



# Exemplar Grade 5 English Test Questions



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# Introduction

This booklet explains ACT Aspire® Grade 5 English test questions by presenting, with their answer keys, sample questions aligned to each reporting category on the test. A key includes the question's depth-of-knowledge (DOK) level,<sup>1</sup> an explanation of the task posed by each question, a thorough explanation of correct responses, ideas for improvement, and more. The exemplar test questions included here are representative of the range of content and types of questions found on the ACT Aspire Grade 5 English test. Educators can use this resource in several ways:

- Become familiar with ACT Aspire question types.
- See what typical questions in each ACT Aspire reporting category look like.
- Help reinforce or adjust teaching and learning objectives.
- Learn how ACT Aspire improvement idea statements can help students identify key skills they have not yet mastered.

## Reporting Categories

ACT Aspire English tests assess students' developed ability to revise and edit texts. A typical English test contains several stimuli, or texts, and a series of selected-response (multiple-choice) and technology-enhanced questions. Texts used in the assessments represent various content areas (including English language arts, the humanities, and the social and natural sciences), and, considered collectively, reflect a range of text complexity levels from simple to complex, as appropriate for students' age and educational attainment. The questions fall under the following reporting categories.

## Conventions of Standard English

The questions in this category require students to apply an understanding of the conventions of standard English grammar, usage, and mechanics to revise and edit text.

### **Punctuation and Usage Conventions**

These questions require students to edit text to conform to standard English punctuation and usage.

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<sup>1</sup> Norman L. Webb, "Depth-of-Knowledge Levels for Four Content Areas," last modified March 28, 2002, <http://facstaff.wcer.wisc.edu/normw/All%20content%20areas%20%20DOK%20levels%2032802.doc>.

**Sentence Structure and Formation**

These questions test understanding of relationships between and among clauses, placement of modifiers, and shifts in construction.

**Production of Writing**

The questions in this category require students to apply an understanding of the rhetorical purpose and the focus of a piece of writing to develop a topic effectively and to use various strategies to achieve logical organization, topical unity, and general cohesion.

**Topic Development**

These questions require students to demonstrate an understanding of and control over the rhetorical aspects of texts by identifying the purpose of parts of texts, determining whether a text has met its intended goal, and evaluating the relevance of material in terms of a text's focus.

**Organization, Unity, and Cohesion**

These questions require students to use various strategies to ensure that text is logically organized, flows smoothly, and has an effective introduction and conclusion.

**Knowledge of Language**

These questions require students to demonstrate effective language use through ensuring precision and concision in word choice and maintaining consistency in style and tone.

**Improvement Ideas**

ACT Aspire includes simple improvement ideas at the reporting category (skill) level on student and parent reports. These improvement ideas are provided for the lowest performing skill for each subject tested. The skills are always ordered from highest performing to lowest performing based on the percentage of points correct. If the percentages for two or more skills are tied, the skill with the lower number of total points is displayed first.

Keep in mind that the order of skills listed on reports may not always be exemplary of where to focus learning. For example, the skills in which a student performed within the ACT Readiness Range may not always be listed first, and the skills in which a student did not perform within the ACT Readiness Range may not always be listed last. Also, keep in mind the total number of points possible in each skill when interpreting the percentage correct.

There are two levels of improvement idea statements (low and high) for ACT Aspire summative reporting. Low statements are given on the report if the student's lowest skill score is below the ACT Readiness Range for that particular skill. High statements are given on the report if the student's lowest skill score is at or above the ACT Readiness Range for that particular skill.

# Answer Key

This section presents a stimulus text and the sequence number, grade, question type, DOK level, alignment to the ACT Aspire reporting categories, and correct response for each question about the text. Each question is accompanied by an explanation of the question and the correct response as well as improvement idea statements for ACT Aspire English.

## Text: “A Lion in the Grass”

The following paragraphs may or may not be in the most logical order. Each paragraph is numbered in brackets, and question 3 will ask you to choose where Paragraph 2 should most logically be placed.

### A Lion in the Grass

[1]

Shortly after arriving in South Africa, my mother, sister, and I traveled north with our tour group toward the savannah for our first safari adventure. As our vehicle bounced along the dusty dirt roads, I begin scanning the tall grasses for cheetah tails, zebra stripes, and ostrich beaks.

