

Reading Act Practice Test

PRACTICE ACT READING TEST — 35 MINUTES

PROSE FICTION: *Three Laws*

It's easy to imagine Mercer, but trickier to remember it. In my mind I reassemble the city from a stock of memories that grow a little more ghostly each time I summon them. The morning always appears first—the liquid shine of fresh-washed sheet glass, two veterans in Roosevelt Park asleep beneath the shadow of a bronzed anchor; stray dogs swallowing bits of soft pretzel scavenged from behind the fair grounds—these scenes I return to often, and they've become like old, handspun lace—intricate, diaphanous and fragile. I sometimes wonder, when at last that lone thread of true memory wears through, whether or not the whole reverie, like lace, will unravel.

Of course it's possible to approach Mercer from without; to finger it on the globe, or trace the serpentine belly of Highway 51 across the pages of a road atlas, right through the hills of Pennsylvania into town. But that's not the town that I remember. My memories begin in the center and radiate outward like a ripple, dying off as they collide with the hilltops that surround the valley.

The poet James Wright once wrote that no one would choose to die in Mercer. He might be right. But the people who inhabit Mercer when I remember it don't die. They don't have the energy to die. They say that, in the universe, energy can't be created or destroyed, but transferred, transformed—that's something I learned after I left for school. And all the energy must have left Mercer a long time before I did. I can imagine the last clay-red train sputtering out of Rodney Station—cargo load just half-full of ore—leaving Mercer and the ground beneath it hollow.

I suppose that's the trouble with a mining town. It thrives on the land like an unwary parasite, marveling at its own good fortune. But when the host gives out, it's hopeless. With every shard of anthracite picked clean from the river bed, I can see the kids who live outside of town, staggering home along the banks, galvanized buckets dangling empty from their hands. Maybe that's what bothered James Wright—not wanting to die on dead land. But when I remember Mercer, the people there live on arrested, unable to grow or die, and a few mad miners persist, still hollowing out the mountains from a mile underground.

Sometimes I try to imagine how the town has changed—which store windows on Market Street are empty, boarded up, or shattered, and whether the train yard is overgrown now in either rust or wildflowers. Left alone, the universe tends toward maximum chaos. That's another thing I learned at school. If that's true,

then I guess Mercer must have fallen apart entirely, and suddenly I see the valley sinking, as the mountains stretch out and fold in overtop, like kneaded dough, burying the town, breaking it, and redistributing the pieces throughout the soil. Other times it seems more likely it's just my memories of Mercer that are being swallowed up. I guess eventually there will be two Mercers—the one I left in Pennsylvania, and the one that I return to, built up and founded entirely in my mind.

But tonight, at least, I'm remembering the Ferris wheel on the fair grounds, its girders lit by ten dozen lemon-yellow incandescent bulbs, writing huge, desolate zeroes in the late August night. Light in motion I remember clearly. I can see the white-hot glow of furnaces through a glass factory window; the probing gleam of headlights sliding across the ceiling as a car turns down my old street. There's an old trick used to prove that light travels as a wave—close up, light shining through a keyhole will just take the shape of a keyhole, but if the beam travels a greater distance, it refracts, and reveals the gaps and fissures of darkness hidden within. The lights of Mercer reach me in the far-field; blurred and fractured by the long journey they've taken. Like starlight, I can't even be sure the source is still extant. But if light is a wave lapping against us; an ocean oscillating through illumination and shadow, then time is the tide, and it pulls a sea of light onto the shore, engulfing and flooding it. Then light recedes, taking with it what was left too near waves, and leaves the rest, at last, in darkness.

1. Which of the following can we infer describes the narrator?

- A. A traveler on a visit to the town of Mercer
- B. A former resident of Mercer recollecting the town
- C. A current townsman residing in Mercer
- D. A poet who says people won't choose to die in Mercer

2. What attribute of the lace does NOT make it a fitting metaphor for the ideas being expressed in paragraph 1 (lines 1-13)?

- F. its frailty
- G. its complexity
- H. its color
- J. its thickness

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Reading ACT Practice Test is an essential tool for students preparing for one of the most significant standardized tests in the United States. The ACT, or American College Test, assesses high school students' readiness for college and consists of four main sections: English, Mathematics, Reading, and Science, with an optional Writing section. Among these, the Reading section evaluates a student's comprehension skills, which are critical for academic success. In this article, we will explore the importance of the Reading ACT Practice Test, its structure, content, tips for preparation, and resources available for students.

Understanding the Reading ACT Section

The Reading section of the ACT is designed to measure a student's ability to read and

understand texts from various genres, including prose fiction, social science, humanities, and natural science. This section contains 40 questions that must be completed in 35 minutes, making time management a crucial skill for students.

Structure of the Reading Section

1. Number of Passages: The Reading section consists of four passages.
2. Types of Passages:
 - Prose Fiction: A narrative passage that may come from a novel or short story.
 - Social Science: A passage that discusses concepts and ideas related to social studies.
 - Humanities: A passage that explores topics related to arts and literature.
 - Natural Science: A passage that deals with scientific concepts and findings.
3. Question Types: The questions typically fall into the following categories:
 - Key Ideas: Questions that test the main idea or theme of the passage.
 - Detail: Questions that require students to locate and interpret specific information.
 - Inferences: Questions that ask students to draw conclusions based on the text.
 - Vocabulary in Context: Questions about the meaning of words or phrases as they are used in the passage.
 - Author's Purpose: Questions that explore why the author wrote the passage in a particular way.

