



2022 | 2023

Preparing for the ACT® Test

What's Inside

- Full-length practice ACT test, including the optional writing test
- Information about the multiple-choice and writing sections
- Test-taking strategies
- What to expect on test day

Esta publicación también se puede ver o
descargar en español

The **ACT**® www.act.org



A Message to Students

This booklet is an important first step as you get ready for college and your career.

The information here is intended to help you do your best on the ACT to gain admission to colleges and universities. Included are helpful hints and test-taking strategies, as well as a complete practice ACT, with “retired” questions from earlier tests given on previous test dates at ACT test sites. Also featured are a practice writing test, a sample answer document, answer keys, and self-scoring instructions.

Read this booklet carefully and take the practice tests well before test day. That way, you will be familiar with the tests, what they measure, and strategies you can use to do your best on test day.

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Contents

Preparing for the ACT® Test 1

A Message to Students 2

Overview of the ACT 2

Test-Taking Strategies 3

Prohibited Behavior at the Test Center 5

Content of the ACT Sections 6

Taking the Practice Tests 10

Practice Multiple-Choice Sections 11

Practice Writing Test 52

Practice Answer Document 55

Scoring Your Tests 63

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Contents

Preparing for the ACT® Test 1

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Overview of the ACT 2

Test-Taking Strategies 3

Prohibited Behavior at the Test Center 5

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Taking the Practice Tests 10

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Get Ready

Prepare well in advance for the ACT.

- Know what to expect on test day. Review the information in this booklet and at www.actstudent.org.
- Take the practice tests in the order they are shown in this booklet, time yourself, and review your responses using the answer keys.
- Carefully review the test-day checklist at www.act.org/the-act/checklist.
- Get plenty of rest the night before the tests.

Note: Most procedures in this booklet refer to testing on a National test date at an ACT test center (within the United States, US territories, or Puerto Rico). Procedures may differ slightly if you take a different administration of the ACT test.

On Test Day

Report on Time

- For National test dates, you must report to your assigned test site by the time stated on your admission ticket (usually 8:00 a.m.). If you are late, you will not be admitted to test. If your ticket does not list a specific test room, the test staff or posted signs will direct you.

What to Bring

- A printed copy of your admission ticket. Your ticket contains important information that helps connect your answer document to the registration on file. If you have lost your ticket, you can print another through your MyACT account. If you do not bring your ticket on test day, your scores may be delayed.
- Acceptable photo identification. You will not be permitted to test if your ID does not meet ACT requirements. See ACT requirements for ID on your ticket or at www.act.org/the-act/id.
- Number 2 Pencil. Bring sharpened No. 2 pencils and good erasers (no mechanical pencils or ink pens). Do not bring any other writing instruments. You will not be allowed to use them.

Note: International test sites are provided approved whiteboards and erasable markers.

- Watch. You may bring a watch to pace yourself, but do not bring a watch with an alarm. During testing, your watch must be removed and placed on your desk face up. If your alarm sounds during testing, you'll be dismissed and your answers will not be scored.
- Calculator. Bring a permitted calculator to be used on the mathematics test only. You are not required to use a calculator at all, but if you do, it is your responsibility to know whether your calculator is permitted. For a current copy of the calculator policy, please visit www.act.org/calculator-policy.html.
- Snacks. You may consume snacks and drinks outside the test room during the break.

What NOT to Bring

- Textbooks, foreign language or other dictionaries, scratch paper, notes, or other aids
- Highlighter pens, colored pens or pencils, or correction fluid/tape
- Any electronic device, other than a permitted calculator
- Reading material

In the Test Room

- Test staff will direct you to a seat. If you need a left-handed desk, tell the staff as you enter.
- Do not leave the test room after you have been admitted.
- Only pencils, erasers, a permitted calculator, your watch (if brought to the test center), and your paper ticket will be allowed on your desk.
- You will be required to put all other personal belongings away.
- Reporting time for the test will be 8:00 a.m. Testing will begin as soon as all examinees who are present at 8:00 a.m. are checked in and seated.
- Listen carefully to all directions read by the test staff.
- It is important that you follow all directions carefully.
- You will normally be dismissed at about 12:35 p.m. If you take the ACT (no writing), or at about 1:35 p.m. if you take the ACT with writing.

