

# Gellerisms

## on the ACT English Test

- Familiarize yourself with ALL directions before the day of the test. Students frequently run out of time when sitting for the ACT; not having to read the directions will earn you valuable minutes.
- On the English Test ignore the directions to read each passage before answering the questions. **BUT ALWAYS READ TO A PERIOD; NEVER STOP AT THE 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.**
- Over fifty percent of the time the shortest answer choice is the correct answer. **WORDINESS IS NOT 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 an answer choice has a period as its punctuation mark, analyze it first. If there is an independent clause on both sides, 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, ignore each as a possible correct answer because they are interchangeable, **AND YOU CANNOT HAVE TWO CORRECT ANSWERS.**
- “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.



**Gellerisms** on the PLAN/ACT English Test – continued

- 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 OR REMOVEABLE” 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 the other 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 the answers are a line or more in length, they probably contain modifiers, perhaps misplaced. GET THE MODIFIERS NEXT TO WHAT THEY MODIFY. The layout 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 GET IT STRAIGHT – “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.)