ACT® English Practice Test 1

English Test · 35 Minutes — 50 Questions

Answer Sheet

1	A	B	C	D	17	A	B	C	D	34	F	G	H	J
2	F	G	H	J	18	F	G	H	J	35	A	B	C	D
3	A	B	C	D	19	A	B	C	D	36	F	G	H	J
4	F	G	H	J	20	F	G	H	J	37	A	B	C	D
5	A	B	C	D	21	A	B	C	D	38	F	G	H	J
6	F	G	H	J	22	F	G	H	J	39	A	B	C	D
7	A	B	C	D	23	A	B	C	D	40	F	G	H	J
8	F	G	H	J	24	F	G	H	J	41	A	B	C	D
9	A	B	C	D	25	A	B	C	D	42	F	G	H	J
10	F	G	H	J	26	F	G	H	J	43	A	B	C	D
11	A	B	C	D	27	A	B	C	D	44	F	G	H	J
12	F	G	H	J	28	F	G	H	J	45	A	B	C	D
13	A	B	C	D	29	A	B	C	D	46	F	G	H	J
14	F	G	H	J	30	F	G	H	J	47	A	B	C	D
15	A	B	C	D	31	A	B	C	D	48	F	G	H	J
16	F	G	H	J	32	F	G	H	J	49	A	B	C	D
					33	A	B	C	D	50	F	G	H	J

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ENGLISH TEST

35 Minutes—50 Questions

DIRECTIONS: In the passages that follow, certain words and phrases are underlined and numbered. In the right-hand column, you will find alternatives for the underlined part. Choose the best answer to each question. If you think the original version is best, choose "**No Change**."

You will also find questions about a section of the passage, or about the passage as a whole. These questions do not refer to an underlined portion of the passage; instead, they are identified by a number or numbers in a box.

For each question, choose the alternative you consider best and fill in the corresponding oval on your answer sheet. Read each passage through once before you begin to answer the questions that accompany it. For many of the questions, you must read several sentences beyond the question to determine the answer. Be sure that you have read far enough ahead each time you choose an alternative.

PASSAGE I

The Woman Who Mapped the Seafloor

[1]

In the late 1940s, few women worked in the earth sciences, and none were allowed aboard the research ships that surveyed[1] the ocean. Marie Tharp, a geologist with degrees in English, music, and mathematics, took a job at Columbia University's Lamont Geological Observatory, where she was hired as a research assistant.[2] [A] While her colleague Bruce Heezen collected depth soundings at sea, Tharp stayed behind; transforming[3] his columns of numbers

1. Which choice is clearest and most precise in context?

- **A. No Change**
- **B.** patrolled
- **C.** supervised
- **D.** overlooked

2. Which choice is least redundant in context?

- **F. No Change**
- **G.** took a job as a research assistant, hired at Columbia University's Lamont Geological Observatory
- **H.** was hired as a research assistant at Columbia University's Lamont Geological Observatory
- **J.** accepted and took a job at Columbia University's Lamont Geological Observatory as a hired research assistant

3. Which choice makes the sentence most grammatically acceptable?

- **A. No Change**
- **B.** behind. Transforming
- **C.** behind, she transformed
- **D.** behind, transforming

into detailed maps.

[2]

The work was painstaking. [B] Each sounding recorded the depth at a single point, so Tharp had to plot thousands of them[4] by hand and then imagine the terrain in between.

4. Which choice makes the sentence most grammatically acceptable?

F. No Change
G. these measurements
H. it
J. those

[5] As her profiles of the North Atlantic took shape, she

5. At this point, the writer is considering adding the following true sentence:

The Atlantic is the second-largest of Earth's five oceans.

Should the writer make this addition here?

