ACT Prep

Overall Test Taking Strategies

1. Stop trying to do too much.
    a. Most of the time students try to do too much and end up falling short of their goals. If your goal is 30, then aim for 30-32, not 36. Set your goal and stick to it.
2. **Read** each question and its answers **carefully**.
    a. Only YOU can prevent mistakes!!
3. Read, predict, assess.
    a. After reading the question make an answer prediction.
    b. **Don't let the answer choices negatively affect your assumptions.**
4. Finish with extra time and double check your answers.
5. The importance of untimed practice.
    a. Did the extra time help?
        i. If not, then we need to practice the fundamentals, terminology, and comprehension.
        ii. If yes, then we need to practice more strategies.
6. The importance of reviewing what we practice.
    a. Ask yourself why did you get a question wrong?
        i. Did you read carefully?
        ii. Did you eliminate all the wrong answers?
    b. Find a solution to your mistakes.
        i. What can you do differently?
        ii. Do you understand what to look for in similar questions for the future.
        iii. Find your weaknesses and improve upon them.
7. Don’t question your instincts.
    a. If you’re unsure, circle it and then come back later.
    b. Double check, eliminate wrong answer choices.
8. Practice makes perfect.
    a. Guess on test day, but not in practice.
        i. It’s important to understand what you know vs. what you don’t know.
        ii. Guessing doesn’t help you or me assess the areas for improvement.

Save time:

1. Circle the answers in the test booklet first, then **with 5 min to go fill in the scantron.**
2. **Eliminate wrong answers.**
    a. Eliminating answers will prevent you from accidentally choosing the wrong answer, but more importantly it saves time in the long run, about **3-5 seconds per answer.**
3. **Skip questions** that are taking too long
    a. Make sure you **read every question at least once.**
    b. **No bonus points** for struggling through a question. Best practice is to skip to the next question.
    c. Circle a question you don’t know and come back to it at the end.

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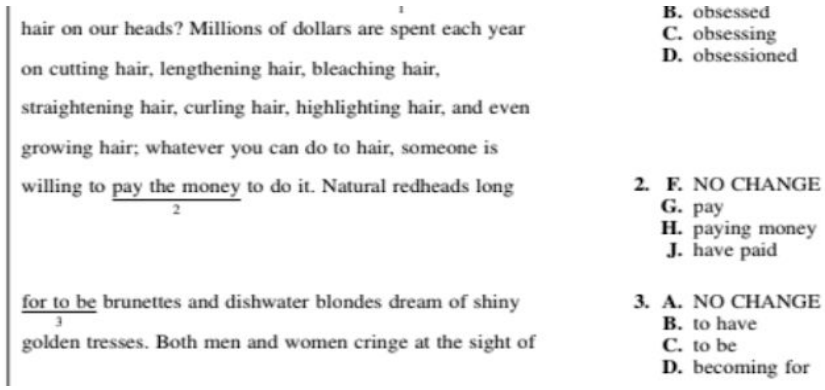
English Strategies:

1. SAVE TIME: **Shortest answer** is typically the **best answer**.
    a. Test creators reward short, concise answers.
    b. Try the shortest answer in the underlined portion, does it work? If so, then move on.



hair on our heads? Millions of dollars are spent each year on cutting hair, lengthening hair, bleaching hair, straightening hair, curling hair, highlighting hair, and even growing hair; whatever you can do to hair, someone is willing to pay the money to do it. Natural redheads long for to be brunettes and dishwater blondes dream of shiny golden tresses. Both men and women cringe at the sight of

B. obsessed
C. obsessing
D. obsessioned

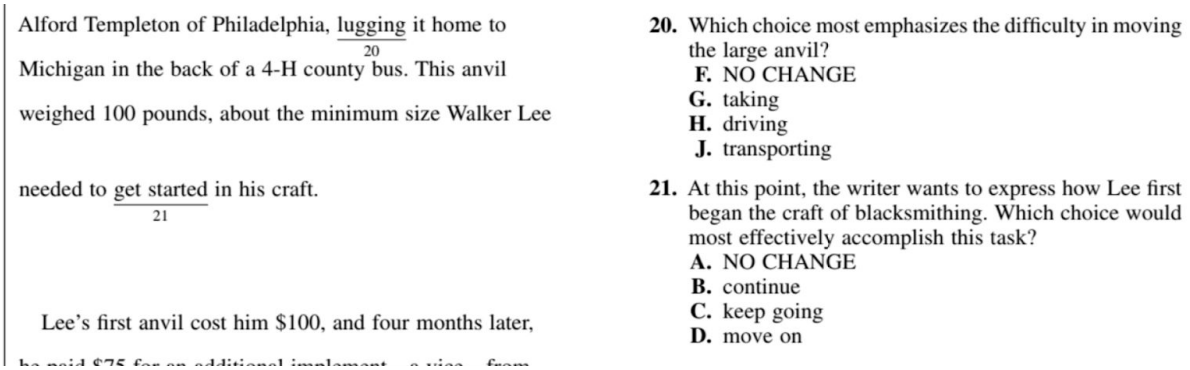
2. F. NO CHANGE
G. pay
H. paying money
J. have paid

3. A. NO CHANGE
B. to have
C. to be
D. becoming for

Question 2: try "pay" as your first answer. Lo and behold, it works. Not always, but more frequently than not it works.

c. **BUT** if it asks a question, has multiple tenses (past, present, future, etc.), or punctuation make sure to answer the question and/or choose the answer with proper grammar.

i. What to do when asked a specific question (question 21):



Alford Templeton of Philadelphia, lugging it home to Michigan in the back of a 4-H county bus. This anvil weighed 100 pounds, about the minimum size Walker Lee needed to get started in his craft.

