

Getting Started with the ACT® Test

Introduction

This tutorial explains how to take the ACT® test. It describes the test pages, how to move through the test, and how to submit and review your answers.

Start the Test

1. **Start** the test.

The first of a series of notice pages is displayed. These pages contain important information related to the test, and include an Examinee Statement.

2. Take time to review all of the information on each page, then select **Next**.
3. On the Examinee Statement page, select **Accept** when you are ready to begin. Selecting **Decline** will exit you from the exam.
4. The instructions page is displayed:



This page contains specific guidance on the types of questions you will encounter, and how to manage your time.

Note: The timer starts as soon as this final information page is displayed. See [Timer](#) below for more information.

5. Select **Next**.

If the test contains multiple-choice questions, the first question is displayed.

If the test contains an essay question, the essay question is displayed along with information about planning your essay. Read this page carefully, then click **Next** to move on to the essay item where you can enter your response.

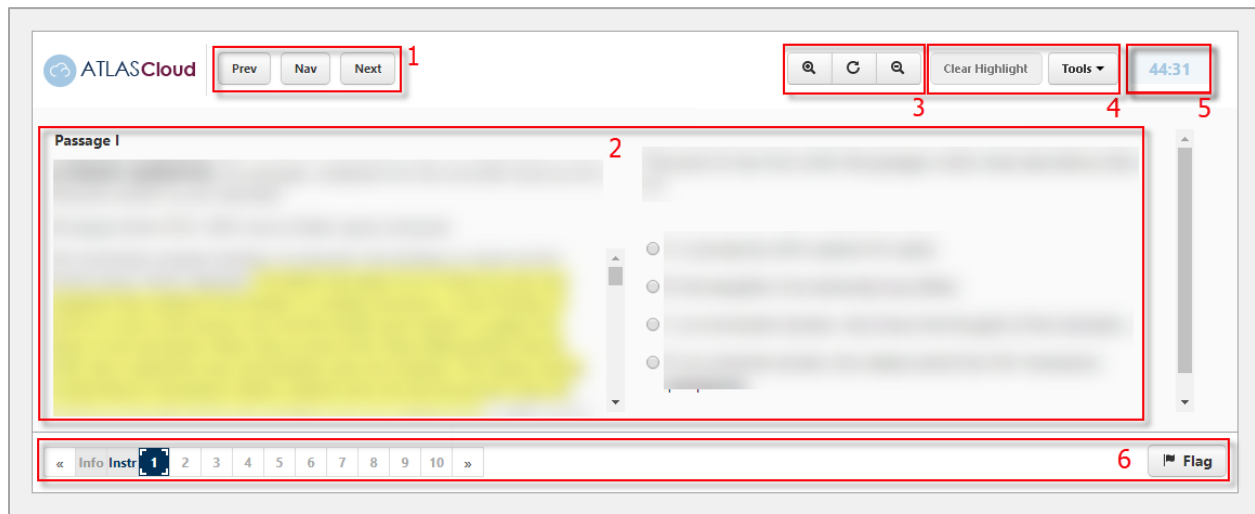
Keyboard Shortcuts

For accessibility purposes, there are several keyboard shortcuts you can use to navigate the test and answer questions. These shortcuts are for the Windows operating system. Press **CTRL+H** to toggle the shortcut menu.

Keybind	Function
Ctrl+H	Toggle Help
Ctrl+F	Flag Item
Ctrl+I	Item Navigation
Alt+P	Previous Question
Alt+N	Next Question
A-E or 1-5	Select Alternative
Ctrl+Enter	Answer Question
Alt+M	Toggle Magnifier
Alt+H	Toggle Highlighter
Alt+E	Toggle Answer Eliminator
Alt+A	Toggle Answer Masking
Alt+L	Toggle Line Reader

The Test Page

The image below is an example of a test page, in this case showing a multiple-choice question:

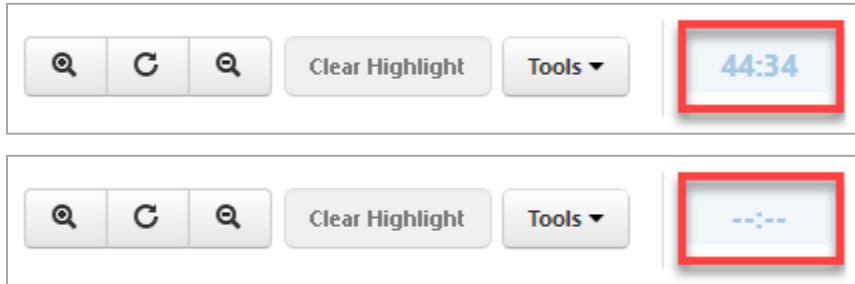


The test page is divided into the following areas:

