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## **How to PLAN & Practice Effectively for the ACT**

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### **A SUGGESTED STUDY PLAN OF PRACTICE**

Preparing for the ACT is one of the most important steps a high school student can take. Your ACT score helps determine where you will go to college and whether or not schools will offer you scholarship money.

When taking the practice exams in this book, please simulate actual test conditions:

- Find a quiet location that is free from distractions.
- Leave your phone in a separate room!
- Be sure to wear the same wrist watch during practice that you will wear during the actual exam.
- Be sure to use the same calculator, as well.
- Try to do an entire test in one sitting, whenever possible.
- Do not “read out loud” as this is not allowed during the ACT.

After completing a practice test, it is imperative that you carefully review your errors. Each test is accompanied by a set of explanations. When you miss a question, carefully review the explanation for the correct answer. It is virtually impossible to improve your ACT score without this corrective input.

All students should carefully read, review, and learn the strategies listed at the beginning of this book, found in the “About the ACT” section. These “Rules” will help you score to your maximum potential.

We suggest the following lesson plans:

## STUDY TIPS

### Focusing

- **Active participation.** Studying requires an attentive, engaged mind, focused on the task at hand. You have to do more than simply watch the words go by on the page.
- **Environment.** Turn off your TV and iPod. Find a place with few distractions. Simulate test conditions as closely as possible.
- **Procrastination.** Break whatever you're studying into smaller parts, tackle the hardest part first, and reward yourself for small accomplishments.

### Planning

- **Budgeting time.** Plan your day, week, month, even year. This is especially important if you're taking tough classes while also studying for the ACT. You know that the month leading up to the test is going to be rough. Prioritize. Observe your own habits. Realize when you like to study, are most effective, etc., and set your schedule around those times.
- **Calendars.** These can help a lot. Have one just for the ACT, and use it to map out study time.
- **Leverage downtime.** Everyone has periods during the day when they are doing nothing but riding in the car or the bus or waiting for someone. This is a perfect time to pull out your study cards or SparkCharts. Those extra 10 minutes a day could make a big difference.

### Cramming

- **Don't try to learn everything.** Tackle only a few concepts or themes. It's better to know a few things pretty well than to barely know a lot of things. Understand that you won't be able to study everything, and focus on the most important themes and topics.
- **Use study cards.** It's the fastest way to memorize and store information. Say things out loud.
- **Stay positive.** Yeah, perhaps you should have started earlier, but there's nothing you can do about that now. Stay confident and focus on what you can do with the time you have.

## TEST-TAKING TIPS

### Multiple Choice

- **Relax:** The answer is right under your nose. You just have to pick it out of the 5 choices given. This is easier than explaining why an answer is correct or showing work on how you arrived at an answer.
- **Traps!** The trap is the answer that looks correct but actually isn't (traps are also called "distractors" because they distract you from finding the real answer). To dodge traps, try to think of your own answer before you look at the choices given.
- **R-E-A-D.** Read the question carefully. We can't say that enough.
- **Don't sweat the small stuff.** If you really get stuck, forget about it and move on. The easy questions count just as much as the hard ones.

### The Essay

- **Outline.** Take a few seconds to outline your essay. Try not to jump right in. Remember that you are being tested not only on your knowledge but also on your ability to write a coherent essay.
- **Stand Up.** Take a stand, make an argument, support it, and conclude strongly. Even if you are wrong, if you take a firm stance, don't waver, and back things up, you'll still get close to full credit.
- **Time Out!** If you're running out of time, make an outline of what you would have liked to have said if you'd had time. This should win you at least a few points (hopefully).

# GENERAL TEST-TAKING STRATEGIES

In this section, you'll learn how to take advantage of the ACT's structure to achieve the score you want. You'll learn basic rules for taking the ACT, as well as pacing and preparation strategies. These are the general test-taking strategies that you should use in all sections of the test, not just the English and Reading Tests. There are, of course, specific strategies for each of the individual tests. We'll cover the specific strategies for the English, Reading, and Writing Tests in this workbook.

