

ACT[®] Coach

English, Reading, and Writing



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Contents

ACT® College Readiness Standards Correlation to <i>Coach</i> Lessons	6
Chapter 1: Reading Comprehension	7
Lesson 1: Context Clues and Acronyms	8
Lesson 2: Multiple-Meaning Words	14
Lesson 3: Jargon and Technical Terms	20
Lesson 4: Figurative Language	26
Lesson 5: Connotation	32
Lesson 6: Author’s Purpose	38
<i>Chapter 1 Review</i>	44
Chapter 2: Reading Literature and Informational Text	49
Lesson 7: Dialogue	50
Lesson 8: Audience	56
Lesson 9: Main Idea and Details	62
Lesson 10: Summarizing	68
Lesson 11: Cause and Effect	74
Lesson 12: Sequence	80
Lesson 13: Making Predictions	86
Lesson 14: Making Inferences and Drawing Conclusions	92
Lesson 15: Reason and Argument	98
Lesson 16: Comparison and Contrast	104
Lesson 17: Following Instructions	112
<i>Chapter 2 Review</i>	118
Chapter 3: Grammar, Sentence Structure, and Punctuation	123
Lesson 18: Verb Forms and Tenses	124
Lesson 19: Verb Moods	130
Lesson 20: Subject-Verb Agreement	136

Lesson 21: Conjunctions, Prepositions, and Pronouns	142
Lesson 22: Effective Sentence Structure	148
Lesson 23: Parallel Structure	154
Lesson 24: Adjectives and Adverbs	160
Lesson 25: Modifiers	166
Lesson 26: Person and Voice	172
Lesson 27: Punctuation	178
Chapter 3 Review	184
Chapter 4: Composition	187
Lesson 28: Paragraph Coherence	188
Lesson 29: Transitions	194
Lesson 30: Relevant and Irrelevant Information.	200
Lesson 31: Eliminating Redundancy	206
Lesson 32: Word Choice: Style, Tone, and Clarity	212
Lesson 33: Prewriting, Outlining, and Drafting.	218
Lesson 34: Editing and Revising	224
Lesson 35: Persuasive Writing	230
Chapter 4 Review	236
Glossary	244
Practice Test 1	249
Practice Test 2	273

ACT® College Readiness Standards Correlation to Lessons

These standards can be found on the ACT® Web site.

Standard Category: English	Coach Lesson(s)
Topic Development in Terms of Purpose and Focus	6, 7, 8, 9, 32, 33, 35
Organization, Unity, and Coherence	11, 12, 13, 15, 16, 28, 29, 33, 34
Word Choice in Terms of Style, Tone, Clarity, and Economy	3, 8, 31, 32
Sentence Structure and Formation	22, 23
Conventions of Usage	18, 19, 20, 21, 24, 25, 26, 27
Conventions of Punctuation	27

Standard Category: Reading	Coach Lesson(s)
Main Ideas and Author’s Approach	6, 9, 15
Supporting Details	9
Sequential, Comparative, and Cause-Effect Relationships	11, 12, 16
Meanings of Words	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
Generalizations and Conclusions	10, 14, 17

Standard Category: Writing	Coach Lesson(s)
Expressing Judgments	35
Focusing on the Topic	28, 30, 31, 32, 33
Developing a Position	33
Organizing Ideas	33
Using Language	32

Chapter 1

Reading Comprehension

Lesson 1 Context Clues and Acronyms

Lesson 2 Multiple-Meaning Words

Lesson 3 Jargon and Technical Terms

Lesson 4 Figurative Language

Lesson 5 Connotation

Lesson 6 Author's Purpose

Chapter 1 Review

Context Clues and Acronyms

Getting the Idea

A **context clue** is a hint in the text that can help a reader figure out the meaning of an unfamiliar word.

Sometimes a context clue may be in the form of a definition included in the same sentence. For example:

Angel and the other explorers moved across the vast tundra, slowly trekking across the treeless, never-ending, frozen plain.

The underlined word, *tundra*, may be unfamiliar to you. Here, the sentence provides a definition—a “treeless, never-ending, frozen plain.”

