Power Up: English ACT Prep, Week 10

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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 the content from the past nine prep activities. First, students review skills learned from week nine. Then, students practice questions reflective of the topics still confusing to them using Magoosh. Finally, they end the class revisiting their Goal Setting handout from week 1. This is the final activity in a 10-week "Power Up" series for ACT prep.

Learning Goals

- Practice and reflect on grammar and revision skills to increase the number of questions answered correctly on the English portion of the ACT.

Attachments

- ACT Guided Practice—English ACT Prep, Week 10.docx
- ACT Guided Practice—English ACT Prep, Week 10.pdf
- Activity Slides—English ACT Prep, Week 10.pdf
- Activity Slides—English ACT Prep, Week 10.pptx
- Skill Sets Check—English ACT Prep, Week 10 - Spanish.docx
- Skill Sets Check—English ACT Prep, Week 10 - Spanish.pdf
- Skill Sets Check—English ACT Prep, Week 10.docx
- Skill Sets Check—English ACT Prep, Week 10.pdf

Materials

- Activity Slides (attached)
- Skill Sets Check handouts (from weeks 2, 3, 4, and 6)
- Goal Setting handout (from week 1)
- Electronic device with internet access (1 per student)
- Headphones/earbuds
- Sticky notes (1 per student)
- Pencil/pen
- Notebook paper

5 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: Preparation

During the Wrap-Up, use the Sticky Bars strategy to visually represent students' selected actions. Use the chart you had created during week 1, add a picture of the chart from week 1 to slide 17, or recreate it in a prepared space (i.e. the board, a poster paper, etc.). Have students move their previous note to their new action or use a different colored note for this week's action.

Use the attached **Activity Slides** to facilitate the activity. Use the Bell Ringer strategy to begin class. Pass out the attached **Skill Sets Check** handout to students as they walk into class. Display **slide 3** and have students determine which annotation symbol matches to each part of ARMS: *add*, *remove*, *move*, or *substitute*.

After a few minutes, transition to **slide 4** and review which symbol matches to each revision type. Explain that this is a quick review of Revision and Conciseness from "Power Up: English ACT Prep, Week 9."

Transition through **slides 5-6** and discuss what students will learn for this week's activity by reviewing the essential question and learning objective.

Display **slide 7** and remind the class what they have learned during the past nine weeks: (1) the components of the Conventions of Standard English: usage, punctuation, and sentence structure and format; (2) the components of the Production of Writing: topic development, organization, unity, and cohesion; and (3) Knowledge of Language: revision and conciseness. Remind students that the majority of the English portion of the ACT is over the Conventions of Standard English.

25 minutes

Activity

Teacher's Note: Device Usage

Here students are going to access a PDF version of a practice test from Magoosh: act.magoosh.com/act-practice-test. This is a practice test where students will need paper to record their answers or would need the last page printed for them, the answer sheet, to practice bubbling in their choices.

Since students will be using a device to access the practice test, please be aware that accessing the test from a phone will prompt students to download the PDF to their device. It will also be difficult to navigate the practice test on such a small screen, so a laptop or tablet would be recommended.

Display **slide 8** and have students retrieve all their Skill Sets Check handouts from each week. They should have five, including the one they received today.

Teacher's Note: Skill Sets Check Handouts

Students should already have the Skill Sets Check handouts from each week of the previous Power Up activities:

- "Power Up: English ACT Prep, Week 2" (Usage)
- "Power Up: English ACT Prep, Week 3" (Punctuation)
- "Power Up: English ACT Prep, Week 4" (Sentence Structure)
- "Power Up: English ACT Prep, Week 6" (Organization & Topic Development)
- "Power Up: English ACT Prep, Week 9" (Revision & Conciseness)

The Skill Sets Check handout for the content covered during week 9 is attached in the current activity (week 10), but is labeled as "Week 9" in the footer for easy reference.

Introduce students to the Muddiest Point strategy and transition to **slide 9**. Give students a few minutes to review what they have learned. Explain that as students review the handouts, they need to also identify their Muddiest Point — the area that is still confusing. As students are reviewing their Skill Sets Check handouts, give each student a copy of the attached **ACT Guided Practice** handout and ask students to write down their Muddiest Point at the top of the handout in the space provided. Ask for volunteers to share out as time allows.