## SEVEN BASIC RULES FOR TAKING THE ACT

These seven rules apply to every section of the ACT. We list them here because you should always have these rules of test-taking in the back of your mind as you take the test. You don't need to focus on them obsessively, but you should be sure not to forget them. They will help you save time and cut down on careless errors.

- 1. Know the instructions for each test.** Since you'll need all the time you can get, don't waste time reading the test instructions during the actual test. Read the instructions before taking each practice set so you'll have them memorized for the actual test.
- 2. Use your test booklet as scratch paper.** Some students seem to think their test booklet has to look "pretty" at the end of the test. Don't be one of those students. A pristine test booklet is a wasted opportunity. In the Math Test, the ACT writers even give you "figuring" space for drawing diagrams and writing out solutions. You should write down all your work for math problems, in case you want to return to them later to complete the question or check your answer. The Math Test isn't the only place where you can benefit from marginal scribbling, though. Making margin notes alongside the Reading and Science Reasoning passages can help you stay on track when answering the subsequent questions. In addition, if you want to skip a question and come back to it later, you should make a distinctive mark next to it, so you won't miss it on your second pass through the questions.
- 3. Answer the easy questions first.** This is a crucial strategy for the ACT. Since all questions within a subject test are worth the same number of points, there's no point in slaving away over a difficult question if doing so requires several minutes. In the same amount of time, you probably could have racked up points by answering a bunch of easy, less time-consuming questions.

So, answer the easy and moderate questions first. That way you'll make sure that you get to see all the questions on the test that you have a good shot of getting right, while saving the leftover time for the difficult questions.

- 4. Don't get bogged down by a hard question.** This rule may seem obvious, but many people have a hard time letting go of a question. If you've spent a significant amount of time on a problem (in ACT world, a minute and a half is a lot of time) and haven't gotten close to answering it, just let it go. Leaving a question unfinished may seem

## **UNDERSTAND “MULTIPLE CHOICE”**

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The multiple-choice format of the ACT should affect the way you approach the questions. In this section, we'll discuss exactly how.

### **Only the Answer Matters**

A computer, not a person, will score your test. This computer does not care how you arrived at your answers; it cares only whether your answers are correct and readable in little oval form. The test booklet in which you worked out your answers gets thrown in the garbage, or, if your proctor is conscientious, into a recycling bin.

On the ACT, no one looks at your work. If you get a question right, it doesn't matter whether you did impeccable work. In fact, it doesn't even matter whether you knew the answer or guessed. The multiple-choice structure of the test is a message to you from the ACT creators: “We only care about your answers.” Remember, the ACT is your tool to get into college, so treat it as a tool. It wants right answers? Give it right answers, as many as possible, using whatever strategies you can.

### **The Answers Are Right There**

When you look at any ACT multiple-choice question, the answer is already right there in front of you. Of course, the ACT writers don't just *give* you the correct answer; they hide it among a bunch of incorrect answer choices. Your job on each question is to find the right answer. Because the answer is right there, begging to be found, you have two methods you can use to try to get the correct answer:

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1. Look through the answer choices and pick out the one that is correct.
  2. Look at the answer choices and eliminate wrong answers until there's only one answer left.
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Both methods have their advantages: You are better off using option 1 in some situations and option 2 in others. In a perfect scenario in which you are sure how to answer a question, finding the right answer immediately is clearly better than chipping away at the wrong answers. Coming to a conclusion about a problem and then picking the single correct choice is a much simpler and quicker process than going through every answer choice and discarding the three or four that are wrong.

However, when you are unsure how to solve the problem, eliminating wrong answers becomes more attractive and appropriate. By focusing on the answers to problems that are giving you trouble, you might be able to use the answer choices to lead you in the right direction or to solve the problem through trial and error. You also might be able to eliminate answer choices through a variety of strategies (these strategies vary, as you'll see in the chapters devoted to question types). In some cases, you might be able to eliminate all the wrong answers. In others, you might only be able to eliminate one, which will still improve your odds when you attempt to guess.

