English: precision, concision and consistent style

Original skill preparation; versioned source scope

ACT English: Precision, Concision and Consistent Style

- Choose **concision** 简洁 by removing **redundancy** 赘余.
- Keep the passage's **register** 语域, usually a **formal register** 正式语域.
- Choose **diction** 措辞 that is precise and accurate to the facts.
- Recognise when a shorter option loses meaning.

Concision

- Cut words that repeat a meaning: "recorded ... and wrote down in their record", "past history", "return back".
- Do not cut information. Concision removes repetition, not facts.
- If two options mean the same, the shorter is usually right.

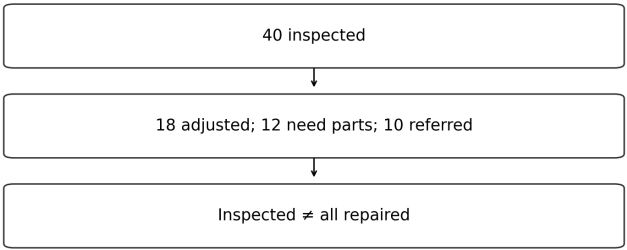
Register and tone

- Most ACT passages are calm and informative. Slang and exaggeration ("totally amazing", "super") break the **register**.
- Keep the tone consistent from start to finish.
- An exaggeration can also be false: "fixed every problem forever".

Precise diction

- Choose the word that matches the facts. "Inspected" and "repaired" are not the same.
- Prefer exact numbers and actions to vague words like "things" or "stuff".
- A word that sounds more impressive is not better if it says something untrue.

Figure: Precise diction



- Worked steps: 40 inspected → 18 adjusted; 12 need parts; 10 referred → Inspected ≠ all repaired
- Match each part of the diagram to the text.

Practice passage

- Original continuous editing passage — A place to mend

P1 On the first Saturday of each month, a group of volunteers opens a repair table in the public library. [S1] The project began when librarian Noor noticed a row of broken desk lamps outside a nearby building. [S2] Some needed specialist work, but others had loose switches or damaged cables. [S3] Noor did not want untrained visitors to try unsafe electrical repairs. [S4] She invited a qualified repairer to explain which items the group could inspect and which should go to a professional.

- The first session accepted only battery-powered objects, with damaged batteries excluded.
- Visitors registered their items and described the faults before any work began.

Worked example: concise and complete

- "Recorded" and "wrote the results down in their record" say the same thing.
- Concise version: "The volunteers recorded the outcomes."
- Deleting the whole sentence would go too far: it would remove the fact that they kept a record.

Worked example: register and precision

- S6: "This totally amazing system fixed every problem forever." "Totally amazing" is informal; "every problem forever" is contradicted by the next sentence.
- Revision: "The arrival windows improved scheduling, but one visitor still waited outside."
- "Forty objects were inspected" cannot become "forty objects were repaired": only 18 worked after an adjustment, 12 needed parts and 10 were referred elsewhere. Precision decides, not length.

Common errors

- Choosing a longer option that repeats a meaning.
- Cutting a sentence that contains needed information.
- Accepting slang or exaggeration in a formal passage.

Common errors (2)

- Choosing a shorter word that changes the facts.
- Choosing a vague word when a precise one is available.

Key terms

- **concision**: Using no more words than the meaning needs.
- **redundancy**: Repeating a meaning without need.
- **register**: The level of formality of writing.
- **formal register**: A serious, careful style without slang.

Check yourself

- Make concise: "In my personal opinion, I think the plan is good."
- Which fits a science report: "The results were awesome" or "The results supported the hypothesis"?
- A writer has 30 tested samples, of which 20 passed. Can they write "30 samples passed"?