

ACT© English Practice Test: 35 Minutes, 50 Questions

Passage I: The Start of the Nuclear Era

On the morning of July 16, 1945, the world entered the nuclear age. An American-made, plutonium bomb was detonated in the desert of New Mexico, and created a force that was large enough to level a small city. Another version of the bomb, the uranium version, was considered to be reliable. Accordingly, the scientists did not think it was necessary to waste a valuable weapon on a test run. The plutonium bomb, however, had a more complex mechanism. The scientists were concerned that the bomb may not correctly function, so they wanted to test the bomb before it was used on the battlefield.

Prior to the test, the scientists had a vast range of predictions as to what might happen. Due to a fear that there could be an accident, key scientists dissolved over the test area to ensure the survivability of the research program.

1. Which choice makes the sentence most grammatically acceptable?
A. NO CHANGE
B. An American-made plutonium bomb
C. An American-made plutonium bomb,
D. An American made plutonium bomb
2. Which transition word or phrase is most logical in context?
A. No Change
B. Because
C. However
D. Nevertheless
3. Which choice makes the sentence most grammatically acceptable?
A. NO CHANGE
B. them
C. it
D. the plutonium bomb
4. If the writer were to delete the underlined sentence, (beginning the paragraph with Due to), the paragraph would primarily lose:
A. An explanation of what the predictions about the bomb test involved.
B. An introduction to the topic of the paragraph.
C. A discussion of the fears that scientists had prior to the test.
D. A chronology of events leading up to the test.
5. Which choice is the clearest and most precise in context?
A. NO CHANGE
B. dissipated
C. diffused
D. dispersed

There were reasonable fears, such as whether the radiation would be sufficiently contained to the test area. There were also apocalyptic fears, such as whether the bomb would create a chain reaction that might consume all the earth.

Then, there were skeptics – lead scientist, Robert Oppenheimer placed a bet against George Kistiakowky that the bomb would not work.

The scientists were initially delighted with the success of the nuclear test. In the coming days, months and years, this delight turned to a haunting contemplation. For so long, the scientists had been consumed with the question of *how* to build the bomb. Afterwards, they were more concerned with the question of *why* they built the bomb in the first place, unleashing the terrific yet terrible power of the atom for human use.

To this day, humanity has yet to come to terms with the nuclear bomb. The scientific discovery of nuclear fission has provided many nations a clean,

6. Which choice makes the sentence most grammatically acceptable?
 - A. NO CHANGE
 - B. reasonable fears; such as
 - C. reasonable fears such as
 - D. reasonable fears. Such as

7. The writer is considering deleting the underlined portion of the sentence. Should this portion be kept or deleted?
 - A. Kept, because it gives a concrete example of fear faced by the scientists.
 - B. Kept, because it shows the atmosphere of excitement surrounding the test.
 - C. Deleted, because it provides an irrelevant example.
 - D. Deleted, because it distracts the reader from the main idea of the paragraph.

8. Which choice makes the sentence most grammatically acceptable?
 - A. NO CHANGE
 - B. skeptics, lead scientist
 - C. skeptics lead scientist
 - D. skeptics – lead scientist

relatively safe power source.

The looming threat of nuclear war, on the other hand, casts a cloud over this technological breakthrough. Nuclear fission has provided society with far more benefits than problems.

9. Which choice makes the sentence most grammatically acceptable?
- A. NO CHANGE
 - B. casted
 - C. had casted
 - D. will cast
10. Given that all of the choices are true, which of the following sentences best concludes the essay?
- A. NO CHANGE
 - B. Only with the passage of time will we see whether our species can use this awesome power for good or for ill.
 - C. Albert Einstein was proven correct in his admonition to Franklin Roosevelt about the Nazi threat to build a bomb.
 - D. Clearly, nuclear weaponry is one of the most sinister inventions every to be created.

Passage II: Classroom Discipline

[1]

New teachers are often taken by surprise when they take the helm of their own classrooms. Doing one's student teaching assignments, they typically find themselves in schools with abundant resources, small class sizes, and engaged students. When new teachers are able to find a full-time position, however, the schools at which they find themselves are often less than ideal. How should new teachers create a supportive yet structured classroom environment for their students?