Part of your preparation for the ACT should be to get some sense of when to use each strategy. Using the right strategy can increase your speed without affecting your accuracy, giving you more time to work on and answer as many questions as possible.

## PACE YOURSELF

The ACT presents you with a ton of questions and, despite its three-hour length, not that much time to answer them. As you take the test, you will probably feel some pressure to answer quickly. As we've already discussed, getting bogged down on a single question is not a good thing. But rushing isn't any good either. In the end, there's no real difference between answering very few questions and answering lots of questions incorrectly: Both will lead to low scores. What you have to do is find a happy medium, a groove, a speed at which you can be both accurate and efficient, and get the score you want. Finding this pace is a tricky task, but it will come through practice and strategy.

### Keep an Eye on the Clock

Because the ACT is a timed test, you should always be aware of the time. The proctor at the test center will strictly enforce the time limits for each subject test. Even if you have only one question left to answer, you won't be allowed to fill in that bubble.

As you take the test, watch the clock. You shouldn't be checking it every two minutes, since you will only waste time and give yourself a headache. But you should check occasionally to make sure you are on pace to achieve your target score.

## SET A TARGET SCORE

The ACT is your tool to get into college. Therefore, a perfect score on the ACT is not a 36; it's the score that gets you into the colleges of your choice. Once you set a target score, your efforts should be directed toward achieving *that* score and not necessarily a 36.

In setting a target score, the first rule is to be honest and realistic. Base your target score on the schools you want to attend, and use the results from your practice tests to decide what's realistic. If you score a 20 on your first practice test, your target score probably should not be a 30. Instead, aim for a 23 or 24. Your scores will likely increase on your second test simply because you'll be more experienced than you were the first time, and then you can work on getting several extra problems right on each subject test. Adjust your pacing to the score you want, but also be honest with yourself about what pace you can maintain.

## PREPARE

Preparation is the key to success on the ACT. When the ACT is lurking sometime far in the future, it can be difficult to motivate yourself to study. Establishing an organized study routine can help keep you on track as you approach the test date.

### Setting Up a Study Schedule

Rather than simply telling yourself to study each week, you might want to write down an actual schedule, just as you have a schedule of classes at school. Keep this schedule where you'll see it every day, and consider showing it to a parent who will nag you incessantly when you don't follow it. (You might as well use your parents' nagging capabilities to your own advantage for once.) You should reward yourself for keeping to your schedule.

You should allot at least a few hours a week to studying, depending on how much time you have before the test date. If you start preparing six weeks in advance, you might consider studying one subject per week, with the last week left over for light review. Our

# LUCID PREP ACT Study Plans

## 1-Month, 2-Month, and 3-Month ACT Practices Schedules

When you're figuring out how to study for the ACT, the best thing to first nail down is your ACT study plan. This ACT study plan defines the length of time you will be studying for, what you will be studying and when, as well as some general tips for preparing that will allow you to walk into test day completely prepared.

### 1-Month ACT Study Plan

One month to study for the ACT can be intense, so we don't really recommend this short of a prep schedule unless absolutely necessary (and ideally in conjunction with an ACT review course). However, because we understand life can get in the way, it's still critical for you to get in-the-know about how to study for the ACT in under 4 weeks. You will need to roll up your sleeves because you will be getting through a ton of content in a pretty short amount of time.

#### Time Commitment:

To be effectively prepared for the ACT in just one month, you will need to plan on devoting at least **12-15 hours per week on prep materials**. This can be broken up however your schedule allows, but we recommend being able to get in a solid 2 to 3 hours of consecutive study on study days.

Here is a potential schedule: Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, Saturday: 2.5 hours study  
Sunday: 3 hours study

More than likely you will be able to clear some weekend time to study. This, of course, takes much more discipline and you must hold yourself accountable for those hours you plan on putting in on Saturday and Sunday.

This one-month ACT study plan is only 60 hours. You can only expect to improve your ACT score by up to 4 points in this time frame.

