



How Vocabulary is Tested Today—The ACT Loves Context

Today's tests are more complex; they try to test your understanding not only of the textbook definition of the word, but your understanding of its place in the language as well. A word's use in the context of language is just as important as its definition.

The ACT takes a subtle approach to testing vocabulary: they include it where knowing the word is crucial to understanding or answering the question, usually without testing it directly. In other words, the vocabulary words on the ACT are usually surrounded by a decent number of hints as to their meanings. These hints are also known as context clues.

Knowing definitions of words isn't as good a measure of language mastery as is the skill of choosing the best word for a specific context. In other words, it's less about the words themselves and more about how they fit with the words around them. The ACT really takes this to heart and rewards students who know how to use context clues.

Let's Begin.....Look Inside!

Prepare. Practice. Succeed.

Blue text indicates a high-frequency word.

An asterisk (*) indicates the definition of the word that is more/most likely to appear on the ACT.

English & Reading

1. **adhere** *verb*
stick completely to a surface or substance* [or]believe in and follow the practices of
2. **aloof** *adjective*
not friendly or forthcoming; cool and distant
3. **ambiguous** *adjective*
open to more than one interpretation; having a double meaning
4. **analyze** *verb*
examine in detail, typically for purposes of explanation and interpretation (analysis, analytical)
5. **anecdote** *noun*
a short and amusing or interesting story about a real incident or person
6. **antagonize** *verb*
cause someone to become hostile
7. **anticipate** *verb*
regard as probable; expect or predict
8. **apprehensive** *adjective*
anxious or fearful that something bad will happen
9. **arcane** *adjective*
mysterious or secret
10. **assert** *verb*
state a fact or belief confidently and forcefully
11. **assess** *verb*
evaluate or estimate the nature, ability, or quality of
12. **attribute** *verb*
regard something as being caused by someone or something
13. **bear** *verb*
endure an ordeal or difficulty
14. **befall** *verb*
(of something bad) happen to someone
15. **burgeon** *verb*
begin to grow or increase rapidly; flourish
16. **coherent** *adjective*
logical and consistent
17. **compassion** *noun*
concern for the sufferings or misfortunes of others
18. **compensate (for)** *verb*
make up for something unwelcome or unpleasant by exerting an opposite force or effect
19. **complement** *noun*
a thing that completes or brings to perfection a larger whole
20. **compose** *verb*
1. write or create*
2. constitute, make up (composition, composed of)
21. **condescending** *adjective*
having or showing a feeling of superiority
22. **consecutive** *adjective*
following continuously; in unbroken or logical sequence
23. **contour** *noun*
an outline, especially one representing or bounding the shape or form of something
24. **contract** *verb*
decrease in size, number, or range
25. **contradict** *verb*
be in conflict with
26. **correlate** *verb*
have a mutual relationship or connection (corollary, correlated)
27. **corollary** *noun*
a direct or natural consequence or result
28. **critical** *adjective*
1. expressing adverse or disapproving comments or judgments
2. expressing or involving an analysis of the merits and faults of a work of literature, music, or art*
3. involving the objective analysis and evaluation of an issue in order to form a judgment*
4. (of a situation or problem) having the potential to become disastrous; at a point of crisis

