Gellerisms

for the **ACT English Test**

- Familiarize yourself with ALL directions before the day of the test. By knowing what you will be asked to do, you will be a more efficient test-taker.

- Complete several ACT practice English Tests to help you decide whether you have the time to read each passage in its entirety before answering the questions. BUT ALWAYS READ TO A PERIOD; NEVER STOP AT AN UNDERLINED WORD OR PHRASE.

- Because ACT assumes you have read the passage first, occasionally you may have to skim ahead for an answer, or you can skip the question and come back to it after you have finished answering all other questions for the paragraph or passage. BUT WATCH YOUR NUMBERING!

- There are two types of questions on the ACT English Test: questions testing knowledge of technical Standard Written English concepts AND rhetorical questions testing knowledge of effective communication. Sometimes a SWET correct answer will be the shortest in number of words because WORDINESS IS NOT ALWAYS WONDERFUL; you want to be concise. First, compare the shortest answer, including "OMIT," with the other three answers. If the other answers are redundant, repetitious with other words/phrases in the sentence or off topic, GO WITH THE SHORTEST ANSWER.

- If only one answer choice has a period as its punctuation mark – the others contain a comma or two, or if the other answer choices have no punctuation marks – analyze the former one first. If there is an independent clause on both sides, probably that choice is the correct one. Don't bother trying the other three answer choices.

- If a period appears in one answer choice and a semi-colon in another, AND BOTH CHOICES CONTAIN EXACTLY THE SAME WORDS AND PUNCTUATION MARKS, ignore each as a possible correct answer because they are interchangeable, AND YOU CANNOT HAVE TWO CORRECT ANSWERS.

- DO NOT BE COMMA HAPPY!!! You must have a good reason to choose an answer choice containing a comma:
    Reason 1 – there are three or more items in a series
    Reason 2 – there is a "MOVEABLE, REMOVEABLE OR INTERRUPTING" phrase
    Reason 3 – there is a subordinate clause followed by a main clause
    Reason 4 – there is an independent clause followed by one of the "fanboys" – *for*, *and*, *nor*, *but*, *or*, *yet*, *so* – and then another independent clause.
    Reason 5 – there are adjectives of equal rank modifying the same noun

- CURE a RUN-ON by placing a comma after the first independent clause, add one of the FANBOYS (for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so) and then finish with another independent clause.
    Other run-on cures: independent clause. independent clause
                      Independent clause; independent clause
                      Independent clause: independent clause
                      delete one of the subjects =
                              single subject with a compound verb

- "if" is a subordinate conjunction. If the "if" clause precedes the main clause, place a comma between the two clauses; however, if the 'if" clause comes after the main clause, add NO COMMA. Treat all subordinate conjunction constructions in this manner.

- If the answers are a line or more in length, they probably contain modifiers, perhaps misplaced. GET THE MODIFIERS NEXT TO WHAT THEY MODIFIY. The <u>layout</u> must be logical!

- UNDERLINE important words/phrases in the questions testing rhetorical skills. Then easily match these underlined words to the correct answer choice.

- LET'S BE CLEAR ONE LAST TIME – its' DOES NOT EXIST IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE!!!!!!! "it's" = it is and its = possession (if "his" signals possession with no apostrophe, then "its" indicates possession with no apostrophe; it's that simple.)

- A SECRET I DISCOVERED JUST FOR YOU: If three or four of the answer choices are verbs, "they" are testing either tense or subject-verb agreement; if three or four of the answer choices are pronouns, "they" are testing pronoun-antecedent agreement; and if three or four of the answer choices are prepositions, "they" want you to find an idiom