11. Which choice is the least redundant in context?
- A. NO CHANGE
 - B. When they do their student teaching assignments,
 - C. In the process of completing their student teaching assignments
 - D. When the new teachers proceed to complete their student teaching assignments,

[2]

The first way that many teachers approach classroom discipline is the “permissive” approach. In an effort to relate to the students, the teachers put up very few personal barriers. Positive outcomes are emphasized over negative consequences. What does the permissive classroom look like? Teachers let the students take control, asking for them to act properly rather than demanding it. The students often look at their teachers more as friends than as authority figures. Students may like their teachers, but will

probably not respect them. Detentions are not an option, but extra credit for good behavior is abundant. **12.** Little actual learning can proceed in a classroom like this since chaos will reign.

[3]

The optimal way to create a disciplined environment is a balanced approach, known as the “authoritative” approach. The authoritative teacher wants neither the fear of her students nor

- 12.** The writer is considering deleting the phrase “for good behavior” from the preceding sentence. Should the writer make this deletion?
- A. Yes, because it is irrelevant to the context of the sentence.
 - B. Yes, because it gives unnecessary details that are already clear to the reader.
 - C. No, because it clarifies the reason that extra credit would be given.
 - D. No, because it explains why a detention would not be given in that situation.

their affection. Instead, the academic instructor wants their respect. To avoid the negative consequences of a permissive approach, clear limits are placed on student behavior. To avoid the other extreme of an authoritarian classroom, students are never embarrassed or humiliated, rather, they are disciplined in a thoughtful, productive fashion. An authoritative teacher will give students the choice to behave or not behave,

and if they choose to be disrespectful, a firm and fair consequence will follow. The authoritative approach is optimal, because it places the burden of acting appropriately on the shoulders of the students, empowering them to monitor their behavior as an individual.

[4]

Another way of disciplining students is on the other end of the discipline spectrum – the “authoritarian” approach. Teachers are extremely strict, creating an environment of fear among their students. In such a classroom, teachers will hand out detentions and public humiliation without any hesitation. If the permissive approach is associated with the counterculture movement of

13. Which choice makes the sentence most grammatically acceptable?
A. NO CHANGE
B. they
C. the authoritative teacher
D. he or she
14. Which choice makes the sentence most grammatically acceptable?
A. No CHANGE
B. humiliated rather,
C. humiliated:
D. humiliated. Rather,
15. Which choice is the least redundant in context?
A. NO CHANGE
B. a fair consequence
C. a firm consequence
D. a consequence
16. Which choice is the clearest and most precise in context?
A. NO CHANGE
B. independently
C. alone
D. originally
17. Which choice makes the sentence most grammatically acceptable?
A. NO CHANGE
B. spectrum the
C. spectrum; the
D. spectrum, the,
18. Which transition word or phrase is most logical in context?
A. NO CHANGE
B. While
C. Since
D. Because

the 1960s, in contrast the authoritarian approach is found in more conservative classrooms that look to the 1950s with reverence. Yes, there will be less chaos in a classroom like this. However, students are often too paralyzed by fear to learn. Furthermore, students will associate academic life with great negativity.

Passage III: My Grandma and the Internet

“You can’t teach an old dog new tricks,” said my Grandma as I sat down with her to teach her how to use her new laptop. I decided that teaching her some new tricks were exactly what I would do. Grandma was increasingly homebound, which depressed her since she had no way of

19. Which choice makes the sentence most grammatically acceptable?
- A. NO CHANGE
 - B. the 1960s, because the authoritarian
 - C. the 1960s, the authoritarian
 - D. the 1960s the authoritarian
20. If the writer were to delete the underlined portion, what would the essay lose?
- A. Addressing a potential objection that the reader may have.
 - B. An explanation of the superiority of the permissive approach over the authoritarian approach.
 - C. A detailed comparison of the counterculture approach versus the more conservative approach.
 - D. Nothing – the portion should be omitted.

21. Which choice makes the sentence most grammatically acceptable?
- A. NO CHANGE
 - B. was
 - C. are
 - D. is

going out and about to chat with her friends. **22.**

After much nudging, I had convinced her to purchase a laptop so that she could join the rest of

the 21st century world in modern ways of life.

