ACT English Test Prep

ACT English Test Taking Strategies	ACT Reading Test Taking Strategies
1. Skim / read the entire passage / paragraph before answering the question. Do not skip ahead. Also, read a few sentences beyond the question before answering. 2. Write on your test. 3. Base your choice on a grammar rule, not what "sounds: correctly. 4. Eliminate 2 answer choices - there are always 2 that are obviously wrong. 5. If you don't know - guess. You don't get penalized for wrong answers. 6. Guess - then mark the question in your book. If you have time, you can go back and answer that question. 7. It's okay to choose "No Change" - in fact about 20% of the questions will be no change.	1. Read - the more you read, the faster you will be able to read the passage. It will also help build your vocabulary. 2. Read the passage first - you won't be able to remember all of the questions. 3. Write on your test. Underline, mark, make notes on the main idea for each paragraph. This way you can go back and find answers later. 4. Eliminate 2 answer choices - there are always 2 that are obviously wrong. 5. If you don't know - guess. You don't get penalized for wrong answers. 6. Guess - then mark the question in your book. If you have time, you can go back and answer that question.

USAGE Rules	
Complete Sentences 1. Complete sentences have at least one subject and one verb. 2. Complete sentences do not start with WHICH or THAT. **Run-On Sentences** 1. You cannot have two complete sentences put together without <u>a comma and a "fanboy"</u> (conjunctions: for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so) or with a semicolon (;). 2. Commas cannot hold together two complete sentences.	**Dependent Clauses / Fragments** 1. These are not sentences because they don't make sense by themselves. 2. They almost always begin with: which, that, what, where, when, because, until, unless, before, after, as, if, since, though, although. 3. If you sentence starts with one of these words, you will need a comma after the clause ends and before your independent clause starts.

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USAGE Rules

Subject-Verb Agreement

Singular verbs end in -s.
ex. John runs.
Plural verbs do not end in -s.
ex. John and Jack run. They run. We run.

*Ignore everything in between the subject and verb. Literally put a line through them. They will distract you from the correct subject verb agreement.
ex. An audience ~~of thousands~~ seems terrifying to a nervous performer.

Unnecessary Shifts in Verb Tense

When you begin reading the passage, note the tense it it written in. Keep that tense consistent throughout.

Past	Present		Future
was	am	can	will
were	is		could
had	are		might
did	have		may
	do		
	does		

Generally ends in -ed	Sometimes ends in -s	Takes two verbs together

Unnecessary Shifts in Point of View

1st Person -> 3rd Person
I, me, we   he, she, they

*When you begin reading the passage, note the point of view it is written from Keep that point of view throughout the passage.

*Most often, the use of YOU should be eliminated.

Contractions and Possessives

<u>its and it's</u>
its is possessive
it's = it is

<u>whose and who's</u>
whose is possessive
who's = who is

<u>their and they're</u>
their is possessive
they're = they are

<u>your and you're</u>
your is possessive
you're = you are

If a singular noun ends in -s, us 's.

Who or Whom?

Who = he, she, it, they
Whom = him, her, them

*Plug in he or him; whichever one makes sense tells you if you should use who or whom.

*If who/whom is followed immediately by a verb, use who.

Parallel Structure

Language has to "match." The parts of speech in a list must be the same. Sentences should follow a pattern if you are trying to make a point.

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USAGE Rules

Pronoun-Antecedent Agreement
These words - he, she, they, them, it, his, her, their - are pronouns. They replace nouns to make reading easier. The nouns they replace are called their antecedents.

Do not use a pronoun that does not have a clear antecedent or that does not agree with its antecedent.

WRONG: Already late for the show, Mary couldn't find their keys. (her keys)

Punctuating Titles

1. If "it" can sit on a shelf, it is underlined.
Ex. book, movie, cd, newspaper, and magazines titles.

2. If "it" is inside something else, it is titled using quotes.
3. Ex. poem, song, article, short story, and essay titles.

Punctuation (basic review)

Commas
1. after introductory phrases/clauses before the independent clause.
2. Around unnecessary phrases.
3. Between items in a series.
4. Before conjunctions that are between 2 independent clauses. (FANBOYS)

Semicolons
*You can combine 2 independent clauses with a ;

Colons
Must follow an independent clause. Usually starts a list.

Dashes   - occur in pairs -
They act like commas and set off unnecessary information that needs to be emphasized.

Quotation Marks
All punctuation goes inside the quotation marks.

Rhetoric Rules

Irrelevance
When asked to evaluate information to choose whether to include it or not, make sure it is relevant to, or supports, the main idea of the passage as a whole. If the information the author wants to add doesn't support the argument, OMIT it or choose the answer that replaces it with relevant information.

Verbosity
due to the fact that = because
eighteen years of age = eighteen

The two examples above illustrate verbosity. Using too many words to communicate your message frustrates your reader in the same way that having too many pillows on your bed makes sleeping comfortably impossible. Use only what you need to get your message across.

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Rhetoric Rules	
Redundancy	**Adding Details / Considering Purpose**
The general rule for writing is to find the shortest and simplest way to say something. Thus, unnecessary repetition is as irritation to a reader as your mom's nagging is to you. Say it once and leave it alone.	The questions about adding details often contain a key word that conveys to the author's purpose. Example: *If the writer wants to illustrate the contrast between his mother and his grandmother, which choice works best here?* *You'd look for the answer that shows how those two women are different.