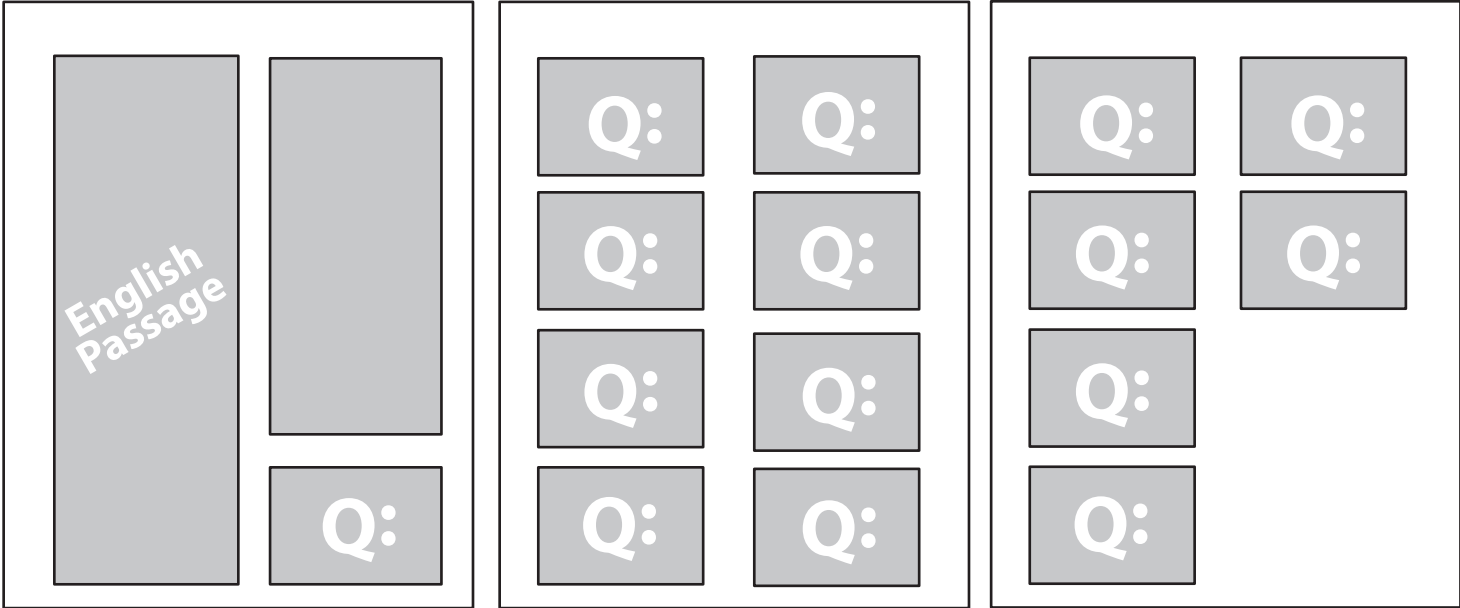# PVPHS AVID Juniors
SAT/ACT Prep
2017/2018

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Packet #1: ACT English
Part A

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Format and Difficulty of the ACT English Test:

- There are 75 multiple choice questions on the ACT English Section.

- The passages are easy to read and understand.

- The problems on this section test your ability to eliminate grammatical errors and rhetorical confusion.

- ACT English problems are NOT organized according to difficulty, so it's a good idea to skip difficult or time consuming problems and come back to them once you've answered all the quicker easier ones.

These Concepts are on the ACT English Section

Usage and Mechanics:

Punctuation (10 questions = 13%)
Commas
Apostrophes
Colons, Semicolons, Dashes
Periods, Question Marks, Exclamation Points

Grammar & Usage (12 questions = 16%)
Grammatical Agreement
Verb Forms
Pronoun Forms and Case
Comparative & Superlative Modifiers
Idioms

Sentence Structure (18 questions = 24%)
Subordinate Clauses
Sentence Fragments
Run-on Sentences
Comma Splices
Misplaced Modifiers
Shifts in Verb Tense
Shifts in Pronoun Person or Number

Rhetorical Strategy:

Writing Strategy (12 questions = 16%)
Relevance
Add or Remove a Sentence
The Effect of Adding/Removing Info
Audience

Organization (11 questions = 15%)
Openings
Transitions
Closing Statements
Logical Progress of ideas

Sense of Stye (12 questions = 16%)
Writing Style
Tone
Clarity
Redundancy & Wordiness
Ambiguity

Spelling is not tested on the ACT. You'll never be asked to identify the proper spelling of a word on the English section of the ACT.