Grandma's initial apprehension about "all the internet identity theft you hear about on television" was replaced with absolute joy as she discovered social networking websites. Within only a couple of days of using the laptop, Grandma was able to connect with many of her friends from as far back as high school. She laughed as she looked up the profile of an ex-boyfriend from her college years, discovering how dreadful the years had

treated his appearance. **26.**

[1] Once Grandma had her social networking fix, her focus shifted to the online gaming community. [2] Grandma missed being able to play bridge with some of her friends in the nearby town, since she was no longer able to drive her car.

22. Where is the most logical place in the preceding sentence to place the phrase "to no end"?

- A. After the word "was"
- B. After the first "her"
- C. After the word "out"
- D. After the word "friends"

23. Which choice is the least redundant in context?

- A. NO CHANGE
- B. 21st century world.
- C. world.
- D. modern world in 21st century technology.

24. Which choice most effectively maintains the essay's tone?

- A. NO CHANGE.
- B. Before only 48 hours had passed.
- C. Prior to the passage of time counting only two days.
- D. With lightning speed,

25. Which choice makes the sentence most grammatically acceptable?

- A. NO CHANGE
- B. poor
- C. dreadfully
- D. well

26. At this point in the essay, the writer wishes to convey her surprise at the fact that an elderly person was interested in using social networking sites for immoral purposes. Given that all of the choices are true, which of the following best conveys the intent of the author?

- A. And I was shocked that my Grandma was using the internet to reconnect with past friends.
- B. And I could not believe that social networking would be used by the elderly.
- C. And I thought that teenagers were the only ones who resorted to such cyber-stalking antics.
- D. And I was surprised that an older person would commit shoplifting and identity theft.

[3] The laptop allowed her to play bridge with people not only in the nearby town, as over the world. [4] Grandma did enjoy the game, but missed the interaction with her friends.

[5] Grandma discovered that tit wasn't the game so much as it was the gossip that delighted her. [6] Also, she complained about how rude people could be online. [7] When people do not have to look one another in the eye, it is extraordinary how gruff they can be. I am glad that I introduced the power of the World Wide Web to Grandma; however, I may have unleashed a monster. Just the other day Grandma checked out my social networking page. Immediately afterwards, she sent me an inquisitive email wanting to know whether my friend Fred came from a good family. 30.

27. Which choice makes the sentence most grammatically acceptable?
- A. NO CHANGE
 - B. not only in the nearby town, and all over the world.
 - C. not only in the nearby town, but all over the world.
 - D. not only in the nearby town but also all over the world.
28. Which choice makes the sentence most grammatically acceptable?
- A. NO CHANGE
 - B. Grandma, however
 - C. Grandma: however,
 - D. Grandma however
29. Which transition word or phrase is most logical in context?
- A. NO CHANGE
 - B. Consequently,
 - C. Additionally,
 - D. On the other hand,
30. Given that all of the following choices are true, which one best concludes the essay as a whole?
- A. Indeed, Fred did come from a good family, and Grandma discovered she had nothing to worry about.
 - B. I knew that, whatever happens, there was no going back once Grandma had opened the laptop.
 - C. Nevertheless, I am definitely sad that I introduced my Grandma to a tool that has caused her and myself such misery.
 - D. No matter what, it is clear that Grandma is far better off with the internet, and my life is far better with her having it.

Passage IV: Terraformation

[1]

For as long as humans have gazed at the stars, man has wondered what it may be like to one day venture beyond planet Earth and live elsewhere. The major obstacle to implementation of these ambitious plans are that if we live on another planet, we will have to supply all of our own food, air and water from Earth, which would hardly be cost-effective. This problem would be remedied if we were able to create an Earth- like planet through planetary engineering, a process known as “terraformation.”