## **Week 1:**

1. **Set a goal score:** Your goal score should be in the 85th percentile of those admitted to the college or university that you wish to apply (*1 hour*)
2. **Find your baseline score:** Your baseline score is what score you can receive on the ACT right now without doing any prep work. This requires taking a diagnostic test, simulating ACT test day conditions – taking an official ACT test in a quiet space, timing yourself appropriately for each section, and only taking breaks during official break time. To calculate your score, you will need to calculate your scaled composite score (*3 hours*)
3. **Calculate how much higher your ACT score needs to become:** You should be shooting for an ACT score that will land you in the top 75th percentile of those admitted into the schools you wish to apply. Keep in mind that if you wish to improve your score over 4 points from your baseline score, you will need more time than just this one month of study (*1 hour*)
4. **Work through diagnostic test questions:** Go through all the questions on your diagnostic test and see which ones you got wrong. You can find patterns on types of questions you are getting incorrect and begin modifying your study plan to improve these weak areas (*3 hours*)
5. **Review the format of the ACT**  
You should go through what each section of the ACT is going to test you on, how to methodically solve questions, as well as how you will be scored (*3 hours*)
6. **Begin working through English**  
Begin working through the English format, learn what concepts you will be tested on as well as what you will need to know for Grammar and the Passages (*1 hour*)
7. **Study English Grammar Topics:** This is your time to actually learn the rules of grammar and how to answer the questions the ACT will ask you in terms of grammar and punctuation (*2 hours*)

## **Week 2:**

1. **Begin working through Reading**  
Begin working through the Reading format, learn what kinds of passages you will see, what the questions tend to ask, and how to improve timing (*1 hour*)
2. **Practice your Reading strategy:** When going through Reading passages, you should read the questions first then skim the passage. This helps you to find answers more quickly as well as saves you on time, since changing your reading pace in just 4 weeks would be pretty difficult (*2 hours*)
3. **Use the ACT Flashcards for reading:** The flashcards in our toolkit cover Reading strategies and ways to determine correct answers (*1 hour*)
4. **Memorize ACT vocab:** You can't study *all* the words tested on the ACT, but there are some common vocabulary words you should expect to be tested on. Start with this list of ACT vocab words in this lucid prep study guide. Consider making flashcards and bringing these around with you over the course of the week (*2 hours*).
5. **Begin Math Basics** Just as before with English and Reading, you need to go through what's expected of you on the Math portion of the ACT. Review the concepts tested on so that you have a good idea of what you will need to practice moving forwards (*1 hour*)
6. **Practice Math Concepts:** Integers, fractions, and proportions are some of the toughest areas for students. You can practice through questions utilizing a formulas cheat sheet (*1 hour*)

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7. **Memorize Math formulas:** It's time to memorize the formulas that you will come across on the ACT (*1 hour*)
8. **Algebra Review:** Algebra class may have felt like years ago, so it's important to brush up on the algebra concepts including the following: word problems, functions, operations, systems of equations, and single-variable equations (*2 hours*)
9. **Geometry Review:** Geometry can account for up to 35% - 45% of the ACT Math section, meaning it should NOT be overlooked. You will need to have the following concepts down pat: lines & slopes, reflections, translations, & rotations, lines & angles, polygons, circles, triangles, and solid geometry (*2 hours*)
10. **Trigonometry Review:** You will only see about 4 to 6 questions (7%) on the ACT Math section, but does warrant review if you are aiming on being a top scorer (*1 hour*)

## Week 3:

1. **Begin working through Science** Run through the Science section format and what to expect (*1 hour*)
2. **Practice Science passage strategy:** Use science practice questions to first read the questions then skimming the passage (*2 hours*)
3. **Brush up on Science concepts:** The ACT Science section doesn't necessarily test you directly on specialized knowledge, but a certain amount of biology, chemistry, math, and physics will be helpful (*1.5 hours*)
4. **Take an official ACT practice test:** Take the ACT test in simulated testing conditions (*3.5 hours*)
5. **Calculate progress:** Scale your scores and see what improvement you have made since your baseline score (*30 minutes*)
6. **Go through ACT practice test answers:** This is important to learn from the mistakes you still may be making and home in on those concepts moving forward into your last week and a half of studying (*3 hours*)
7. **Review strategies for all sections:** Practice how to eliminate incorrect answers, plugging in answers for the Math and Science Sections, as well as how to read tables and charts (*4 hours*)