Sometimes context clues are found in surrounding sentences—before or after the unfamiliar word. They may also be in the form of a synonym or antonym. A synonym is a word that means the same as another word, while an antonym means the opposite. A restatement is a synonymous phrase that can give a clue to an unfamiliar word’s meaning. Read the following example:

Rashida often included superfluous details in her essays. Mr. Miranda advised her to eliminate unnecessary words in order to improve her writing.

In the sentence above, the word *unnecessary* helps you understand the meaning of its synonym, *superfluous*. Now read this sentence:

Jake was a tentative kind of guy. On the other hand, his brother Kevin was enthusiastic and took charge.

In this example, antonyms are used to compare Jake and Kevin. The phrase *on the other hand* establishes the contrast. Kevin is assertive, but Jake is tentative, or more laid-back and hesitant.

Look for context clues that show cause and effect. For example:

Elissa and Mary Anne had seen all that delicious food in the movie. As a result, they returned home ravenous.

Even if the word *ravenous* is unfamiliar, it can be understood from the context that after salivating at the movie, the girls would be very hungry when they got home.

An **acronym** is a word formed from the initials or parts of several words. For example, NASA is an acronym for **N**ational **A**eronautics and **S**pace **A**dmistration. NATO is an acronym for **N**orth **A**tlantic **T**reaty **O**rganization. Acronyms typically include the initials of key words and leave out the initials of small, unimportant words like *and*, *for*, and *of*. Acronyms are pronounced as one word, not as a series of letters. This is different from initialisms, such as NFL, IRS, and GPS, in which each letter is pronounced separately.

The first time an acronym appears in a text it is usually enclosed in parentheses after the full spelling of the name or term. For example:

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) provides assistance in times of disaster. FEMA can help people rebuild their lives.

Thinking It Through

Read the following paragraph, and then answer the question that follows.

A sprained ankle is a common injury that can often be treated at home. Doctors recommend the RICE method of treatment. First, it is important to rest the ankle. Do not put too much weight on it for the first two days following the injury. Second, ice the injury every three to four hours during the first two days. Third, apply compression to the ankle by wrapping it up in a bandage. Be careful not to cut off the circulation! Finally, keep the ankle above your heart as often as possible. Elevation will help reduce inflammation.



What is the acronym in the passage, and which words does it most likely stand for?

Hint Use context clues to figure out the words that the acronym represents.

Coached Example

Read the passage and answer the questions.

When I was growing up, the old man who lived in the red brick house at the end of the block was particularly churlish. He was always yelling at kids passing by and complaining that they trespassed on his lawn. I never once saw him smile. Sometimes, when we were younger, my friends and I would take a longer route home from school to avoid seeing him. It definitely seemed like the better option. Only the most intrepid of us dared to get close to him. At the time, I thought he detested children and enjoyed being mean to them. Now, however, I see things differently. I see him as a sad, lonely man who lost his joy of life somewhere along the way. My fear and resentment of him have been replaced with pity. I make a point of walking by his house, waving, and saying hello when I see him. He never reciprocates my greeting, but he doesn't yell at me, either.



1. In the first sentence, what does the word churlish mean?
 - A. outgoing
 - B. grumpy
 - C. in poor health
 - D. knowledgeable

Hint Clues to the meaning of the word *churlish* can be found in the two sentences that follow it.

2. In the last sentence, what does the word reciprocates mean?
 - A. returns
 - B. ignores
 - C. questions
 - D. identifies

Hint Try replacing *reciprocates* with each answer choice, then choose the one that best fits the context.

Lesson Practice

Use the Reading Guide to help you understand the passage.

Reading Guide

What does the *D* in *CDC* most likely stand for?