Lee's first anvil cost him $100, and four months later,

20. Which choice most emphasizes the difficulty in moving the large anvil?
F. NO CHANGE
G. taking
H. driving
J. transporting

21. At this point, the writer wants to express how Lee first began the craft of blacksmithing. Which choice would most effectively accomplish this task?
A. NO CHANGE
B. continue
C. keep going
D. move on

The context to question number 21 is that you want to make sure which one most effectively expresses how he first began his craft. There are three answers that reference continuing his craft, while one talks about the beginning. In either case, the answer will not necessarily be the shortest. Question 20 is similar, where you must make sure to answer the question presented.

2. SAVE TIME: **Read the last two questions** of each passage first.

a. There are 15 questions per passage.

b. The last question (sometimes two) typically asks "**did the passage…"**, **yes or no** and **why**? or to **rearrange the passage**.

c. This will help give clues about the passage as well as provide a quick answer at the end if you pay attention while reading the passage.

3. **Read out loud at a controlled pace.**

a. Many errors can be analyzed correctly by reading out loud (ex.- punctuation).

i. Speed reading leads to errors and under-punctuation.

ii. Reading too slow leads to over-punctuation.

iii. Find the perfect pace for you.

4. NO CHANGE is a frequent answer choice, but not too frequent.

a. When in doubt, it isn't always no change.

5. **SAVE TIME**: Skip time intensive questions (i.e.- whole passage questions)

a. Each question is worth the same, so spending too much time is not advantageous.

b. Skip any question that you are unsure of or won't be able to finish in 30 seconds.

6. **SAVE TIME**: You don't need to read every word.

a. If there are long gaps between questions, you can skip to the next question.

b. If you are running out of time skip the following questions:

i. Rearrange sentence/paragraph questions (see question 11 below)

ii. Whole passage questions

Note: not reading every word sacrifices some points, so it's important to decide your goal score.

11. For the sake of logic and coherence, Sentence 5 should be placed:

A. where it is now.
B. before Sentence 1.
C. after Sentence 2.
D. before Sentence 4.

The English Basics

Memorize and study. Notecards and/or quizlet are helpful.

. (period) = ; (semi-colon) and some conjunctions	**they are the "same", so cross them each one out.**
Parenthetical phrases	**are extra phrases added between commas, dashes, or parentheses.**

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	Ex.- My mother, a banker, had lunch with me today.
,(comma) = - (dash) = (parentheses)	**all of them are the "same", but commas are preferential.**
Who vs. Whom	**who (subject of sentence) = Replace with he, she, they** **Ex.- Who (he) ate my sandwich?** **whom (verb or preposition of) = Replace with him/her/them** **Ex.- To whom (him) should I contact?**
(:) Colon	**needs a complete sentence before it** **Ex.- These are my favorite colors: purple, turquoise, pink, and yellow.** **For example, do not use a colon here** **He went to the store to buy peanut butter, jelly, and bread.**
Then vs. Than	**then = chronological order-** **Ex.- This then that happened** **than = comparison** **Ex.- This is better than that**
There	**reference to a place** **Ex.- He went over there**
Their	**possession** **Ex.- Their blanket is red**
They're	**they are** **Ex.- They're going with me**
It's	**it is** **Ex.- It's nicer over here than expected**
Its	**possession** **Ex.- The book is past its due date**
To	**verb "go, do, etc."**

	Ex.- He went to the store with me
Too	**another form of = Replace with "also"** **Ex.- He went too = He went also.**
Noun-verb agreement	**singular noun needs a plural verb, while a plural noun needs a singular verb.** **Ex.- he lifts vs. they lift**

Reading strategies:

1. **What's wrong** with the answer you chose?
    a. **WRONG USE of DETAILS (DET)**: Answer uses exact phrases present in the passage, but part of the answer is wrong.
    b. **OPPOSITE (OPP):** Answer says the opposite of the correct answer. Look for terms like no, not, except, least likely.
    c. **OUTSIDE the SCOPE of passage (OUT):** answer has details that are outside those presented in the passage.
    d. **EXAGGERATED use of details (EXAG):** Beware of extreme terms like always, never, only, etc.
2. **SAVE TIME**: Eliminate wrong answers
    a. Only one answer can be right.
    b. Eliminate any answer that you think could work and choose the answer that has nothing wrong with it.
    c. Nothing can be wrong about the answer you choose. Not, "maybe this works," rather than "this definitely works."
    d. Make sure the **wrong answers are wrong** and the **right answers are right.** Even a single word can change your answer from right to wrong, so read the questions and answers carefully.
3. Time Management, Passage Strategy, or Vocabulary
    a. Time under normal conditions and also with more time. See if your score improves with more time. If not, then it is an issue with terminology, wording, and overall understanding of the passage as well as issues with questions and answers.
    b. If you do improve drastically, then it is an issue more so due to time management and your strategy with the passage.
    c. Take another test untimed to compare results.
4. There are different ways to attack the reading passage, find the method that works best

