GOUDA ACADEMY

EST ENGLISH 1-DAY SELF-STUDY REVISION GUIDE

2026 EDITION



Grammar • Writing • Reading

Hacks • Strategy • Practice

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GOUDA ACADEMY • 1-DAY SELF-STUDY SPRINT

EST English
1-Day Self-Study Revision Guide

Everything you need to sharpen your grammar, speed up your reading, and crush the EST English test in one focused day. Work through each block in order, check off every box, and test yourself with the drills at the end.

Your 1-Day Study Checklist (~3.5 Hours Total)

[ ]	**Block 1:** The 6 Fast Grammar Hacks + Quick Check	**45 min**
[ ]	**Block 2:** Writing & Organization Hacks (Transitions, Tone, Placement)	**35 min**
[ ]	**Block 3:** Reading Hacks & Mr. Gouda's 4-Step Choice-First Plan	**45 min**
[ ]	**Block 4:** Module 3 Hybrid Sprint Strategy & Pacing Clock	**20 min**
[ ]	**Block 5:** 16-Question Final Drill + Self-Grading & Mistake Review	**45 min**

Test-Day Clock Hack: Remember 32 / 30 / 28

You have 90 minutes for 85 questions across 3 modules. Aim for **32 minutes** on Module 1 (35 editing Qs), **30 minutes** on Module 2 (25 reading Qs — 15 min per passage), and **28 minutes** on Module 3 (25 short hybrid Qs).

Block 1: The 6 Fast Grammar Hacks

Do not guess by "what sounds right." Almost every EST grammar question tests one of these six simple rules. Spot the trigger, apply the hack, and move on in under 30 seconds.

Hack 1: The Pronoun Finger-Point

When to use it: Any time a pronoun (*he, she, it, they, its, their, my, our, you, we*) is underlined.

The Hack: Put your finger on the exact noun the pronoun replaces. Match singular to singular, plural to plural, and never let the point of view jump from *they/she* to *my/our/you*.

> **Trap:** "Mrs. Stevenson was glad they took the blankets and said she would have done the same in my case." → **Fix: their**

> **Trap:** "Uncle Jimmy was a retired sea-captain. She built the famous ship." → **Fix: He**

Hack 2: The Semicolon Split Test

When to use it: Any time you see a semicolon (;) or period (.) in the underlined part or answer choices.

The Hack: Cover the semicolon with your thumb. Both the left side AND the right side must be complete sentences that can stand alone. If either side starts with *while, although, except, because, which,* or an *-ing* word, a semicolon is WRONG—use a comma instead.

> **Trap:** "The wind howled around the house; making a mournful sound." → **Fix: , making**

> **Trap:** "Their mutton was equal; while their ability to fatten was superior." → **Fix: , while**

Hack 3: Matching Bookends (Dashes & Commas)

When to use it: An extra descriptive phrase sits in the middle of a sentence.

The Hack: Extra middle phrases must wear matching punctuation on both ends: **comma + comma** OR **dash + dash**. Never mix a dash with a comma, never put a single comma between a subject and its verb, and never put a colon right after a verb (like *are:* or *include:*).

> **Trap:** "The eastern coast is deficient in rocks —at least south of Cape Cod, so algae is rare." → **Fix: —at least south of Cape Cod—**

> **Trap:** "Among them are the: saber-tooth tiger, wolves, and bears." → **Fix: Among them are the**

Hack 4: The "How Many Owners?" Apostrophe Test

When to use it: Choices vary between `word`, `word's`, `words'`, and `words's`.

The Hack: Ask "Does it own the next noun? If yes, how many owners?" One owner = `'s` (*Mrs. Stevenson's house*). Multiple owners ending in *s* = `s'` (*the farmers' fields*). Irregular plurals without *s* = `'s` (*men's, children's*—NEVER *mens'*).

> **Trap:** "...under great mens' guidance..." → **Fix: men's**

Hack 5: The Mirror Verb Check (Parallelism & Tense)

When to use it: Two verbs are joined by *and* or *or*, or a verb follows *was/were/has/had*.

The Hack: Look at the verb on the other side of *and/or* and mirror its exact ending (*-ed* with *-ed*, *-ing* with *-ing*). After *was/were/been*, always use the past participle (*withdrawn*, not *withdrew*).

> **Trap:** "They got down from the carriage, rubbed knees and stretch arms." → **Fix: rubbing knees and stretching arms**

> **Trap:** "...were the leader's aid withdrew." → **Fix: withdrawn**

Hack 6: Partner Words & Prepositions

When to use it: Small connector words (*and, but, or, nor, in, on, to, at*) are underlined.

The Hack: Lock in fixed pairs: **Not only... but**, **Either... or**, **Neither... nor**. For prepositions, test the plain physical meaning (*on a farm*, *in space*, *put questions to elders*).

> **Trap:** "Not only in the spiral, and in other nebulae..." → **Fix: but**

> **NO CHANGE Reality Check**
>
> **NO CHANGE** is right about 1 out of every 5 times it appears. Don't be scared to pick it if the original sentence passes all 6 hacks—and don't pick it just because the sentence sounds fancy!