For Students Approved to Test at National Test Sites With One and One-Half Time

Testing with one and one-half time is available on the multiple-choice and/or writing sections for students with diagnosed disabilities and/or limited English proficiency.

If you are approved for one and one-half time at a National test site, you will have 50% additional time to complete each section.

The full ACT:

Test	Questions	Minutes per Test
English	75	70
Mathematics	60	90
Reading	40	55
Science	40	55
Writing (optional)	1 essay	60

After Testing

Voiding Your Test on Test Day

If you have to leave the test site before completing all sections, you must decide whether or not you want your test scored and then inform the test staff of your decision. If you do not, your test will be scored.

If you do not complete all your sections and want to test again, you will need to re-register and pay for a new test date. Once you access test content, you cannot request a Test Date Change.

Testing More Than Once

If you wish to take the test again to increase your scores, ACT will calculate and report a superscore for students who have taken the ACT test more than once. This gives colleges the option to use the student's best scores from all test administrations, rather than scores from just one sitting, in their admission and scholarship decisions.

For information about superscoring, see

www.act.org/the-act/superscore.

For more information about retaking the ACT, see

www.act.org/the-act/retaking.

Testing More Than Once In the Same Administration

You may not receive scores from more than one test taken during a scheduled National or International test date.

For example, you may test on Saturday, on an authorized non-Saturday date, or on a rescheduled test date—but not on more than one of those days on a particular test date.

If you are admitted and allowed to test a second time on a particular test date, we will report only the scores from the first test. The second set of scores will be canceled without refund.

Requesting a Copy of Your Test Questions and Answers

On certain test dates, you may order (for an additional fee) a copy of the multiple-choice test questions used to determine your scores, a list of your answers, and the answer key. If you took the writing section, you will also receive a copy of the writing prompt, scoring guidelines, and the scores assigned to your essay.

This service is not available for all test dates and is available only for National testing or Special testing in the United States, US Territories, and Puerto Rico. Restrictions apply.

If you are interested in this service, check

www.act.org/the-act/tir for more detail.

Prohibited Behavior at the Test Center

A complete list of the prohibited behaviors was provided during the registration process. The following behaviors can also result in dismissal. Please be reminded of the following:

- For paper testing, you may not fill in or alter responses to any multiple-choice questions or continue to write or alter the essay after time has been called. This includes fixing stray marks.
- For paper testing, you may not look at any section of the test outside of the designated time for that test.
- You may not access an electronic device (other than your testing computer and mouse, when testing online) at any time during testing or during breaks. All other devices must be powered off and placed out of sight from the time you are admitted to the test room until you are dismissed.

- You may not give or receive assistance by any means. This includes looking at another person's test.
- The test is confidential and remains so even after the exam is complete. You may not remove any materials from the test room. You may not discuss or share test questions, answers, or test form identification numbers during test administration, during breaks, or after the test.
- You may not disclose test questions or answers in any way or at any time, including through social media, in whole or in part.
- You may not eat, drink, or use reading materials in the test room.

If you are observed or suspected of engaging in prohibited behavior, you will be dismissed and your test will not be scored.

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Preparing for the ACT® Test 1

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Overview of the ACT 2

Test-Taking Strategies 3

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- ~ If not, check to see whether your phrasing is one of the other answer choices. If you do not find your phrasing, choose the best of the answers presented.
- For questions cued by a number in a box or a highlighted asterisk in brackets, decide which choice is most appropriate in terms of the question posed or the stated rhetorical situation.
- Reread the sentence, using your selected answer. Once you have selected the answer you feel is best, reread the corresponding sentence(s) of the passage, inserting your selected answer at the appropriate place in the text to make sure it is the best answer within the context of the passage.