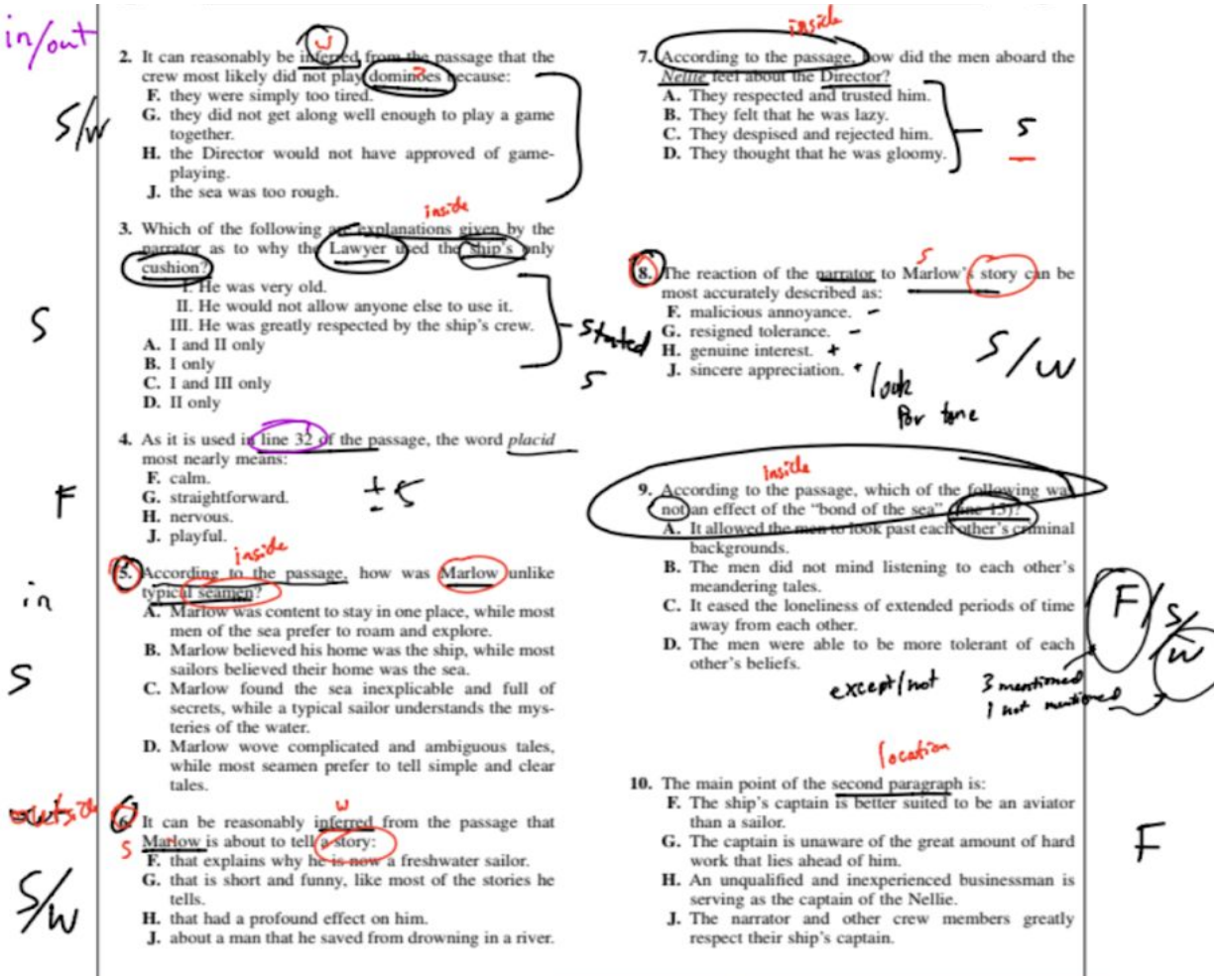
for you.

5. If a question takes too long, skip it.
    a. Should take less than 60 seconds/question.
6. If you don't understand a passage, skip it and try the next one. Come back to it at the end.

BREAK IT DOWN

Step One: Label the Questions

1. Map the questions in order of difficulty to find and answer.
    a. A question that has a certain line number, paragraph, or location in the passage, **label F, for easy to Find.** Answer these first because it is easy to find.
    b. A question that asks about a key term or person's name, **label S, for Skim** (be careful that it's actually something you can find)**.**
    c. For harder questions that are talking about the overall passage, **label W, for Whole passage**. Typically holistic and/or inference. They are time consuming!!! See the example below for how to label a passage.



