

ACT Writing Study Pack

Quick Review · Essay Planner · Flashcards

1 essay · 40 minutes · optional section

How to use this pack. Start with the review, complete the practice before reading the key, then cut out or cover the flashcard answers for self-testing. These are original, unofficial practice materials. ACT is a registered trademark of ACT Education Corp.; no endorsement is implied.

Quick Review

Ideas and Analysis. Understand the issue and all perspectives before choosing your position. Your argument should answer the question and show that you understand the tradeoffs.

Development and Support. Give reasons, examples, or observations, then explain why each one supports your claim. A specific example is useful only when its connection is clear.

Organization. Use a focused introduction, purposeful body paragraphs, and a conclusion that follows from the argument. Transitions should show the relationship between ideas.

Language Use and Conventions. Prefer clear, direct sentences. Save a few minutes to check agreement, sentence boundaries, punctuation, and word choice.

Timed Essay Practice

Prompt 1: Public spaces

A town is deciding whether to convert an underused parking lot into a public green space. Some residents value the added outdoor area; others worry about losing parking and maintenance costs. Consider the perspectives below, then develop your own position and explain how it relates to one or more of them.

Perspective 1: A green space can improve daily life and give residents a place to gather. Perspective 2: The town should preserve practical services and avoid long-term costs. Perspective 3: The best choice depends on whether the design meets several needs at once.

Prompt 2: School schedules

A school district is considering a later start time for high school. Supporters emphasize student well-being; others point to transportation, work, and family schedules. Develop a position and explain how it relates to one or more perspectives.

Perspective 1: Students need schedules that allow enough rest. Perspective 2: A change should not create unmanageable effects for families and staff. Perspective 3: A flexible schedule may balance different needs better than one fixed time.

A quick plan for 40 minutes

1. Minutes 0–5: Identify the issue, summarize each perspective, and choose a position.
2. Minutes 5–9: Draft a claim and two reasons; jot one example for each.
3. Minutes 9–30: Write an introduction and developed body paragraphs. Connect evidence to reasoning.
4. Minutes 30–35: Address another perspective fairly and explain your response.
5. Minutes 35–40: Revise organization, clarity, sentence boundaries, and conventions.

Four-part self-check: Did I (1) take a clear position, (2) develop reasons with examples, (3) organize ideas so the relationship is clear, and (4) use readable, correct sentences?

Flashcards

Cover the right column, answer aloud, and then check. For print-and-cut use, trim along the rules.

Front / term	Back / meaning
Position	Your clear, defensible answer to the prompt's central issue.
Perspective	A way of viewing the issue, often emphasizing different values or outcomes.
Claim	A reasoned statement that supports your position.
Evidence	An example, observation, or fact used to support a claim.
Reasoning	The explanation connecting evidence to the claim.
Counterargument	A fair description of a concern or position that differs from yours.
Response	Your explanation of why your position remains stronger or how it addresses the concern.
Organization	The logical arrangement of ideas across paragraphs.
Development	The detail and explanation that make a reason convincing.
Implication	A likely consequence or broader effect of a choice.
Transition	A phrase that clarifies how one idea relates to another.
Revision pass	A final review for clarity, logic, paragraph flow, and conventions.

Quick Planning Practice

1. State the issue in one sentence and write your position.
2. Summarize one perspective you will engage with.
3. Write a claim, a supporting example, and the reasoning that connects them.
4. Name one likely counterargument and your response.