Which context clues in the introduction help you understand the word *sequestered*?

excerpted and adapted from

The Decameron

by Giovanni Boccaccio

*Today, organizations like the CDC and the WHO work to prevent and control diseases. People of earlier times did not enjoy the benefits of these organizations. During the fourteenth century, multiple outbreaks of the plague decimated over one third of the population in Europe. The highly contagious disease known as the Black Death was transmitted through contact with infected animals or persons. Nobles and other wealthy people sequestered themselves in country estates in the hopes of staying alive. This human tragedy was the backdrop for Boccaccio's *The Decameron*, a collection of one hundred stories. In the framing story, ten people flee from a plague-ridden city to the country. To pass the time, each person tells ten tales.*

- 1 Near Sicily, on an islet called Lipari, lived a fair damsel called Costanza, born of a very considerable family. It chanced that a very agreeable young man of the same island, called Martuccio Gomito, fell in love with her, and she fell in love with him.
- 2 Costanza's father, however, felt that Martuccio was too poor to marry his daughter. The young man, incensed to see himself rejected for poverty, equipped a ship and swore never to return to Lipari until he was rich. Accordingly, he departed thence and became a pirate, cruising off the coast of Barbary and plundering all who were weaker than himself. Then one day, he and his companions were attacked by the Saracens. Most of the crew was killed, but Martuccio was captured and imprisoned in Tunis, a city in North Africa.
- 3 The news was brought to Lipari, and Costanza, believing that Martuccio was dead with the others, wept. One night, she rowed out to sea in a little boat. The wind carried her to a beach near the town of Susa, a hundred miles beyond Tunis. By chance, an old woman named Carapresa was on the beach, gathering the fishermen's nets. Carapresa asked the girl how she had come to be in that boat all alone.

Use context clues to figure out the meaning of *aught*.

What is an adversary?

4 Weeping, Costanza recounted her sad fate. The kind woman brought Costanza to the house of a Saracen lady, who graciously took her in. Costanza joined the other women of the household, making silk and leather goods.

5 One day, a certain youth of great family and power in Granada declared that the kingdom of Tunis was rightfully his. He assembled a large army to oust Mariabdela, King of Tunis. Hearing that the king was making great efforts to defend his kingdom, Martuccio spoke to one of the prison guards: “Tell the king that I know how he can win this war.”

6 When Martuccio was brought before the king, he said, “My lord, I have noted that you wage your battles more with archers than with aught else. Therefore, if a means could be found whereby your adversary’s bowmen should lack arrows, while your own had abundance thereof, I believe your battle would be won.”

7 “Without doubt,” answered the king, “if this might be done, I should deem myself assured of victory.”

8 “Here is what you do,” continued Martuccio. “Have strings made for your archers’ bows much thinner than those which are commonly used. Then, make arrows with notches that shall only serve for these thin strings. After your adversary’s archers and your own shall have shot all their arrows, you know that, the battle lasting, your foes will gather up the arrows shot by your men and your men will gather theirs. But the enemy will not be able to make use of your arrows because the narrow notches will not work with their thick strings. Meanwhile, your men will make good use of the enemy’s arrows, since the thin strings will work with the wide-notched arrows. And so your men will have abundance of ammunition while the others will have a shortage.”

9 The king followed Martuccio’s counsel and won his war. Martuccio was freed and given great riches as a reward. It came presently to Costanza’s ears that Martuccio Gomito, whom she had long deemed dead, was alive. She traveled to Tunis, where Martuccio lived in a grand estate. Costanza threw herself on his neck and began to weep. Martuccio embraced her, weeping, and kissed her tenderly. He and Costanza returned to Lipari, where so great was the rejoicing that it might never be told. Martuccio and Costanza were married, after which they long lived in peace and repose.

Answer the following questions.

1. What does the word decimated mean, as used in the introduction?
 - A. encountered
 - B. astounded
 - C. revived
 - D. killed

 2. In this passage, the WHO is MOST LIKELY an association known as
 - A. Wipe Hunger Out.
 - B. With Hearts Open.
 - C. Witty Hacker Organization.
 - D. World Health Organization.

 3. What is the meaning of incensed in paragraph 2?
 - A. puzzled
 - B. satisfied
 - C. very angry
 - D. grateful

 4. Which word in paragraph 2 BEST helps you understand the meaning of plundering?
 - A. pirate
 - B. captured
 - C. departed
 - D. companions
-

5. Explain the context clues that help you figure out the meaning of the word oust in paragraph 5.
