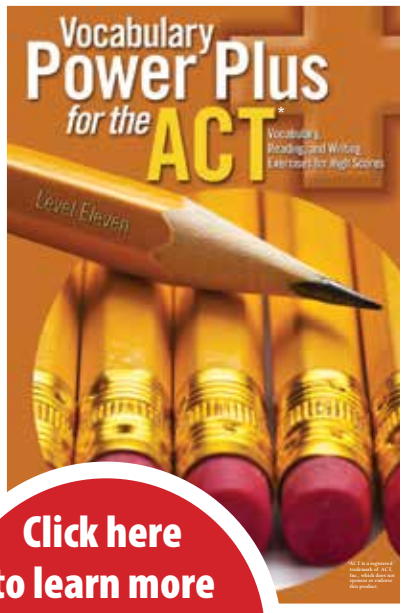




Vocabulary Power Plus  
for the ACT®

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# Vocabulary Power Plus

for the **ACT**

Vocabulary,  
Reading, and Writing  
Exercises for High Scores

Level Eleven

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## •Introduction•

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**V**OCABULARY POWER PLUS FOR THE ACT combines classroomtested vocabulary drills with reading and writing exercises designed to prepare students for the American College Testing assessment; however, *Vocabulary Power Plus for the ACT* is a resource for all students—not just those who are college bound or preparing for the ACT. This series is intended to increase vocabulary, improve grammar, enhance writing, and boost critical reading skills for students at all levels of learning.

Vocabulary lessons combine words-in-context exercises with inferences to ensure that definitions are understood, instead of merely memorized.

Lengthy critical reading exercises and detailed questions emulate the reading passages of the ACT Reading test. Each passage involves a topic in social studies, natural science, prose fiction, or humanities, and is accompanied by multiple levels of questions.

ACT-style grammar passages and questions provide practice in punctuation, usage, structure, and word choice.

The process-oriented writing exercises in *Vocabulary Power Plus for the ACT* develop speed and thrift in essay writing, qualifiable with the objective writing fundamentals in the simulated ACT essay scoring guide.

We hope that you find the *Vocabulary Power Plus for the ACT* series to be an effective tool for teaching new words and an exceptional tool for preparing for the ACT.

## Strategies for Completing Activities

### Roots, Prefixes, and Suffixes

A knowledge of roots, prefixes, and suffixes can give readers the ability to view unfamiliar words as puzzles that require only a few simple steps to solve. For the person interested in the history of words, this knowledge provides the ability to track word origin and evolution. For those who seek to improve vocabulary, this knowledge creates a sure and lifelong method; however, there are two points to remember:

1. Some words have evolved through usage, so present definitions might differ from what you infer through an examination of the roots and prefixes. The word *abstruse*, for example, contains the prefix *ab* (away) and the root *trudere* (to thrust), and literally means *to thrust away*. Today, *abstruse* is used to describe something that is hard to understand.
2. Certain roots do not apply to all words that use the same form. If you know that the root *vin* means “to conquer,” then you would be correct in concluding that the word *invincible* means “incapable of being conquered”; however, if you tried to apply the same root meaning to *vindicate* or *vindictive*, you would be incorrect. When analyzing unfamiliar words, check for other possible roots if your inferred meaning does not fit the context.

Despite these considerations, a knowledge of roots and prefixes is one of the best ways to build a powerful vocabulary.

### Critical Reading

Reading questions generally fall into several categories.

1. *Identifying the main idea or the author’s purpose.* Generally, the question will ask something similar to, “What is this selection about?”

In some passages, the author’s purpose will be easy to identify because one or two ideas leap from the text; however, other passages might not be so easily analyzed, especially if they include convoluted sentences. Inverted sentences (subject at the end of the sentence) and elliptical sentences (words missing) will also increase the difficulty of the passages, but all of these obstacles can be overcome if readers take one sentence at a time and recast it in their own words. Consider the following sentence:

These writers either jot down their thoughts bit by bit, in short, ambiguous, and paradoxical sentences, which apparently mean much more than they say—of this kind of writing Schelling's treatises on natural philosophy are a splendid instance; or else they hold forth with a deluge of words and the most intolerable diffusiveness, as though no end of fuss were necessary to make the reader understand the deep meaning of their sentences, whereas it is some quite simple if not actually trivial idea, examples of which may be found in plenty in the popular works of Fichte, and the philosophical manuals of a hundred other miserable dunces.

