

SAT and ACT Combo Test: Answer Explanations

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Section 5 – ACT Reading Test

17 minutes, 20 questions

The following abbreviations identify common types of wrong answers:

OOS Out of scope: This information isn't in the passage.

WL Wrong location: This information is in the passage, but not in the location identified in the question stem.

OPP Opposite: One word or concept is the opposite of what was in the passage.

MS Misused synonym: This is a synonym of the word in question, but it doesn't fit back into the sentence given the context.

EXT Extreme answer: This takes the right answer too far, or it takes a statement extremely literally.

ALT Alteration: The correct answer has been altered to form this incorrect answer.

1. A. **OPP** The author says the house isn't haunted.
- B. **Correct answer.** In lines 1-2, the author refers to herself and her husband as "mere ordinary people."
- C. **WL** The author calls the house "untenanted" but not "dilapidated." She makes comments about the garden being in disrepair, but not in the first paragraph.
- D. **OOS** The author does not mention whether or not the house is tidy.
2. F. **OPP** Although the author refers to the house as an "hereditary estate," she doesn't imply it belongs to her own family. Otherwise, why would she need to rent it?
- G. **ALT** John's mocking references the author's appreciation of the home. Furthermore, she believes the house is not haunted.
- H. **Correct answer.** The questions concern the house being "rented cheaply" and "long untenanted"
- J. **EXT** The author mentions that she "expects that in marriage," but there is no indication that her expectations are unreasonable.

3. A. **Correct answer.** In line 17, the author says that “he does not believe I am sick.” This shows that her husband does not share her belief that she has an illness.
- B. **OPP** In line 29, the author says she is “forbidden to work” by which she means writing.
- C. **OPP** In line 28, the author says she disagrees with the idea that she shouldn’t write.
- D. **OOS** The author doesn’t mention any friends.
4. Consider line 23, “My brother is also a physician, and also of high standing, and he says the same thing.”
- F. **ALT** The author’s brother has a similar standing as her husband.
- G. **ALT** No difference is stated between the two doctors’ attitude toward medicine.
- H. **Correct answer.** The author’s brother says the same thing as her husband.
- J. **OOS** Anger on the brother’s part is not discussed in this passage.
5. Consider the statement in line 30, “but what am I to do?”
- A. **OOS** The author doesn’t display any joy.
- B. **ALT** The husband and brother are controlling, not the author.
- C. **OOS** The author doesn’t display any arrogance.
- D. **Correct answer.** This statement is an example of resignation.
6. Consider line 47: “There were greenhouses, too, but they are all broken now.”
- F. **ALT** The author mentions “gates that lock” but does not connect them to the idea of an extended vacancy.
- G. **Correct answer.** The fact that the greenhouses are broken shows that the garden has fallen into a state of disrepair.
- H. **ALT** The author mentions a great distance from the road but does not connect this to the idea of an extended vacancy.
- J. **ALT** The author mentions the grapevines but does not call them overgrown.

7. Consider lines 75-77, which describe the pattern of the wallpaper as “uncertain curves” that “commit suicide” and “destroy themselves.”
- A. **ALT** The color is described as “repellant,” but this is not personification.
 - B. **Correct answer.** Only a person (as compared to an inanimate object) would be “uncertain” or take the actions mentioned in lines 75-77.
 - C. **ALT** The paper is described as “stripped off in great patches,” but this is not personification.
 - D. **OOS** The way the paper smells is not mentioned. (“Sickly sulphur” is a reference to color, not smell.)
8. Consider the lines 25-28, when the author discusses the instructions of her husband and brother: “So I take... tonics, and journeys, and air, and exercise, and am absolutely forbidden to ‘work’ until I am well again.”
- F. **OPP** John forbids her to work.
 - G. **OOS** The passage does not mention spending time with family.
 - H. **OPP** Writing is the “work” that the author is forbidden to do.
 - J. **Correct answer.** John does advocate for exercise.
9. The quote in line 60-63 is about “getting air,” which means that the husband would like the author to be in a location with abundant fresh air. This statement is directly followed by “So, we took the nursery, at the top of the house.”
- A. **Correct answer.** The implication here is that the nursery was selected because of its access to fresh air.
 - B. **WL** John does believe in exercise, but it is not a factor in selecting the room.
 - C. **OOS** The passage does not discuss the husband’s control over her diet.
 - D. **OOS** The passage does not indicate a belligerent (aggressive, angry) attitude on the part of the husband.
10. Consider the lines 32-33: “I did write for a while in spite of them, but it does exhaust me a good deal having to be so sly about it...”
- F. **OPP** The author seems to enjoy writing.
 - G. **OOS** Publication is not mentioned in the passage.
 - H. **OOS** The house’s suitability, or lack thereof, for writing is not mentioned.
 - J. **Correct answer.** Lines 32-33 make the connection between hiding her writing and being exhausted.