Mathematics Section

The mathematics section is designed to assess the mathematical skills students have typically acquired in courses taken up to the beginning of grade 12.

Most questions are self-contained. Some questions may belong to a set of several questions (e.g., each about the same graph or chart).

The material covered emphasizes the major content areas that are prerequisites to successful performance in entry-level courses in college mathematics. Knowledge of basic formulas and computational skills are assumed as background for the problems, but recall of complex formulas and extensive computation are not required.

Note: You may use a permitted calculator on the mathematics section. See

www.act.org/calculator-policy.html *for details about prohibited models and features.*

Nine scores are reported for the mathematics section: a score for the section overall and eight reporting category scores based on specific mathematical knowledge and skills. The approximate percentage of the section devoted to each reporting category is:

Preparing for Higher Math (57–60%)

This category covers the more recent mathematics that students are learning, starting when they began using algebra as a general way of expressing and solving equations. This category is divided into five subcategories:

- **Number and Quantity (7–10%):** Demonstrate knowledge of real and complex number systems. Reason with numerical quantities in many forms, including expressions with integer and rational exponents and vectors and matrices.
- **Algebra (12–15%):** Solve, graph, and model multiple types of expressions. Interpret and use many different kinds of equations, such as linear, polynomial, radical, and exponential relationships. Find solutions to systems of equations, even when represented by a simple matrix equation, and apply results to real-world contexts.
- **Functions (12–15%):** Demonstrate knowledge of function: definition, notation, representation, and application. Use functions including linear, radical, piecewise, polynomial, exponential, and logarithmic. Manipulate and translate functions, as well as interpret and use important features of graphs.

- **Geometry (12–15%):** Apply your knowledge of shapes and solids, using concepts such as congruence and similarity relationships or surface area and volume measurements. Apply your understanding to composite objects and solve for missing values in triangles, circles, and other figures. Use trigonometric ratios and equations of conic sections.
- **Statistics & Probability (8–12%):** Describe center and spread of distributions. Apply and analyze data collection methods. Understand and model relationships in bivariate data. Calculate probabilities by recognizing the related sample spaces.

Integrating Essential Skills (40–43%)

This category focuses on measuring how well you can synthesize and apply your understandings and skills to solve more complex problems. The questions ask you to address concepts such as:

- rates and percentages
- proportional relationships
- area, surface area, and volume
- average and median
- expressing numbers in different ways

You will solve non-routine problems that involve combining skills in chains of steps, applying skills in varied contexts, understanding connections, and demonstrating fluency.

Modeling

This category represents all questions that involve producing, interpreting, understanding, evaluating, and improving models. Each question is also counted in other appropriate reporting mathematics categories. This category is an overall measure of how well you use modeling skills across mathematical topics.

Tips for Taking the Mathematics Section

✓ *If you use a calculator, use it wisely.*

All of the mathematics problems can be solved without a calculator. Many of the problems are best done without a calculator. Use good judgment in deciding when, and when not, to use a calculator. For example, for some problems you may wish to do scratch work to clarify your thoughts on the question before you begin using a calculator to do computations.

✓ *Solve the problem.*

To work out solutions to the problems, you will usually do scratch work. You may wish to glance over the answer choices after reading the questions. However, working backwards from all five answer choices can take a lot of time and may not be effective.

✓ *Find your solution among the answer choices.*

Once you have solved the problem, look for your answer among the choices. If your answer is not included among the choices, carefully reread the problem to see whether you missed important information. Pay careful attention to the question being asked. If an equation is to be selected, check to see whether the equation you think is best can be transformed into one of the answer choices provided.

✓ *Make sure you answer the question.*

The solutions to many questions will involve several steps. Make sure your answer accounts for all the necessary steps. Frequently, an answer choice is an intermediate result, not the final answer.