## Week 4:

1. **Take another ACT practice test:** Just as before, run through an official ACT practice test as if you are taking the real ACT (*3.5 hours*)
2. **Score your ACT and look for where to review:** Score and scale your ACT score and see which areas you still need to work on (*30 minutes*)
3. **Go through questions you missed and understand why:** This is critical for improving your test-taking ability. Go through the answers and comprehend why that answer is correct (*1 hour*)
4. **Drill yourself on the weak areas of your last test:** Go back and review concepts that you missed on your third practice test. Test out the strategies you may have failed to use so that you can do this right on the next real ACT test (*4 hours*)
5. **Review with your flashcards** You don't want to get too stressed out on your last week before taking the ACT, so the rest of the week can be going through concepts and just getting confident in your understanding of what the ACT asks for and how to answer questions (*4 hours*).
6. **Take the day off before the test:** It's almost time to celebrate. Enjoy the day off and get your mind off testing.

# Two-Month ACT Study Plan

A two-month ACT study plan can be a bit more digestible for those who are not trying to study 15 hours a week. This 2-month ACT study plan can be worked into nearly anybody's schedule, as it only requires 6-7 study hours per week for a total of 80 hours of study. This is a pretty moderate study plan, and, as always, you can feel free to study more or less as needed, but consider this a rough guide on how to do well on the ACT with 2 months of total prep.

**Time Commitment:** For this two-month ACT study plan, you will need to plan on devoting at least **6-7 hours preparing for the ACT per week**. We recommend study periods of up to 2 hours at a time, totaling 3 days per week. *Monday, Wednesday, Friday: 2-3 hours.* **This one-month ACT study plan is ~80 hours. You can expect to improve your ACT score by 4-6 points in this time frame!**

## Week 1:

1. **Set a goal score:** Your goal score should be in the 85th percentile of those admitted to the college or university that you wish to apply (*1 hour*)
2. **Find your baseline score:** Your baseline score is what score you can receive on the ACT right now without doing any prep work. This requires taking a diagnostic test, simulating ACT test day conditions – taking an official ACT test in a quiet space, timing yourself appropriately for each section, and only taking breaks during official break time. To calculate your score, you will need to calculate your scaled composite score (*3 hours*)
3. **Analyze results of test:** Your baseline score is the composite scaled score you calculated. Take some time to go through your test and see where you are missing questions (*1-2 hours*)
4. **Calculate how much higher your ACT score needs to become:** You should aim for an ACT score that lands you in the top 85th percentile of those admitted into the schools you wish to apply. Keep in mind that if you wish to improve your score over 6 points from your baseline score, you will likely need more time than just these 2 months of study (*30 minutes*)

## **Week 2:**

### **1. Understand the ACT format**

Spend an hour reading up on what the formatting of the ACT is and what sections to expect and how scoring works (*1 hour*)

### **2. Begin English Section** Go through what the ACT English section is about and begin working through passages (*1.5 hours*)

### **3. Study ACT Grammar and Punctuation:** This part you should not skip for the ACT English.

Read up on the rules that will be tested in both grammar and punctuation and practice questions and analyze results (*2.5 hours*)

### **4. Practice your Reading strategy:** When going through Reading passages, you should read the questions first then skim the passage. This helps you to find answers more quickly as well as saves you on time, since changing your reading pace in just 8 weeks would be pretty difficult (*2 hours*)

## **Week 3:**

### **1. Learn the Reading format** The Reading section differs from the English, and you should read what the Reading section is going to test you on and what kinds of passages to expect (*3 hours*)

