Power Up: English ACT Prep, Week 9

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Time Frame 35 minutes

Essential Question(s)

- How can I increase my ACT score?

Summary

In this English ACT prep activity, students review revision and conciseness using the ARMS acronym and practicing with a Quizizz. Students will then practice revision and pacing with an ACT-style passage. This is the ninth activity in a 10-week "Power Up" series for ACT prep.

Learning Goals

- Revise writing for conciseness, clarity, and meaning using the ARMS acronym.

Attachments

- A Perfect Night to Hunt—English ACT Prep, Week 9.docx
- A Perfect Night to Hunt—English ACT Prep, Week 9.pdf
- Activity Slides—English ACT Prep, Week 9.pdf
- Activity Slides—English ACT Prep, Week 9.pptx
- Skill Sets Check—English ACT Prep, Week 9 - Spanish.docx
- Skill Sets Check—English ACT Prep, Week 9 - Spanish.pdf
- Skill Sets Check—English ACT Prep, Week 9.docx
- Skill Sets Check—English ACT Prep, Week 9.pdf

Materials

- Activity Slides (attached)
- A Perfect Night to Hunt handout (attached, 1 per student)
- Electronic device with internet access (1 per student)
- Pencil/pen

10 minutes

Introduction

Teacher's Note: ACT Enhancements

The following resource has been updated to better align with the test changes that began in April 2025 for the online test and in September 2025 for the paper-pencil test. Some outside resources linked are based on the previous version of the ACT. Learn more about enhancements to the ACT in 2025.

Teacher's Note: Quizizz Set-up

Quizizz is a free online tool used for pre- and post-assessment over any content in an interactive way.

1. Select the link: http://k20.ou.edu/english-week9.
2. Click the "Start a live quiz" drop-down menu and select the "Classic" option.
3. Select either "Team" or "Classic" mode; then select "Continue" button. (Choose "Team" mode if you would like students to work in groups. Choose "Classic" mode for individual work.)
4. Direct students to join by going either to "joinmyquiz.com" and provide them with a code or you can click the "Show QR" button and have students scan the QR code. The game code and QR code will change with each new game. See hidden **slide 8** for a visual.
5. Once all the students have joined, click the "START" button.

At any point you can pause the game (see button at the top right) to resolve any misconceptions. To restart the quiz for the next class, select the link again and repeat steps 2-5.

Use the attached **Activity Slides** to facilitate the activity.

Transition through **slides 3-4** and discuss what students will learn for this week's activity by reviewing the essential question and learning objective.

Display **slide 5** and share that the Knowledge of Language portion of the English section asks students 1) to use effective language to maintain consistency in style and tone, while being concise, and 2) to focus on revision in writing, such as deleting wordiness and using the best choice of words without changing the meaning. Explain that Knowledge of Language comprises 15%-17% of the English section, so there may be 2-3 questions like these for each passage.

Move to **slide 6** and share the A.R.M.S. (*Add*, *Remove*, *Move*, *Substitute*) acronym. Ask if students have any questions.

Access the Quizizz assessment; see the note at the beginning for additional steps. Move to **slide 7** and direct students to go to joinmyquiz.com or scan the QR code displayed on your Quizizz screen. Once the participant list contains all of your students, click the "START" button. Students can go at their own pace and work individually. Share the "Leaderboard" on the screen so they can see how they compare with others. Afterwards, select the "Questions" tab to provide students feedback on the correct answers.

Teacher's Note: Explanations

Question 1 - The correct answer is “Smith’s research attempts to change the past.” Students should revise the progressive verb phrase “is attempting” to the verb “attempts” because the progressive voice is used to indicate action that has begun and not yet ended. The verb is closer to the noun without any unneeded fillers. Here, we used the “R” and “S” in ARMS by removing “is” and substituting a different form of the verb “attempting” to “attempts.”

Question 2 - The correct answer is “Finally, hard work can bring success.” This question tests wordiness so only adding a comma doesn’t help. The last choice may seem correct as there are fewer words; however, with this revision we lose the finality of the items being listed. Here we used the “R” and “A” in A.R.M.S. by removing half the sentence that was too wordy and adding a transition to help the reader still understand the context.

Question 3 - The correct answer is “At the end of the paragraph.” The underlined sentence beginning with the transitional conjunction “But” indicates a cause-and-effect relationship. The *cause* of Judith’s lack of money is her spending habits. The underlined sentence should go at the end because this is the most logical choice as the *effect* is usually located after the *cause*. Here we used the “M” in A.R.M.S. by moving a sentence closer to another with the same topic to aid in clarity.

10 minutes

Activity

Display **slide 9** and review the testing tip over “Revising for Clarity and Conciseness” in as much detail as needed.

Pass out the attached **A Perfect Night to Hunt** handout and warn students that they will have only nine minutes to read the passage and answer the questions. Remind them that this helps them practice pacing for the full-length English portion of the ACT. Instruct students to begin and then start the K-20 Center Timer on **slide 10**; have students work silently.

15 minutes

Wrap-up

When the timer goes off, tell students to put their pencils down and stop working even if they haven't finished answering all the questions. Transition through **slides 11-14** and begin reviewing the answers in as much detail as you find necessary.

Display **slide 15**, and introduce the Fist to Five strategy where students are asked to indicate how confident they feel about today's activity. Use the slide to go over what number of fingers held up means what kind of response then ask students the following: *How do you feel about answering ACT questions over revision and conciseness?* Make note of who still needs help with these concepts and consider coming back to this topic in the future.

Show and explain **slide 16** which reveals a sneak peek at what will happen next time and also provides students a "side quest" where they are encouraged to try to be as concise as possible without losing the meaning of an original sentence on a writing assignment or an assignment that includes writing.

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 fairness, 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).
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- K20 Center. (n.d.). Fist to five. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/68
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- 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