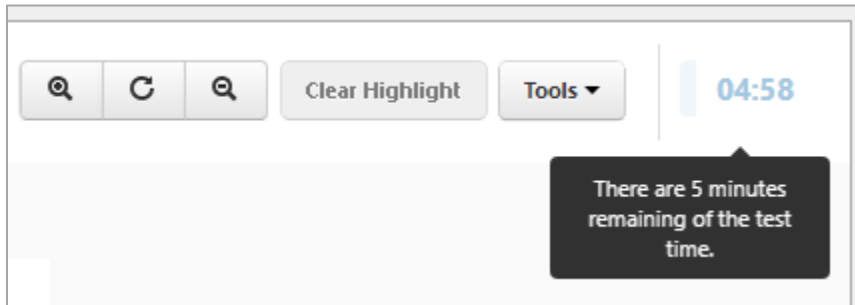
1. Navigation buttons
2. Question and answer area
3. Zoom function
4. Test display controls (Tools function)
5. Timer
6. Navigation bar and flag button

Timer

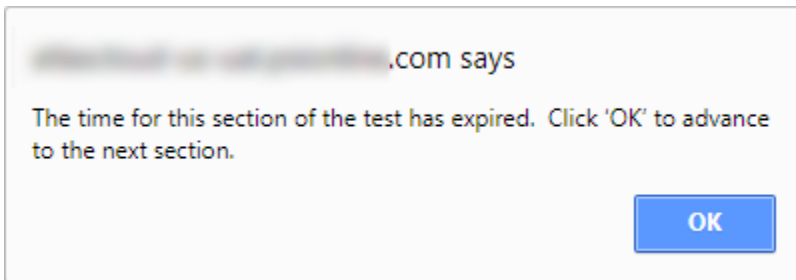
The time remaining to complete each test is displayed in the top-right of the test page. To hide/unhide the time from view, you can click on the timer to select it, the timer will toggle between being shown and hidden, upon being clicked (as shown in the red boxes below):



The timer starts running as soon as this final information page is displayed. A warning is given when 5 minutes remain in each test: The 5 minute warning message will still display, even if the timer has been hidden.



When the time limit is reached, the test automatically ends, and the following message is displayed:

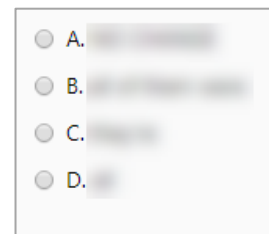


Question Types

During the test, you will encounter two types of questions: multiple-choice and essay questions.

Multiple-choice Questions

These questions offer several possible answers to a posed question. Only a single answer can be selected. These questions can also be accompanied by a graphic or a block of text, which may be highlighted to draw attention to specific sections.



Essay Questions

If you take the writing test, you are presented with a question that requires a written answer which must be recorded in an editable text box (shown below). The '**Chars left:**' field under the box, displays the number of allowed characters you have remaining, for your reference.



Answers To Test Questions

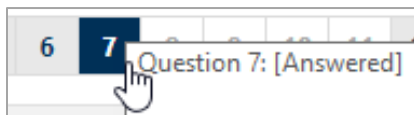
Answer a Question

- To answer a multiple-choice question, select the desired response before moving to another question.
- To answer an essay question, type your entire answer into the text box before moving on.

Change an Answer

You can change an answer to the item you are currently on by selecting a different response.

If you want to change your answer to a previously answered item, navigate back to the item using the navigation bar at the bottom of the test page or the "Nav" panel (see "[Move through the Test](#)" below).

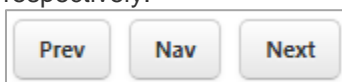


The question is displayed. The previously chosen answer is still selected. Select or enter a different answer, and select **Next** or **Prev** to progress with the test. Selecting **Next** will take you forwards by one question, to the next question in sequence. Selecting **Prev** will take you one question backwards from the question currently on screen.