### **2. Choose a reading strategy**

There are various strategies to tackling the ACT Reading passages. Many students prefer to read the questions first, then skim through the passage looking for quick and easy answers. This is all up to your preference and there is a reading strategy that works for everyone. Begin practicing this reading strategy over the course of the next 2 days (*4 hours*)

## **Week 4:**

### **1. Use the ACT Flashcards** (The flashcards in our toolkit cover Reading strategies and ways to determine correct answers (*1 hour*)

### **2. Memorize ACT vocab:** You can't study *all* the words tested on the ACT, but there are some common vocabulary words you should expect to be tested on. Start with this list of ACT vocab words. (*2 hours*)

### **3. Practice ACT English and Reading Questions:** Start working through official and unofficial ACT English and Reading questions. Don't forget to go through the answer and understand what you are getting incorrect and why (*3 hours*)

### **4. Go back and study any gaps in English and Reading:** If you are consistently answering something incorrectly or don't feel confident on specific questions, use this time to go back and study up on these concepts (*1 hour*)

## **Week 5:**

### **1. Begin learning Math format**

It's time to switch into Math mode and go through the math section content, learn what is being tested, and have an understanding of what you will need to focus on (*1 hour*)

2. **Practice Math Concepts:** Integers, fractions, and proportions are some of the toughest areas for students. You can practice through questions utilizing a formulas cheat sheet (*1 hour*)
3. **Memorize Math formulas:** It's time to memorize the formulas that you will come across on the ACT (*1 hour*)
4. **Algebra Review:** Algebra class may have felt like years ago, so it's important to brush up on the algebra concepts including the following: word problems, functions, operations, systems of equations, and single-variable equations (*2 hours*)
5. **Geometry Review:** Geometry can account for up to 35% - 45% of the ACT Math section, meaning it should NOT be overlooked. You will need to have the following concepts down pat: lines & slopes, reflections, translations, & rotations, lines & angles, polygons, circles, triangles, and solid geometry (*2 hours*)

## **Week 6:**

1. **Trigonometry Review:** You will only see about 4 to 6 questions (7%) on the ACT Math section, but does warrant review if you are aiming on being a top scorer (*2 hours*)
2. **Practice on official or quality unofficial math problems:** This is your time to work through questions and utilize strategies to get the correct answer. Be sure to understand when you get the incorrect answer and why (*2 hours*)
3. **Begin working through Science** Run through the Science section format and what to expect (*1 hour*)
4. **Practice Science passage strategy:** Use science practice questions to first read the questions then skimming the passage (*2 hours*)
5. **Brush up on Science Concepts:** The ACT Science section doesn't necessarily test you directly on specialized knowledge, but a certain amount of bio, chem, math, and physics will be helpful (*1.5 hours*)
6. **Take an official ACT practice test:** Take the ACT test in simulated testing conditions (*3.5 hours*)

## **Week 7:**

1. **Analyze results of ACT practice test:** Go through the answers of your ACT practice test and take note of weak areas to continue practicing! (*1.5 hours*)
2. **Learn Science and Math answer strategies:** For example, plugging in numbers or answers as well as charts and tables you will need to learn for Science (*2 hours*)
3. **Practice these strategies on official or high quality unofficial Science and Math sections** (*2 hours*)
4. **Learn the Writing section:** Read what is expected on the ACT writing (*30 minutes*)

## **Week 8:**

1. **Take your final ACT practice test:** Take the ACT test in simulated testing conditions (*3.5 hours*)
2. **Analyze results of ACT practice test:** Go through the answers of your ACT practice test and make any final adjustments to last-minute study material (*1 hour*)
3. **Practice writing an ACT Essay prompt:** Go through the format and try writing an ACT essay, if you plan to take it (*1 hour*)
4. **Study concepts and last-minute materials:** Go through ACT vocab, math formulas, and any other material that you need to continue working on (*2-3 hours*)

# Three-Month ACT Study Plan

This three month ACT study plan can be intense, but if you plan on studying for 3 months for the ACT, then it's fair to say you are already up for the task. We're going to share with you a 3-month ACT study plan that will get you the ACT score you deserve.