2. It can reasonably be inferred from the passage that the crew most likely did not play dominoes because:
F. they were simply too tired.
G. they did not get along well enough to play a game together.
H. the Director would not have approved of game-playing.
J. the sea was too rough.

3. Which of the following are explanations given by the narrator as to why the Lawyer used the ship's only cushion?
I. He was very old.
II. He would not allow anyone else to use it.
III. He was greatly respected by the ship's crew.
A. I and II only
B. I only
C. I and III only
D. II only

4. As it is used in line 32 of the passage, the word *placid* most nearly means:
F. calm.
G. straightforward.
H. nervous.
J. playful.

5. According to the passage, how was Marlow unlike typical seamen?
A. Marlow was content to stay in one place, while most men of the sea prefer to roam and explore.
B. Marlow believed his home was the ship, while most sailors believed their home was the sea.
C. Marlow found the sea inexplicable and full of secrets, while a typical sailor understands the mysteries of the water.
D. Marlow wove complicated and ambiguous tales, while most seamen prefer to tell simple and clear tales.

6. It can be reasonably inferred from the passage that Marlow is about to tell a story:
F. that explains why he is now a freshwater sailor.
G. that is short and funny, like most of the stories he tells.
H. that had a profound effect on him.
J. about a man that he saved from drowning in a river.

7. According to the passage, how did the men aboard the *Nellie* feel about the Director?
A. They respected and trusted him.
B. They felt that he was lazy.
C. They despised and rejected him.
D. They thought that he was gloomy.

8. The reaction of the narrator to Marlow's story can be most accurately described as:
F. malicious annoyance.
G. resigned tolerance.
H. genuine interest.
J. sincere appreciation.

9. According to the passage, which of the following was not an effect of the "bond of the sea" (line 137)?
A. It allowed the men to look past each other's criminal backgrounds.
B. The men did not mind listening to each other's meandering tales.
C. It eased the loneliness of extended periods of time away from each other.
D. The men were able to be more tolerant of each other's beliefs.

10. The main point of the second paragraph is:
F. The ship's captain is better suited to be an aviator than a sailor.
G. The captain is unaware of the great amount of hard work that lies ahead of him.
H. An unqualified and inexperienced businessman is serving as the captain of the Nellie.
J. The narrator and other crew members greatly respect their ship's captain.

The goal of mapping out the passage is to figure out essential questions to answer in order to get the score you desire. The purpose of mapping is not to waste time and fight over the designation in your head, but rather label the questions how you want to answer them as well as organize questions by topic or location to answer them in an efficient manner (less than 1 min). I teach my students to map the questions first, but some students can read and annotate the passage quickly, allowing this as a potential method of success on test day (see alternate method: **Passage Label Method** below). Once labeled, assess which method to proceed with: F/S/W or Label Passage. Most students decide to do a combination of each method since the alternate method gets more points right per passage, but takes about 3 minute more on average to complete. Finding that perfect mix will be our goal over the next few weeks.

Step Two: Answer the Questions

If there are **7+ questions that are F - S, then focus on the F - S.**

1. Answer questions from easy to hard:
    a. **F** (easy specific line number) - 1
    b. **F/S** (typically a quote) - 2
    c. **S** (easier skim concept) - 3
    d. **W/F** (easy, but time consuming or potentially hard question) - 4
    e. **S/W** (harder skim concept-AVOID) - 5
    f. **W** (AVOID) - 6

Mapping the passage and answering only the questions you **NEED** will help you **GET** the score you **WANT**. Focus on F and S type questions and avoid W type questions. This will lead you to success.

Alternate: Passage Label Method

If there are **4+ questions that are S/W or W**, then the **Passage Label Method is more conducive** for additional points.

Each passage can be read and annotated after mapping the questions. When annotating the passage try to understand the:

1. **Main idea** of the passage or paragraph
    a. These are typically in the **first and last sentence of each paragraph.**
2. **Key Details**
    a. These are typically in the **middle of the paragraph**.
3. **Vocab**
    a. Not necessarily how you would define the word, but rather how it is used in the sentence.
    b. These are **typically in the middle of the paragraph**.

4. **Author/Narrator**
    i. How does the author construct the passage?
    ii. What is the author's purpose in utilizing the following method?
5. **Take notes** while reading to keep a "road map" of the topics you come across.
    a. **Look for transition phrases** that show changes in the topic (i.e.- on the other hand, conversely, meanwhile, etc.). These are road signs for **important new details to follow.**

Science Strategies:

1. Types of passages:
    a. Data representation
        i. Make sense of figures and tables.
        ii. Identify relationships.
    b. Research summary
        i. Experimental design.
        ii. Make sense of figures and tables.
        iii. Identify relationships.
    c. Scientist vs scientist
        i. Conflicting viewpoints.
        ii. Label and conquer.
        iii. You don't have to be a scientist.
            1. You have to read carefully and interpret results.
            2. Just need to know the basics.