ACT Rev 1/17

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Tips for Raising Your ACT English Score

1. Learn to practice effectively by reading and following the advice on the page 6.

2. Don't *skim* the passage. *Read* the passage, using active reading techniques.

3. Attack the questions in the best possible order to maximize your score. Before you begin each problem, consider the scope of the question before you try to answer it. Does the question require you to consider more than a single sentence? If it deals with the entire passage, then you probably want to skip this question and come back once you've answered all the quicker, easier questions!

4. When you spot an error in an underlined section of the passage, solve the error in your head BEFORE you even look at the answer choices. Remember, all but one of the answer choices are wrong, and they're designed to confuse you! Do your best best to solve the problem in your head before you look at the answers.

5. Manage your time. You've only got 45 minutes to answer 75 questions. That means that you've only got 36 seconds per question. That may not sound like much time, but it's actually more than you'll need for 75% of the questions, which is good because you need to "bank time" on those easy questions, so you'll have enough time to knock out the difficult ones.

6. Keeping your momentum is an important part of a good approach to the ACT English section. This is true for a couple of reasons. Obviously, you need to move quickly in order to finish the test, but when you get stuck on a hard problem, you're actually better off returning to that problem later with fresh eyes.

7. When you're working on a difficult problem and you're unable to come up with a good answer in your head, then it can be useful to check the answer choices for clues as to what's being tested on that problem. For example, if answer choices use plural verbs and some use singular verbs, then that's big hint that the problem deals with subject verb agreement.

8. Don't be afraid to choose NO CHANGE. If you've read a problem a few times and you can't see any way to improve the underlined text, then go ahead and choose NO CHANGE. It's often the correct answer.

9. Never leave a question blank! There's no penalty for guesses or wrong answers, so make sure you've bubbled in an answer on every problem before time expires.

Process of Elimination for ACT English

Eliminate any answer choice that:

    is grammatically incorrect

    fails to communicate an idea clearly

    includes unnecessary punctuation

    includes unnecessary words or phrases

    provides information that's irrelevant to the passage

Do not eliminate an answer choice that:

    is grammatically correct

    communicates an idea clearly

    includes NO unnecessary punctuation

    includes NO unnecessary words or phrases

    provides only information that's relevant to the passage

A Right Answer Must Pass Three Tests:

1. **Listen to your answer.** The simplest *sounding* answer is often correct, but not if that simplicity comes at the expense of clarity. Listening to an answer is a great way to identify sentence fragments and adjective/adverb switches.

2. **Look at your answer.** Your ears can fool you, especially on questions involving homophones (e.g. *they're*, *their*, and *there*), so be sure to use your eyes to spot grammatical mistakes that you can't hear. Remember the grammar rules in this book.

3. **Consider your answer.** If it sounds good and looks good, then it may be the right answer, but just to be sure, take a moment to think about your answer. Check your answer to make sure it actually makes sense. Consider the commonly occurring errors in this section like subject verb agreement, unnecessary punctuation, and idiom errors.

15 Essential Grammar Concepts

1. Mark Up the Question

Always underline the words NOT, LEAST, and EXCEPT in the question.

2. Basic Punctuation

| Period | = | Semicolon | = | Comma | + | Conjunction (FANBOYS or Subordinate) |

3. Subject Verb Agreement

Use the verb to find the subject by asking "*Who or what performed this action?*"
Then check for agreement in number. Singular verbs end in *-s* and must pair with singular subjects. Plural verbs do not end in *-s* and must pair with plural subjects.

> (Ex:) *George **runs**. Michael **runs**. The two boys **run**.*

4. Separating Non-essential Clauses

A non-essential clause is just extra information that the rest of the sentence does not depend upon. For the purposes of separating a non-essential clause from the rest of the sentence, remember:

Colon	+	Non-Essential Clause
Dash	+	Non-Essential Clause
Comma	+	Non-Essential Clause	+	Comma
Dash	+	Non-Essential Clause	+	Dash

5. Non-essential Lists or Explanations at the end of sentences

| Complete sentence | + | Colon | + | List of items |
| Complete sentence | + | Colon | + | Extra information |

6. *-ING* Words (Gerunds)

-ing words are NEVER verbs. They cannot be the action word in a sentence.

-ing words (especially *having* or *being*) usually result in wordy sentences.

7. Homophones and Apostrophes

Its = Possessive form of *it*   *It's* = It is

Their = Possessive form of *they*   *They're* = They are   *There* = a location