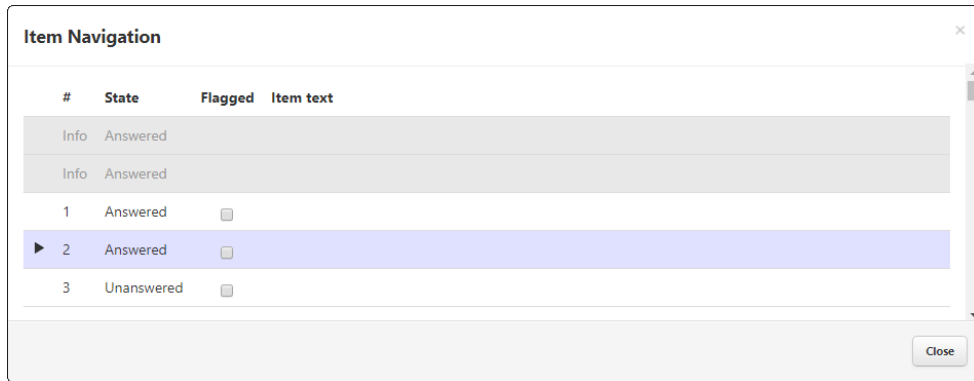
Move through the Test

You can move through the questions using one of these methods:

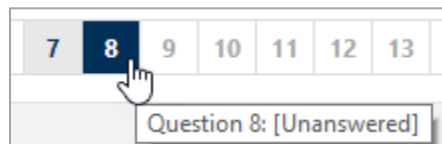
- Select **Next** or **Prev** at the top of the Test page to move to the next or previous question respectively:



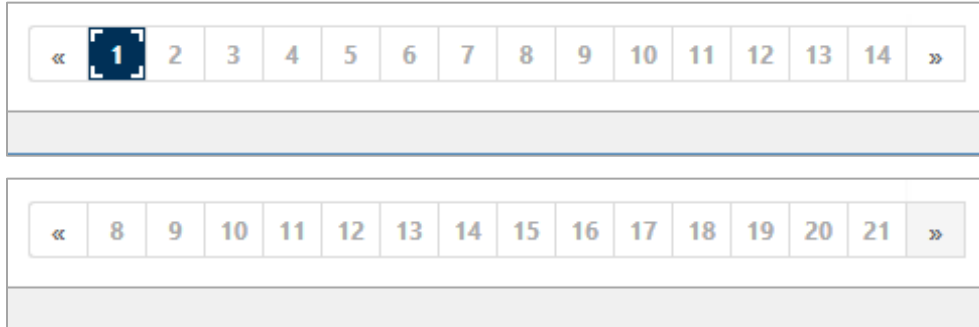
- Select **Nav** at the top of the Test page to display the Item Navigation page. This page lists all the questions in the test, and shows whether they are answered or flagged for review. Select a question on this page to move to that question:



- Select the number of the question you want to view on the Navigation bar at the bottom of the page. Answered questions are displayed in bold text with a grey background, and unanswered questions are displayed in grey text with a white background:



The arrows at the beginning and end of the Navigation bar, allow you to view any question numbers which are currently off screen, so that they can then be selected, as required. The first set of backwards arrows will take you to the beginning of the questions, and the last set of arrows will take you towards the end.



Flag a Question for Review

You can flag a multiple-choice question for review. This is useful if you are unsure of the answer you have given and, if time permits, want to review it later.

Note: You cannot flag an essay question for review.

To flag a question using the navigation bar:

1. Select the question in the navigation bar.
The question is displayed.
2. Select **Flag** in the bottom right-corner of the test page.

A flag is displayed over the question number on the navigation bar:

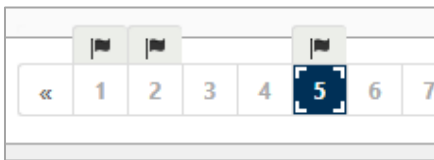


Note: You can also remove the flag by selecting the question in the navigation bar and selecting **Flag** again.

To flag a question, or multiple questions, using the ‘Nav’ button (Item Navigation):

1. Select the Nav button.
The list of questions is displayed.
2. Select the **Flagged** check box for the required question(s). Click Close to close the Item Navigation.