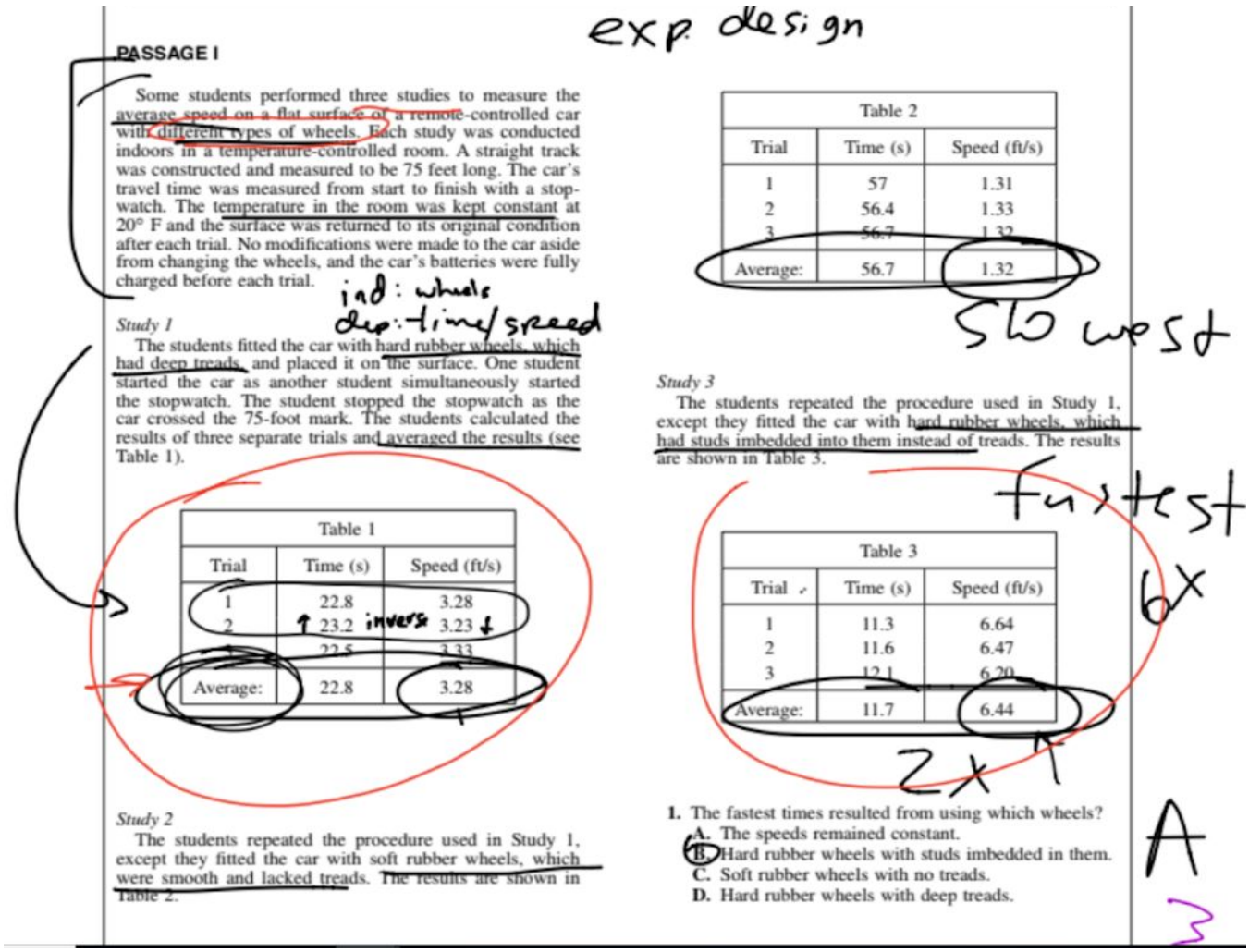
BREAK IT DOWN: Data Representation and Research Summary

1. **Read introduction of the passage/instructions** for details about what the passage is about (30 seconds or so).
2. **Make sense of the figures and tables**.
    a. Identify relationships **within** each table, figure, and chart.
    b. Identify relationships **between** each table, figure, and chart.
3. **Identity**:
    a. **Independent and dependent variables**
    b. Relationships (**direct, inverse, and no relationship**)
4. **Decide whether to map** out the questions or just dive right in.
    a. How many experiments and figures are there?
        i. Two or more figures/tables/experiments = **MAP** the passage.
        ii. If **only one figure or two similar charts**, move onto the questions and answer them in any order you'd like.
5. **Label** the experiment/figure/table for each question.
6. **Answer the questions** together by topic (experiment, figure, or table).

