ACT CONVENTIONS OF STANDARD ENGLISH PRACTICE TEST (SAMPLE)

STUDY GUIDE



SAMPLE STUDY GUIDE WITH LIMITED QUESTIONS

VISIT US ONLINE FOR THE FULL VERSION STUDY GUIDE

https://actconventionsofstandardeng.examzify.com

Copyright © 2026 by Examzify - A Kaluba Technologies Inc. product.

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

No part of this book may be reproduced or transferred in any form or by any means, graphic, electronic, or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, web distribution, taping, or by any information storage retrieval system, without the written permission of the author.

Notice: Examzify makes every reasonable effort to obtain accurate, complete, and timely information about this product from reliable sources.

SAMPLE

Table of Contents

Copyright 1

Table of Contents 2

Introduction 3

How to Use This Guide 4

Questions 5

Answers 8

Explanations 10

Next Steps 15

SAMPLE

Introduction

Preparing for a certification exam can feel overwhelming, but with the right tools, it becomes an opportunity to build confidence, sharpen your skills, and move one step closer to your goals. At Examzify, we believe that effective exam preparation isn't just about memorization, it's about understanding the material, identifying knowledge gaps, and building the test-taking strategies that lead to success.

This guide was designed to help you do exactly that.

Whether you're preparing for a licensing exam, professional certification, or entry-level qualification, this book offers structured practice to reinforce key concepts. You'll find a wide range of multiple-choice questions, each followed by clear explanations to help you understand not just the right answer, but why it's correct.

The content in this guide is based on real-world exam objectives and aligned with the types of questions and topics commonly found on official tests. It's ideal for learners who want to:

- Practice answering questions under realistic conditions,
- Improve accuracy and speed,
- Review explanations to strengthen weak areas, and
- Approach the exam with greater confidence.

We recommend using this book not as a stand-alone study tool, but alongside other resources like flashcards, textbooks, or hands-on training. For best results, we recommend working through each question, reflecting on the explanation provided, and revisiting the topics that challenge you most.

Remember: successful test preparation isn't about getting every question right the first time, it's about learning from your mistakes and improving over time. Stay focused, trust the process, and know that every page you turn brings you closer to success.

Let's begin.

SAMPLE

How to Use This Guide

This guide is designed to help you study more effectively and approach your exam with confidence. Whether you're reviewing for the first time or doing a final refresh, here's how to get the most out of your Examzify study guide:

1. Start with a Diagnostic Review

Skim through the questions to get a sense of what you know and what you need to focus on. Your goal is to identify knowledge gaps early.

2. Study in Short, Focused Sessions

Break your study time into manageable blocks (e.g. 30 – 45 minutes). Review a handful of questions, reflect on the explanations.

3. Learn from the Explanations

After answering a question, always read the explanation, even if you got it right. It reinforces key points, corrects misunderstandings, and teaches subtle distinctions between similar answers.

4. Track Your Progress

Use bookmarks or notes (if reading digitally) to mark difficult questions. Revisit these regularly and track improvements over time.

5. Simulate the Real Exam

Once you're comfortable, try taking a full set of questions without pausing. Set a timer and simulate test-day conditions to build confidence and time management skills.

6. Repeat and Review

Don't just study once, repetition builds retention. Re-attempt questions after a few days and revisit explanations to reinforce learning. Pair this guide with other Examzify tools like flashcards, and digital practice tests to strengthen your preparation across formats.

There's no single right way to study, but consistent, thoughtful effort always wins. Use this guide flexibly, adapt the tips above to fit your pace and learning style. You've got this!