## Time Commitment:

To be effectively prepared for the ACT in just one month with this ACT study plan, you will need to plan on devoting at least **12-15 hours per week on prep materials**. This can be broken up however your schedule allows, but we recommend being about to at least get in 2 to 3 hours at a time on study days. Here is a potential schedule:

*Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, Saturday: 2.5 hours study*

*Sunday: 3 hours study*

More than likely you will be able to clear some weekend time to study to fit the hours in for this 3-month ACT study plan. This, of course, takes much more discipline and you must hold yourself accountable for those hours you plan on putting in on Saturday and Sunday.

*This 3-month ACT study plan totals 150 hours. You can expect to improve your ACT score by up to 9 points in this timeframe.*

## Week 1:

1. **Set a goal score:** Your goal score should be in the 85th percentile of those admitted to the college or university that you wish to apply (*1 hour*)
2. **Find your baseline score:** Your baseline score is what score you can receive on the ACT right now without doing any prep work. This requires taking a diagnostic test, simulating ACT test day conditions – taking an official ACT test in a quiet space, timing yourself appropriately for each section, and only taking breaks during official break time. To calculate your score, you will need to calculate your scaled composite score (*3 hours*)
3. **Analyze results of test:** Your baseline score is the composite scaled score you calculated. Take some time to go through your test and see where you are missing questions (*1 hour*)
4. **Calculate how much higher your ACT score needs to become:** You should aim for an ACT score that lands you in the top 85th percentile of those admitted into the schools you wish to apply. Keep in mind that if you wish to improve your score over 6 points from your baseline score, you will likely need more time than just these 2 months of study (*30 minutes*)
5. **Understand the ACT format**  
Spend an hour reading up on what the formatting of the ACT is and what sections to expect and how scoring works (*1 hour*)
6. **Begin English Section** Go through what the ACT English section is about and begin working through passages (*1.5 hours*)
7. **Study ACT Grammar and Punctuation:** This part you should not skip for the ACT English. Read up on the rules that will be tested in both grammar and punctuation and practice questions and analyze results (*2.5 hours*)
8. **Practice your Reading strategy:** When going through Reading passages, you should read the questions first then skim the passage. This helps you to find answers more quickly as well as saves you on time, since changing your reading pace in just 8 weeks would be pretty difficult (*2 hours*)

## Week 2:

1. **Learn the Reading format** The Reading section differs from the English, and you should read what the Reading section is going to test you on and what kinds of passages to expect (3 hours)
2. **Choose a reading strategy** There are various strategies to tackling the ACT Reading passages. Many students prefer to read the questions first, then skim through the passage looking for quick and easy answers. This is all up to your preference and there is a reading strategy that works for everyone. Begin practicing this reading strategy over the course of the next 2 days (4 hours)
3. **Use the ACT Flashcards** The flashcards cover Reading strategies and ways to determine correct answers (1 hour)
4. **Memorize ACT vocab:** You can't study *all* the words tested on the ACT, but there are some common vocabulary words you should expect to be tested on. Start with this list of ACT vocab words. Consider making flashcards and bringing these around with you over the course of the week (2 hours)
5. **Practice ACT English and Reading Questions:** Start working through official and unofficial ACT English and Reading questions. Don't forget to go through the answer and understand what you are getting incorrect and why (3 hours)
6. **Go back and study any gaps in English and Reading:** If you are consistently answering something incorrectly or don't feel confident on specific questions, use this time to go back and study up on these concepts (1 hour)