NOTE: Timing per passage is based off the number of questions.

    a. Goal time: Take one minute less than the number of questions

b. Ex.- 6 questions means try to finish in 5 minutes or less.



exp design

PASSAGE I

Some students performed three studies to measure the average speed on a flat surface of a remote-controlled car with different types of wheels. Each study was conducted indoors in a temperature-controlled room. A straight track was constructed and measured to be 75 feet long. The car's travel time was measured from start to finish with a stopwatch. The temperature in the room was kept constant at 20° F and the surface was returned to its original condition after each trial. No modifications were made to the car aside from changing the wheels, and the car's batteries were fully charged before each trial.

ind: wheels
dep: time/speed

Study 1

The students fitted the car with hard rubber wheels, which had deep treads, and placed it on the surface. One student started the car as another student simultaneously started the stopwatch. The student stopped the stopwatch as the car crossed the 75-foot mark. The students calculated the results of three separate trials and averaged the results (see Table 1).

Table 1

Trial	Time (s)	Speed (ft/s)
1	22.8	3.28
2	23.2	3.23
3	22.5	3.33
Average:	22.8	3.28

inverse

Study 2

The students repeated the procedure used in Study 1, except they fitted the car with soft rubber wheels, which were smooth and lacked treads. The results are shown in Table 2.

Table 2

Trial	Time (s)	Speed (ft/s)
1	57	1.31
2	56.4	1.33
3	56.7	1.32
Average:	56.7	1.32

slowest

Study 3

The students repeated the procedure used in Study 1, except they fitted the car with hard rubber wheels, which had studs imbedded into them instead of treads. The results are shown in Table 3.

fastest

6x

Table 3

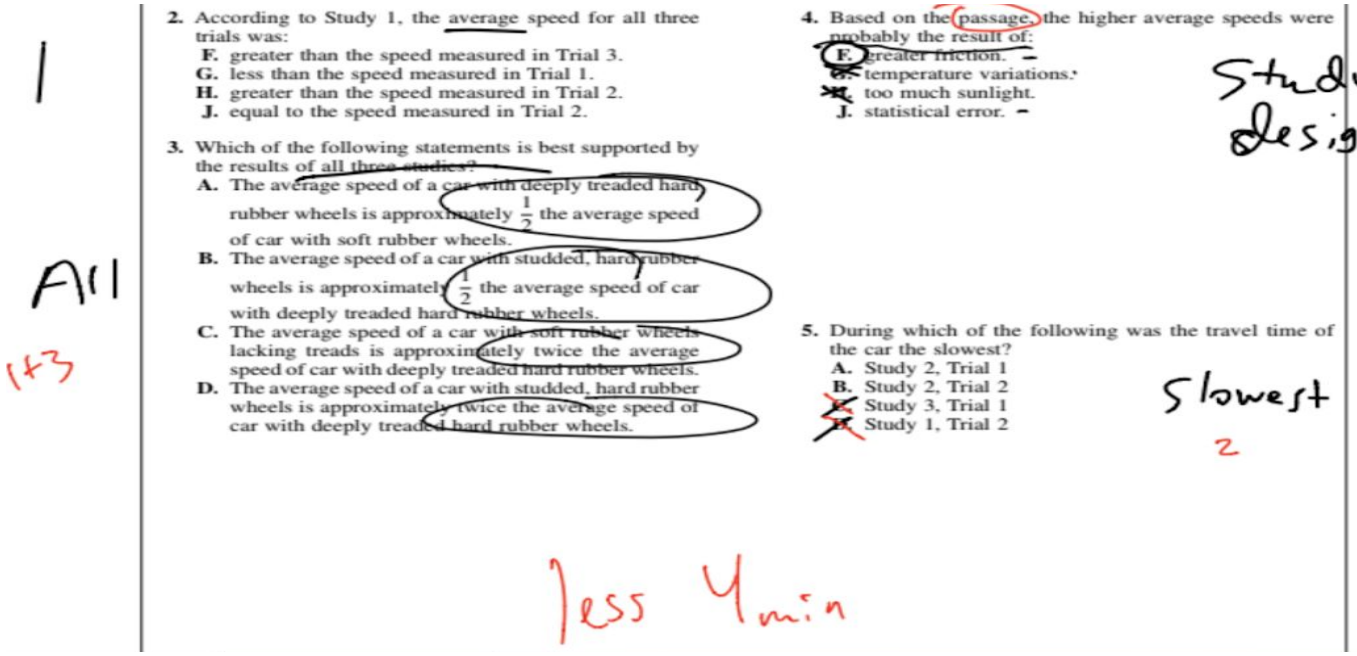
Trial	Time (s)	Speed (ft/s)
1	11.3	6.64
2	11.6	6.47
3	12.1	6.20
Average:	11.7	6.44

2x

1. The fastest times resulted from using which wheels?
   - A. The speeds remained constant.
   - B. Hard rubber wheels with studs imbedded in them.
   - C. Soft rubber wheels with no treads.
   - D. Hard rubber wheels with deep treads.

A

ACT Prep



2. According to Study 1, the average speed for all three trials was:
   F. greater than the speed measured in Trial 3.
   G. less than the speed measured in Trial 1.
   H. greater than the speed measured in Trial 2.
   J. equal to the speed measured in Trial 2.

