

ACT/SAT

– Part One–

*Strategy:

In order to be successful on the ACT & SAT exams, you absolutely must put together a game plan. This game plan includes a few important focus points:

- **Time Management Plan**
- **Reading Strategy (Passages/Questions/Answers)**
- **Problem Solving Techniques**

Solid strategies for the above three items will help to solidify your success on the date of your test. These strategies are not always easy to formulate or to stick with. There is no “One Size Fits All” way of taking the ACT or the SAT. What works for Student A may not work for Student B. There are, however, different approaches that a student can attempt when putting together their game plan. A student that is willing to try out a few different formulas in an attempt to make their own pathway to success is a student that will succeed.

The ACT and SAT each have four different portions to their structure (five when including the written portion). Each is unique and requires its own strategy. We shall take each test into account separately in the future, but for now, let’s focus on the “numbers” involved in each of the tests.

English Test-ACT

| | |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Number Of Questions | 75 Multiple Choice |
| Number Of Passages | 5 Different Focuses |
| Total Time Allotted | 45 Minutes |

***You do the numbers. Based on the information above, what time management plan do you think makes the most sense? The passages are not in play here. Just look at the number of questions and the total minutes. What are they both divisible by? Figure that out, and you have your CHECKPOINTS!!!!**

English Test-SAT

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|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Number Of Questions | 44 Multiple Choice |
| Number Of Passages | 4 Different Focuses |
| Total Time Allotted | 35 Minutes |

***You do the numbers. Based on the information above, what time management plan do you think makes the most sense? The passages ARE in play here. Just look at the number of passages and the total minutes. What are they both divisible by? Figure that out, and you have your CHECKPOINTS!!!!**

Reading - ACT

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|---------------------|---------------------|
| Number Of Questions | 40 Multiple Choice |
| Number Of Passages | 4 Different Focuses |
| Total Time Allotted | 35 Minutes |

***You do the numbers. Based on the information above, what time management plan do you think makes the most sense? On this test, the number of questions is not as important as the number of passages and the minutes you are working with. How much time should be spent per passage?**

Reading - SAT

| | |
|---------------------|---------------------|
| Number Of Questions | 52 Multiple Choice |
| Number Of Passages | 5 Different Focuses |
| Total Time Allotted | 65 Minutes |

***You do the numbers. Based on the information above, what time management plan do you think makes the most sense? On this test, the number of questions is not as important as the number of passages and the minutes you are working with. How much time should be spent per passage?**

Written Portion

For the ACT's written Portion, **40 Minutes** are given to read a prompt and then create a well-written response. The task that is prompted varies, and we shall look at the different possibilities later on.

For the SAT's written Portion, **50 Minutes** are given to read a prompt and then create a well-written response. The task that is prompted is always a rhetorical analysis of someone's written work.

Reading Strategies

Success on the Reading Portion of the ACT and SAT is very much based on **habits**. Do you know how to read? Yes. Do you know how to fill in bubbles on a Scan-Tron? Yes. Every time that you read a text, do you come away from it with a keen idea of what the main idea, author's purpose, tone, mood and theme are? Probably not. This habit is something that I call....**READING WITH A PURPOSE**. Each time that you peruse a passage in the reading section, you need to be sensitive to what each of the afore mentioned are within that passage. How does one do this? Habits!! Make the hunt for these literary elements your habit. Don't worry about the specifics. Names, colors, places, stats, numbers, etc....you can revisit the passage to find these if needed. But items such as knowing the **mood** of a passage are harder to seek out if you don't sense them while reading the entire written work. Also, the knowledge of the mood of a piece literature can help you in selecting seemingly unrelated questions!

A second habit that must become part of how you test is that you must **BROADEN YOUR SCOPE**. Each question and answer will lead to a specific portion of the test...find that section...and then broaden your focus!!!! If the test asks about a word on line 37....read lines 34-40!!! The answer will be clearer much sooner. Don't wait to "need" to do that!! **Make that your habit!!!**

The following is an example of a narrative passage that you will encounter while taking the **ACT** exam. Take ten minutes (which is over a minute longer than you are allotted) to read this excerpt and attempt to answer the ten questions. *This will be handed out in class.*

Monique was enjoying this afternoon more than she had anticipated. Often, the tryouts for the spring musical tested the limits of her patience and nerves, with one hopeful girl after the next taking turns strutting onto the tarnished wooden stage,
5 delivering a competent but uninspired version of some Rodgers & Hammerstein number, and then being politely excused by Mrs. Dominguez as the next name on the list was called.