✓ *Make sure your answer is reasonable.*

Sometimes an error in computation will result in an answer that is not practically possible for the situation described. Always think about your answer to determine whether it is reasonable.

✓ *Check your answer.*

You may arrive at an incorrect solution by making common errors in the problem-solving process. If there is time remaining before the end of the mathematics section, it is important that you reread the questions and check your answers to make sure they are correct.

Reading Section

The reading section measures your ability to read closely, reason logically about texts using evidence, and integrate information from multiple sources.

The questions focus on the mutually supportive skills that readers must bring to bear in studying written materials across a range of subject areas. Specifically, questions will ask you to:

- determine main ideas
- locate and interpret significant details
- understand sequences of events
- make comparisons
- comprehend cause-effect relationships
- determine the meaning of context-dependent words, phrases, and statements
- draw generalizations
- analyze the author's or narrator's voice and method
- analyze claims and evidence in arguments
- integrate information from multiple texts

The reading section is composed of multiple parts. Some parts consist of one long prose passage and others consist of shorter prose passages. The passages represent the levels and kinds of text commonly encountered in first-year college curricula.

Each passage is preceded by a heading that identifies the author and source, and may include important background information to help you understand the passage. Each portion contains a set of multiple-choice questions. These questions do not test the rote recall of facts from outside the passage or rules of formal logic, nor do they contain isolated vocabulary questions. In sections that contain two shorter passages, some of the questions involve both of those passages.

Four scores are reported for the reading section: a score for the section overall and three reporting category scores based on specific knowledge and skills. Score reports also include an Understanding Complex Texts indicator. The approximate percentage of the section devoted to each reporting category is:

Key Ideas & Details (52–60%)

This category requires you to read texts closely to determine central ideas and themes; summarize information and ideas accurately; and show an understanding of relationships and draw logical inferences and conclusions, including understanding sequential, comparative, and cause-effect relationships.

Craft & Structure (25–30%)

These questions ask you to:

- determine word and phrase meanings
- analyze an author's word choice rhetorically
- analyze text structure
- understand the author's purpose and perspective
- analyze characters' points of view
- interpret authorial decisions rhetorically
- differentiate between various perspectives and sources of information

Integration of Knowledge & Ideas (13–23%)

This category requires you to understand authors' claims, differentiate between facts and opinions, and use evidence to make connections between different texts that are related by topic. Some questions will require you to analyze how authors construct arguments and to evaluate reasoning and evidence from various sources.

Visual and Quantitative Information in the Reading Section

One passage may be accompanied by an element like a graph, figure, or table that contains information relevant to the reading task. In the passage containing these visual and quantitative elements, some of the questions will ask you to identify or interpret information from the graphic or integrate the information from the passage and graphic to determine the best answer.

Tips for Taking the Reading Section

✓ *Read each passage carefully.*

Before you begin answering a question, read all of the content carefully. Be conscious of relationships between or among ideas. Take note about important ideas in the passages.

✓ *Refer to the passages when answering the questions.*

Answers to some of the questions will be found by referring to what is explicitly stated in the text of the passages. Other questions will require you to determine implicit meanings and to draw conclusions, comparisons, and generalizations. Consider the text before you answer any question.

Science Section

The science section measures the interpretation, analysis, evaluation, reasoning, and problem-solving skills required in the natural sciences. The section presents several authentic scientific scenarios, each followed by a number of multiple-choice questions.

The content includes biology, chemistry, Earth/space sciences (e.g., geology, astronomy, and meteorology), and physics. Advanced knowledge in these areas is not

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Contents

Preparing for the ACT® Test 1

A Message to Students 2

Overview of the ACT 2

Test-Taking Strategies 3

Prohibited Behavior at the Test Center 5

Content of the ACT Sections 6

Taking the Practice Tests 10

Practice Multiple-Choice Sections 11

Practice Writing Test 52

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Language Use and Conventions

Scores in this domain reflect the ability to use written language to convey arguments with clarity. Competent writers make use of the conventions of grammar, syntax, word usage, and mechanics. They are also aware of their audience and adjust the style and tone of their writing to communicate effectively.

