

READING QUIZZES

# ACT





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## Annotation Exercise - Introduction

The ACT Reading Test is designed to test your active reading skills. One of the best ways to enhance these skills is to practice annotating. We have included practice exercises in this book to help you become acquainted with the annotation process.

If you're not sure what to annotate, use the guided passages created by ESM mentors. The guided passages have important areas of the text marked with brackets, numbers, and underlined sentences. These exercises include annotation instructions to help you through the process. Follow the instructions on the social science and prose fiction annotation quizzes to answer the questions below the text. We are confident that these exercises will help you gain a clear understanding of the passage so that you are able to answer questions correctly.

If you are comfortable with the annotation process, use the unmarked versions of the social science and prose fiction passages to create your own annotations. ESM mentors have annotated copies of these passages if you'd like to cross check your work.

Remember that annotating improves both timing and accuracy on the ACT reading test. The more you can practice, the easier this process will become. For additional materials, reference the *Using Outside Resources for ACT Reading* document at the end of this section.

Date Completed: \_\_\_\_\_

Mentor Initials: \_\_\_\_\_

## Prose Fiction Passage

PROSE FICTION: This passage is adapted from the novel *This Side of Paradise* by F. Scott Fitzgerald (© 1920).

Amory was now eighteen years old, just under six feet tall and exceptionally, but not conventionally, handsome. He had rather a young face, the ingenuousness of which was marred by the penetrating green eyes, fringed with long dark eyelashes. He lacked somehow that intense animal magnetism that so often accompanies beauty in men or women; his personality seemed rather a mental thing, and it was not in his power to turn it on and off like a water-faucet. But people never forgot his face.

She paused at the top of the staircase. The sensations attributed to divers on spring-boards, leading ladies on opening nights, and lumpy, husky young men on the day of the Big Game, crowded through her. She should have descended to a burst of drums or a discordant blend of themes from "Thais" and "Carmen." She had never been so curious about her appearance; she had never been so satisfied with it. She had been sixteen years old for six months.

"Isabelle!" called her cousin Sally from the doorway of the dressing room.

"I'm ready." She caught a slight lump of nervousness in her throat.

"I had to send back to the house for another pair of slippers. It'll be just a minute."

Isabelle started toward the dressing room for a last peek in the mirror, but something decided her to stand there and gaze down the broad stairs of the Minnehaha Club. They curved tantalizingly, and she could catch just a glimpse of two pairs of masculine feet in the hall below. Pump-shod in uniform black, they gave no hint of identity, but

35 she wondered eagerly if one pair were attached to Amory Blaine. This young man, not as yet encountered, had nevertheless taken up a considerable part of her day—the first day of her arrival. Coming up in the machine from the station, Sally had volunteered, amid a rain of question, comment, revelation, and exaggeration:

"You remember Amory Blaine, of course. Well, he's simply mad to see you again. He's stayed over a day from college, and he's coming tonight. He's heard so much about you—says he remembers your eyes."

This had pleased Isabelle. It put them on equal terms, although she was quite capable of staging her own romances, with or without advance advertising. But following her happy tremble of anticipation came a sinking sensation that made her ask:

"How do you mean he's heard about me? What sort of things?"

55 Sally smiled. She felt rather in the capacity of a showman with her more exotic cousin.

"He knows you're—you're considered beautiful and all that"—she paused—"and I guess he knows you've been kissed."

60 At this Isabelle's little fist had clinched suddenly under the fur robe. She was accustomed to be thus followed by her desperate past, and it never failed to rouse in her the same feeling of resentment; yet—in a strange town it was an advantageous reputation. She was a "Speed," was she? Well—let them find out.

Out of the window Isabelle watched the snow glide by in the frosty morning. It was ever so much colder here than in Baltimore; she had not remembered; the glass of the side door was iced, the windows were shirred with snow in the corners. Her mind played still with one subject. Did he dress like that boy there, who walked calmly down a bustling business street, in moccasins and winter-carnival costume? How very Western! Of course he wasn't that way: he went to Princeton, was a sophomore or something. Really she had no distinct idea of him. An ancient snapshot she had preserved in an old book of photos had impressed her by the big eyes (which he had probably grown up to by now). However, in the last month, when her winter visit to Sally had been decided on, he had assumed the proportions

of a worthy adversary. Children, most astute of matchmakers, plot their campaigns quickly, and Sally had played a clever correspondence sonata to Isabelle's excitable temperament. Isabelle had been for some time capable of very strong, if very transient emotions....

They drew up at a spreading, white-stone building, set back from the snowy street. Mrs. Weatherby greeted her warmly and her various younger cousins were produced from the corners where they skulked politely. Isabelle met them tactfully. At her best she allied all with whom she came in contact—except older girls and some women. All the impressions she made were conscious.