3. Which of the following statements is best supported by the results of all three studies?
   A. The average speed of a car with deeply treaded hard rubber wheels is approximately $\frac{1}{2}$ the average speed of car with soft rubber wheels.
   B. The average speed of a car with studded, hard rubber wheels is approximately $\frac{1}{2}$ the average speed of car with deeply treaded hard rubber wheels.
   C. The average speed of a car with soft rubber wheels lacking treads is approximately twice the average speed of car with deeply treaded hard rubber wheels.
   D. The average speed of a car with studded, hard rubber wheels is approximately twice the average speed of car with deeply treaded hard rubber wheels.

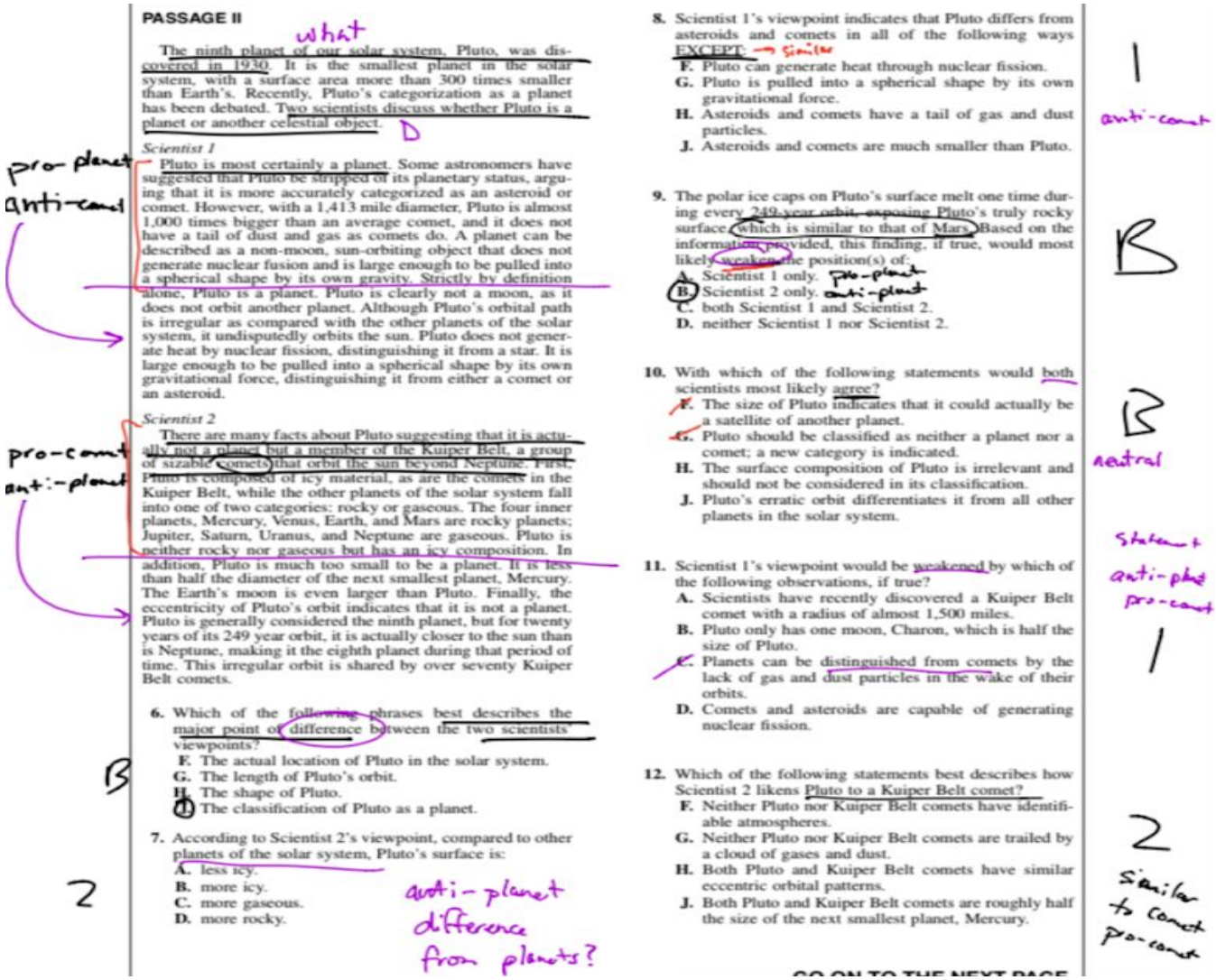
4. Based on the passage, the higher average speeds were probably the result of:
   F. greater friction.
   G. temperature variations.
   H. too much sunlight.
   J. statistical error.

