

The Research-
Driven Solution
to Raise the
Quality of High
School Core
Courses

QualityCore[®]



English 9

End-of-Course Test Blueprint



Test Blueprint QualityCore® End-of-Course Assessment English 9

The QualityCore® End-of-Course (EOC) system is modular, consisting of either two 35–38 item multiple-choice components or one 35–38 item multiple-choice component combined with a constructed-response component. This approach to measuring achievement of ACT Course Standards allows users to select the configuration that best meets their particular needs, while still receiving scores on a standardized QualityCore scale.

The EOC Test Blueprint tables below show how the test items are distributed across reporting categories and depth-of-knowledge levels. The tables display ranges of the percentages of operational multiple-choice items and the number of operational constructed-response items per test. Sample standards by reporting category are provided, along with definitions of the depth-of-knowledge thinking processes covered by the assessment. The constructed-response scoring guide is also presented.

Reporting category	Percent of multiple-choice items	Number of constructed-response items
Reading Comprehension	35–55	—
Critical Reading	25–45	—
Modes of Writing	0–10	—
Mechanics of Writing	10–20	—
Essay	—	1
Total	100	1

Depth of Knowledge	Percent of multiple-choice items	Number of constructed-response items
Level 1 — Literal	15–25	—
Level 2 — Interpretive	50–70	—
Level 3 — Evaluative	15–25	1
Total	100	1

Sample ACT Course Standards by Reporting Category

Reading Comprehension

- Identify key characteristics in various genres; interpret how form shapes meaning
- Identify elements of fiction; recognize how they shape meaning
- Summarize and paraphrase information
- Identify author’s purpose and basic elements of style
- Use context clues to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words
- Understand how organization and writer’s techniques shape meaning

Critical Reading

- Analyze various common literary devices
- Analyze various common poetic devices
- Analyze persuasive techniques and detect bias
- Make logical inferences
- Use important details and facts to support conclusions

Modes of Writing (only if second multiple-choice component is administered)

- Identify and analyze effective writing techniques in various modes
- Demonstrate understanding of effective organization
- Add important information and delete irrelevant information
- Use organizational strategies to clarify meaning and maintain consistency

Mechanics of Writing

- Correct errors in sentence construction; understand how sentence structure shapes meaning
- Correct common usage and punctuation errors
- Use punctuation to clarify meaning and create variety

Essay (only if constructed-response component is administered)

- Craft a first draft of a personal essay that thoughtfully describes an experience relevant to the subject or theme of a reading passage; demonstrate insightful understanding of the significance of this experience
- Effectively convey a personal experience using literary writing techniques; elaborate on the effect or influence of the experience on the writer and/or others; maintain clear focus on critical ideas
- Effectively organize an essay using logical progression of ideas and effective transitions; employ an engaging introduction and effective conclusion
- Demonstrate good command of language through well-constructed sentences and precise word choice; maintain appropriate voice and tone; express ideas clearly with correct grammar, usage, and mechanics

Thinking Processes

ACT uses the depth-of-knowledge (DOK) levels (Webb, 2002) to describe the thinking processes assessed by the EOC tests. Webb developed labels and descriptions of the DOK levels specifically for English Language Arts.[†]

Level 1: Recall (Literal) requires students to recite facts or to use simple skills or abilities. Items require only a literal understanding of text and often consist of verbatim recall from text.