A. Yes, because it explains why Tharp chose to map the North Atlantic.
B. Yes, because it emphasizes how much work Tharp's maps required.
C. No, because it interrupts the paragraph's description of how Tharp built her maps and what she discovered.
D. No, because it contradicts the paragraph's claim that the work was painstaking.

noticed something that no one had expected[6]: a deep, V-shaped

6. Given that all the choices are true, which one best emphasizes how surprising Tharp's discovery was?

F. No Change
G. seemed interesting
H. she later described in her notes
J. contradicted what nearly every geologist in the country believed

valley running down the center of the Mid-Atlantic Ridge.

[3]

Tharp believed the valley was a rift, a place where the seafloor was being pulled apart. That idea supported continental drift, a theory that most American geologists of the time was[7] quick to reject. Heezen at first dismissed her

7. Which choice makes the sentence most grammatically acceptable?

A. No Change
B. were
C. has been
D. is

finding as "girl talk." [C] Over time, however, the[8] evidence became impossible to ignore, especially when Tharp showed that earthquakes along the ridge followed the same line as the rift.

[4]

In 1977, Tharp and Heezen published the World Ocean Floor map, painted by the Austrian artist Heinrich Berann. The map was printed in several sizes and sold to schools.[9] [D]

8. Which choice makes the sentence most grammatically acceptable?

F. No Change
G. Over time however, the
H. Over time, however the
J. Over time; however, the

9. Which choice most effectively concludes the essay by emphasizing the significance of Tharp's work?

A. No Change
B. Berann painted many other maps during his career, including several of the Alps.
C. For the first time, people could see Earth's hidden mountain ranges wrapping around the globe like the seams on a baseball.
D. Heezen died that same year while on a research voyage near Iceland.

Question 10 asks about the preceding passage as a whole.

10. The writer is considering adding the following sentence to the essay:

To measure depth, a ship's crew sent pulses of sound to the seafloor and timed how long the echoes took to return.

If the writer were to add this sentence, it would most logically be placed at:

F. Point A in Paragraph 1.
G. Point B in Paragraph 2.
H. Point C in Paragraph 3.
J. Point D in Paragraph 4.

PASSAGE II

Third Gear

[1]

My grandfather's pickup truck was older than my mother, and it had a stick shift that no one in our family under the age of fifty knew how to drive[11]. So when he offered to teach me the summer I turned sixteen, I was all over it, no question[12]. How hard, I wondered, could three pedals and a lever really be?[13]

[2]

Very hard, it turned out. On my first try, I let the clutch out too quickly, and the truck lurched forward and died. In[14] the

11. Given that all the choices are true, which one most clearly suggests that driving the truck was a rare skill in the narrator's family?

A. No Change
B. had been repaired many times
C. my grandfather kept in perfect condition
D. sat in the barn most of the year

12. Which choice most effectively maintains the essay's tone?

F. No Change
G. enthusiastically acquiesced to his proposal
H. went for it big-time
J. jumped at the chance

13. Which choice makes the sentence most grammatically acceptable?

A. No Change
B. be.
C. be;
D. be:

14. Which choice makes the sentence most grammatically acceptable?

F. No Change
G. died in
H. died; in
J. died: in

middle of my grandparents' gravel driveway. My grandfather, whom[15] had taught all four of his children to drive in that same truck, simply nodded. "Again," he said.

15. Which choice makes the sentence most grammatically acceptable?

A. No Change
B. which
C. who
D. whose

[3]

[1] For the next two weeks, we practiced every evening after dinner. [2] Slowly, I began to feel the moment when the engine caught, a faint shiver that traveled up through the pedal and up into my foot, rising upward[16]. [3] He explained that the clutch was like a handshake: too[17] firm or too limp, and the connection fails. [4] He never raised his voice, even the time I rolled backward toward the mailbox. [18]

16. Which choice is least redundant in context?

F. No Change
G. and up into my foot, ascending
H. rising and climbing into my foot
J. and into my foot

17. Which of the following alternatives to the underlined portion would NOT be acceptable?

A. handshake—too
B. handshake, too
C. handshake; too
D. handshake. Too

18. Which sequence of sentences makes Paragraph 3 most logical?

F. No Change
G. 1, 3, 2, 4
H. 1, 3, 4, 2
J. 3, 1, 4, 2

[4]

By August, I could shift smoothly from first to second and, on the empty farm road behind the house, all the way into third[19]. On the last Saturday of the month, I drove us to town. My grandfather rode in the passenger seat with the window down, his arm resting on the door, watching the fields go by[20].