[2]

34. It is relatively close, has quite a bit of water on its poles, and has a solid surface. How could we change Mars into a planet like our own? Scientists have all sorts of creative ideas, ranging

- 31.** Which choice makes the sentence most grammatically acceptable?
- A. NO CHANGE
 - B. were
 - C. is
 - D. had been
- 32.** Which choice is the least redundant in context?
- A. NO CHANGE
 - B. food
 - C. supplies
 - D. food and water
- 33.** Which choice makes the sentence most grammatically acceptable?
- A. NO CHANGE
 - B. planet, through planetary engineering, a process
 - C. planet through planetary engineering a process
 - D. planet through planetary, engineering, a process
- 34.** The author wishes to insert a sentence at this point that will provide a transition from the previous paragraph and introduce the topic of the next paragraph. Given that all of the following are true, which of the following sentences best accomplishes that task?
- A. Planetary engineering is a monumental task to undertake.
 - B. The greatest candidate for terraformation is Mars.
 - C. Mars, the red planet, is the most fascinating nearby astronomical body.
 - D. Mars would be a great planet for this, as long as additional water can be found.

from using thermonuclear weapons to releasing carbon dioxide from the planetary core, to crashing a comet into the surface of Mars to provide additional water. These creative ideas are similar to the great ideas of past scientists like Einstein and Da Vinci. The general idea is that we would slowly warm up the Martian atmosphere, gradually populate the planet with plant life, and set human habitations eventually.

[3]

Even if humans developed the technology necessary to transform the atmosphere of another planet, the question arises: should it be done? Were we to transform Mars into a miniature Earth, we would likely destroy any native life that has not

35. Which choice makes the sentence most grammatically acceptable?
- A. NO CHANGE
 - B. released
 - C. release
 - D. have released
36. Which transition word or phrase is most logical in context?
- A. NO CHANGE
 - B. Therefore, these
 - C. Consequently, these
 - D. Nevertheless, these
37. Which choice makes the sentence most grammatically acceptable?
- A. NO CHANGE
 - B. set up, human habitations eventually.
 - C. eventually set up human habitations.
 - D. set up, eventually, human habitations.
38. Which of the following would be the best alternative to the underlined portion?
- A. arises. Should it be done?
 - B. arises, should it be done?
 - C. arises; should it be done?
 - D. arises – should it be done?

yet been discovered. Also, we would be modifying a pristine planetary wilderness to make it fit our idea of what is useful. When we look at how we have modified the environment on earth, our track record is not all that great. Then again, if we did terraform Mars, human life would continue, even in the event of a horrific tragedy on Earth. For the sake of the survival of our species, perhaps terraformation is something we should consider. **39.**

[4]

With chronic talks of decreasing the budget for NASA, and plenty of problems here on Earth, it is highly unlikely that terraformation will move from science fiction to scientific reality anytime soon. **40.**

- 39.** Which choice, if inserted here, would most effectively maintain the essay's tone?
- A. NO CHANGE
 - B. It is clear that terraformation will be disastrous for both Earth and Mars alike.
 - C. There is little doubt left that terraformation is the solution to our demographic problems.
 - D. Clearly, NASA should shift its focus from exploration to interplanetary colonization.
- 40.** Upon reviewing the essay and finding that some information has been left out, the writer composes the following sentence incorporating that information:

“ A project like this would be far more grand than anything ever attempted by humans, and the estimated time frame for completion is anywhere from 100 to 1,000,000 years.”

This sentence would most logically be placed after the last sentence in paragraph:

- A. 1
- B. 2
- C. 3
- D. 4

Passage V: Gender Roles and Dating

In my parents' and grandparents' generations, the roles that men and women had in dating were clear. Guys were expected to ask the girl to go out; and be chivalrous in every way possible: paying for dinner, holding open doors, and walking the girl up to her door at the end of the evening. Girls, on the other hand, had less to do; they simply had to look nice and be ready on time. But with this lack of responsibility came a lack of power. **43.** Women had to wait to be asked on a date, and had to leave it up to the guy to plan and pay for an entertaining evening. As feminism has succeeded in many of its goals, especially in increasing female opportunities in the workforce, both positives and negatives have come about for the modern American woman in courtship rituals.

