

ACT CHALLENGE (TEACHER GUIDE)

The following table of answers and explanations correlate to the "Shooting an Elephant" passage. As part of ACT best practices, try to make time to review not only the correct answers but explaining why the other choices were incorrect.

Question	Answer	Explanation
1	A	B and D incorrectly create sentence fragments. C introduces a semicolon but still leaves a fragment after it. A is correct because the commas properly separate modifying phrases without splicing two independent clauses.
2	B	A incorrectly shifts from third person "one" to second person "your," creating inconsistent pronoun usage. C creates pronoun-antecedent disagreement between singular "one" and plural "their." D shifts to first person plural, which is inconsistent with the established third person perspective. B is correct because it maintains consistent third person pronoun usage with "one's" properly matching the antecedent "one."
3	F	G incorrectly mixes "began" + gerunds with past tense verbs "beat" and "stuffed," creating inconsistent structure. H uses an infinitive structure that would require changing "began" to maintain proper parallelism. J shifts to simple past tense throughout, changing the meaning and losing the progressive aspect. F is correct because it maintains parallel gerund structure with "tearing...beating...stuffing."
4	B	A incorrectly uses past perfect "had demanded" which suggests an action completed before another past action, but no such sequence exists here. C incorrectly uses present perfect "have demanded" which suggests ongoing relevance to present time, and D uses conditional "would demand" which doesn't fit the context of what actually happened. B is correct because the simple past tense "demanded" is appropriate for describing what they wanted at that time.
5	G	F incorrectly uses a colon which creates run-on sentence structure, H improperly uses a semicolon for connecting a main clause with a descriptive phrase, and J creates a sentence fragment with "Its massive body was relaxed, its trunk-guided meal undisturbed." G is correct because the comma properly connects the descriptive phrase and maintains sentence flow.

Question	Answer	Explanation
6	B	A incorrectly uses "more heavy" with the adjective form when the adverb "heavily" is needed to modify the verb "weighed." C uses "heavier" which is a comparative adjective when an adverb is needed to modify the verb, and D uses "most heavily" which is a superlative form but the context requires comparative for comparing two things. B is correct because "more heavily" is the proper comparative adverb form modifying the verb "weighed."
7	B	This choice best maintains the essay's tone. The writer has consistently used dashes throughout the passage to set off descriptive interruptions. The dashes preserve the reflective, dramatic tone by giving emphasis to the image of walking away. The commas do not fit the passage's style, so choice A is incorrect. While grammatically acceptable, commas make the phrase feel less dramatic and would weaken the essay's reflective tone. C is incorrect because the semicolon is incorrect here because what follows is not an independent clause. This choice would break the grammar as well as the tone. D is incorrect as this version starts with a dash but ends with a comma, creating an imbalance. The essay consistently uses matching dashes to enclose such interruptions, so this option does not maintain the established style.
8	F	G incorrectly uses "appearances sake" which lacks the apostrophe for possession. H treats "appearances" as plural with "appearances' sake," but the idiom uses singular "appearance," and J uses "appearance sake" which lacks the possessive apostrophe entirely. F is correct because "appearance's sake" shows the proper possessive form of the singular noun.
9	C	The correct answer is C because it emphasizes the crowd's expectations and the narrator's fear of their view of him showing a "sign of weakness." The crowd's invited derision and imagined criticism strengthens the idea that their judgement forced his actions. A . This does not fit well because Paragraph 1 focuses on the narrator's hesitation and inner conflict, not yet on the crowd's direct judgment of him. B . This point comes too early. Paragraph 3 is about the narrator's realization of imperialism's larger effects, not about the crowd's specific accusations. D . This placement would be illogical. By Paragraph 6, the elephant has already been shot, and the narrator is reflecting privately, away from the crowd. Adding the crowd's judgment here would break the flow of reflection.

Question	Answer	Explanation
10	D	<p>The essay focuses almost entirely on the narrator’s internal conflict—the struggle between his conscience and the expectations of the crowd. Instead of highlighting benefits of imperialism, the essay shows how it forced him into an act of betrayal against his own judgment. This focus makes it clear that the purpose of the essay is not to praise imperialism but to reveal its moral and psychological costs. A is inaccurate because while the narrator appears to “strengthen authority” by shooting the elephant, the essay makes clear that this was an <i>illusion of power</i>. The narrator himself says he acted only because the crowd demanded it, not because imperialism truly empowered him. B is inaccurate. The essay never portrays imperialism as creating “order or stability.” On the contrary, it emphasizes chaos, pressure from the crowd, and the narrator’s sense that imperialism destroys both the oppressor and the oppressed. C is partly true—the essay <i>does</i> highlight imperialism’s destructive effects. However, this answer is incomplete. The passage does more than critique imperialism generally; it narrows in on the narrator’s <i>personal internal conflict</i>. Since the question specifies the essay’s primary focus, D captures the nuance more precisely than C.</p>

Source: Questions and explanations were adapted from chatgpt.