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29. **cumbersome** *adjective*
1. large or heavy and therefore difficult to carry or use
2. slow or complicated and therefore inefficient*
30. **deficit** *noun*
the amount by which something is too small
31. **demean** *verb*
cause a severe loss in the dignity of and respect for someone or something
32. **depict** *verb*
show or represent
33. **determine** *verb*
1. cause (something) to occur in a particular way; be the decisive factor in
2. ascertain or establish exactly, typically as a result of research or calculation*
34. **devoid** *adjective*
entirely lacking or free from
35. **differentiate** *verb*
1. recognize or ascertain what makes (someone or something) different*
2. (differentiate between) identify differences between (two or more things or people)
3. make (someone or something) appear different or distinct
4. make or become different in the process of growth or development
36. **diffuse** *adjective*
spread out over a large area; not concentrated
37. **digress** *verb*
leave the main subject temporarily in speech or writing
38. **diminish** *verb*
make or become less
39. **discrepancy** *noun*
a lack of compatibility or similarity between two or more facts
40. **(dis)inclined** *adjective*
willing or positive about an action, belief, or attitude (disinclined: unwilling or negative about something)
41. **dismay** *verb*
consternation and distress, typically that caused by something unexpected
42. **disposition** *noun*
1. a person's inherent qualities of mind and character*
2. an inclination or tendency
43. **dynamic** *adjective*
characterized by constant change, activity, or progress
44. **eclipse** *noun*
a loss of significance, power, or prominence in relation to another person or thing
45. **emerge** *verb*
become apparent, important, or prominent
46. **eminent** *adjective*
famous and respected within a particular sphere or profession
47. **engage** *verb*
1. occupy, attract, or involve (someone's interest or attention)
2. (engage someone in) cause someone to become involved in (a conversation or discussion)
3. (engage in) participate or become involved in*
48. **engross** *verb*
absorb all the attention or interest of
49. **ethereal** *adjective*
extremely delicate and light in a way that seems too perfect for this world
50. **evolve** *verb*
develop gradually, especially from a simple to a more complex form
51. **exploit** *verb*
1. make full use of and derive benefit from*
2. use a situation or person in an unfair or selfish way
52. **facilitate** *verb*
make an action or process easy or easier
53. **feign** *verb*
pretend to be affected by a feeling, state, or injury
54. **fleeting** *adjective*
lasting for a very short time
55. **glaring** *adjective*
extremely obvious or conspicuous
56. **hardship** *noun*
severe suffering or deprivation
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57. **hurtle** *verb*
move or cause to move at a great speed, typically in an uncontrolled manner
58. **immerse** *verb*
involve oneself deeply in a particular activity or interest* [or] dip or submerge in a liquid
59. **imminent** *adjective*
about to happen
60. **(im)mobile** *adjective*
able to move or be moved freely or easily (immobile: not able to be moved)
61. **impervious** *adjective*
unable to be affected by
62. **incendiary** *adjective*
1. tending to stir up conflict*
2. designed to cause fires
63. **incompetent** *adjective*
not having or showing the necessary skills to do something successfully
64. **(in)conceivable** *adjective*
capable of being imagined or grasped mentally (inconceivable: not capable of being imagined)
65. **(in)dissoluble** *adjective*
able to be dissolved, loosened, or disconnected (indissoluble: solid, not able to be broken apart)
66. **inevitable** *adjective*
certain to happen; unavoidable
67. **infer** *verb*
deduce or conclude (information) from evidence and reasoning rather than from clear statements (inference)
68. **integrate** *verb*
combine one thing with another so that they become a whole
69. **intuition** *noun*
the ability to understand something immediately, a 'gut feeling'
70. **justify** *verb*
1. show or prove to be right or reasonable*
2. be a good reason for

71. **lack** *verb*
be without or deficient in
72. **latent** *adjective*
existing but not yet developed or obvious; hidden; concealed
73. **lethargic** *adjective*
sluggish and apathetic
74. **mere** *adjective*
used to emphasize how small or insignificant someone or something is
75. **minute** *adjective*
extremely small (pronounced MY-noot)
76. **mishap** *noun*
an unlucky accident
77. **nostalgia** *noun*
a sentimental longing or affection for the past
78. **notion** *noun*
a conception of or belief about something
79. **obsolete** *adjective*
no longer produced or used; out of date
80. **obstruct** *verb*
to be or get in the way of; prevent; hinder
81. **omit** *verb*
leave out or exclude (someone or something), either intentionally or forgetfully
82. **orient** *verb*
align or position something relative to a known point or landmark
83. **paradox** *noun*
an idea that, despite sound (or apparently sound) reasoning from acceptable premises, leads to a conclusion that seems senseless, logically unacceptable, or self-contradictory
84. **pensive** *adjective*
engaged in, involving, or reflecting deep or serious thought
85. **peril** *noun*
serious and immediate danger

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86. **perpetual** *adjective*
occurring repeatedly; so frequent as to seem endless and uninterrupted
87. **ponder** *verb*
think about something carefully
88. **potent** *adjective*
having great power, influence, or effect
89. **precede** *verb*
1. come before (something) in time
2. come before in order or position* (preceding)
90. **predate** *verb*
exist or occur at a date earlier than something
91. **principle** *noun*
a fundamental truth or proposition that serves as the foundation for a system of belief or behavior
92. **proficient** *adjective*
competent or skilled in doing or using something
93. **profound** *adjective*
1. very great or intense*
2. having or showing great knowledge or insight
94. **pungent** *adjective*
having an intensely strong taste or smell
95. **redundant** *adjective*
not or no longer needed or useful
96. **reflect** *verb*
1. (of a surface or body) throw back (heat, light, or sound) without absorbing it
2. (of a mirror or shiny surface) show an image of
3. embody or represent (something) in a faithful or appropriate way
4. (reflect well/badly on) bring about a good or bad impression of: the incident reflects badly on the operating practices of the airlines.
5. (reflect on/upon) think deeply or carefully about*
97. **relevant** *adjective*
closely connected or appropriate to the matter at hand (antonym: irrelevant)
98. **resent** *verb*
feel bitterness or slight anger at a circumstance, action, or person