However, this was to be Monique's third straight year in the musical, and the confidence that her seniority afforded her
10 around the more nervous newcomers allowed her to bask in the radiance of her own poise.

She had already sung her audition song an hour ago, commencing the day's ceremonies. This year, Monique used "God Bless the Child," a choice she found to be quite sophisticated
15 since Billie Holiday's version of it was familiar mostly to adults, and even then, mostly to adults of the previous generation. More importantly, it required a reserved performance, which Monique felt showcased her maturity, especially because most of the other auditioners chose songs that would show their enthusiasm, even
20 if it meant their technical mastery would not be on full display.

Normally, the first audition slot was dreaded by most. Mrs. Dominguez would ask if anyone wanted to volunteer to “get it over with,” but no one would make a sound. Then, she would call the first name off her list and the room would drop into an
25 uncomfortably solemn silence as the first student walked nervously up to the stage. Monique often imagined during those moments that she was witness to a death-row inmate taking his inexorable march toward a quick curtain.

But not this year. Monique had decided to make a show
30 of her own self-confidence by volunteering to go first. Such a defiantly fearless act, she had figured, would probably instill even more fear into her competition because they would realize that Monique had something they clearly lacked. Mrs. Dominguez had seemed neither surprised nor charmed by Monique’s
35 decision to go first. Although she was annoyed by Monique’s escalating arrogance, she also acknowledged that Monique was one of the more talented actors and was probably correct in assuming herself a shoo-in.

At this late stage of the afternoon, Monique felt like a monarch, sitting in the back of the auditorium with her royal court of friends and admirers. They took care to sit far enough away from Mrs. Dominguez that they would not be caught in the act of belittling the other students’ auditions.

To Monique, the endless parade of aspirants who sang their
45 hearts out for three minutes each were like jesters performing for her amusement. As Mrs. Dominguez read Esperanza Solito’s name off her list, Monique and her entourage prepared themselves for a special treat.

Esperanza was one of the most awkward students at Thorn-
50 ton High. Her caramel-colored face was usually hidden behind thick tortoise shell glasses. Her wavy black hair exploded off her scalp like a snapshot of an atom bomb. She wore clothing that looked like it had spent years in a musty attic. Understanding her debased position on the social totem pole, Esperanza scurried through the high school’s hallways with her eyes looking
55 narrowly at the back of the person walking in front of her, trying to disappear within the herd lest she be recognized by any malicious onlookers as easy prey.

Esperanza had been sitting alone in the front row, paying little
60 attention to the other auditions, working on geometry homework
until her name was called. Shuffling her feet toward the center
of the stage, Esperanza did not look up until she was there, and
even then looked only at Mrs. Dominguez.

“Whenever you’re ready,” Mrs. Dominguez said politely,
65 sensing the potential for this audition to devolve into a painful
target of ridicule.

As Esperanza began the opening notes to “The Star Span-
gled Banner,” Monique and her friends looked at each other in
total disbelief. Clearly, they thought, Esperanza had no theater
70 pedigree, or she would never stoop to singing such a trite, for-
mulaic song. Standing perfectly still, Esperanza moved methodi-
cally through the tune with little flair or emotion. However, the
expectant smiles of mockery were quickly vanishing from the
faces of all who listened.

75 Anticipating a tentative, mousy voice that would befit such
a quirky presence as Esperanza’s, the audience instead heard an
unusually smooth, rich tone with full command of the multiple
registers that the national anthem’s melody requires. At the cli-
matic “rocket’s red glare,” Esperanza’s voice filled the room with
80 a calm resonance that forced one’s heart to lift within one’s chest
as though some reluctant patriotism was determined to find its
way out. The final phrase of the song, so often soaked in vibrato
by melodramatic singers, was gently performed, with a touch
that felt like a mother tucking in her baby to sleep.

85 Although Monique was loath to admit it and Esperanza
was reluctant to want it, Esperanza had just set herself apart
from the herd.

It can reasonably be inferred from the passage that Monique believed the song she chose for her audition:

- A. would be the most inspiring Rodgers & Hammerstein number she could choose.
- B. was the most sophisticated song in Billie Holiday's repertoire.
- C. would likely be more recognizable to Monique's parents than to her friends.
- D. would allow Monique to more effectively showcase her enthusiasm.