19. If the writer were to delete the underlined portion (adjusting the punctuation as needed), the essay would primarily lose:

- **A.** a description of the farm road behind the house.
- **B.** an explanation of why the grandfather chose to teach the narrator.
- **C.** nothing, because the narrator's progress is described later in the paragraph.
- **D.** a detail showing how far the narrator's skill had progressed, which connects to the essay's title.

20. Which choice most effectively concludes the essay by suggesting that the grandfather now trusted the narrator's driving?

- **F. No Change**
- **G.** humming along with the radio and never once reaching for the dashboard
- **H.** even though the air conditioner had been broken for years
- **J.** while we passed several farms and a gas station

PASSAGE III

Why Flamingos Are Pink

[1]

Flamingos are so closely associated with the color pink that it can be surprising to learn that each of a flamingo's chicks hatch[21] covered in gray, fluffy down. Flamingos live on every continent except Australia and Antarctica.[22]

21. Which choice makes the sentence most grammatically acceptable?

A. No Change
B. have hatched
C. hatches
D. are hatching

22. Which choice provides the most effective transition from the first sentence to the rest of the essay?

F. No Change
G. Flamingo chicks are fed a special milk produced by both parents.
H. Some flamingos have lived for more than fifty years.
J. A flamingo's famous color is not something it is born with; it is something it eats.

[2]

The birds feed by wading through shallow lakes and lagoons, turned their heads upside down,[23] and sweeping their bills from side to side. Comb-like plates along the edges of the bill strain out from the water the tiny organisms, such as algae and brine shrimp, that are in it.[24] These organisms are

23. Which choice makes the sentence most grammatically acceptable?

A. No Change
B. turning their heads upside down
C. their heads turned upside down,
D. they turn their heads upside down

24. Which choice is least redundant in context?

F. No Change
G. from the water, out of it, tiny organisms such as algae and brine shrimp
H. tiny organisms, such as algae and brine shrimp, from the water
J. the tiny organisms in the water out from the water, such as algae and brine shrimp

rich in carotenoids, the same pigments that give carrots <u>their</u> [25]

25. Which choice makes the sentence most grammatically acceptable?

A. No Change
B. its
C. it's
D. there

orange color.

[3]

As a flamingo digests its food, enzymes in its liver break the carotenoids down into <u>pigment molecules, that</u> [26] are then

26. Which choice makes the sentence most grammatically acceptable?

F. No Change
G. pigment molecules, which,
H. pigment molecules; that
J. pigment molecules that

deposited in growing feathers, skin, and even egg yolks. The more carotenoids a flamingo eats, the <u>thicker</u> [27] its color.

27. Which choice is clearest and most precise in context?

A. No Change
B. more vivid
C. more abundant
D. more numerous

[28]

28. At this point, the writer is considering adding the following true sentence:

Because bright color signals a well-fed, healthy bird, the pinkest flamingos often have the most success attracting mates.

Should the writer make this addition here?

F. Yes, because it describes how a flamingo's liver processes carotenoids.
G. Yes, because it explains one reason a flamingo's color matters to the bird itself.
H. No, because it contradicts the claim that a flamingo's color depends on its diet.
J. No, because it shifts the focus of the paragraph from flamingos to other birds.

[4]

This connection between diet and color has practical consequences.[29] Flamingos kept in zoos once faded to a pale, washed-out white because their keepers fed them diets lacking carotenoids. Today, zoos add pigment supplements to the birds' food to keep them pink.

29. Which choice most effectively introduces the paragraph?

- **A. No Change**
- **B.** Flamingos are popular attractions at many zoos.
- **C.** Carotenoids are also found in tomatoes and salmon.
- **D.** Wild flamingos sometimes gather in flocks of more than a million birds.

