

ACT Research and Policy

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Test Preparation and Changes in ACT Scores

How Does the Amount of Time Spent on Preparation Relate to ACT Scores?

Information Brief

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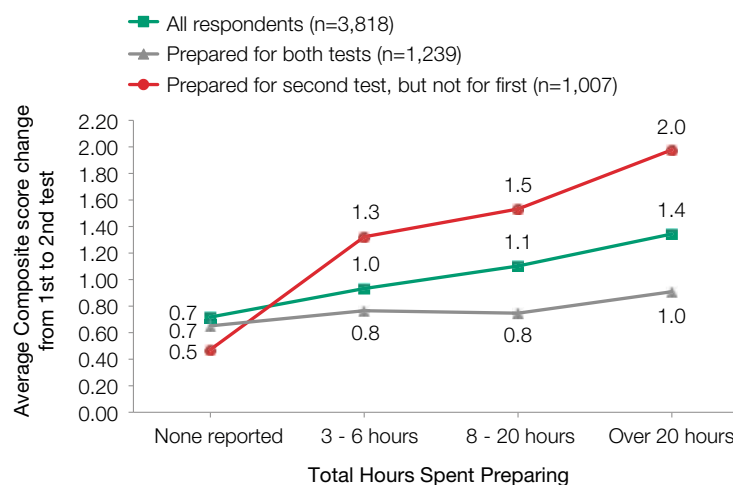
Students who reported preparing at least 20 hours for the second test earned Composite scores about 0.6 points higher, on average, than students who did not report any preparation hours.

In *Test Preparation and Changes in ACT Scores, Part I*, we saw that students who reported preparing for a second ACT test earned Composite scores on that test about 1.2 points higher, on average, than their scores on the first test. How does the amount of time spent preparing relate to the scores?

The more time students spent preparing, the higher the average ACT Composite score change from the first to the second test. Students who reported preparing for at least 20 hours for the second test earned Composite scores about 0.6 points higher, on average, than those who did not report any preparation hours.¹ (See the green squares in the figure.)

Moreover, students who reported preparing for more than 20 hours for the second test only earned Composite scores on that test about 1.5 points higher, on average, than did students who did not report any preparation hours (red circles in the figure). Students who reported preparing for both tests experienced relatively small changes in Composite scores, irrespective of the number of hours reported preparing (gray triangles).

Score Changes of Student Who Took the ACT on Two Occasions



Note: Data are from 3,818 students who took the ACT twice, either for the first time in fall 2007 and for the second time in spring 2008, or for the first time in spring 2008 and for the second time in fall 2008. The students also completed a survey pertaining to test preparation activities.

¹We asked students how many hours they spent on each of the following activities: ACT's free preparation booklet, ACT's Web-based preparation program (ACT Online Prep™), other Web-based preparation programs, *The Real ACT Prep Guide*, another test preparation workbook, test preparation courses or workshops offered by a high school or local colleges or universities, commercial test preparation courses, working with a private tutor or consultant, working one-on-one with a high school teacher, and other test preparation software.

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