## Week 3:

1. **Begin learning Math format** It's time to switch into Math mode and go through the math section content, learn what is being tested, and have an understanding of what you will need to focus on (1 hour)
2. **Practice Math Concepts:** Integers, fractions, and proportions are some of the toughest areas for students. You can practice through questions utilizing a formulas cheat sheet (1 hour)
3. **Memorize Math formulas:** It's time to memorize the formulas that you will come across on the ACT (1 hour)
4. **Algebra Review:** Algebra class may have felt like years ago, so it's important to brush up on the algebra concepts including the following: word problems, functions, operations, systems of equations, and single-variable equations (2 hours)
5. **Geometry Review:** Geometry can account for up to 35% - 45% of the ACT Math section, meaning it should NOT be overlooked. You will need to have the following concepts down pat: lines & slopes, reflections, translations, & rotations, lines & angles, polygons, circles, triangles, and solid geometry (2 hours)
6. **Trigonometry Review:** You will only see about 4 to 6 questions (7%) on the ACT Math section, but does warrant review if you are aiming on being a top scorer (2 hours)
7. **Practice on official or quality unofficial math problems:** This is your time to work through questions and utilize strategies to get the correct answer. Be sure to understand when you get the incorrect answer and why (2 hours)
8. **Begin working through Science** : Run through the Science section format and what to expect (1 hour)
9. **Practice Science passage strategy:** Use science practice questions to first read the questions then skimming the passage (2 hours)

10. **Brush up on Science Concepts:** The ACT Science section doesn't necessarily test you directly on specialized knowledge, but a certain amount of biology, chemistry, math, and physics will be helpful (*1.5 hours*)

## **Week 4:**

1. **Take an official ACT practice test:** Take the ACT test in simulated testing conditions (*3.5 hours*)
2. **Analyze results of ACT practice test:** go through the answers of your ACT practice test and take note of weak areas to continue practicing! (*1.5 hours*)
3. **Learn Science and Math answer strategies:** For example, plugging in numbers or answers as well as charts and tables you will need to learn for Science (*2 hours*)
4. **Practice Math and Science strategies:** On official or high quality unofficial Science and Math sections (*4 hours*)

## **Week 5:**

1. **Practice weak areas of English section:** From previous practice test (*3 hours*)
2. **Practice weak areas of Science section:** From previous practice test (*3 hours*)
3. **Practice weak areas of Reading section:** From previous practice test (*3 hours*)
4. **Practice weak areas of Math section:** From previous practice test (*3 hours*)

## **Week 6:**

1. **Study the ACT Writing format:** Read through various writing prompts and understand what is asked for in the optional writing section (*2 hours*)
2. **Choose a writing format or template:** Practice writing with a format so that you can plug and chug any prompt into an essay template (*1 hour*)
3. **Begin writing timed essays:** Write full essays in timed responses (*4 hours*)
4. **Review and practice questions:** from each section (*6 hours*)

## **Week 7:**

1. **Take another official ACT Practice test:** Take the ACT test in simulated testing conditions (*3.5 hours*)
2. **Analyze results of ACT practice test:** go through the answers of your ACT practice test and take note of weak areas (*1.5 hours*)
3. **Focus on the sections and questions you're still struggling with:** on the practice test (*6 hours*)

## **Week 8:**

1. **Review Math and Science:** topics and practice questions (*6 hours*)
2. **Review English and Reading:** topics and practice questions (*6 hours*)

## **Week 9:**

1. **Take another official ACT Practice test:** Take the ACT test in simulated testing conditions (*3.5 hours*)
2. **Analyze results of ACT practice test:** go through the answers of your ACT practice test and take note of weak areas (*1.5 hours*)
3. **Focus on the sections and questions you're still struggling with:** on the practice test (*6 hours*)

## **Week 10:**

- 1. Practice weak areas of English section:** from previous practice test (3 hours)
- 2. Practice weak areas of Science section:** from previous practice test (3 hours)
- 3. Practice weak areas of Reading section:** from previous practice test (3 hours)
- 4. Practice weak areas of Math section:** from previous practice test (3 hours)

## **Week 11:**

- 1. Take another official ACT Practice test:** Take the ACT test in simulated testing conditions (3.5 hours)
- 2. Analyze results of ACT practice test:** go through the answers of your ACT practice test and take note of weak areas (1.5 hours)
- 3. Focus on the sections and questions you're still struggling with:** on the practice test (6 hours)

## **Week 12:**

- 1. Take a break this week with light prep and last-minute reviews** (6-7 hours)
- 2. Don't study the day before the test!**

