



Power Up: English ACT Prep, Week 4



Patricia McDaniels-Gomez, Michell Eike, Kelsey Willems

Published by K20 Center

This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons CC BY-SA 4.0 License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/)

Time Frame 35 minutes

Essential Question(s)

- How can I increase my ACT score?

Summary

In this English ACT prep activity, students focus on sentence structure conventions. First, students complete a Card Matching activity, matching examples with explanations and the corresponding rules. Then, students apply their understanding of sentence structure and ACT skills through reading a practice passage and answering questions. This is the fourth activity in a 10-week "Power Up" series for ACT prep.

Learning Goals

- Categorize different instances of fragments, verb tense shifts, and sentence structure errors.
- Identify when fragments, verb tense shifts, and sentence structure rules are broken.

Attachments

- [Activity Slides—English ACT Prep, Week 4.pdf](#)
- [Activity Slides—English ACT Prep, Week 4.pptx](#)
- [Rule Labels—English ACT Prep, Week 4 - Spanish.docx](#)
- [Rule Labels—English ACT Prep, Week 4 - Spanish.pdf](#)
- [Rule Labels—English ACT Prep, Week 4.docx](#)
- [Rule Labels—English ACT Prep, Week 4.pdf](#)
- [Sentence Structure Cards—English ACT Prep, Week 4 - Spanish.docx](#)
- [Sentence Structure Cards—English ACT Prep, Week 4 - Spanish.pdf](#)
- [Sentence Structure Cards—English ACT Prep, Week 4.docx](#)
- [Sentence Structure Cards—English ACT Prep, Week 4.pdf](#)
- [Skill Sets Check—English ACT Prep, Week 4 - Spanish.docx](#)
- [Skill Sets Check—English ACT Prep, Week 4 - Spanish.pdf](#)
- [Skill Sets Check—English ACT Prep, Week 4.docx](#)
- [Skill Sets Check—English ACT Prep, Week 4.pdf](#)
- [White Water Worrier—English ACT Prep, Week 4.docx](#)
- [White Water Worrier—English ACT Prep, Week 4.pdf](#)

Materials

- Activity Slides (attached)
- Sentence Structure Cards handout (attached; 1 set per class)
- Rule Labels document (attached; 1 set per class)
- Skill Sets Check handout (attached; 1 per student)
- White Water Worrier handout (attached; 1 per student)
- Pen/Pencil

5 minutes

Introduction

Teacher's Note: Preparing the Activity

Before you begin, print the attached **Sentence Structure Cards** and cut out the cards. Depending on the class size, use the extra cards (indicated with a star) on pages 3 and 4 as needed. Each page has nine cards, and each student should get one card. For example, if the class is comprised of 24 students, print pages 1-3 and use all of the cards from pages 1-2 and the first two rows of cards on page 3 to get 24 different cards. The activity has 11 explanation cards and 11 corresponding example cards, so there should be two students per group. The cards with stars, are additional example cards but not repeated cards. If the class has fewer than 22 students, place the unused cards next to their corresponding "rule" so that students are still learning all the explanations and examples.

Print the attached **Rule Labels** document and hang in three different corners or on different walls of the classroom. Groups of students gather at each "rule." The number of groups at each "rule" depends on the rule. Fragments should have two groups each (4 cards/students), Verb Tense Shifts should have two groups (4 cards/students), and Sentence Structure has seven groups (14 cards/students). Of the extra cards indicated with stars, there are five cards for the Fragments "rule," four cards for the Verb Tense Shifts "rule," and five cards for the Sentence Structure "rule."

Consider laminating the cards and rule labels for durability and multiple use.

As students walk into class, give each student a Sentence Structure Card and their attached **Skill Sets Check** handout. Use the attached **Activity Slides** to facilitate the activity.

Transition through **slides 3-4** to introduce students to the essential question and learning objectives. Display **slide 5** and explain to students that this week they will continue practicing for the English portion of the ACT. This week the focus is primarily on the category of "Sentence Structure and Format" which is a contributing factor to "Conventions of Standard English" which is over 50% of the subject test.

Use **slide 6** to introduce students to the [Card Matching](#) strategy. Explain to the class that each student has either an example card with a sentence or an explanation card. Tell the class that they are to create a set that is comprised of 1-2 example cards and 1 explanation card. Direct students' attention to the Rule Labels hanging around the room. Have them make their best guess about which "rule" corresponds to their cards and gather there. Give students three minutes to find their group. Use the [K20 Center timer](#) on **slide 7**. This is not the time to correct students' thinking, as they will refine their understanding and move to a new rule, if necessary, as the activity progresses.

20 minutes

Activity

After all students are at a rule, transition to **slide 8** and have everyone watch the "[Sentences, Fragments, and Run-Ons](#)" video about Rule: Fragments. Stop the video at 2:40. Direct students to write notes about this rule on their Skill Sets Check handout. After the video, answer any questions or clear up any misconceptions. Then, ask the class to reflect on what they just learned and use this new knowledge to determine whether they need to change groups or not. Give students another three minutes using the [K20 Center timer](#) on **slide 9** to move to a different rule, if needed, until they find their right group and rule.

Embedded video

<https://youtube.com/watch?v=GJZzAaexLd4?si=yytjwQz6DcdJnzEt>

After the last round of students sort themselves, briefly transition through **slides 13-17** with the "answers" and have students double check to determine they are at the right rule. Give students time to fill in the rest of their handouts.