Question 30 asks about the preceding passage as a whole.

30. Suppose the writer's primary purpose had been to explain how an animal's appearance can be shaped by what it eats. Would this essay accomplish that purpose?

- **F.** Yes, because it describes in detail how flamingos use their bills to feed.
- **G.** Yes, because it explains how the carotenoids in a flamingo's food produce the color of its feathers and what happens when those pigments are missing.
- **H.** No, because it focuses mainly on how zoos care for flamingos.
- **J.** No, because it suggests that flamingos are born with their color.

PASSAGE IV

The Seed Library

[1]

Our town's public library lends out more than books. In a wooden card catalog near the front desk, there is[31] hundreds of

31. Which choice makes the sentence most grammatically acceptable?

- **A. No Change**
- **B.** there was
- **C.** there are
- **D.** there's

envelopes of seeds: tomatoes, sunflowers, beans, and dozens of herbs[32]. Anyone with a library card can take a few packets in the spring. The only rule is that, at the end of the season, borrowers should try and return[33] some seeds from their own harvest.

[2]

I started volunteering at the seed library the summer after ninth grade. Arriving in envelopes, jars, and once in a folded paper towel, I sorted the seeds by type.[34] Each donation had to be labeled with the plant's name, the year in which it was grown and harvested that year[35], and any notes from the

32. Given that all the choices are true, which one most effectively illustrates the variety of seeds the library offers?

- **F. No Change**
- **G.** seeds, all of them free
- **H.** seeds
- **J.** seeds that are kept in alphabetical order

33. Which choice makes the sentence most grammatically acceptable?

- **A. No Change**
- **B.** try returning back
- **C.** trying to return
- **D.** try to return

34. Which choice makes the sentence most grammatically acceptable?

- **F. No Change**
- **G.** Arriving in envelopes, jars, and once in a folded paper towel, sorting the seeds by type was my job.
- **H.** The seeds arrived in envelopes, jars, and once in a folded paper towel, and I sorted them by type.
- **J.** I sorted the seeds, arriving in envelopes, jars, and once in a folded paper towel, by type.

35. Which choice is least redundant in context?

- **A. No Change**
- **B.** of its growing year
- **C.** when it was grown in that year
- **D.** it was grown

gardener.

[3]

The notes became my favorite part. One borrower wrote that her beans had climbed all the way to her neighbor's gutter[36]. Another warned that the "small" pumpkins were anything but small. [37] Reading those notes, I began to realize that every packet carried a little piece of someone's summer.

[4]

Last spring, a woman who had moved to town only a month earlier interrogated me about[38] which tomato she should

36. Which choice most vividly illustrates how well the beans had grown?

- **F. No Change**
- **G.** very high
- **H.** higher than she had expected
- **J.** quite a bit that year

37. At this point, the writer is considering adding the following true sentence:

Pumpkins are a type of squash native to North America.

Should the writer make this addition here?

- **A.** Yes, because it explains why the pumpkins were larger than expected.
- **B.** Yes, because it gives background information about one of the plants described.
- **C.** No, because it interrupts the paragraph's focus on the gardeners' notes and what they meant to the narrator.
- **D.** No, because it contradicts the claim that the pumpkins were small.

38. Which choice most effectively maintains the essay's tone?

- **F. No Change**
- **G.** questioned me on
- **H.** inquired of me regarding
- **J.** asked me

try. I handed her a packet labeled "Mrs. Ochoa's Paste Tomato —grows like a weed, tastes like August." She laughed and promises [39] to bring back seeds in the fall. [40]

39. Which choice makes the sentence most grammatically acceptable?

A. No Change
B. promised
C. will promise
D. has promised

40. The writer wants to add a sentence here to conclude the essay in a way that connects to the realization described in Paragraph 3. Which choice best accomplishes this goal?