[2]

At first, I was disappointed that I hadn't spotted the golden cat before the guide, but my disappointment quickly turned to glee when I saw a lioness sitting under one of the trees with her two cubs. My mother dimmed her eyes with her hand and squinted, trying to see the mother and her cubs more clearly, while my sister adjusted the zoom feature on her camera, hoping to get a picture worthy of a frame.

[3]

I was hoping to be the first in our group to spot one of the majestic creatures, which, until now, I had only seen in zoos and picture books. Suddenly, our vehicle came to a halt, and our guide pointed toward a few lonely trees several yards away. Excited, he whispered, “Lion!”

[4]

“Look how calm they are,” said my mother, nudging my arm. As I stared, the lioness seemed to look directly at me with her large eyes. Because the fur of the lions blended with the color of the grass, it was easy to focus on the movement of their piercing yellow eyes and their large, tooth-filled mouths as they yawned.

[5]

After a few minutes, the silence of the savannah was broken by the whirl of engines. Our tour group was moving on to the next location, where I hoped to be the first to spot another beautiful animal.

## Question 1

The following paragraphs may or may not be in the most logical order. Each paragraph is numbered in brackets, and question 3 will ask you to choose where Paragraph 2 should most logically be placed.

## A Lion in the Grass

[1]

Shortly after arriving in South Africa, my mother, sister, and I traveled north with our tour group toward the savannah for our first safari adventure. As our vehicle bounced along the dusty dirt roads, I **begin** scanning the tall grasses for cheetah tails, zebra stripes, and ostrich beaks.

[2]

At first, I was disappointed that I hadn't spotted the golden cat before the guide, but my disappointment quickly turned to glee when I saw a lioness sitting under one of the trees with her two cubs. My mother dimmed her eyes with her hand and squinted, trying to see the mother and her cubs more clearly, while my sister adjusted the zoom feature on her camera, hoping to get a picture worthy of a frame.

[3]

I was hoping to be the first in our group to spot one of the majestic creatures, which, until now, I had only seen in zoos and picture books. Suddenly, our vehicle came to a halt, and our guide pointed toward a few lonely trees several yards away. Excited, he whispered, "Lion!"

What change, if any, should be made to the highlighted word?

- A. NO CHANGE
- B. will have begun
- C. have begun
- D. began

Sequence	Grade	Question type	DOK level	Reporting category	Correct response
1	5	Selected Response	1	Conventions of Standard English	D

This selected-response question requires students to recognize and correct inappropriate changes in verb tense and aspect within and between sentences (aligns with the Common Core State Standards College and Career Readiness anchor standards [CCRA] W.5, L.1). A student must read the entire sentence carefully in order to recognize that the verb shift is illogical and deviates from a clearly established pattern in the passage.

## Correct Response

The text is presented in the past tense, with the preceding sentences and following paragraph following this pattern. The shift in tense created by answer options A, B, and C would be illogical, and there is nothing in the text that supports a shift away from the past tense. Answer option D is correct because it is the only choice that uses the past tense.

## Improvement Idea Statements

Reporting category	Grade	Low statement (scored below ACT Readiness Range)	High statement (scored at or above ACT Readiness Range)
Conventions of Standard English	5	Work on using nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, pronouns, commas, ending punctuation, and prepositions correctly. Avoid sentence structure errors such as inappropriate shift in tense.	Challenge yourself to write more complex sentences, avoiding errors such as inappropriate shifts in tense and pronoun number. Work on punctuating essential/nonessential parts of sentences correctly.

## Question 2

The following paragraphs may or may not be in the most logical order. Each paragraph is numbered in brackets, and question 3 will ask you to choose where Paragraph 2 should most logically be placed.

**A Lion in the Grass**

guide, but my disappointment quickly turned to glee when I saw a lioness sitting under one of the trees with her two cubs. My mother **dimmed** her eyes with her hand and squinted, trying to see the mother and her cubs more clearly, while my sister adjusted the zoom feature on her camera, hoping to get a picture worthy of a frame.

[3]

I was hoping to be the first in our group to spot one of the majestic creatures, which, until now, I had only seen in zoos and picture books. Suddenly, our vehicle came to a halt, and our guide pointed toward a few lonely trees several yards away. Excited, he whispered, "Lion!"