A flag is displayed over the question number on the navigation bar:

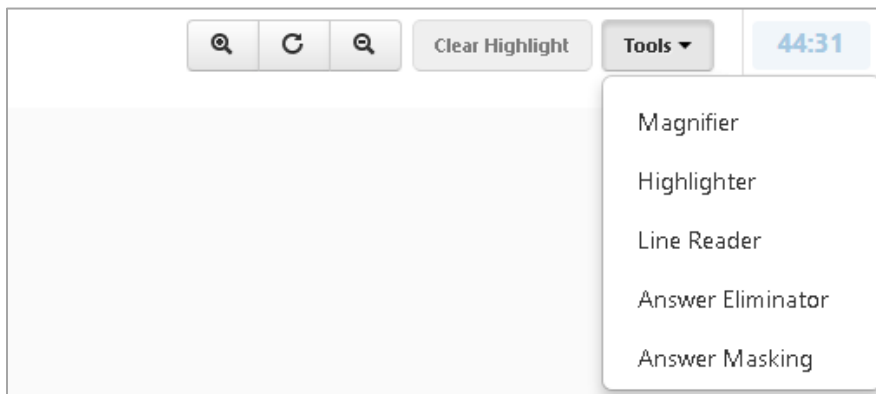


Note: You can also remove flag(s) by de-selecting the **Flagged** checkboxes in the Item Navigation.

You should ensure you have enough time to review the flagged items as required before the end of the test, as all questions are counted towards scoring whether they are flagged or not.

Test Display Controls

During the test, you can control the appearance of the screen using the buttons and the Tools drop-down menu on the top right of the test page:



You can:

- Magnify an area of the screen to improve readability.
- Highlight question text.
- Position a line reader over part of the question text.
- Eliminate multiple-choice answers.
- Mask multiple-choice answers.

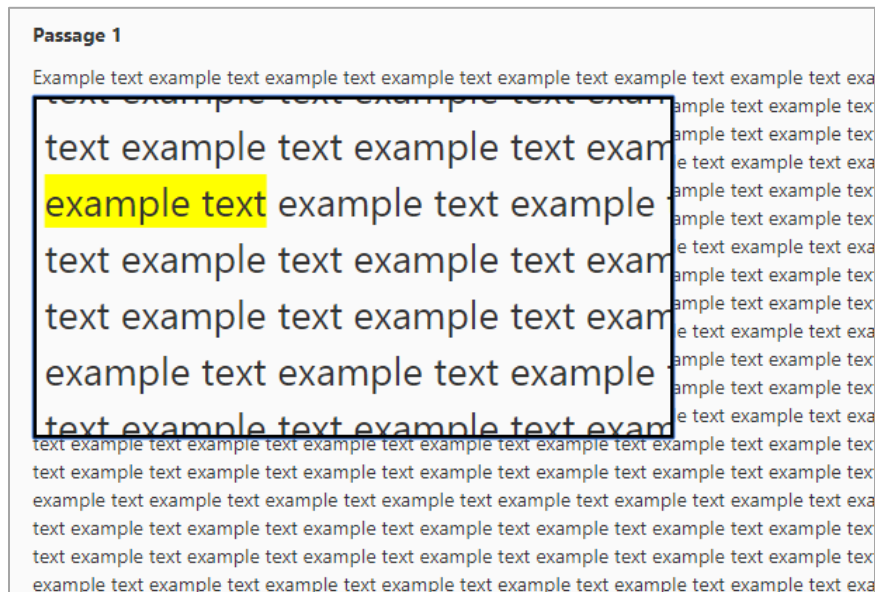
Note: Answer eliminator and answer masking are available for multiple-choice questions only (not available for essay questions).

Magnify Question Text

If the question text is too small to read comfortably, you can use the magnifier option to enlarge the text.

Select **Magnifier** on the Tools menu to display a movable window on the page. The window magnifies the text and images it is positioned over. Select and drag the window around the page to magnify the required text.

Note: The size of the magnifier box is not adjustable.



The magnifier will stay open when you move from item to item, though its location on the screen will reset with each new item. To close the magnifier, select **Magnifier** on the Tools menu again.

Highlight text

To highlight sections of text so that they stand out within the question, use the Highlighter.

Select **Highlighter** on the Tools menu. The cursor will then change from an arrow cursor (↔) to a text cursor (I). You can then use your cursor to select and drag the mouse across the sections of text you wish to highlight. You can highlight multiple words/sections within a single question. The highlights will remain until you clear them, even if you navigate away from the question. Note: If you highlight text within a passage on the question you are working on, the highlights will not persist across *all* questions which are using the same passage.