If we edit out some of the words, the main point of this sentence is obvious.

These writers either jot down their thoughts bit by bit, in short, sentences, which apparently mean much more than they say or they hold a deluge of words as though necessary to make the reader understand the deep meaning of their sentences

Some sentences need only a few deletions for clarification, but others require major recasting and additions; they must be read carefully and put into the reader's own words.

Some in their discourse desire rather commendation of wit, in being able to hold all arguments, than of judgment, in discerning what is true; as if it were a praise to know what might be said, and not what should be thought.

After studying it, a reader might recast the sentence as follows:

In conversation, some people desire praise for their abilities to maintain the conversation, rather than for their abilities to identify what is true or false, as though it were better to sound good than to know what is truth or fiction.

2. Identifying the stated or implied meaning. *What is the author stating or suggesting?*

The literal meaning of a text does not always correspond with the intended meaning. To understand a passage fully, readers must determine which meaning—if there is more than one—is the intended meaning of the passage.

Consider the following sentence:

If his notice was sought, an expression of courtesy and interest gleamed out upon his features; proving that there was light within him and that it was only the outward medium of the intellectual lamp that obstructed the rays in their passage.

Interpreted literally, this Nathaniel Hawthorne metaphor suggests that a light-generating lamp exists inside of the human body. Since this is impossible, the reader must look to the metaphoric meaning of the passage to properly understand it. In the metaphor, Hawthorne refers to the human mind—consciousness—as a lamp that emits light, and other people cannot always see the lamp because the outside “medium”—the human body—sometimes blocks it.

3. Identifying the tone or mood of the selection. *What feeling does the text evoke?*

To answer these types of questions, readers must look closely at individual words and their connotations; for example, the words *stubborn* and *firm* have almost the same definition, but a writer who describes a character as *stubborn* rather than *firm* is probably suggesting something negative about the character.

## Writing

The ACT writing exam allocates only thirty minutes to the composition of a well-organized, fully developed essay. Writing a satisfactory essay in this limited time requires the ability to quickly determine a thesis, organize ideas, and produce adequate examples to support the ideas.

An essay written in thirty minutes might not represent the best process writing—an ACT essay might lack the perfection and depth that weeks of proofreading and editing give to research papers. Process is undoubtedly important, but students must consider the time constraints of the ACT. Completion of the essay is just as important as organization, development, and language use.

The thesis, the organization of ideas, and the support make the framework of a good essay. Before the actual writing begins, therefore, a writer must create a mental outline by establishing a thesis, or main idea, and one or more specific supporting ideas (the number of ideas will depend on the length and content of the essay). Supporting ideas should not be over complicated; they are simply ideas that justify or explain the thesis. The writer must introduce and explain each supporting idea, and the resultant supporting paragraph should answer the *why?* or *who cares?* questions that the thesis may evoke.

Once the thesis and supporting ideas are identified, writers must determine the order in which the ideas will appear in the essay. A good introduction usually explains the thesis and briefly introduces the supporting ideas. Explanation of the supporting ideas should follow, with each idea in its own paragraph. The final paragraph, the conclusion, usually restates the thesis or summarizes the main ideas of the essay.

Adhering to this mental outline when the writing begins will help the writer organize and develop the essay. Using the Organization and Development scoring guides to evaluate practice essays will help to reinforce the process skills. The Word Choice and Sentence Formation scoring guides will help to strengthen language skills—the vital counterpart to essay organization and development.

