

**American College Testing (ACT)  
ACT Practice Paper  
ACT English Practice Paper 1**

**DIRECTIONS:** In the passage that follows, certain words and phrases are underlined and numbered. In the right-hand column, you will find alternatives for the underlined part. In most cases, you are to choose the one that best expresses the idea, makes the statement appropriate for standard written English, or is worded most consistently with the style and tone of the passage as a whole. If you think the original version is best, choose "NO CHANGE." In some cases, you will find in the right-hand column a question about the underlined part. You are to choose the best answer to the question.

You will also find questions about a section of the passage, or about the passage as a whole. These questions do not refer to an underlined portion of the passage, but rather are identified by a number or numbers in a box.

For each question, choose the alternative you consider best and fill in the corresponding oval on your answer document. Read the passage through once before you begin to answer the questions that accompany it. For many of the questions, you must read several sentences beyond the question to determine the answer. Be sure that you have read far enough ahead each time you choose an alternative.

**A Microscope in the Kitchen**

I grew up with buckets, shovels, and nets waiting by the back door; hip-waders hanging in the closet; tide table charts covering the refrigerator door; and a microscope was sitting on the kitchen table. Having studied, my mother is a marine biologist. Our household might have been described as uncooperative. Our meals weren't always served in the expected order of breakfast, lunch, and supper. Everything was subservient to the disposal of the tides. When the tide was low, Mom could be found down on the mudflats. When the tide was high, she would be standing on the inlet bridge with her plankton net.

I have great respect for my mother. I learned early that the moon affected the tides. Mom was always waiting for a full or new moon, when low tide would be lower than average and high tide higher than average. The moon being aligned with Earth and the sun when full or new, so its gravity combines with the sun's gravity to create an even stronger gravitational pull. I knew that it took about eight hours for the tides to change from high to low, sixteen hours for a complete cycle of tides. I didn't have to wait to learn these things in school. In our house they were everyday knowledge.

[1] Often, my brother and I, joined our mother on her adventures into tidal lands. [2] At the very low tides of the full moon, when almost all the water was sucked away, we found the hideaways where crabs, snails, starfish, and sea urchins hid in order not to be seen.[3] Sometimes we would dig with shovels in the mud, where yellow and white worms lived in their leathery tunnels. 13 For plankton tows, we would stand on the bridge while Mom lowered a cone-shaped net that is often used by marine biologists. Then we would patiently wait. After a while, she would pull up the net, and we would go

1. Choose the best answer.
  - A. NO CHANGE

- B. waiting, by the back door,
- C. waiting by the back door,
- D. waiting by the back door

2. Choose the best answer.

- A. NO CHANGE
- B. would sit
- C. Sitting
- D. sat

3. Choose the best answer.

- A. NO CHANGE
- B. As my mother's interest is science, she is
- C. My mother's occupation is that of
- D. My mother is

4. Which choice would most effectively introduce the rest of this paragraph?

- A. NO CHANGE
- B. There seemed to be no explanation for why Mom ran our household the way she did.
- C. Our household didn't run according to a typical schedule.
- D. Mom ran our household in a most spectacular manner.

5. Choose the best answer.

- A. NO CHANGE
- B. was defenseless in the face of
- C. depended on
- D. trusted in

6. Which choice most effectively signals the shift from the preceding paragraph to this paragraph?

- A. NO CHANGE
- B. Our lives were likewise affected by the phases of the moon.
- C. A relationship exists between the moon and the tides.
- D. The moon is a mysterious orb afloat in the sky.

7. Choose the best answer.

- A. NO CHANGE
- B. Since the moon is
- C. The moon is
- D. The moon

8. Choose the best answer.

- A. NO CHANGE
- B. one's
- C. it's
- D. its'

9. If the writer were to delete the phrase “sixteen hours for a complete cycle of tides” from the preceding sentence (ending the sentence with a period), the essay would primarily lose a detail that:

- A. shows how the narrator’s interests are different from the mother’s interests.
- B. contradicts a point made earlier in the paragraph.
- C. helps establish the setting for the essay.
- D. displays the narrator’s knowledge of tides.

10. Choose the best answer.

- A. NO CHANGE
- B. brother, and I,
- C. brother, and I
- D. brother and I

11. Choose the best answer.

- A. NO CHANGE
- B. away. Then we
- C. away. We
- D. away; we

12. Choose the best answer.

- A. NO CHANGE
- B. hideouts where crabs, snails, starfish, and sea urchins concealed and hid themselves.
- C. places where crabs, snails, starfish, and sea urchins were stashed away.
- D. hiding places of crabs, snails, starfish, and sea urchins.

13. Which of the following sequences of sentences makes this paragraph most logical?

- A. NO CHANGE
- B. 2, 1, 3
- C. 2, 3, 1
- D. 3, 1, 2

14. Given that all of the choices are true, which one provides information that is relevant and that makes the rest of this paragraph understandable?

- A. NO CHANGE
- B. had a specimen bottle attached to its smaller end.
- C. was woven from cotton and nylon material.
- D. was shaped like a geometric figure.