Block 2: Writing & Organization Hacks

When a question asks about transitions, concision, keeping/deleting a sentence, or moving a sentence, stop checking grammar and start checking **logic and flow**.

Question Type	Fast Student Hack	Common Trap to Avoid
Transitions	Hide the transition word. Read the sentence before and after, then pick the relationship: *Same direction (In addition), Contrast (However), Cause/Effect (Therefore),* or *Time/Next Step (Then / Finally)*.	Picking *However* or *Conversely* when the second sentence simply happens next in time.
Concision & Tone	Pick the shortest answer that keeps the exact meaning AND stays formal.	Picking a super short choice that uses casual slang (like "*got the basic idea*" or "*lots of stuff*").
Keep or Delete	Decide **Keep** or **Delete** first (does it prove/explain the point, or is it off-topic/repetitive?). Then check the reason after the comma!	Picking the right Keep/Delete word with a false reason (e.g., "defines a key term" when no term is defined).
Sentence Placement	Look for clue words inside the sentence: *This, They, It, Such, Another*. Place the sentence right after the noun those clues point to.	Forgetting that "*where it is now*" is often the right answer when the sentence wraps up the paragraph!
Best Intro / Support	Read the whole paragraph first. Match the exact direction of the surrounding sentences (watch for contrast signals like *conversely* or *but*).	Picking a nice-sounding sentence that says the exact opposite of the next sentence.

Block 3: Reading Hacks & Mr. Gouda's 4-Step Choice-First Plan

EST passages often use older, formal English with long sentences. Don't get lost in the fancy words—use this two-part attack on every passage.

> **The Long-Sentence Shortcut**
> When a sentence is 4 lines long, skip over the extra descriptions between commas and find just three things: **WHO** (the subject) + **DID WHAT** (the main verb) + **WHY IT MATTERS** (the main point). After each paragraph, write a 4-word note in the margin so you can find answers fast.

Mr. Gouda's 4-Step Choice-First Reading Plan

1. **Find the Clue:** Go back to the exact paragraph or line mentioned in the question. Never answer from memory.
2. **Use the Choices Right Away:** Read choices A–D immediately to see the exact ideas you are choosing between—let the choices guide what to check in the text.

3. **Eliminate Traps:** Cross out extreme words (*always, never, solely, completely*), opposite tone, and true details from the wrong paragraph.

4. **Prove the Winner & Learn:** Confirm your remaining choice with direct proof on the page. When grading practice, circle why any wrong choice tempted you.

3 Extra Reading Hacks for Tricky Questions

1. Vocabulary in Context ("most nearly means"): Use the choices to your advantage—plug each of the 4 answer choices directly into the sentence in place of the tested word. Eliminate any choice that breaks the sentence's meaning or tone, and keep the one that fits naturally (watch for common words used with secondary meanings like *arrested* = blocked, *liberal* = generous, *purchase* = grip).

2. "Evaluate the Logic" Questions: Ask yourself: *Did the author give concrete evidence (measurements, dates, real examples)?* If yes, pick the choice that says the reasoning is logical because of that specific evidence. If the author made a claim without explaining why, pick the choice that points out the missing explanation.

3. Diagrams & Pictures: Look closely at the picture and caption, then ask: *Does this picture confirm a step described in the text, or could it trick a reader into a wrong idea that the text corrects?*

Block 4: The Module 3 Hybrid Sprint Hack

Module 3 gives you 10 to 12 short paragraphs that mix grammar questions and reading questions together. Use the **5-Second Bracket Scan** to stay fast and focused:

A. **Check for Brackets [1] First:** If the paragraph has underlined numbers, jump right into Grammar/Writing mode—apply Hacks 1–6 and grab fast points in 30 seconds.

B. **No Brackets? Slow Down Once:** If there are no underlined numbers, it is a pure Reading paragraph. Read those 4–5 sentences carefully once, then apply the 4-Step Plan.

C. **Don't Get Stuck:** Spend max 2.5 minutes per short passage. If one question feels tough, cross out 2 wrong choices, guess, mark it, and keep moving—easy grammar points are often waiting on the last two passages!

Block 5: 16-Question Final Self-Study Drill

Set a timer for **16 minutes** and complete all 16 questions without peeking at the Answer Key. Then grade yourself and review every mistake!

Part A: Grammar & Writing Drills (Questions 1–10)

1. Although the botanist cataloged hundreds of alpine mosses during the trip, <u>we</u> never published the drawings.

A. NO CHANGE B. they C. he D. you

2. The harbor froze early in December; trapping three merchant schooners inside the breakwater until March.

A. NO CHANGE B. , trapping C. : trapping D. . Trapping

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3. The old observatory—built atop the limestone ridge in 1842, remained the clearest vantage point in the county.

A. NO CHANGE B. —built atop the limestone ridge in 1842— C. ; built atop the limestone ridge in 1842— D. , built atop the limestone ridge in 1842;

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4. The curator discovered an unpublished letter tucked inside the childrens' storybook collection.