## Pronunciation Guide

- a — track
- ā — mate
- ä — father
- â — care
- e — pet
- ē — be
- i — bit
- ī — bite
- o — job
- ō — wrote
- ô — port, horse, fought
- ōō — proof
- öö — book
- u — pun
- ū — you
- û — purr
- ə — about, system, supper, circus
- îr — steer
- ë — Fr. coeur
- oi — toy

## Word List

### Lesson 1

aegeis  
altruism  
amorphous  
besiege  
boor  
carrion  
enervate  
ephemeral  
erotic  
factious  
fervent  
ignoble  
opulent  
perspicacity  
rectify

### Lesson 2

antithesis  
bauble  
bestial  
bland  
chagrin  
diaphanous  
effete  
emendation  
gloat  
impediment  
impotent  
labyrinth  
maelstrom  
nihilism  
shard

### Lesson 3

adventitious  
ambiguous  
bona fide  
cataclysm  
deviate  
edify  
extenuate  
fecund  
glower  
impale  
importune  
obfuscate  
optimum  
parochial  
pedestrian

### Lesson 4

baroque  
besmirch  
celibate  
debacle  
demeanor  
facetious  
fortuitous  
hedonism  
imperative  
obloquy  
perfunctory  
quasi-  
recapitulate  
sacrosanct  
sadistic

### Lesson 5

bowdlerize  
carnal  
deference  
ebullient  
elegy  
fop  
impair  
imprecation  
nebulous  
non sequitur  
panegyric  
pedantic  
quandary  
rakish  
sanguine

### Lesson 6

affluence  
amoral  
antipathy  
banal  
bedlam  
denouement  
elucidate  
eschew  
imminent  
obdurate  
onerous  
parody  
peruse  
scurrilous  
sedulous



**Lesson 7**

adroit  
affectation  
bovine  
callow  
dichotomy  
fatuous  
ferret  
knell  
laconic  
macroscopic  
patent  
peccadillo  
quiddity  
rationalize  
sagacious

**Lesson 8**

agape  
carcinogen  
censure  
deride  
gambol  
gibe  
grotesque  
hackneyed  
immolate  
imperious  
martinet  
neologism  
olfactory  
quagmire  
recondite

**Lesson 9**

blanch  
chimerical  
eclectic  
finesse  
grandiose  
harbinger  
heterogeneous  
hybrid  
idiosyncrasy  
machination  
masochist  
nubile  
pejorative  
raiment  
sapient

**Lesson 10**

adulterate  
bucolic  
caveat  
defile  
diadem  
emanate  
garish  
gratuitous  
idolatry  
immutable  
impecunious  
impious  
onus  
redolent  
sedition

**Lesson 11**

cessation  
delineate  
desiccated  
elixir  
epitome  
fetish  
fissure  
garrulous  
juxtapose  
kinetic  
lachrymose  
languid  
legerdemain  
libertine  
scintillate

**Lesson 12**

badinage  
bilious  
blandishment  
debauchery  
fastidious  
garner  
gumption  
halcyon  
hegira  
kismet  
malapropism  
milieu  
necromancy  
paradigm  
regress

**Lesson 13**

animosity  
brevity  
cataract  
despicable  
empathy  
harlequin  
hoi polloi  
impinge  
nirvana  
obsequious  
offal  
redundant  
salutary  
savant  
sentient

**Lesson 14**

aggrandize  
bombast  
deign  
elicit  
endemic  
flaunt  
mendacious  
obviate  
orthography  
paleontology  
panache  
paroxysm  
recoil  
saturnine  
shibboleth

**Lesson 15**

aesthetic  
chaff  
egregious  
empirical  
flaccid  
foment  
germane  
hallow  
hermetic  
hospice  
meretricious  
orifice  
perdition  
querulous  
ratiocinate

**Lesson 16**

affinity  
fiscal  
flagellate  
flout  
impalpable  
jocular  
lascivious  
malleable  
miscreant  
palliate  
recant  
recreant  
regale  
salacious  
salient

**Lesson 17**

beguile  
coalesce  
desultory  
ennui  
ergo  
hector  
hiatus  
hubris  
lambent  
nonentity  
pandemic  
pecuniary  
rebuke  
sang-froid  
sibilant

**Lesson 18**

apotheosis  
auspicious  
avuncular  
contiguous  
incendiary  
inimitable  
malfeasance  
platonic  
pontificate  
proletariat  
prurient  
refractory  
specious  
tenacious  
vociferous