15. The best placement for the underlined portion would be:

- A. where it is now.
- B. after the word lenses.
- C. after the word microscope.
- D. after the word bottle (but before the dash).

**The following paragraphs may or may not be in the most logical order. Each paragraph is numbered in brackets, and question 14 will ask you to choose where Paragraph 2 should most logically be placed. Question 14 and 15 ask about the preceding passage as a whole.**

### **My Father's Garden**

[1]

When I was a boy growing up in Delhi, India, we had a kitchen garden behind our downstairs apartment. My father was an avid gardener, he still is; and every Saturday morning he would put on his work clothes, pick up his hoe and trowel, and would head out the back door. 3

[2]

As a ten-year-old, I was supremely unenthusiastic about swinging a hoe in the garden when I could be out playing with my friends. Having tried and failed, my father was unable to make a gardener of me. I had no qualms, of course, about enjoying the results of his labor: the potatoes, squash, cucumbers, and cauliflower that he pursued out of the earth. I would even help him dig out the potatoes or cut a cucumber from its vine. To me, it was much more fun to reap than sowing.

[3]

Many years later, living in an upstairs apartment, I am more often sorry I didn't follow my father out to the garden. I have several indoor plants, but the experience is not the same. The few times that I've helped a friend on the other side of the world), I wish I'd spend more time with him in the garden.

[4]

My favorite photograph of my father shows him squatting on his heels, trowel in hand, behind a golden heap of onions freshly pulled from the ground. His glowing smile are evidence of his pride in the

onions—the proof of his labor and love—and in me, the photographer, his son. In that photo, his love of the land and his love for me are somehow intertwined, indivisible. It is that same love—love of kin, love of land—that pushes under my fingernails, pushes against my skin, when I thrust my hand into the yielding earth and think that on its far side my father might be doing the same.

1. Choose the best answer.

- A. NO CHANGE
- B. gardener—he still is—
- C. gardener, he still is—
- D. gardener and he still is

2. Choose the best answer.

- A. NO CHANGE
- B. picked up his hoe and trowel, and headed
- C. pick up his hoe and trowel, and head
- D. picking up his hoe and trowel, and headed

3. If the word Saturday were deleted from the preceding sentence, the essay would primarily lose:

- A. evidence that the father was an avid gardener.
- B. a detail that changes the meaning of the sentence.
- C. support for a point made earlier.
- D. a crucial link to the following paragraph.

4. Which of the choices best emphasizes how much the father wanted his son to share his avid interest in gardening?

- A. NO CHANGE
- B. Because of my indifference to his hobby,
- C. Contrary to this thinking,
- D. Despite his repeated attempts,

5. Choose the best answer.

- A. NO CHANGE
- B. More important, I had no qualms
- C. It stands to reason, then, that I certainly would have no qualms
- D. I had no qualms, as a consequence of it,

6. Choose the best answer.

- A. NO CHANGE
- B. coaxed
- C. surrendered
- D. enlisted

7. Choose the best answer.

- A. NO CHANGE
- B. the most fun to reap than to sow.
- C. much more fun to reap than to sow.
- D. the most fun reaping than if I'd had to sow.

8. The best placement for the underlined portion would be:

- A. where it is now.
- B. after the word sorry.
- C. after the word follow.
- D. after the word garden (ending the sentence with a period).

9. Choose the best answer.

- A. NO CHANGE
- B. have given
- C. has gave
- D. have gave

10. Choose the best answer.

- A. NO CHANGE
- B. with getting
- C. of getting
- D. got

11. Choose the best answer.

- A. NO CHANGE
- B. wished I had spent
- C. wish I had spent
- D. wish to have spent

12. At this point, the writer is considering adding the following true statement:

***I have many photo albums, and each one includes pictures of my father in various poses.***

Should the writer make this addition here?

- A. Yes, because it informs the reader that the photograph he describes in the preceding sentence is not the only one he has of his father.
- B. Yes, because it informs the reader that the writer is more than an amateur photographer.
- C. No, because it contradicts the writer's claim that the photograph he describes in the preceding sentence is one he also treasures.
- D. No, because it distracts the reader from the main focus of the paragraph and does not logically fit at this point in the essay.

13. Choose the best answer.

- A. NO CHANGE
- B. is
- C. were
- D. OMIT the underlined portion.

14. For the sake of the logic and coherence of the essay, Paragraph 2 should be placed:

- A. where it is now.
- B. before Paragraph 1.
- C. after Paragraph 3.
- D. after Paragraph 4.

15. Suppose the writer had intended to write a brief essay showing how a value he holds as an adult is very different from what he felt as a child. Would this essay successfully fulfill the writer's goal?

- A. Yes, because the essay shows how the writer came to value gardening when this was something he had not appreciated as a child.
- B. Yes, because the essay shows that as an adult the writer finally learned to value his father's ability to be a good parent, when as a child he had not done so.
- C. No, because the focus of the essay is on the writer's father's values and not on the values of the writer himself.
- D. No, because the essay is not about values; rather, it is about one man's avid interest in backyard gardening.