

ACT Bellringers

Monday October 19th-Reading, slides 2-4

Tuesday October 20th-Math, slides 5-6

Thursday October 22nd-Writing, slides 7-10

Reading Instructions: Read the passage in order to answer the question that follows.

During the 1970s, a number of state and federal courts adopted a broader legal definition of insanity proposed by the American Law Institute, which states: “A person is not responsible for criminal conduct if at the time of such conduct, as a result of mental disease or defect, he lacks substantial capacity either to appreciate the wrongfulness of his conduct or to conform his conduct to the requirements of the law.” The word *substantial* suggests that “any” incapacity is not enough to avoid criminal responsibility but that “total” incapacity is not required either. The use of the word *appreciate* rather than *know* implies that intellectual awareness of right or wrong is not enough; individuals must have some understanding of the moral or legal consequences of their behavior before they can be held criminally responsible.

Reading Question

Based on the passage, the primary purpose for the 1970s redefinition of insanity proposed by the American Law Institute was to:

- F. eliminate the insanity defense from American courtrooms.
- G. more precisely define the concepts of responsibility and intellectual capacity.
- H. redefine legal insanity so that it might include as many criminals as possible.
- J. apply the McNaghten Rule only to trials involving cases of mistaken identity.

Reading Answer

The best answer is G. Support for this choice is found in the direct quote from the definition proposed by the American Law Institute. This 1970s redefinition of insanity set out to define more precisely when "a person is not responsible for criminal conduct" and to explain that a person must have "substantial capacity either to appreciate the wrongfulness of his conduct or to conform his conduct to the requirements of the law."

The best answer is NOT F because the 1970s redefinition of insanity was adopted by "a number of state and federal courts"; therefore, the purpose would not be to eliminate the insanity defense.

The best answer is NOT H. Lines 51-52 suggest that the 1970s redefinition of insanity more clearly defined who could be held criminally responsible: " 'any' incapacity is not enough to avoid criminal responsibility." This suggests a limitation of the number of criminals who could bring the insanity defense, not an increase.

The best answer is NOT J because there is no mention of mistaken identity in relation to the 1970s redefinition of insanity proposed by the American Law Institute.

Math Question

Given:

$$x = y - 4$$

What is the value of:

$$|y - x| + |x - y|$$

Math Answer

Rewrite $x = y - 4$ to match the problem. $|y - x| + |x - y|$

$$y - x = 4 \quad \text{AND} \quad x - y = -4.$$

Now substitute values into the absolute Value equations.

$$|4| + |-4|$$

The answer is 8.

Writing Instructions

- Read the writing prompt and perspectives.
- The teacher will review the steps of writing an essay with the class using the following slides.
- Students may then choose a perspective and brainstorm with the rest of the class to support that perspective.
- You do not write the essay. This is brainstorming practice.
 - Brainstorming definition: a spontaneous group discussion to produce ideas and ways of solving problems OR an idea that someone thinks of suddenly .

Writing Prompt: This sample prompt, *Intelligent Machines*, is representative of the prompts that will be used for the ACT writing test. The test describes an issue and provides three different perspectives on the issue. You are asked to "evaluate and analyze" the perspectives; to "state and develop" your own perspective; and to "explain the relationship" between your perspective and those given. Your score will not be affected by the perspective you take on the issue.

Intelligent Machines

Many of the goods and services we depend on daily are now supplied by intelligent, automated machines rather than human beings. Robots build cars and other goods on assembly lines, where once there were human workers. Many of our phone conversations are now conducted not with people but with sophisticated technologies. We can now buy goods at a variety of stores without the help of a human cashier. Automation is generally seen as a sign of progress, but what is lost when we replace humans with machines? Given the accelerating variety and prevalence of intelligent machines, it is worth examining the implications and meaning of their presence in our lives.

Perspective One: What we lose with the replacement of people by machines is some part of our own humanity. Even our mundane daily encounters no longer require from us basic courtesy, respect, and tolerance for other people.

Perspective Two: Machines are good at low-skill, repetitive jobs, and at high-speed, extremely precise jobs. In both cases they work better than humans. This efficiency leads to a more prosperous and progressive world for everyone.

Perspective Three: Intelligent machines challenge our long-standing ideas about what humans are or can be. This is good because it pushes both humans and machines toward new, unimagined possibilities.

Write a unified, coherent essay in which you evaluate multiple perspectives on the increasing presence of intelligent machines.

STAGE 1: PLAN YOUR ESSAY Time: 8-10 minutes

Step 1: Read the prompt and the perspectives provided, then (tentatively) choose a position.

Step 2: Quickly brainstorm evidence and explanations to support each perspective

Sources for evidence

Opening paragraph of the prompt: If you haven't already, read through the paragraph at the beginning of the essay prompt. You can appropriate some or all of the examples in it to use in your own essay.

Personal Experience: you can tell any story (real or not) about you or someone else you know (or make up) that supports any one of your points.

Statistics: again, these can be real or made up. You could invent a research study that looked at recordings of phone calls and found >80% of people end up cursing while using automated phone menus (to support perspective one), make up statistics that show automated cashiers are able to process 3x as many check-outs as human cashiers (to support perspective 2), or come up with any other kind of statistics that support one of the perspectives.

Specifics from Sources: use knowledge of events from history or current events to support your points. If you're not certain of the details, it's all right - the essay graders won't deduct points for factually inaccurate information. For this essay, you could use the invention of the printing press (and its effects) as an example of how mechanization can lead to "unimagined possibilities."

Step 3: Brainstorm your counterarguments to or analyses of the two other perspectives

There's no one right way to respond to the other two prompts. Some of it depends on what point of view you take. For instance, if I agreed with Perspective One, which takes a negative view of the effects of intelligent machines, I might want to discuss the other two perspectives (which both take positive views of intelligent machines) in one paragraph, and then disagree with them in the next paragraph as I present my support for Perspective One. In this case, since I am arguing for Perspective Three (machines challenge our ideas about what humans are or can be, which pushes us and machines toward new possibilities), I am going to argue **against** Perspective One and Perspective Two separately. Again, these are not necessarily worded in their final form.

Step 4: Organize your essay

Now that you have the main points of your essay, it's time to organize them in a way that makes sense. Make sure to include your introduction (with your thesis statement containing your point of view) and conclusion in this organization. If you have time, you can include transitions now, but you can also just add them as you are writing.

Step 5: Write your essay, Time: 25-28 minutes