Importance of the Reading ACT Practice Test

Taking a Reading ACT Practice Test is crucial for several reasons:

1. Familiarization: It helps students become familiar with the format and structure of the actual test.
2. Identifying Strengths and Weaknesses: Practice tests allow students to identify which types of passages and questions they find most challenging, helping them focus their study efforts.
3. Time Management: Students learn to manage their time effectively, ensuring they can complete the test within the allotted time.
4. Building Confidence: Regular practice can reduce test anxiety and build confidence in students' reading and comprehension skills.
5. Improving Scores: Consistent practice often leads to improved scores, as students become more adept at answering questions correctly.

Preparing for the Reading ACT

To prepare effectively for the Reading section of the ACT, students should consider the following strategies:

1. Take Practice Tests

- Schedule regular practice tests under timed conditions.
- Analyze the results to identify areas needing improvement.

2. Read Actively

- Engage with a variety of texts, including fiction, non-fiction, and academic articles.
- Take notes on key ideas, themes, and vocabulary.

3. Build Vocabulary

- Use flashcards or apps to learn new words and phrases.
- Practice using new vocabulary in context.

4. Develop Critical Thinking Skills

- Discuss readings with peers or teachers to enhance understanding.
- Ask questions about the text, such as "What is the author's main argument?" or "What evidence supports this claim?"

5. Review Test Strategies

- Familiarize yourself with common question types and strategies for answering them.
- Practice eliminating incorrect answer choices to improve chances of selecting the correct answer.

Resources for ACT Reading Practice

Several resources are available to help students prepare for the Reading section of the ACT:

1. Official ACT Resources

- The official ACT website offers free practice tests, sample questions, and test-taking tips.
- The ACT prep book provides valuable insights and additional practice materials.

2. Online Platforms

- Websites like Khan Academy, ACT Academy, and Magoosh offer interactive practice questions and video lessons.
- Educational apps can help with vocabulary building and reading comprehension exercises.

3. Study Groups and Tutoring

- Joining a study group can provide motivation and support from peers.
- Hiring a tutor can give personalized guidance on reading strategies and test preparation.

Test Day Tips for the ACT Reading Section

When it comes time to take the ACT, students should keep the following tips in mind:

1. Get a Good Night's Sleep: Ensure you are well-rested before test day to maintain focus and concentration.
2. Eat a Healthy Breakfast: A nutritious meal can fuel your brain and keep your energy levels up.
3. Arrive Early: Give yourself plenty of time to check in and settle down before the test begins.
4. Read Directions Carefully: Take a moment to read the instructions for each section thoroughly.
5. Pace Yourself: Keep an eye on the time, but don't rush through the questions. If you find a question too difficult, move on and return to it later if time allows.
6. Answer Every Question: There is no penalty for guessing on the ACT, so it's better to provide an answer than leave a question blank.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the Reading ACT Practice Test is an indispensable resource for students preparing for the ACT. By understanding the structure and content of the Reading section, utilizing effective preparation strategies, and leveraging available resources, students can enhance their reading comprehension skills and improve their performance on the test. Regular practice, active reading, and test-day strategies are all crucial elements that contribute to success. With dedication and the right approach, students can achieve their desired scores and pave the way for their future academic endeavors.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the purpose of a reading ACT practice test?

The purpose of a reading ACT practice test is to help students familiarize themselves with the format and types of questions they will encounter on the actual ACT reading section, allowing them to improve their reading comprehension skills and test-taking strategies.

How can I find free reading ACT practice tests online?

You can find free reading ACT practice tests online through various educational websites, official ACT resources, and test prep platforms such as Khan Academy, ACT.org, and other tutoring services that offer sample questions.

What types of passages are typically included in the reading ACT section?

The reading ACT section typically includes four types of passages: prose fiction, social science, humanities, and natural science, each designed to assess different reading comprehension skills.

How long is the reading section on the ACT?

The reading section on the ACT lasts 35 minutes and consists of 40 questions that test a student's ability to understand, analyze, and interpret written texts.

What strategies can I use while taking a reading ACT practice test?

Effective strategies include skimming the passage for main ideas, highlighting key details, managing your time wisely, and answering the easier questions first before tackling more challenging ones.

How often should I take reading ACT practice tests before the exam?

It is recommended to take reading ACT practice tests regularly, ideally once a week or bi-weekly, as part of your study plan in the weeks leading up to the actual exam to track your progress and identify areas for improvement.

Can reading ACT practice tests help improve my score?

Yes, taking reading ACT practice tests can significantly help improve your score by allowing you to practice timing, develop better reading strategies, and become more comfortable with the types of questions you will face.

What should I do after completing a reading ACT practice test?

After completing a reading ACT practice test, you should review your answers, analyze any mistakes, and identify patterns in the types of questions that challenge you to focus your study sessions on those areas.

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