SAMPLE

Questions

SAMPLE

1. Which sentence correctly shows that no comma should appear between a subject and its verb?

A. The team wins the game.

B. The team, wins the game.

C. The team wins the game quickly.

D. The team wins the game yesterday.

2. Which sentence uses complement correctly to mean something that completes another?

A. The scarf is a perfect compliment to the coat.

B. The scarf is a perfect complement to the coat.

C. The scarf will compliment the coat.

D. The coat complements the scarf.

3. Choose the sentence that shows proper pronoun-antecedent agreement.

A. Every student must hand in their assignments on time.

B. Every student must hand in his or her assignment on time.

C. Every student must hand in his assignment on time.

D. Every student must hand in their assignment on time.

4. The results differ ____ the expectations.

A. in contrast to

B. contrast with

C. compensate for

D. puzzled/confused/perplexed by

5. Which sentence correctly uses commas to set off a nonrestrictive clause?

A. The scientist, who won the award, spoke tonight.

B. The scientist who won the award spoke tonight.

C. The scientist, who won the award spoke tonight.

D. The scientist who won, the award spoke tonight.

SAMPLE

6. Which sentence uses commas correctly in a list?

A. I bought apples bananas cherries.

B. I bought apples, bananas, and cherries.

C. I bought apples, bananas and cherries.

D. I bought apples bananas, and cherries.

7. Which sentence correctly uses an emphatic pronoun without a preceding comma?

A. The president himself attended the dinner party.

B. The president, himself attended the dinner party.

C. The president himself, attended the dinner party.

D. The president attended the dinner party, himself.

8. Which sentence contains a misplaced modifier?

A. The student nearly finished his homework on time.

B. On time, the student nearly finished his homework.

C. The student finished his homework on time.

D. The student nearly finished on time his homework.

9. Identify the corrected version of the run-on sentence.

A. Janet is an actress she often appears in major television network shows.

B. Janet is an actress, who often appears in major television network shows.

C. Janet is an actress who often appears in major television network shows.

D. Janet is an actress; she often appears in major television network shows.

10. Which sentence uses simple past tense?

A. The guests left yesterday.

B. The guests leave yesterday.

C. The guests had left yesterday.

D. The guests are leaving yesterday.

SAMPLE

Answers

SAMPLE

1. A
2. B
3. B
4. A
5. A
6. B
7. A
8. B
9. C
10. A

SAMPLE

Explanations

SAMPLE

1. Which sentence correctly shows that no comma should appear between a subject and its verb?

A. The team wins the game.

B. The team, wins the game.

C. The team wins the game quickly.

D. The team wins the game yesterday.

The important idea is that a subject and its verb should stay connected with no comma separating them. In the simplest sentence, the subject The team sits directly next to the verb wins, with nothing interrupting them. That clean connection shows the rule most clearly. Having a comma directly after the subject—The team, wins the game.—breaks that connection and creates an unnecessary pause, which is why that version is not correct. The other two sentences also avoid placing a comma between the subject and the verb, so they don't violate this particular rule. The key point is the direct pairing of subject and verb without a comma in between, and the first sentence demonstrates that pairing most clearly.

2. Which sentence uses complement correctly to mean something that completes another?

A. The scarf is a perfect compliment to the coat.

B. The scarf is a perfect complement to the coat.

C. The scarf will compliment the coat.

D. The coat complements the scarf.

This item tests the noun form of complement, meaning something that completes or goes well with something else, and it contrasts it with the similar-sounding compliment. The scarf being a perfect complement to the coat fits this sense exactly: the scarf is something that completes or nicely enhances the coat, forming a complete look. The other sentences shift meaning. Using compliment here would be about praise, not something that completes. The sentence with will compliment uses compliment as a verb meaning to praise or harmonize, not the noun sense of a thing that completes. The sentence where the coat complements the scarf uses the verb form of complement, which expresses completing in a verb sense but not the noun sense the prompt targets. Thus, the noun form that denotes a completing addition is the best choice.

3. Choose the sentence that shows proper pronoun-antecedent agreement.

A. Every student must hand in their assignments on time.

B. Every student must hand in his or her assignment on time.

C. Every student must hand in his assignment on time.

D. Every student must hand in their assignment on time.

Pronoun-antecedent agreement hinges on matching the pronoun to the number of its antecedent. Here, the subject "Every student" is singular, so the pronoun that refers back to it must be singular as well. "His or her" is explicitly singular and inclusive, so it correctly agrees with the singular, gender-neutral antecedent. Using "their" would treat the antecedent as plural, which breaks formal agreement. Using only "his" would be gender-specific and not appropriate for all students. So the sentence with "his or her" preserves proper agreement and inclusivity. (In casual writing, singular they is commonly used, but this item adheres to the traditional form.)

SAMPLE

4. The results differ ____ the expectations.

A. in contrast to

B. contrast with

C. compensate for

D. puzzled/confused/perplexed by

The key idea is signaling a comparison that shows a difference between what happened and what was expected. "In contrast to" is the natural choice because it means "unlike" or "opposite to," highlighting that the results stand in opposition to the expectations. It frames the sentence as a clear difference when the two ideas are weighed against each other. The other options don't fit the intended sense. "Contrast with" can be used to compare two things, but with the verb differ, it doesn't blend as smoothly here. "Compensate for" means to make up for a shortfall, which changes the meaning entirely. "Puzzled by" would describe a reaction, not a relationship between the results and the expectations, making the sentence ungrammatical.

5. Which sentence correctly uses commas to set off a nonrestrictive clause?

A. The scientist, who won the award, spoke tonight.

B. The scientist who won the award spoke tonight.

C. The scientist, who won the award spoke tonight.

D. The scientist who won, the award spoke tonight.

Setting off a nonrestrictive clause with commas is the key idea here. A nonrestrictive clause adds extra information about a noun that's already identified and can be removed without changing which noun you're talking about. It's like a aside that doesn't limit the meaning. In the correct sentence, the clause who won the award is enclosed by commas: The scientist, who won the award, spoke tonight. You can take out the middle bit and still have a complete, clear sentence: The scientist spoke tonight. The commas signal that this extra information is optional and not needed to identify which scientist is being discussed. The other options don't follow this rule. Without commas, The scientist who won the award spoke tonight uses a restrictive clause, narrowing which scientist is meant to imply that only the scientist who won the award spoke tonight. That's not the intended nonrestrictive usage. If there's a comma only before the clause but not after, as in The scientist, who won the award spoke tonight, the sentence isn't properly punctuated to enclose the nonrestrictive clause. And The scientist who won, the award spoke tonight breaks the sentence structure entirely, making it incorrect and nonsensical.