99. **revive** *verb*
1. to regain life, consciousness, or strength
2. restore interest in or the popularity of*
100. **rudimentary** *adjective*
1. involving or limited to basic principles
2. of or relating to an immature, undeveloped, or basic form*
101. **sensory** *adjective*
of or relating to sensation or the physical senses; transmitted or perceived by the senses
102. **skeptical** *adjective*
not easily convinced; having doubts or reservations
103. **solemn** *adjective*
formal and dignified; serious
104. **static** *adjective*
lacking in movement, action, or change
105. **superlative** *adjective*
of the highest quality or degree
106. **sustainable** *adjective*
1. able to be maintained at a certain rate or level
2. conserving an ecological balance by avoiding depletion of natural resources*
107. **trait** *noun*
a distinguishing quality or characteristic
108. **trivial** *adjective*
of little value or importance
109. **(un)realized** *adjective*
give actual or physical form to (unrealized: not given form to, such as 'unrealized plans' to have a picnic on a rainy day)
110. **void** *noun*
a completely empty space
111. **wholly** *adverb*
entirely; fully

Science

- 112. abundant** *adjective*
existing or available in large quantities; plentiful
- 113. altitude** *noun*
the height of an object or point in relation to sea level or ground level
- 114. attribute** *noun*
a quality or feature regarded as a characteristic or inherent part of someone or something
- 115. characteristic** *adjective*
typical of a particular person, place, or thing
- 116. combustion** *noun*
the process of burning something
- 117. conduct(ivity)** *verb*
transmit a form of energy such as heat or electricity (conductivity: the effectiveness of a material at conducting energy)
- 118. correspond** *verb*
have a close similarity; match or agree almost exactly
- 119. decelerate** *verb*
reduce the speed of; lose velocity; move more slowly
- 120. deposition** *noun*
the process of some substance being naturally deposited somewhere
- 121. distinguish** *verb*
recognize or treat (someone or something) as different
- 122. efficient** *adjective*
being effective without wasting time or effort or expense; able to accomplish a purpose; functioning effectively
- 123. emit** *verb*
give off, send forth, or discharge; as of light, heat, or radiation, vapor, etc.
- 124. erode** *verb*
remove soil or rock; become ground down or deteriorate
- 125. evolution** *noun*
a process in which something passes by degrees to a different stage (especially a more advanced or mature stage)
- 126. exert** *verb*
put to use; make a great effort at a mental or physical task
- 127. exhibit** *verb*
show an attribute, property, knowledge, or skill; to show, make visible or apparent
- 128. fuse** *verb*
mix together different elements; join
- 129. gauge** *verb*
measure precisely and against a standard; determine the capacity, volume, or contents of by measurement and calculation
- 130. generalize** *verb*
draw from specific cases for more general cases
- 131. given** *adjective*
specified or stated: Students' understanding of any given topic.
- 132. hypothesis** *noun*
a tentative theory about the natural world; a concept that is not yet verified but that if true would explain certain facts or phenomena
- 133. incremental** *adjective*
increasing gradually by regular degrees or additions
- 134. intact** *adjective*
undamaged in any way; whole
- 135. interval** *noun*
the distance between things; a definite length of time marked off by two instants
- 136. larvae** *noun*
the active immature form of an insect, especially one that differs greatly from the adult and forms the stage between egg and pupa, e.g., a caterpillar or grub.
- 137. latter** *noun*
the second of two or the second mentioned of two
- 138. mass** *noun*
the quantity of matter that something contains

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- 139. maturation** *noun*
coming to full development; becoming mature
- 140. onset** *noun*
the beginning or early stages
- 141. precipitation** *noun*
the falling to earth of any form of water (rain or snow or hail or sleet or mist)
- 142. prolong** *verb*
lengthen or extend in duration or space
- 143. directly proportional** *adjective*
a relationship between two connected amounts, factors or quantities in which an increase in one causes an increase in the other
- 144. inversely proportional** *adjective*
a relationship between two connected amounts, factors or quantities in which an increase in one causes a decrease in the other
- 145. residual** *adjective*
relating to or indicating a remainder; something left after other parts have been taken away
- 146. solution** *noun*
a homogeneous mixture of two or more substances; frequently (but not necessarily) a liquid solution
- 147. substrate** *noun*
any substance or layer lying underneath another; a surface on which an organism grows or is attached; the substance that is acted upon by an enzyme or ferment
- 148. trial** *noun*
a specific experiment or set of experiments within a larger context
- 149. uniform** *adjective*
evenly spaced; always the same; showing a single form or character in all occurrences
- 150. variable** *noun*
in an experiment: an element, feature, or factor that is changed within the experiment to determine its effects



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