Level 1 items require students to:

- Support ideas by reference to details in a passage
- Identify figurative language in a passage
- Use appropriate grammar, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling
- Recall elements and details of passage structure, such as sequence of events, character, plot, and setting

[†] Webb, Norman L. (2002). Depth-of-Knowledge Levels for Four Content Areas. Retrieved from <http://facstaff.wcer.wisc.edu/normw/All%20content%20areas%20%20DOK%20levels%2032802.doc>

Level 2: Skill/Concept (Interpretive) requires mental processing that goes beyond recalling or reproducing an answer. It involves comprehension and subsequent processing of text; intersentence analysis and inference are required. The cognitive demands are more complex than in Level 1. Level 2 items require students to:

- Identify and summarize major events, main ideas, and pertinent details
- Use context clues to determine the meaning of a word
- Predict a logical outcome based on information in a passage
- Use organizational strategies to structure written work

Level 3: Strategic Thinking (Evaluative) requires planning, thinking, explaining, justifying, using evidence, conjecturing, and postulating. The cognitive demands are complex and abstract, going beyond Level 2. Level 3 items require students to:

- Evaluate writing and writing strategies
- Describe the author’s purpose and how it affects the interpretation of a passage
- Analyze and describe the characteristics of a passage
- Infer across an entire passage
- Identify abstract themes
- Use voice appropriate to the purpose and audience
- Edit writing to produce a logical progression of ideas
- Analyze and synthesize information

QualityCore English 9 Analytic Scoring Guide

Purpose of Task: To Present a Reflective Narrative

For each English constructed-response item, four separate analytic scores (ranging from 1 to 6) are given: reflective narrative, development, organization, and language. These scores are added together and are reported as the Essay subscore. No score is given to a response that is blank, off-topic, illegible, or written in another language.

REFLECTIVE NARRATIVE SCORE

Score of 6: Responses at this score point demonstrate effective skill in writing a reflective narrative. The response demonstrates an insightful and thorough understanding of the reflective narrative task and memorably describes and critically analyzes an experience of meaningful reflective significance. Reflection in the response is integrated, embedded in a way that clearly leads the reader from specific personal experience to the abstraction that underlies it.

Score of 5: Responses at this score point demonstrate competent skill in writing a reflective narrative. The response demonstrates a thoughtful understanding of the reflective narrative task, successfully describes and analyzes an experience of meaningful reflective significance, and clearly expresses integral connections between personal experience and abstract ideas.

Score of 4: Responses at this score point demonstrate adequate skill in writing a reflective narrative. The response demonstrates understanding of the reflective narrative task, adequately describes and analyzes an experience of reflective significance, and establishes a connection between personal experience and more general ideas.

Score of 3: Responses at this score point demonstrate some developing skill in writing a reflective narrative. The response demonstrates limited understanding of the reflective narrative task, attempts to describe and analyze an experience of reflective significance with limited success, and suggests a connection between personal experience and more general ideas, although reflection is brief or unclear.

Score of 2: Responses at this score point demonstrate inconsistent or weak skill in writing a reflective narrative. The response demonstrates little understanding of the reflective narrative task. Any attempt at description and analysis of an experience of reflective significance is inaccurate, confusing, or unclear. The response lacks connection between personal experience and more general ideas.

Score of 1: Responses at this score point demonstrate little or no skill in writing a reflective narrative. The response demonstrates no understanding of the reflective narrative task, does not describe and analyze an experience of reflective significance, and offers no connection between personal experience and more general ideas.

DEVELOPMENT SCORE

Score of 6: Responses at this score point demonstrate effective skill in writing a reflective narrative. The response describes an appropriate experience in memorable detail. Reflective ideas are thoroughly explained. The response maintains an effective balance between describing the experience and relating it to the abstract.

Score of 5: Responses at this score point demonstrate competent skill in writing a reflective narrative. The response describes an appropriate experience with strong detail. Reflective ideas are clearly explained. The response maintains a balance between describing the experience and relating it to the abstract.

Score of 4: Responses at this score point demonstrate adequate skill in writing a reflective narrative. The response demonstrates an appropriate experience with some original detail. Reflective ideas are adequately explained. The response mostly maintains a balance between describing the experience and relating it to the abstract, although one may be slightly underdeveloped.

Score of 3: Responses at this score point demonstrate some developing skill in writing a reflective narrative. The response demonstrates an appropriate experience but offers few and mostly mundane details. Reflective ideas are only somewhat explained. The response is poorly balanced; either the description of the experience or the reflection is significantly underdeveloped.