5. During which of the following was the travel time of the car the slowest?
   A. Study 2, Trial 1
   B. Study 2, Trial 2
   C. Study 3, Trial 1
   D. Study 1, Trial 2

BREAK IT DOWN: Scientist vs scientist

1. **Underline the first and last sentence of the first paragraph**.
2. **Underline the first sentence of each scientist**.
   a. This should give you the differences and what the passage is about.
3. **Label** the questions
   a. If about scientist 1, then label 1.
   b. If scientist 2, then label with a 2.
   c. If about both scientists, then label B (for both).
4. **Answer the questions for each scientist in order**, saving both scientist questions for last.
5. Question types:
   a. **Strengthen/weaken**: (based off of notes)
   b. **For/against**: (based off of notes)
   c. **Similar/agree**: Look for a neutral answer
   d. **Differences**: Look for a polarizing answer choice

ACT Prep



PASSAGE II

The ninth planet of our solar system, Pluto, was discovered in 1930. It is the smallest planet in the solar system, with a surface area more than 300 times smaller than Earth's. Recently, Pluto's categorization as a planet has been debated. Two scientists discuss whether Pluto is a planet or another celestial object.

Scientist 1

Pluto is most certainly a planet. Some astronomers have suggested that Pluto be stripped of its planetary status, arguing that it is more accurately categorized as an asteroid or comet. However, with a 1,413 mile diameter, Pluto is almost 1,000 times bigger than an average comet, and it does not have a tail of dust and gas as comets do. A planet can be described as a non-moon, sun-orbiting object that does not generate nuclear fusion and is large enough to be pulled into a spherical shape by its own gravity. Strictly by definition alone, Pluto is a planet. Pluto is clearly not a moon, as it does not orbit another planet. Although Pluto's orbital path is irregular as compared with the other planets of the solar system, it undisputedly orbits the sun. Pluto does not generate heat by nuclear fission, distinguishing it from a star. It is large enough to be pulled into a spherical shape by its own gravitational force, distinguishing it from either a comet or an asteroid.

Scientist 2

There are many facts about Pluto suggesting that it is actually not a planet but a member of the Kuiper Belt, a group of sizable comets that orbit the sun beyond Neptune. First, Pluto is composed of icy material, as are the comets in the Kuiper Belt, while the other planets of the solar system fall into one of two categories: rocky or gaseous. The four inner planets, Mercury, Venus, Earth, and Mars are rocky planets; Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, and Neptune are gaseous. Pluto is neither rocky nor gaseous but has an icy composition. In addition, Pluto is much too small to be a planet. It is less than half the diameter of the next smallest planet, Mercury. The Earth's moon is even larger than Pluto. Finally, the eccentricity of Pluto's orbit indicates that it is not a planet. Pluto is generally considered the ninth planet, but for twenty years of its 249 year orbit, it is actually closer to the sun than is Neptune, making it the eighth planet during that period of time. This irregular orbit is shared by over seventy Kuiper Belt comets.

6. Which of the following phrases best describes the major point of difference between the two scientists' viewpoints?
   - F. The actual location of Pluto in the solar system.
   - G. The length of Pluto's orbit.
   - H. The shape of Pluto.
   - J. The classification of Pluto as a planet.

7. According to Scientist 2's viewpoint, compared to other planets of the solar system, Pluto's surface is:
   - A. less icy.
   - B. more icy.
   - C. more gaseous.
   - D. more rocky.

8. Scientist 1's viewpoint indicates that Pluto differs from asteroids and comets in all of the following ways EXCEPT:
   - F. Pluto can generate heat through nuclear fission.
   - G. Pluto is pulled into a spherical shape by its own gravitational force.
   - H. Asteroids and comets have a tail of gas and dust particles.
   - J. Asteroids and comets are much smaller than Pluto.

9. The polar ice caps on Pluto's surface melt one time during every 249-year orbit, exposing Pluto's truly rocky surface which is similar to that of Mars. Based on the information provided, this finding, if true, would most likely weaken the position(s) of:
   - A. Scientist 1 only.
   - B. Scientist 2 only.
   - C. both Scientist 1 and Scientist 2.
   - D. neither Scientist 1 nor Scientist 2.

10. With which of the following statements would both scientists most likely agree?
    - F. The size of Pluto indicates that it could actually be a satellite of another planet.
    - G. Pluto should be classified as neither a planet nor a comet; a new category is indicated.
    - H. The surface composition of Pluto is irrelevant and should not be considered in its classification.
    - J. Pluto's erratic orbit differentiates it from all other planets in the solar system.

11. Scientist 1's viewpoint would be weakened by which of the following observations, if true?
    - A. Scientists have recently discovered a Kuiper Belt comet with a radius of almost 1,500 miles.
    - B. Pluto only has one moon, Charon, which is half the size of Pluto.
    - C. Planets can be distinguished from comets by the lack of gas and dust particles in the wake of their orbits.
    - D. Comets and asteroids are capable of generating nuclear fission.

12. Which of the following statements best describes how Scientist 2 likens Pluto to a Kuiper Belt comet?
    - F. Neither Pluto nor Kuiper Belt comets have identifiable atmospheres.
    - G. Neither Pluto nor Kuiper Belt comets are trailed by a cloud of gases and dust.
    - H. Both Pluto and Kuiper Belt comets have similar eccentric orbital patterns.
    - J. Both Pluto and Kuiper Belt comets are roughly half the size of the next smallest planet, Mercury.

GO ON TO THE NEXT PAGE