6. Which sentence uses commas correctly in a list?

A. I bought apples bananas cherries.

B. I bought apples, bananas, and cherries.

C. I bought apples, bananas and cherries.

D. I bought apples bananas, and cherries.

Separating items in a list with punctuation keeps the meaning clear, especially when there are three or more items. The sentence that lists three distinct items uses a comma after each item, including the final one before the conjunction: apples, bananas, and cherries. This serial (or Oxford) comma before "and" helps prevent ambiguity and signals clearly that there are three separate things. The other sentences fail because they don't consistently separate the items. One has no commas at all, so it's hard to tell where each item ends. Another places a comma after the first item but not after the second, which breaks the pattern of listing items. The last one puts the comma before the and but misses the comma that should come after the first item, making the list feel off.

SAMPLE

7. Which sentence correctly uses an emphatic pronoun without a preceding comma?

A. The president himself attended the dinner party.

B. The president, himself attended the dinner party.

C. The president himself, attended the dinner party.

D. The president attended the dinner party, himself.

The emphasis is placed correctly when the emphatic pronoun directly follows the noun it emphasizes, with no comma interrupting them. In the sentence The president himself attended the dinner party, himself serves to intensify the subject "the president" without breaking the flow with a pause, so the meaning stays clear and the syntax stays smooth. Emphatic pronouns should not be set off by a comma between the noun and the verb, because that would treat the pronoun as a separate, parenthetical element rather than an integrated intensifier. The other options insert a comma in positions that disrupt this tight connection—between the noun and the verb, after the pronoun, or before the pronoun at the end—making them awkward or incorrect. Therefore, the sentence that uses the emphatic pronoun without a preceding comma is the one that places him self immediately after the noun with no interruption.

8. Which sentence contains a misplaced modifier?

A. The student nearly finished his homework on time.

B. On time, the student nearly finished his homework.

C. The student finished his homework on time.

D. The student nearly finished on time his homework.

A modifier should attach directly to the word or action it's meant to describe. When a time phrase like "on time" is placed at the beginning of a sentence, it can seem to describe the subject rather than the verb, which creates ambiguity about what exactly is on time. In the sentence "On time, the student nearly finished his homework," the phrase is right up against the subject, so readers tend to think the student is on time, not that the finishing happened on time. That's why this placement is considered misplaced. The other sentences place the time phrase so it clearly describes the act of finishing: "The student nearly finished his homework on time" means he almost finished at the deadline, and "The student finished his homework on time" makes it explicit when the finishing occurred. The last option is awkward in phrasing, which also disrupts clarity, but the clearest example of a misplaced modifier among them is the fronted time phrase that attaches to the wrong part of the sentence.

9. Identify the corrected version of the run-on sentence.

A. Janet is an actress she often appears in major television network shows.

B. Janet is an actress, who often appears in major television network shows.

C. Janet is an actress who often appears in major television network shows.

D. Janet is an actress; she often appears in major television network shows.

The main idea being tested is how to fix a run-on by linking related ideas with appropriate punctuation and structure, so the sentence remains a single, smooth thought. Using a restrictive relative clause right after the noun keeps the description tightly connected to Janet and clarifies which actress is being talked about. The corrected sentence uses who to introduce essential information about Janet, and it flows as one complete statement: Janet is an actress who often appears in major television network shows. This version avoids a run-on by not letting two independent clauses stand apart without a connector. It also keeps the meaning precise: Janet is an actress who often appears in such shows, without implying there are many actresses of the same name or introducing extra, nonessential details. Other forms would either create a run-on (no punctuation between the two parts), or add a comma to set off a nonessential clause that changes the meaning by implying Janet is just one example among actresses. A semicolon would fix the run-on as well but splits the sentence into two independent thoughts rather than tying the description directly to Janet.

SAMPLE

10. Which sentence uses simple past tense?

A. The guests left yesterday.

B. The guests leave yesterday.

C. The guests had left yesterday.

D. The guests are leaving yesterday.

Simple past tense is used for actions that happened and were completed at a specific time in the past. In this sentence, the verb left is the simple past form of leave (and it's irregular). The time word yesterday clearly places the action in the past, so the sentence communicates a completed action that occurred yesterday. The other sentences don't fit this same pattern. The form leave is present tense, which doesn't align with yesterday. The form had left uses the past perfect, which signals an action completed before another past moment, so it's more complex than simple past. The form are leaving uses present progressive, which describes an ongoing action in the present, not something tied to yesterday.

SAMPLE

Next Steps

Congratulations on reaching the final section of this guide. You've taken a meaningful step toward passing your certification exam and advancing your career.

As you continue preparing, remember that consistent practice, review, and self-reflection are key to success. Make time to revisit difficult topics, simulate exam conditions, and track your progress along the way.

If you need help, have suggestions, or want to share feedback, we'd love to hear from you. Reach out to our team at hello@examzify.com.

Or visit your dedicated course page for more study tools and resources:

https://actconventionsofstandardeng.examzify.com

We wish you the very best on your exam journey. You've got this!

SAMPLE