1. Based on the passage, the major conflict can be best summarized as:
  - A. a young man from Princeton is driving Isabelle to a nearby ball.
  - B. Isabelle is awaiting an introduction with Amory.
  - C. Isabelle is planning her clothing ads for the next issue of *Western!*
  - D. Isabelle is arguing with Mrs. Weatherby about her new date.
2. The word “discordant” (line 17) most nearly means:
  - A. inharmonious
  - B. varied
  - C. contradictory
  - D. trite
3. It can be most reasonably inferred that Isabelle’s “catch just a glimpse of two pairs of masculine feet” (line 32 – 33) serves to:
  - A. deduce which type of shoes Amory will be wearing.
  - B. signify her apprehension for uncovering Amory’s mysterious character.
  - C. symbolize her keen knack for men’s fashion
  - D. metaphorically suggest Amory is a “man’s - man.”
4. In the passage, Isabelle’s reflection of previous lovers was triggered by:
  - A. the benefit of reputation in the strange town.
  - B. the restlessness ensued by looking at the snow-covered window.
  - C. Sally’s comments about Amory’s passionate wish to see Isabelle again.
  - D. Sally’s correspondence with Isabel during last month’s visit.

5. Which of the following events referred to in the passage occurred first chronologically?
- A. Isabelle listening to “Thais,” and “Carmen.”
  - B. Isabelle’s sending for another pair of slippers.
  - C. Amory’s remembrance of Isabelle’s eyes.
  - D. Mrs. Weatherby’s greeting.
6. The author uses the phrase “divers on springboards” (line 13) in order to:
- A. compare the sensations of the divers with Isabelle’s current sentiment about her meeting with Amory.
  - B. recall the momentous highlights of the Big Game.
  - C. emphasize Isabelle’s comparable elevation on the staircase.
  - D. comment on the free-falling nature of newly formed relationships.
7. Which of the following is NOT answered in the passage?
- A. Sally and Isabelle’s relationship.
  - B. Where Amory and Isabelle first met.
  - C. The current weather conditions.
  - D. Isabelle’s imagination of who Amory will turn out to be.
8. What effect does the allusion of childhood romances play in the passage?
- A. It certifies Isabelle’s excitable temperament.
  - B. It outlines the necessary channels Isabelle had to go through with Mrs. Weatherby.
  - C. It contributes to the mystery of Amory.
  - D. It lends to Sally’s jealousy of Isabelle’s date.
9. The author makes mention of question, comment, revelation, and exaggeration (lines 40 – 41) in order to:
- A. clue the reader into knowing more about the implied dialogue.
  - B. explicitly mention the topics discussed between Sally and Isabelle throughout the day.
  - C. foreshadow Amory and Isabelle’s first conversation.
  - D. provide a tone of melancholy for Sally and Isabelle’s conversation.
10. The relationship between Sally and Isabelle can be best described as:
- A. Sally is Isabelle’s older sister.
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A mentor can change everything.



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### Directions:

For each underlined section, indicate what information is revealed about the character that is being discussed.

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- 2.
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- 7.

Write a word or short phrase in the margins next to each bracket that sums up the information in brackets or indicates the author's tone with the appropriate symbol. Use a plus sign for positive tone and a minus sign for negative tone.

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## Social Science Passage

SOCIAL SCIENCE: This passage is adapted from John Sheffield’s 2015 essay entitled “Defenestrate your DVR: Why The System’s Got To Go.”

America has been battling monopolies for over a century. The Sherman Anti-Trust Act of 1890 banned monopolies that hampered interstate trade and President Theodore Roosevelt put it to use as he established himself as a trustbuster. He broke up Northern Securities, which controlled most rail shipping in the northern United States. Roosevelt’s example was followed by President Taft, who despite his well-publicized trouble squeezing out of his own bathtub, was able to trim or break up nearly a hundred monopolies while in office. During the Progressive Era monopolies were dismantled in nearly every sector, from finance to oil to steel to tobacco. In 1984, the federal government turned to the telecommunications industry, breaking up the Bell Telephone Company that had previously owned or licensed nearly all telephones and telephone utilities in the country. Prominent contemporary companies, like AT&T and Verizon, emerged from the dissolution.

Despite the recognition that monopolies encourage anti-competitive behavior and hurt consumers, one portion of the telecommunications has been allowed to keep its monopolies- the cable industry. Today, regardless of where they live, most customers in the United States have only one cable company from which to choose. Most of the only alternatives for television come from satellite providers. While no one cable company is allowed to dominate the entire national market, regional hegemony exists in each particular market.