A. NO CHANGE B. childrens C. children's D. childrens's

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5. During the sudden squall, the deckhands scrambled across the planks, secured the canvas and lashed the spare timber.

A. NO CHANGE B. securing the canvas and lashing C. secured the canvas and lashing D. secure the canvas and lashed

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6. Not only did the canal shorten the shipping route by two hundred miles, and it lowered the price of winter coal.

A. NO CHANGE B. or C. but D. nor

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7. The expedition reached the summit at dawn, yet the guide warned that the fog had not yet drove off the ridge.

A. NO CHANGE B. driving C. driven D. drives

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8. In her memoirs, the astronomer noted that the comet's tail was really super bright and pretty amazing to look at against the winter sky.

A. NO CHANGE B. shone with remarkable brilliance C. had a glow that was kind of bright D. looked totally awesome

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9. The surveyor measured the ridge three times to verify the elevation. Conversely, he recorded the final numbers in the ledger.

A. NO CHANGE B. Nevertheless C. Thereafter D. Although

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10. Among the artifacts recovered were: bronze coins, clay oil lamps, and carved ivory combs.

A. NO CHANGE B. Among the artifacts recovered were C. Among the artifacts recovered; were D. Among, the artifacts recovered were

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Part B: Reading & Logic Drills (Questions 11–16)

> Many casual observers assume that the cedar forests along the northern coast owe their longevity solely to abundant rainfall. Yet a closer inspection of fallen trunks reveals that trees rooted in thin, rocky soil often outlive their counterparts in deep, moist valleys. The harsh exposure stunts their annual growth, packing the wood fibers tightly together so that

> decay and insects find scarcely any purchase. Consequently, the very hardship that slows a coastal cedar's youth becomes the armor that preserves its old age.

11. What is the primary purpose of the passage?

A. To argue that coastal rainfall harms cedar forests
B. To correct a common assumption about why coastal cedars live so long
C. To compare northern cedars with tropical hardwoods
D. To explain how insects destroy valley soil

12. As used in the passage, "purchase" most nearly means

A. payment. B. bargain. C. foothold. D. value.

13. What can be reasonably inferred about cedar trees growing in deep, moist valleys?

A. They grow faster, producing less dense wood that is more vulnerable to decay.
B. They receive less sunlight than trees on rocky slopes.
C. They are immune to insect damage because of excess moisture.
D. They never reach full height.

14. Which statement best evaluates the logic of the author's reasoning?

A. It is flawed because it relies on emotional appeals rather than observation.
B. It is logical because it links physical evidence in fallen trunks to a clear biological mechanism.
C. It is weak because it fails to name specific insect species.
D. It contradicts itself by claiming rainfall is unnecessary for trees.

15. What is the effect of the metaphor "the armor that preserves its old age" in the final sentence?

A. It emphasizes how tightly packed wood protects the tree from threats over time.
B. It suggests that coastal cedars were used to build medieval shields.
C. It criticizes observers who underestimate the weight of cedar bark.
D. It implies that young cedars cannot survive without human protection.

16. Which detail directly supports the claim that harsh conditions can extend a cedar's lifespan?

A. Observers assume rainfall explains forest longevity.
B. Trees rooted in thin, rocky soil often outlive those in deep, moist valleys.
C. Coastal forests receive abundant annual rainfall.
D. Fallen trunks are easy for casual visitors to inspect.

Self-Grading Answer Key & Quick Explanations

Q#	Ans	Quick Hack & Why
1	**C**	**Pronoun Finger-Point:** "the botanist" is singular third-person; "we" is a person shift.
2	**B**	**Semicolon Split:** "trapping..." is a fragment, so use a comma, not a semicolon.
3	**B**	**Matching Bookends:** Opening dash (–) must close with a matching dash (–).

Q#	Ans	Quick Hack & Why
4	**C**	**Apostrophe Test:** "children" is an irregular plural → add `'s` (`children's`).
5	**B**	**Mirror Verb:** Parallel ***-ing*** participles (*securing... and lashing*) modify how they scrambled.
6	**C**	**Partner Words:** *Not only...* always pairs with *but*.
7	**C**	**Mirror Verb:** After *had not yet*, use the past participle *driven* (not *drove*).
8	**B**	**Concision & Tone:** Concise AND matches formal memoir style (no slang).
9	**C**	**Transitions:** Recording comes after measuring (time sequence = *Thereafter*).
10	**B**	**Matching Bookends:** Never put a colon directly after a verb like *were*.
11	**B**	**4-Step Plan:** Opens with "Many casual observers assume..." and pivots with "Yet."
12	**C**	**Vocab in Context:** Secondary meaning of *purchase* = firm grip or *foothold*.
13	**A**	**Inference:** Slower growth = dense, rot-resistant wood; faster valley growth = looser, more vulnerable wood.
14	**B**	**Evaluate Logic:** Connects observable evidence (fallen trunks) to a clear cause (tightly packed fibers).
15	**A**	**Rhetorical Craft:** "Armor" highlights how dense wood shields the tree from insects and decay.
16	**B**	**Command of Evidence:** Directly proves harsh rocky soil leads to longer life than moist valleys.