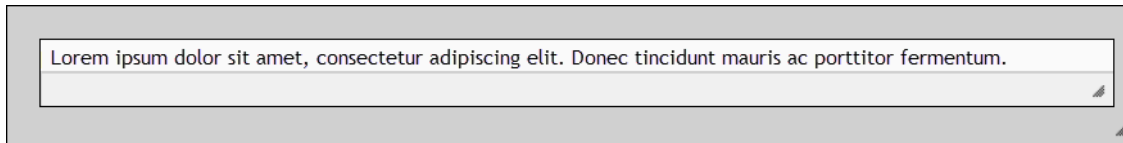
If you wish to clear all of the highlighting from a question, you should select the **Clear Highlight** button. This will only clear the highlighting on the question you are working on.

Use the Line Reader

To draw attention to a particular line or lines, or to keep your place in the question text, use the line reader tool.

Select **Line Reader** on the Tools menu. The line reader is displayed at the top of the question text area. The line reader comprises an outer dark grey box, and an inner lighter box.

Select the bottom of the grey border and drag the line reader over the text you want to mask (hide) from view. You can resize the white and grey areas of the box with the arrows in the bottom right of the reader, to capture the line or lines in the top half of the inner box:



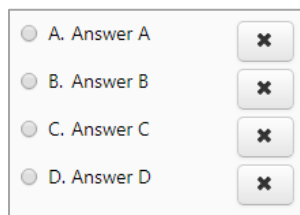
The line reader tool will stay open when you move from item to item, though its location on the screen will reset with each new item. You can turn the line reader off by deselecting it in the Tools menu.

Eliminate Multiple-Choice Answers

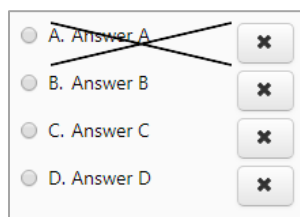
When answering a multiple-choice question, you can choose to eliminate some of the answers. This is useful if you want to narrow down the options while you work out which one is correct.

The Tools menu offers the option **Answer Eliminator**.

If you select Answer Eliminator, X buttons  are displayed next to the answer options:




Select an X button to display a black cross through the corresponding answer:



Mask Multiple-Choice Answers

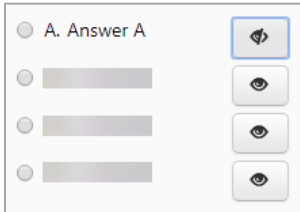
When answering a multiple-choice question, you can choose to mask some of the answers from view. This is useful if you want to narrow down the options, by hiding or showing them, while you work out which one is correct.

The Tools menu offers the option: “**Answer Masking**”.

If you select “Answer Masking”, all the answers are hidden by default, and a reveal button  is displayed next to each one:

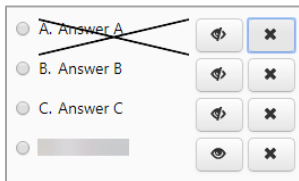


Select a reveal button to display the corresponding answer:



Note the following:

- The tools do not automatically close. When you move to a new item, they will automatically appear until you turn them off.
- To turn the tools off, deselect them on the Tools menu.
- When you deselect a tool the changes you have made are hidden, but not lost. For example, you can view any answer elimination or masking options you applied by selecting the tool again.
- Changes to the tools are also retained after you move to a new item. So if you have to come back to a previous item, you can see the answers you've eliminated or masked.
- You can use the tools in combination; for example, you can use the Answer Masking and Answer Eliminator to hide one answer you know to be wrong, and eliminate the others as required:



Zoom Function

In addition to the magnifier, you can also use the Zoom function to increase or decrease the entire screen size. The screen keeps a static layout and you can use horizontal and vertical tool bars to navigate around the screen. The range available is from 50% up to 500%.

To use this functionality, select the magnifier button with the + or -. To reset the page to the original size, select the **Reset** button in the middle of the + and – symbols.

The Zoom function is available for all items within a test.



Breaks

You will be given two breaks before the conclusion of the test. A 15-minute break after the mathematics test and a 5-minute break after the science test. You cannot skip these breaks. Once the break timer has expired, select **OK** to proceed.

End the Test

The test will end once you have completed all sections or time has expired for all sections. You cannot end the test in the middle of a section.

The final page, entitled **Next Steps** will then display. Read these instructions and select **Next** to continue to the logout screen.