Teacher's Note: Optional Slides

If you used the provided extra example cards (the "starred" ones) then unhide **slides 18-20** and share with students as you did with slides 13-17.

10 minutes

Wrap-Up

Next, move to **slide 21** and briefly introduce some test-taking tips about answer choices. Explain the following in as much detail as you feel necessary:

1. It's okay if students choose "NO CHANGE" as there is a 25% chance of it being correct. If a question is asked, students usually expect there to be something wrong. Highlight the fact that they shouldn't second guess themselves.
2. If students are running out of time or just don't know the answer, they should make an educated guess. According to Sult (2021), "Often, the most concise answer is the correct one," so explain how the answer choices can guide their thinking.

Pass out the attached **White Water Worriers** handout and instruct students to read the passage independently and answer the questions. Warn students that they will have seven minutes as that's about how long it will take to read and answer the questions. There are fewer than the usual 15 questions, which is why the time is less than the usual nine minutes for a passage and corresponding questions. Use the [K20 Center Timer](#) on **slide 22** and allow students to work silently. Collect the passage at the end of class. Explain that you will review the answers next time as next week's activity will be a comprehensive review from what students have learned thus far.

Teacher's Note: Time Saver

After collecting the students' White Water Worrier handout, review the responses and make note of the most frequently missed questions. Doing this now will save you time when facilitating "[Power Up: English ACT Prep, Week 5](#)."

Show and explain **slides 23-24** which reveal a sneak peek at what will happen next time but also provide students a "side quest" where they will listen for sentence fragments in everyday speech, posts, or other forms of communication and write down the corrected form. Slide 24 provides a fun example of an English teacher correcting the sentence structure of a famous line from an ad. "Got Milk?" is missing a subject and interrogative to make it a complete thought.

Research Rationale

Standardized testing in high schools has long stood as a metric for assessing college readiness and school accountability (McMann, 1994). While there has been debate surrounding the accuracy of such metrics, as well as concerns regarding equity, many institutions of higher education continue to make these scores part of the admissions process (Allensworth & Clark, 2020; Black et al., 2016; Buckley et al., 2020). Aside from admissions, it is also important to keep in mind that standardized test scores can also provide students with scholarship opportunities they wouldn't otherwise have (Klasik, 2013). Though the topic of standardized testing continues to be debated, effective test prep can ensure that our students are set up for success.

With several benefits to doing well on college admissions tests, it is important to consider how best to prepare students for this type of high stakes test. Those students from groups that may historically struggle to find success, such as those in poverty or first generation college students, especially stand to benefit from effective test preparation (Moore & San Pedro, 2021). The American College Test (ACT) is one option students have for college admissions testing that is provided both at national centers and school sites. Taking time to understand this test including the timing, question types, rigor, and strategies for approaching specific questions can help to prepare students to do their best work on test day and ensure their score is a more accurate representation of what they know (Bishop & Davis-Becker, 2016).

Resources

- Allensworth, E. M., & Clark, K. (2020). High school GPAs and ACT scores as predictors of college completion: Examining assumptions about consistency across high schools. *Educational Researcher*, 49(3), 198-211.
- Bishop, N.S. & Davis-Becker, S. (2016). Preparing examinees for test taking: Guidelines for test developers and test users. 2nd edition. Crocker, L. (Ed). In *Handbook of Test Development*, (pp. 129-142). Routledge.
- Black, S. E., Cortes, K. E., & Lincove, J. A. (2016). Efficacy versus equity: What happens when states tinker with college admissions in a race-blind era? *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 38(2), 336–363. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/44984542>
- Buckley, J., Baker, D., & Rosinger, K. (2020). Should state universities downplay the SAT?. *Education Next*, 20(3).
- Chegg. (2017). ACT English: Sentence structure. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o-3bu54h4EU>.
- FYC at USF. (2013). CC-style & grammar | Verb tense shifts. YouTube. <https://youtu.be/mkAbVuuXVcQ?feature=shared>.
- K20 Center. (2021, September 21). K20 Center 2-minute timer. YouTube. <https://youtu.be/HcEEAnwOt2c?feature=shared>
- K20 Center. (2021, September 21). K20 Center 3-minute timer. YouTube. <https://youtu.be/iISP02KPau0?feature=shared>
- K20 Center. (2021, September 21). K20 Center 7-minute timer. YouTube. <https://youtu.be/gWwvDLxwV9c?feature=shared>
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Card matching. Strategies. <https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/1837>
- Kevin Spaans. (2021). Sentences, fragments, & run-ons. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GJZzAaexLd4>.
- Klasik, D. (2013).
The ACT of enrollment: The college enrollment effects of state-required college entrance exam testing. *Educational Researcher*, 42(3), 151–160. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23462378>
- McMann, P. K. (1994). The effects of teaching practice review items and test-taking strategies on the ACT mathematics scores of second-year algebra students. Wayne State University. <https://www.monroeccc.edu/sites/default/files/upward-bound/McMannP.-the-effects-of-teaching-practice-review-items-ACT-mathematics-second-year-algebra.pdf>
- Moore, R., & San Pedro, S. Z. (2021). Understanding the test preparation practices of underserved learners. ACT Research & Policy. Issue Brief. ACT, Inc. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED616526.pdf>
- Sult, E. P., & Piqosity. (2021, October 20). *ACT English Strategies*. Piqosity. <https://www.piqosity.com/act-english-strategies-tips/#:~:text=The%20first%20answer%20to%20many,least%20some%20of%20the%20answers>.