**Lesson 19**

abnegation  
acid  
apex  
credulity  
dross  
fulminate  
gravitas  
hegemony  
insuperable  
jejune  
polyglot  
psychosomatic  
truculent  
verisimilitude  
viscous

**Lesson 20**

acerbic  
androgynous  
augur  
beatitude  
diaspora  
discursive  
disseminate  
extemporaneous  
intractable  
maladroit  
politic  
requiem  
sinecure  
tendentious  
traduce

**Lesson 21**

bon mot  
clandestine  
digress  
furlough  
misogyny  
peon  
plenary  
plutocrat  
potboiler  
redoubtable  
stolid  
succor  
travesty  
vignette  
xeric

## Lesson One

- factious** (fak' shəs) *adj.* causing disagreement  
The *factious* sailors refused to sail any farther into the storm.  
*syn:* belligerent; contentious *ant:* cooperative; united
- ignoble** (ig nō' bəl) *adj.* dishonorable; shameful  
Cheating on an exam is an *ignoble* way to get good grades.  
*syn:* despicable; base *ant:* noble; glorious
- boor** (bōr) *n.* a rude or impolite person  
The *boor* grabbed handfuls of hors d'oeuvres and walked around while he ate them.  
*syn:* buffoon; clown *ant:* sophisticate
- aegis** (ē' jis) *n.* a shield; protection  
The life of the witness is under the *aegis* of the witness protection program.  
*syn:* backing
- perspicacity** (pūr spi kas' i tē) *n.* keenness of judgment  
The old hermit still had the *perspicacity* to haggle with the automotive dealer.  
*syn:* perceptiveness *ant:* stupidity; ignorance
- fervent** (fūr' vənt) *adj.* eager; earnest  
We made a *fervent* attempt to capture the stallion, but he was too quick for us.  
*syn:* burning; passionate *ant:* apathetic
- rectify** (rek' tə fī) *v.* to correct; to make right  
JoAnne tried to *rectify* her poor relationship with her son by spending more time with him.  
*syn:* remedy; resolve
- enervate** (en' ər vāt) *v.* to weaken  
The record temperatures *enervated* the farmhands before noon.  
*syn:* devitalize; exhaust *ant:* energize; strengthen



**Exercise I**

**Words in Context**

*From the list below, supply the words needed to complete the paragraph. Some words will not be used.*

amorphous    enervate    besiege    factious  
ephemeral    perspicacity    altruism    carrion

1. Carter had been walking for more than four hours since his truck ran out of fuel. The morning desert sun \_\_\_\_\_ him, bringing him closer to exhaustion. In his weary state, he chastised himself for not having the \_\_\_\_\_ to have brought an extra can of fuel on the trip. In such a barren, isolated place, Carter knew that he couldn't rely on the \_\_\_\_\_ of others for help if his truck broke down. The only living things on the road were biting flies that \_\_\_\_\_ Carter and forced him to swat his face and neck every few seconds. They continued to attack until they detected the foul smell of \_\_\_\_\_ when Carter passed a dead hare on the shoulder of the road. The departure of the flies gave him \_\_\_\_\_ relief as he continued his trudge; the bugs went away, but in the distance, Carter could see, through eyes stinging with sweat, the \_\_\_\_\_ distortions of light along the hot, desert floor.

*From the list below, supply the words needed to complete the paragraph. Some words will not be used.*

rectify    factious    ignoble    erotic    amorphous    besiege

2. Some of the council approved the new zoning restriction, but a few \_\_\_\_\_ members refused to cast votes. None of them actually approved of the \_\_\_\_\_ bookstore next to the little league field, but they wanted to find a better way to legally \_\_\_\_\_ the \_\_\_\_\_ situation.

From the list below, supply the words needed to complete the paragraph. Some words will not be used.

aegis    altruism    boor    fervent    carrion    opulent

3. Councilman Parker, a wealthy native of the small town, knew that a few council members had a[n] \_\_\_\_\_ desire to remove him from office. Some of them resented his \_\_\_\_\_ lifestyle, and others claimed that Parker was careless because he lived under the \_\_\_\_\_ of his wealth and thus had no fear of being fired. They also called Parker a \_\_\_\_\_ because he had the habit of interrupting conversations and barging into offices without knocking.