Score of 2: Responses at this score point demonstrate inconsistent or weak skill in writing a reflective narrative. The response reports rather than describes an appropriate experience. Explanations of reflective ideas are incomplete or unclear. The response is not balanced; either the description of the experience or the reflection is significantly underdeveloped or absent.

Score of 1: Responses at this score point demonstrate little or no skill in writing a reflective narrative. The response may not discuss an appropriate experience, may lack explanation of reflective ideas, or may be comprised entirely of a description of the experience.

ORGANIZATION SCORE

Score of 6: Responses at this score point demonstrate effective skill in writing a reflective narrative. The response achieves unity through a natural progression of ideas, sequenced through lines of thought rather than external organizational patterns. The response provides closure, leaving the reader with something to think about.

Score of 5: Responses at this score point demonstrate competent skill in writing a reflective narrative. The response offers a well-sequenced beginning, middle, and end, with a logical progression of ideas. The response provides closure, leaving the reader with something to think about.

Score of 4: Responses at this score point demonstrate adequate skill in writing a reflective narrative. The response offers a clear beginning, middle, and end, although it may seem restricted by an organizational formula. Ideas are logically grouped throughout the response. The response includes a clear and adequate closing.

Score of 3: Responses at this score point demonstrate some developing skill in writing a reflective narrative. The response shows evidence of organization but tends to digress at times. Most ideas in the response are logically grouped. The response offers an underdeveloped or unsuccessful closing.

Score of 2: Responses at this score point demonstrate inconsistent or weak skill in writing a reflective narrative. The response shows some evidence of organization but is somewhat confusing. Only some ideas are logically grouped in the response. The response offers a weak closing.

Score of 1: Responses at this score point demonstrate little or no skill in writing a reflective narrative. The response shows little or no evidence of organization and little or no logical grouping of ideas. The response is missing a closing.

LANGUAGE SCORE

Score of 6: Responses at this score point demonstrate effective skill in writing a reflective narrative. The writing is engaging, using strong and expressive sentences with varied structure. The response uses precise, imaginative, and metaphoric language in addition to strong verbs and sensory images. Although there may be a few minor errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics, meaning is clear throughout the response.

Score of 5: Responses at this score point demonstrate competent skill in writing a reflective narrative. The writing is clear, and sentences have varied structure. Language is evocative, with strong verbs, sensory images, and figurative language. There are a few errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics, but they are rarely distracting and meaning is clear.

Score of 4: Responses at this score point demonstrate adequate skill in writing a reflective narrative. The writing is clear, with a little sentence variety and some successful use of sensory images and figurative language. There are some distracting errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics, but meaning is usually clear.

Score of 3: Responses at this score point demonstrate some developing skill in writing a reflective narrative. The writing is clear, but general, and lacks sentence variety. Creative or descriptive language use is minimal or ineffective. Errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics are distracting and occasionally impede understanding.

Score of 2: Responses at this score point demonstrate inconsistent or weak skill in writing a reflective narrative. The writing is generally understandable, but sentence structure and word use are basic. Little or no creative or descriptive language is attempted. Errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics are frequently distracting and sometimes impede understanding.

Score of 1: Responses at this score point demonstrate little or no skill in writing a reflective narrative. The writing is not clear and may be confusing or hard to follow. The descriptive nature of the task is unacknowledged. Errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics are frequently distracting and significantly impede understanding.

ACT endorses the *Code of Fair Testing Practices in Education* and the *Code of Professional Responsibilities in Educational Measurement*, guides to the conduct of those involved in educational testing. ACT is committed to ensuring that each of its testing programs upholds the guidelines in each *Code*. A copy of each *Code* may be obtained free of charge from ACT Customer Services (68), P.O. Box 1008, Iowa City, IA 52243-1008, 319/337-1429.