

What is tested on the English portion of the ACT? (from ACT.org)

The English section consists of multiple essays, or passages, each followed by a set of multiple-choice questions.

- For paper testing, some questions refer to underlined portions of the passage and offer several alternatives to the underlined portion. For online testing, these questions will refer to highlighted portions of the passage. You decide which choice is most appropriate in the context of the passage.
- Some questions ask about an underlined portion, a section of the passage, or the passage as a whole. You decide which choice best answers the question posed.
- Many questions offer “NO CHANGE” to the passage as one of the choices.

The English section puts you in the position of a writer who makes decisions to revise and edit a text. Essays in different genres provide a variety of rhetorical situations. These passages are chosen for their appropriateness in assessing writing and language skills and to reflect students’ interests and experiences.

Content Covered by the ACT English Test

Four scores are reported for the English section: a score for the section overall and three reporting category scores based on specific knowledge and skills. The approximate percentage of the section devoted to each reporting category is:

Production of Writing (29–32%)

This category requires you to apply your understanding of the purpose and focus of a piece of writing.

- **Topic Development:** Demonstrate an understanding of, and control over, the rhetorical aspects of texts. Identify the purposes of parts of texts, determine whether a text or part of a text has met its intended goal, and evaluate the relevance of material in terms of a text’s focus.
- **Organization, Unity, and Cohesion:** Use various strategies to ensure that a text is logically organized, flows smoothly, and has an effective introduction and conclusion.

Knowledge of Language (13–19%)

These questions require you to demonstrate effective language use through ensuring precision and concision in word choice and maintaining consistency in style and tone.

Conventions of Standard English (51–56%)

These questions require you to apply an understanding of the conventions of standard English grammar, usage, and mechanics to revise and edit text.

- **Sentence Structure and Formation:** Apply understanding of sentence structure and formation in a text and make revisions to improve the writing.
- **Punctuation:** Recognize common problems with standard English punctuation and make revisions to improve the writing.
- **Usage:** Recognize common problems with standard English usage in a text and make revisions to improve the writing.