## Exercise II

### Sentence Completion

Complete the sentence in a way that shows you understand the meaning of the italicized vocabulary word.

1. The highway crew removed the *carrion* from the road because...
2. Bob decided to *rectify* his crime by...
3. People called Cory a *boor* because he always...
4. In an act of *altruism*, Jennifer went to the nursing home to...
5. Citizens protested the opening of an *erotic* bookstore near the park because...
6. Under the *aegis* of the police department, the witness could safely...
7. During the summit, the *factious* ambassador caused...
8. Working on the roof *enervated* the contractors, especially when...
9. The *ephemeral* argument was over in...
10. Features in the *opulent* mansion include...
11. The wounded fish was soon *besieged* by...

12. The *amorphous* body of the amoeba had no discernable...
13. If it were not for dad's *perspicacity*, I would have purchased a car that...
14. His *fervent* speech convinced...
15. A person can lose his or her job by committing an *ignoble* act such as...

### Exercise III

## Roots, Prefixes, and Suffixes

Study the entries and answer the questions that follow.

The roots *fus* and *fun* mean "melt" or "pour out."

The suffix *ion* means "the act of."

The roots *grad* and *gress* means "step" or "go."

The suffix *el* means "little."

The prefix *con* means "together."

The prefixes *di*, *dif*, and *dis* mean "apart."

The prefix *e* means "out" or "from."

1. Using literal translations as guidance, define the following words without using a dictionary.
  - A. fusion
  - B. funnel
  - C. infuse
  - D. regress
  - E. progress
  - F. congress
2. If you have an *effusive* personality, then it \_\_\_\_\_ of you.  
Motor oil will \_\_\_\_\_ across the gravel if it spills out of the can.
3. A step-by-step process is often called a[n] \_\_\_\_\_ process, and a highway crew might use a[n] \_\_\_\_\_ to smooth out a road.
4. *Egress* literally translates to \_\_\_\_\_, and if someone loses a high-paying job and takes a lower-paying job, his or her career is said to have \_\_\_\_\_.
5. List all the words that you can think of that contain the roots *grad* and *gress*.



**Exercise IV**

***Inference***

Complete the sentences by inferring information about the italicized word from its context.

1. You probably will not miss too many days of school, because the *ephemeral* strain of influenza does not...
2. Brenda felt guilty for stealing the money from the register, so she *rectified* the situation by...
3. Out of pure *altruism*, Ed went to the homeless shelter on Christmas Eve to...

**Exercise V**

***Writing***

Here is a writing prompt similar to the one you will find on the essay writing portion of the ACT.

The argument has been fought and, at times, won by NASA, that humankind should not focus only on solving problems on Earth before investing enormous amounts of money and labor on exploring space. The challenges of space travel, much like the challenges of a world war, often yield new technology that would not have been developed otherwise. The new technology might, as in the case of antibiotics, save millions of lives.

Should the billions of dollars spent on space exploration instead be diverted to ending poverty or creating sustainable energy?

Pretend that you are the governor of a state that has an above-average poverty level. Write a speech in which you argue for or against space and deep sea exploration. Include at least three reasons to support your central argument.

**Thesis:** Write a *one-sentence* response to the above assignment. Make certain this single sentence offers a clear statement of your position.

*Example: If all money goes to the solving of survival problems, with none going to research or exploration, then the world will be stuck in the dark ages because new technology and understanding will be essentially nonexistent.*

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**Organizational Plan:** List at least three subtopics you will use to support your main idea. This list is your outline.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

**Draft:** Following your outline, write a good first draft of your essay. Remember to support all your points with examples, facts, references to reading, etc.

**Review and revise:** Exchange essays with a classmate. Using the scoring guide for Organization on page 246, score your partner's essay (while he or she scores yours). Focus on the organizational plan and use of language conventions. If necessary, rewrite your essay to improve the organizational plan and/or your use of language.