of" is a common misheard error for **could have**.)
- **Correct:** *I **could have** finished the project earlier if I hadn't procrastinated.*

### ACT-Style Practice Question:

He enjoys soccer more **then** baseball.

- A. NO CHANGE
- B. than

- C. as
- D. from

## 18. Idiomatic Expressions and Prepositions

**Explanation: Idioms** are accepted phrases in English that often don't follow a strict rule but just "sound right" to native speakers. Many idioms involve particular prepositions after certain verbs or adjectives. The ACT may test whether you know the correct preposition or word pairing in a phrase. There isn't a formula for every idiom – these are often about memorizing common usage. Some examples:

- **Preposition usage:** "consistent **with**," "interested **in**," "capable **of**," "concerned **about**," "prohibit **from**," "prefer X **to** Y," "between X **and** Y" (for two things) vs. "among" (for more than two).
- **Two-part expressions:** either...or, neither...nor, not only...but also, both...and, as...as, etc., must pair correctly (the ACT might underline one part to see if you know the matching part).
- **Gerund vs. infinitive:** Certain expressions require a gerund (-ing form) or an infinitive. (For example, "interested **in doing** something," not *interested to do*.)

Tips: If you see an underlined preposition or a verb+preposition combo, consider if it's the standard phrase. Also, if something "sounds off," it might be an idiom issue. Try each answer choice in the sentence to see which phrase sounds correct or is traditionally used.

- **Incorrect:** *The treasure was divided **between** the three explorers.* (Use **among** for three or more people.)
- **Correct:** *The treasure was divided **among** the three explorers.*
- **Incorrect:** *She insisted **for** getting a refund after the show was canceled.* ("Insisted" idiomatically pairs with **on**.)
- **Correct:** *She insisted **on** getting a refund after the show was canceled.*

### ACT-Style Practice Question:

The new policy is consistent **to** the company's values.

- A.** NO CHANGE
- B.** consistent with
- C.** consistent about
- D.** consistent in

## 19. Wordiness and Redundancy (Being Concise)

**Explanation:** The ACT values clear and concise writing. **Wordiness** or **redundancy** means using more words than necessary or repeating ideas. Often, the shortest answer (as long as it's grammatically correct and not missing important information) is the best choice. Be on the lookout for phrases that can be simplified or words that repeat an idea already expressed.

Common redundancies:

- Phrases like "at this point in time" (just say "**now**"), "in order to" (just say "**to**"), "whether or not" (usually "whether" alone suffices), "each and every" (one is enough), "future plans" (all plans are about the future), etc.
- Saying the same thing twice: "*The reason is because...*" (just say "The reason is that..." or just "because"), "*circle around*," "*absolutely essential*" (essential already means "absolutely necessary"), "*repeat again*" (to repeat is to do again), etc.

When a sentence is underlined, check if it's wordy. If an answer choice offers a shorter wording that keeps the meaning, it's likely correct. If you see "DELETE" or "OMIT the underlined portion" as an option, consider that—often the best fix is to remove unnecessary words entirely.

- **Wordy:** *In order to be successful, you should practice regularly.*
- **Concise:** *To be successful, you should practice regularly.* (Shorter and clear – "In order to" was not needed.)
- **Redundant:** *She arrived at 8 a.m. **in the morning**.* ("a.m." already means morning.)
- **Revised:** *She arrived at 8 a.m.*

### ACT-Style Practice Question:

At this point in time, we **are currently** seeking new volunteers for the event.

- A.** NO CHANGE
- B.** are seeking new volunteers for the event currently.
- C.** are now seeking new volunteers for the event.
- D.** are seeking new volunteers for the event.