

ACT Science – 3 Tips to Get Better Scores

The ACT Science Test is a lot easier than you think (after all, it's basically an open book test)! Even if your knowledge of Science is limited, you can still get better scores through discipline and hard work. On Test Day, the ACT Science Test will always be the fourth test you'll take. It will have 7 passages and you'll have 35 minutes to complete them.

1. **Practice your pacing!** Don't wait until two weeks before your test to get started. You will only have about 5 minutes per passage, so you may want to start by only doing 5 passages, allotting 7 min per passage. Once you can confidently do 5 passages with reasonable accuracy, work your way up to 6 and then 7. If you have a limited time to study and your accuracy significantly drops after 5 passages, just stick to 5 on Test Day. Better to do 5 really well and guess on 7 than to do all 7 sloppily.
2. **Always refer back to the passage.** You won't be able to memorize the information presented in the passages; it's too overwhelming. Read the passages to understand the gist and the data that is presented, but also move back to the passage to locate the information you need to answer. Memory alone will not suffice, and you may find it helpful to jot down a few short notes on each passage. Drawing arrows and circling important info is also a great idea
3. **Adopt a strategy for each of the 3 formats.** ACT Science Test passages come in three forms: Data Representation, Conflicting Viewpoints, and Research Summaries. You will need to modify your approach slightly for each one. Data Representation focuses mostly on charts, graphs, and tables, so you will need to practice identifying trends and understanding the layout of variables. Conflicting Viewpoints typically has no diagrams and is more like the paired passages you might remember if you took the SAT. Research Summaries describes one or more experiments. You will need to understand the Purpose, Method, and Results for each experiment, and know what the similarities and differences were between them. Don't treat these 3 formats all the same – they are each quite unique!

Set a timer the next time you work on an ACT Science practice test, and see if you can stick to these checkpoints. This is the ideal timing for the actual exam:

:00 ... Set the clock and begin!

:05....Finish gridding in the answers for Passage 1

:10....Finish gridding in the answers for Passage 2

:15....Finish gridding in the answers for Passage 3

:20....Finish gridding in the answers for Passage 4

:25....Finish gridding in the answers for Passage 5

:30....Finish gridding in the answers for Passage 6

:35....Finish gridding in the answers for Passage 7 (make sure you can do this before time is called!)