F. That fall, a new envelope appeared in the returns: "Paste tomato, from Mrs. Ochoa's seeds—still tastes like August."
G. The library also offers classes on composting and canning.
H. Tomatoes are among the most popular plants in home gardens.
J. I still volunteer at the library on Saturday mornings.

PASSAGE V

The Great Molasses Flood

[1]

Shortly after noon on January 15, 1919, residents of Boston's North End heard a deep rumble, some said it [41]

41. Which choice makes the sentence most grammatically acceptable?

A. No Change
B. deep rumble, which some said it
C. deep rumble that some said
D. deep rumble some said it

sounded like a passing train. Seconds later, a steel storage tank fifty feet tall burst open, releasing more than two million gallons of molasses into the crowded neighborhood.

[2]

The wave of syrup that swept through[42] the streets was estimated to be as high as twenty-five feet and to travel at roughly thirty-five miles per hour. It knocked buildings off their foundations, bent the steel supports of an elevated railway, and it trapped[43] people and horses in a thick, sticky mass. The number of people killed were[44] twenty-one, and about 150 more were injured.

[3]

Rescue efforts were slow and exhausting.[45] As the evening

42. Which choice is clearest and most precise in context?

- **F. No Change**
- **G.** meandered through
- **H.** drifted along
- **J.** trickled down

43. Which choice makes the sentence most grammatically acceptable?

- **A. No Change**
- **B.** trapping
- **C.** had trapped
- **D.** trapped

44. Which choice makes the sentence most grammatically acceptable?

- **F. No Change**
- **G.** was
- **H.** are
- **J.** have been

45. Which choice most effectively introduces the paragraph?

- **A. No Change**
- **B.** Boston is one of the oldest cities in the United States.
- **C.** At the time, molasses was used to make industrial alcohol.
- **D.** The tank had been built only four years earlier.

grew colder, the molasses thickened and became more viscous and dense[46], making it nearly impossible for rescuers to wade through. Cleanup crews worked for weeks, using salt water from the harbor to wash away the residue; for decades afterward, longtime residents claimed that on hot summer days the neighborhood still smelled sweet.

46. Which choice best avoids wordiness and redundancy in context?

F. No Change
G. thickened, growing thicker
H. thickened
J. became thick and dense in consistency

[4]

The North End is now known for its restaurants and bakeries.[47] The company that owned the tank argued that someone had blown it up, but a court-appointed investigator concluded that the tank had been poorly built: its[48] walls were too thin, and it had leaked from the day it was first filled, a fact the company had tried to hide by painting the tank brown[49]. The lengthy lawsuit that followed helped persuade

47. Which choice provides the most effective transition to the information in the rest of the paragraph?

A. No Change
B. Molasses is a thick syrup made from sugarcane.
C. Many residents of the North End at the time were recent immigrants from Italy.
D. Beyond the immediate damage, the disaster left a lasting legal legacy.

48. Which of the following alternatives to the underlined portion would NOT be acceptable?

F. built, its
G. built; its
H. built. Its
J. built—its

49. The writer is considering deleting the underlined portion (ending the sentence with a period after the word *filled*). Should the writer make this deletion?

A. Yes, because the color of the tank is unrelated to the investigator's conclusions.
B. Yes, because the information repeats a detail given earlier in the essay.
C. No, because it shows that the company knew about the tank's flaws, strengthening the case against it.
D. No, because it explains how the tank was built.

lawmakers to require that engineers and architects certify their calculations before construction begins.

Question 50 asks about the preceding passage as a whole.

50. Suppose the writer's primary purpose had been to explain in detail how a disaster changed engineering practices. Would this essay accomplish that purpose?

- **F.** Yes, because it explains that the tank's walls were too thin.
- **G.** Yes, because it describes the new requirement that engineers certify their calculations.
- **H.** No, because it argues that the tank was blown up deliberately.
- **J.** No, because it focuses mainly on the disaster and its immediate aftermath, mentioning changes to engineering practices only briefly.

END OF TEST

STOP! Check your work on this test only.