Direct students' attention to the Pick a Passage portion of their ACT Guided Practice handout and show **slide 10**. Explain to students that they should skim through the tables on their handout, where it lists the different types of questions each passage contains, and then choose the passage that contains questions related to their Muddiest Point they identified earlier. Have students put a star or marking next to the corresponding passage number. For example, if they said their Muddiest Point was comma usage then they would put a star next to Passage II. Or if a student said that topic development was their Muddiest point, then they would put a mark next to Passage V. They will use this information for their practice today.

Teacher's Note: ACT Guided Practice handout

If there were no questions reflective of a particular category in certain passages then said category has intentionally been left off the table.

Display **slide 11** and direct students to go to: act.magoosh.com/act-practice-test or scan the QR code on the slide. As students are accessing the practice test, give each student a piece of notebook paper.

Show **slide 12** and explain that they will not be working through a full practice test, but rather focusing on their Muddiest Point today. Direct students to navigate to the page that has the passage number that they marked on their handout.

Display **slide 13** and explain that they will need to number their paper according to the question number their chosen passage starts with and write down their answers for their chosen passage. Give students approximately 10 minutes to read their passage and answer the corresponding questions. While students are working, distribute headphones or earbuds.

Teacher's Note: Corresponding Questions

Depending on time, students can answer the questions that correspond to their Muddiest Point for their selected passage or students can answer all 15 questions corresponding to that passage.

If you have additional time, consider using the K20 Center Timer to have students practice pacing and have them answer all 15 questions that correspond to their selected passage.

Afterwards, show **slide 14** and have students scroll down to page 54 of the test and select the "VIEW EXPLANATIONS" button, which will take them to the "ACT Practice Test PDF Explanations" page where they can click on specific questions to check their work. Remind students to check their work for questions they were unsure of first before going through all the answers.

Use **slides 15-16** to help students navigate the ACT Practice Test PDF Explanations page. Here students check their work and read or watch an explanation. They can do this as many times as needed but explain that they should first focus on the topics they identified as their Muddiest Points.

Give students 5-10 minutes to check their work. Encourage students to keep this handout in a safe place so that they can keep revisiting the Magoosh site for extra ACT support outside of class.

Teacher's Note: Magoosh Limitations

Unfortunately, not every question has a video and/or written explanation, but the significant majority do. If students encounter a question that does not have an explanation, encourage them to find another question that exemplifies their Muddiest Point.

The missing answers for the following questions are below:

Question 15: Answer Choice C is the best choice. In this position, it can expand and clarify the previous sentence. If we put it in position [D], it wouldn't make any sense. It would suggest that maybe "such an occurrence" refers to forgiveness. Choice C is much clearer and fits with the logical flow of the sentence.

Question 30: In the passage, the writer only explores the image of the river as memories. Because of this, Choice C is correct.

Question 45: Choice C is the best choice because Choices A, B, and D have elements in the answer that are wrong. Choice A talks about more than just bottler problems. Choice B only focuses on 1977 to the present and not the full 150 years. Choice D talks about various marketing strategies that were used over the years. Because of these errors, Choice C is correct.

Question 60: Choice C is correct because the question refers to a historical essay about the early races, and while this essay focuses on the one race between the two women, it doesn't refer to any other early races.

Question 75: Choice A is correct because the passage does discuss the similarities and differences between American and Japanese comics.

5 minutes

Wrap-Up

Display **slide 17** and ask students to get out their Goal Setting handout from week 1. Remind them that during "Power Up: English ACT Prep, Week 5," they identified a new action they would practice which would help them achieve their desired test score. Give students time to choose a new (third) action they want to practice. Pass out sticky notes to each student. Using the Sticky Bars strategy, have students write their name on their sticky note and place it above the new action they have selected or have students move their prior sticky note.

Once everyone has placed their sticky note on the bar graph, have students discuss with a partner what they have done to support their first and second actions and what third action they have chosen to work on from now until their ACT test day.

Show and explain **slide 18**, which congratulates students on "Powering Up" and finishing the 10-week English ACT Prep challenge! Encourage students to complete their last "side quest" which asks them to complete a full practice test on one of the listed sites for free.

Research Rationale

Standardized testing in high schools has long been used 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). In addition to admissions, it is important to keep in mind that standardized test scores can also provide students with scholarship opportunities they would not otherwise have (Klasik, 2013). Although the topic of standardized testing continues to be debated, effective test preparation 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. 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 the time to understand this test, including the timing, question types, rigor, and strategies for approaching specific questions, can help 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).
- K20 Center. (2021, September 21). K20 Center 9-minute timer. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZvN435zg2zE
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