The proliferation of the Internet has yielded new methods of television consumption. Services

like Netflix, Hulu, and Amazon Prime Instant Video deliver content without the monopoly of cable providers. Even these, though, are threatened by the anti-competitive practices that limit Internet service. The same companies dominating the cable industry also control majorities of the local internet delivery market. Most of the only competing Internet service providers cannot provide service at the same speeds or rates. As a result, the same firms that compose most of the cable television market also control most of the Internet service infrastructure.

Large telecommunications providers are able to offer faster speeds because of the significant investments they have already made in their infrastructure. It is prohibitively expensive for many new firms to lay the cable necessary to deliver high speed Internet reliably into homes and businesses around the country. Because of the cable companies in each market have already made the investment, large telecommunications providers are able to provide faster and cheaper service than would-be competitors. The cost of setting up this type of infrastructure creates a daunting barrier-to-entry to any would be competitor in this space.

But regional monopolies mean consumers are unable to shift to alternatives. A 2003 Federal Communications Commission Study stated that only two percent of customers have viable alternatives for cable delivery. The impact on consumers is exemplified by surveys such as the American Customer Satisfaction Index that ranked Time Warner Cable as the least favorable business in history, followed closely by its fellow

telecommunications giant, Comcast. Despite this widespread odium shared by their clients, the Comcast and Time Warner Cable both return significant annual profits.

75 Consumer protection advocates laud the rise of new technologies, like fiber-optic cable providers, that might offset existing monopolies. Some of these new developments offer Internet speeds ten times faster than that of cable service  
80 providers' existing systems at cheaper prices, but these new products are only available in a handful of cities. Not only are they difficult to implement but also their expansions are hampered by the existing telecommunications monopolies that  
85 spend nearly a hundred million dollars a year on political lobbying to protect their own interests.

Recently, the two biggest telecommunications firms proposed a merger. While the plan called for the sale of the market share in some cities to other  
90 competitors, the proposed merger of Comcast and Time Warner would have allowed the new company to possess more than 75% of all Internet service customers. Further, no other company would have controlled even 10% of the market.  
95 Instead of the current system with regional monopolies, the new company's enormous market strength would enable it to unilaterally dictate pricing and service levels across much of the country. While this merger folded under  
100 increasing scrutiny from the federal government, consumers should remain wary about the existing anti-competitive practices in the telecommunications industry and their potential consequences to consumers.

1. The main purpose of the passage can best be described as an effort to:
  - A. demand the dismantling of a single monopoly.
  - B. illustrate how a particular industry does not best serve consumers.
  - C. inform readers about the history of monopolies in the United States.
  - D. detail a strategy to fix a challenged industry.
2. The author's attitude toward the subject of the passage can best be characterized as:
  - A. ossified
  - B. disgusted
  - C. anxious
  - D. deferential
3. The main function of the first paragraph (lines 1 – 21) is to:
  - A. enumerate notable examples of government intervention of monopolies.
  - B. compare one president's approach to trust busting to that of another president.
  - C. joke about the obesity of one government official.
  - D. define the mechanisms for destroying monopolies.
4. The author believes all of the following about the "new technologies" mentioned in line 76 EXCEPT:
  - A. they may offer new alternatives to existing monopolies.
  - B. they face significant challenges to widespread implementation.
  - C. if people lobbied for them, there would be no more monopolies.
  - D. they could benefit consumers.

5. The author would most likely attribute the high market share of one company in local markets to all of the following EXCEPT:
- A. restrictive startup costs.
  - B. previous infrastructure spending.
  - C. superior customer marketing.
  - D. political networking.
6. Based on the information provided, it can be inferred that consumer protection advocates (line 75) feel which of the following about the political lobbying mentioned in line 86?
- A. It almost always hurts the consumers.
  - B. It discourages equal competition.
  - C. It costs taxpayers too much money.
  - D. Political speech should be restricted.
7. As described in the passage, monopolies are disadvantageous to consumers because they:
- A. always lead to inordinate pricing.
  - B. encourage firms to take advantage of market conditions.
  - C. become vertical monopolies that control an entire supply chain.
  - D. are inevitably tied into government.
8. The author believes the role of the federal government in regulating monopolies should be:
- A. active in dismantling any business that conducts an anticompetitive practice.
  - B. restrained so that consumers choices and the free market can dictate business policies.
  - C. deliberative to make sure all opinions are heard before any action is taken.
  - D. vigilant to intervene when consumers are being hurt.
9. The author most likely uses the term hegemony (line 32) for what purpose?
- A. To emphasize the overwhelming regional market share.
  - B. To convey the variety of options nationwide.
  - C. To encourage the government to break apart the monopoly.
  - D. To compare certain businesses with federal or state governments.
10. It can be inferred that the author mentioned the 2003 FCC study in order to convey:
- A. the cost of building internet service provider infrastructure.
  - B. that many consumers resent their current providers.
  - C. the challenge of properly regulating the telecommunications industry.
  - D. the difficulty consumers face finding alternative cable and internet service providers.