Tips for Taking the Writing Section

✓ *Pace yourself.*

Budget your time based on your experience in taking essay tests in school or when you have done writing within a time limit. It is unlikely that you will have time to draft, revise, and recopy your essay.

✓ *Plan.*

Before writing, carefully read and consider all prompt material. Be sure you understand the issue, the different perspectives on the issue, and your essay task.

Planning questions are included with the prompt that will help you analyze the different perspectives and develop your own. Use these questions to think critically about the prompt and generate an effective response. How would you best organize and support your ideas in a written argument. Spend time structuring or outlining your response.

Note: The planning questions are optional and are not scored.

✓ *Write.*

Establish the focus of your essay by making clear your argument and its main ideas.

- Explain and illustrate your ideas with sound reasoning and meaningful examples.

- Discuss the significance of your ideas: what are the implications of what you have to say, and why is your argument important to consider?

As you write, ask yourself if your logic is clear, if you have supported your claims, and if you have chosen precise words to communicate your ideas.

✓ *Review your essay.*

Try to make your essay as polished as you can. Take a few minutes before time is called to read over your essay and correct any mistakes.

If you take the ACT on paper, be sure to write your essay legibly. If you find words that are hard to read, recopy them. Make corrections and revisions neatly, between the lines. Do not write in the margins, if applicable.

✓ *Practice.*

There are many ways to prepare for the writing section. Read newspapers and magazines, watch/listen to news analyses online, on TV, or on radio, or participate in discussions and debates, thinking carefully about other perspectives in relation to your own.

One good way to prepare for the writing section is to practice writing with different purposes for different audiences. The writing you do in your classes will help you, as will writing a personal journal, stories, essays, editorials, or other writing you do on your own.

It is also a good idea to practice writing within a time limit. Taking the practice writing test will give you a sense of how much additional practice you may need. You might want to take the practice writing section even if you do not plan to take the ACT with writing. It will help you build skills that are important in college-level learning and the world of work.

Taking the Practice Tests

It is a good idea to take the practice tests under conditions as similar as possible to those you will experience on test day. The following tips will help you:

- If taking the ACT (no writing), the four multiple-choice tests require 2 hours and 55 minutes to complete. Take them in order, in one sitting, with a 10- to 15-minute break between Tests 2 and 3.
- You will need only sharpened, soft lead No. 2 pencils and good erasers. Remove all other items from your desk. You will not be allowed to use unapproved scratch paper, but you can use the test booklet to make notes.
- If you plan to use a permitted calculator on the mathematics test, use the same one you will use on test day.
- Use a digital timer or clock to time yourself on each practice test. Set your timer for five minutes less than the time allowed for each test so you can get used to the verbal announcement of five minutes remaining.
- Give yourself only the time allowed for each test.
- Detach and use the sample answer document on pages 55–56.

- Read the test directions on the first page of each multiple-choice test. These are the same directions that will appear in your test booklet on test day.
- Start your timer and begin with Test 1. Continue through Test 4, taking a 10- to 15-minute break between Tests 2 and 3. Use the timing table on page 1 to time each section of the test.
- Score your multiple-choice tests using the information beginning on page 63.
- If you plan to take the ACT with writing, read the directions on the first page of the practice ACT writing test (page 52). These are the same directions that will appear in your test booklet on test day. Start your timer (set for 40 minutes), then read the prompt on page 53. After you understand what the prompt is asking you to do, plan your essay and then write or print it on lined paper. On test day, if you test on paper, your answer document will have lined pages on which you will write your essay. Score your essay using the information on pages 68–69.