[4]

"Look how calm they are," said my mother, nudging my arm. As I stared, the lioness seemed to look directly at me with her large eyes. Because the fur of the lions blended with the color of the grass, it was easy to focus on the movement of their piercing yellow eyes and their large, tooth-filled mouths as they yawned.

[5]

What change, if any, should be made to the highlighted word?

- A. NO CHANGE
- B. shaded
- C. clouded
- D. cooled

Sequence	Grade	Question type	DOK level	Reporting category	Correct response
2	5	Selected Response	3	Knowledge of Language	B

This selected-response question requires students to establish the clearest and most precise way of expressing information or ideas in a text (aligns with CCRA.W.4–5, L.3–6). To answer this question, students must read the entire sentence that contains the highlighted word and determine which answer option provides the clearest, most precise, and most logical expression of an idea.

### Correct Response

Based on the context of the sentence, the correct answer choice should provide a verb that suggests the narrator's mother takes an action that allows her to see the lion and cubs more clearly. Answer option B is the best choice because among the options, it is the most precise and logical verb to use in this context. Answer options A and D suggest impediments to clear vision and are therefore incorrect. Answer option C does not make sense in the context of the sentence because it is an expression of temperature, not clarity of vision.

### Improvement Idea Statements

Reporting category	Grade	Low statement (scored below ACT Readiness Range)	High statement (scored at or above ACT Readiness Range)
Knowledge of Language	5	In your writing, work on choosing the best words and phrases in order to express your ideas clearly and on recognizing when to use formal or informal language.	In your writing, work on choosing words and phrases that are clear and precise and on maintaining consistency in style and tone.

### Question 3

The following paragraphs may or may not be in the most logical order. Each paragraph is numbered in brackets, and question 3 will ask you to choose where Paragraph 2 should most logically be placed.

#### A Lion in the Grass

[2]  
 At first, I was disappointed that I hadn't spotted the golden cat before the guide, but my disappointment quickly turned to glee when I saw a lioness sitting under one of the trees with her two cubs. My mother dimmed her eyes with her hand and squinted, trying to see the mother and her cubs more clearly, while my sister adjusted the zoom feature on her camera, hoping to get a picture worthy of a frame.

[3]

I was hoping to be the first in our group to spot one of the majestic creatures, which, until now, I had only seen in zoos and picture books. Suddenly, our vehicle came to a halt, and our guide pointed toward a few lonely trees several yards away. Excited, he whispered, "Lion!"

[4]

"Look how calm they are," said my mother, nudging my arm. As I stared, the lioness seemed to look directly at me with her large eyes. Because the fur of the lions blended with the color of the grass, it was easy to focus on the movement of their piercing yellow eyes and their large, tooth-filled mouths as they yawned.

This question refers to the essay as a whole.

For the essay to be most easily understood, where should the highlighted paragraph be placed?

- A. NO CHANGE
- B. After Paragraph 3
- C. After Paragraph 4
- D. After Paragraph 5

Sequence	Grade	Question type	DOK level	Reporting category	Correct response
3	5	Selected Response	3	Production of Writing	B

This selected-response question requires students to make a decision about where a proposed paragraph should be placed within the text as a whole (aligns with CCRA.W.4, W.5). In order to answer this question, students must read and have a general understanding of the entire essay. Students must then determine the best placement for the proposed paragraph based on logic and cohesion, avoiding placements that are illogical or weaken the organization of the essay.

#### Correct Response

In its current placement, the highlighted paragraph contains information that does not make logical sense. There is a reference to the guide spotting the lion, which does not occur until paragraph 3. In addition, the narrator first sees the lion in the highlighted paragraph, which would make placement after paragraph 4 and paragraph 5 illogical. The best placement is after paragraph 3 (answer option B), which correctly recognizes the chronology of the narrative.

#### Improvement Idea Statements

Reporting category	Grade	Low statement (scored below ACT Readiness Range)	High statement (scored at or above ACT Readiness Range)
Production of Writing	5	In your writing, work on focusing and developing your topic, organizing your ideas so they are easy to follow, and expressing your ideas in a clear way.	Practice writing for a variety of purposes. Work on developing topics effectively, organizing ideas logically, and expressing ideas in a clear and consistent way.