2. The passage initially portrays Monique and her friends as:

- F. concerned and nervous.
- G. confused and surprised.

- H. friendly and inclusive.
 - J. aloof and disparaging.
3. According to the narrator, what did Esperanza do prior to singing "The Star Spangled Banner"?
- A. Looked only at Mrs. Dominguez
 - B. Walked confidently up to the stage
 - C. Watched the other auditions carefully
 - D. Finished her geometry homework
4. The main purpose of the statement in line 29 is to:
- F. inform the reader that students' fears of going first were largely a thing of the past.
 - G. present reasons for why this year's audition was the strangest yet.
 - H. suggest that Monique's imagination no longer involved the same imagery.
 - J. offer a contrast created by Monique's choice of audition slot.
5. It can be reasonably inferred from the passage that Esperanza Solito:
- A. was teased more than anyone else at her school.
 - B. was not sitting near Monique and her friends during the auditions.
 - C. had her audition immediately after Monique's audition.
 - D. had previously explained her stage fright to Mrs. Dominguez.
6. According to the passage, Monique figured that volunteering to perform "God Bless the Child" as the first audition of the day would:
- F. bolster her confidence in her performance.
 - G. make the other auditioners feel they could not compete with her.
 - H. guarantee her a part in the play.
 - J. impress and charm Mrs. Dominguez.
7. According to the passage, when Esperanza Solito got to the climax of "The Star Spangled Banner," she:
- A. raised her voice to emphasize the lines.
 - B. demonstrated her patriotism.
 - C. had a sudden bout of nerves.
 - D. could be heard throughout the auditorium.
8. The passage states that Mrs. Dominguez suspected Esperanza's audition could be:
- F. vulnerable to ridicule.
 - G. one of the most awkward.
 - H. a special treat.
 - J. neither surprising nor charming.
9. Which of the following details is used in the passage to describe how Monique and her friends responded to hearing Esperanza's audition?

- A. Their decision to sit comfortably behind Mrs. Dominguez
 - B. Their preconceived notions about Esperanza's voice
 - C. Their fading facial expressions of mockery
 - D. Their fondness for patriotic songs
10. The passage most strongly suggests that Esperanza's choice of audition material was:
- F. good for a mousy voice.
 - G. often partly sung with vibrato.
 - H. an impressive, original choice.
 - J. something Monique's friends had anticipated.

Example of “Paired Find the Evidence” questions from the SAT

35 It doesn't have to be like this. Done right, public transport can be faster, more comfortable, and cheaper than the private automobile. In Shanghai, German-made magnetic levitation trains skim over elevated tracks at 266 miles an hour, whisking people
40 to the airport at a third of the speed of sound. In provincial French towns, electric-powered streetcars run silently on rubber tires, sliding through narrow streets along a single guide rail set into cobblestones. From Spain to Sweden, Wi-Fi equipped high-speed
45 trains seamlessly connect with highly ramified metro

networks, allowing commuters to work on laptops as they prepare for same-day meetings in once distant capital cities. In Latin America, China, and India, working people board fast-loading buses that move
50 like subway trains along dedicated busways, leaving the sedans and SUVs of the rich mired in dawn-to-dusk traffic jams. And some cities have transformed their streets into cycle-path freeways, making giant strides in public health and safety and
55 the sheer livability of their neighborhoods—in the process turning the workaday bicycle into a viable form of mass transit.

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The central idea of the fourth paragraph (lines 35-57) is that

- A) European countries excel at public transportation.
- B) some public transportation systems are superior to travel by private automobile.
- C) Americans should mimic foreign public transportation systems when possible.
- D) much international public transportation is engineered for passengers to work while on board.

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Which choice provides the best evidence for the answer to the previous question?

- A) Line 35 ("It . . . this")
- B) Lines 35-37 ("Done . . . automobile")
- C) Lines 37-40 ("In . . . sound")
- D) Lines 44-48 ("From . . . cities")

Homework:

In the **Red ACT** and the **Blue SAT** Prep Books, please do the first Reading Tests. Time yourself and do this in a simulated test environment. If you run out of time, mark your paper where you ran out...and then complete the remainder of the test. Please check your answers and mark those that you missed, but **DO NOT MARK THE CORRECT ANSWERS!!!!** We will be going over this homework collectively next week. Good luck!!