11. A. **ALT** There is a reference to harsh criticism of architectural flourishes (Ornament is crime, in line 24), but that opinion belongs to someone other than the authors.
- B. **WL** Although the authors may be interested in human history, they only mention it in one location. This is not the main focus of the passage, so the passage is not “best described” in this way.
- C. **Correct answer.** In the beginning, middle and end of this passage, the authors present several opinions and conclusions (review of literature) on ornamentation in architecture (one aspect of a specific field).
- D. **ALT** Although the passage mentions a few renowned architects, it offers no evidence that the authors themselves are architects.
12. F. **OPP** Nothing about ornamental features is “lamented.”
- G. **OOS** Although the historical presence of ornament appears in the paragraph, the authors do not specifically address its evolution.
- H. **WL** This appears later in the passage, not in the first paragraph.
- J. **Correct answer.** The first paragraph mentions how the idea of ornament has been part of the field of architecture from “the very first architectural treatises ... into the 21st century.”
13. A. **Correct answer.** Lines 17-19 state that “these achievements have provided a brilliant opportunity for cheaper, faster, and high quality production of a new generation of ornaments.”
- B. **WL** A text questions the need for ornamentation, but it is not discussed with respect to technology.
- C. **WL** The “imprecise definition” of ornament is discussed, but not with respect to technology.
- D. **OOS** The authors do not state the opinion that decoration is more important than ornament.
14. F. **EXT** Clearly, the book “Ornament is Crime” uses “crime” in a figurative rather than a literal sense.
- G. **Correct answer.** The authors mention that the book is a part of the modernist movement, and that flourishes are “distracting.”
- H. **WL** This is discussed in later paragraphs, but not in the third paragraph.
- J. **OPP** Some architects recommend eliminating (not using) decoration to create calm negative space.

15. Matt Gibberd and Albert Hill _____ that sleek, clean lines...
- A. **Correct answer.** “Suggest” would fit well in this sentence.
 - B. **OPP** This statement shows what they would agree with, not disagree.
 - C. **EXT** They state their opinion but do not impose it on anyone else.
 - D. **EXT** They state their opinion but do not enforce it.
16. F. **OPP** Lines 56-58 state “ornament and decoration are neither synonymous nor interchangeable.”
- G. **WL** This is a reference to the book “Ornament is Crime” that is mentioned earlier in the passage.
 - H. **WL** This comes from the previous paragraph, before the discussion of definitions.
 - J. **Correct answer.** The authors discuss this in lines 42-44, “Ornament... possesses a multifaced nature which resists any precise definition.”
17. For this question, we are looking for the one “out of scope” answer, so we must eliminate anything that is in scope.
- A. **IN SCOPE** Lines 29-32 discuss the purpose of negative space.
 - B. **IN SCOPE** Lines 75-77 discuss what ornament and decoration have in common.
 - C. **OOS Correct answer.** The authors never give their personal opinions concerning the extent to which ornament should be used in architecture.
 - D. **IN SCOPE** Lines 95-97 state that “a more careful application of the terms... is anticipated.”
18. F. **OOS** The authors never criticize postmodernists.
- G. **WL** The last paragraph does not mention technology.
 - H. **Correct answer.** The authors anticipate a “revision of architects’ approach” and a “more careful application of terms” in the future.
 - J. **OOS** The authors do not state an opinion on this.

19. For this question, we are looking for the one “wrong” answer, so we must eliminate anything that is in scope.
- A. **IN SCOPE** Lines 72-73 mention both history and mythology with respect to decoration.
 - B. **IN SCOPE** In line 77 the authors state that decoration’s main role is “beautifying...their carriers.”
 - C. **IN SCOPE** In lines 47-49, the authors state that the words “ornament” and “decoration” are sometimes (erroneously) used interchangeably.
 - D. **OPP Correct answer.** Lines 69-70 state that a decoration “does not have a permanent connection with its carrier.”
20. F. **OOS** The passage does not state whether ornament can appear on the interior of a building.
- G. **Correct answer.** Lines 62-63 say that ornament “creates a firm bonding with its carrier” while lines 69-70 state that a decoration “does not have a permanent connection with its carrier.”
 - H. **OPP** Both ornament and decoration are intended to be aesthetically pleasing, as stated in line 77.
 - J. **EXT** The words “Ornament is Crime” are not intended to be taken literally.