41. Which choice makes the sentence most grammatically acceptable?
- A. NO CHANGE
 - B. In my parents and grandparents generations,
 - C. In my parent's and grandparent's generations,
 - D. Many years ago,
42. Which choice makes the sentence most grammatically acceptable?
- A. NO CHANGE
 - B. girl to go out, and being chivalrous
 - C. girl to go out, and to be chivalrous
 - D. girl to go out by being chivalrous
43. The author is considering deleting the preceding sentence, and starting a new paragraph with "Women had to wait . . ." Should the writer make this change?
- A. Yes, because the first paragraph is about the gender roles of men, and this would provide a transition to a paragraph about women.
 - B. Yes, because the content of the preceding sentence is irrelevant to the topic of the essay.
 - C. No, because it provides a transition between the two parts of the paragraph.
 - D. No, because it explains how women did not have power in American society.
44. Which of the following would NOT work as an alternative to the underlined portion?
- A. goals – especially in increasing female opportunities in the workforce – both
 - B. goals, increasing female opportunities in the workforce, both
 - C. goals, (such as increasing female opportunities in the workforce), both
 - D. goals, including increasing female opportunities in the workforce, both

In consideration of the situation of the modern woman, consider the situation of my twenty-something sister Susan. On her first date with Jeff, they arranged to

meet for an initial date at a local Mexican restaurant.

After a delightful dinner of fajitas and chips with guacamole, the waiter brought over the check.

When he lay it on the table, Susan wasn't sure whether or not she should offer to help pay or not.

Had Jeff been a titan of industry, she would not have hesitated to stick him with the bill. Through the evening's conversation, however, she had learned that he was a freelance artist who certainly made quite a bit less money than she did as

an attorney. Jeff, in the end, with her offer, refused to split the bill.

[1] As Jeff and Susan continued to see one another, Jeff became more agreeable to allowing Susan to pick up the tab now and then. [2] Susan would very much like to settle down and marry Jeff,

45. Which choice most effectively maintains the essay's tone?

- A. NO CHANGE
- B. Illustrating the dilemma of the modern woman,
- C. For the dilemma of the modern woman,
- D. To understand the dilemma of the modern woman,

46. Which choice makes the sentence most grammatically acceptable?

- A. NO CHANGE
- B. had lain
- C. laid
- D. lied

47. Which choice makes the sentence most grammatically acceptable?

- A. NO CHANGE
- B. In the end she offered to split the bill but Jeff refused.
- C. Jeff refused, in the end, to split the bill with her after her offer.
- D. In the end, she offered

but culture dictates that the man is supposed to ask the woman for her hand in marriage. [3] My sister feels like her life is on hold as she is afraid of being thought presumptuous were she to initiate a marriage conversation. [4] When one problem is solved, another seems to come in its place. [5] Jeff, unfortunately, seems to be content to keep things as they are for the foreseeable future.

So, while the modern American woman has a better sense of when to pay on a date, she is still stuck with having to wait on the whims of her significant other to settle the biggest question of all: “Will we be together forever”? This question is extremely pressing for women to solve. 50.

48. If the writer were to delete the underlined portion, (ending the sentence with a period after “Jeff”), the paragraph and essay as a whole would lose:
- A. A transition to the following sentence.
 - B. An explanation of Jeff’s reasons for hesitation.
 - C. A description of Susan’s anxiety.
 - D. An introduction to the cultural issues in relationships.
49. For the sake of logic and coherence, what is the best place for sentence 4?
- A. Where it is now.
 - B. After sentence 1.
 - C. After sentence 2.
 - D. After sentence 5.
50. The writer is considering deleting the last sentence of this paragraph. Should the writer make this deletion?
- A. Yes, because it repeats a point that has been implied throughout the paragraph and the essay as a whole.
 - B. Yes, because it is unrelated to the topic of the paragraph and the essay as a whole.
 - C. No, because it serves to emphasize the importance of this question to the modern American woman.
 - D. No, because it provides a new perspective on the topic of the essay as a whole.

Answer Key

- | | |
|-------|-------|
| 1. B | 26. C |
| 2. A | 27. C |
| 3. C | 28. A |
| 4. B | 29. A |
| 5. D | 30. B |
| 6. A | 31. C |
| 7. A | 32. A |
| 8. D | 33. A |
| 9. A | 34. B |
| 10. B | 35. C |
| 11. B | 36. A |
| 12. C | 37. C |
| 13. D | 38. D |
| 14. D | 39. A |
| 15. A | 40. B |
| 16. B | 41. A |
| 17. A | 42. C |
| 18. B | 43. C |
| 19. C | 44. B |
| 20. A | 45. D |
| 21. B | 46. C |
| 22. B | 47. D |
| 23. B | 48. A |
| 24. A | 49. B |
| 25. C | 50. A |