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## Using Outside Resources for ACT Reading

If you want to be a better reader, the answer is simple: read, read, read. This is true, to an extent. When helping students score higher on their ACT Reading Test, it is not always so simple.

Teaching students *how* to take the ACT Reading Test is an art in and of itself. Supplementing your instruction with non-ACT reading materials is a great way to fortify critical reading skills that are essential to a high ACT Reading score. Infusing instruction with outside reading materials is a good way to sustain interest, reinforce good reading habits, and prepare students for college-level coursework.

### What to Read

While no one will argue that any reading is better than no reading at all, in regards to preparing for the ACT, there are some qualifiers to consider. Here is a breakdown of what your students should be reading and why.

1. Memoir: Excerpts from memoirs frequently show up as ACT reading passages. Students should become familiar with the structure of memoirs as it relates to purpose and point of view.
  - The Art of the Personal Essay is a great anthology to use as a starting point.
2. Appropriately challenging periodicals: Using current newspapers, journals, and magazines allows students to broaden their perspective on current events while developing critical and active reading skills. Choose periodicals that display stylized writing, discuss ideas in a complex, nuanced manner, and utilized a varied vocabulary. Here are a handful of solid options:
  - New York Book Review
  - New York Times
  - The Atlantic Monthly
  - The Economist
  - The Wall Street Journal
  - The New Yorker
  - Forbes
3. The right novels: Students should always be reading a novel, but not all novels fit the bill. Though popular, most young adult novels and best-selling fiction will not be particular fitting for our purposes. Aside from memoirs, the ACT adapts many of its passages from works that fall within the canon of late nineteenth century and twentieth century literature. Reading choices should reflect this.
  - The College Board's reading list, for college-bound students, would be a good reference point.

4. Short Stories: The short story is a powerful tool to examine the same elements of literature in short form. While a novel might take too long for a student to read, a short story can be read between sessions and used to teach character development. Mentors will benefit from having a handful of short stories at their disposal to draw from.
5. Science-specific publications: Not only will these support the development of active, critical reading skills, but they will also fortify students' understanding of basic scientific principles, which may be helpful in the Science section of the test. Here are a couple of publications that students and mentors might explore:
  - Scientific American
  - National Geographic
  - Nature (peer-reviewed journal)
  - Science Magazine (peer-reviewed journal)
6. Poetry: Poetry is obviously a little bit more abstract, but the same concepts apply. Poems offer the opportunity for in-depth discussions about the author's purpose and tone.

## How to Use These Resources

Assigning alternative reading assignments to read independently, or using non-ACT reading material in your lessons, can be both engaging and highly effective if done so correctly.

First, a few reminders for you and your students that will not only help them on the ACT, but will better prepare them for college:

1. Read like a scholar/editor/test writer: Casually kicking back with a novel on a Sunday afternoon is great, but not for our purposes. Remind students that they should read *everything* with the critical and inquisitive eye of a scholar.
2. Ditch the highlighter for the pen: A pen allows students to mark up the text in way that is truly interactive and forces them to ask *why* a certain line is important in a way that highlighting does not. If students can't write in the book, encourage stickie notes.

## Strategies for Mentors and Students

1. Mark it up:
  - It goes somewhat without saying that students should be encouraged to annotate in the same way they do on actual ACT passages.
2. Play test maker:
  - Writing ACT questions is much more challenging than answering them. After reviewing

the types of questions the ACT asks in its reading passages, have students write questions of their own.

- If a student is struggling with a particular type of question, like the author's purpose, then target this type of question with the student.
- As an added challenge, work with students to come up with strong, believable distractors along with correct answers.

### 3. Read with a purpose:

- While the ACT reading test requires fast, efficient reading, students should also be given the opportunity to slow down a bit and examine a passage with multiple read-throughs. Give students a singular lens through which to read a story or article.
  - For example, a student might read through a passage for style, then again for argument or character.
  - This helps students better understand the craft of writing. Once they are able to analyze a passage through each individual lens, they will be better able to see each of these elements within the scope of an ACT passage.

### 4. Have students analyze their own understanding:

- Another way to utilize multiple read-throughs is to have students give themselves a comprehension score, ranging from 1-10, of a passage, after a single read-through.
- Students should then re-read the passage, underlining any words or sections that they do not understand. When they finish, they should give themselves another score.
- Students can continue this pattern, circling or highlighting sections they still do not understand, until they can confidently give themselves a 10.