



2024 | 2025

# Preparing for the ACT<sup>®</sup> Test

## Testing with Alternate Formats

### What's Inside

- Information about preparing for the ACT test with ACT-authorized alternate format accommodations
- Information about the multiple-choice and writing sections
- Test-taking strategies
- What to expect on test day



ACT is committed to representing the diversity of society in all its aspects, including race, ethnicity, and gender. Questions, passages, and writing prompts are chosen to reflect a range of cultures and are written to not disadvantage any particular group of examinees. ACT employs extensive reviews and statistical procedures to ensure the fairness of test materials.

ACT conducts research and periodically updates tests to provide test content that reflects classroom instruction and continues to be a relevant predictor of college and career readiness. There may be subtle differences between the ACT practice test in this document and the test you take on test day.

ACT endorses the *Code of Fair Testing Practices in Education* and the *Code of Professional Responsibilities in Educational Measurement*, which guide the conduct of those involved in educational testing. ACT is committed to ensuring that each of its testing programs upholds the guidelines in each Code. You may locate copies of these Codes through the following organizations:

- Code of Fair Testing Practices in Education: American Psychological Association (<https://www.apa.org/science/programs/testing/fair-testing.pdf>)
- Code of Professional Responsibilities in Educational Measurement: National Council on Measurement in Education (<https://www.ncme.org/resources-publications/professional-learning/library>)

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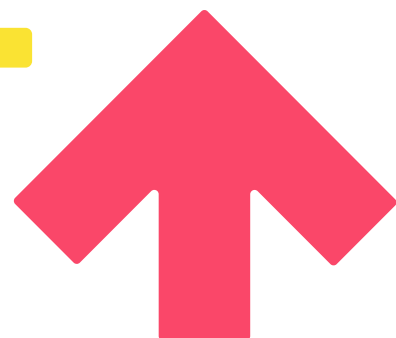
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# A Message to Students

This document 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. If you have not already done so, order your free alternate format practice tests at: <https://www.act.org/content/dam/act/unsecured/documents/Alt-Format-Practice-Tests-Order.pdf>. Screen reader users can access the practice test at: <https://practice-two.actdigitalservices.org/>. Click on “Guest access” to access the tests.

The information here is for students with professionally diagnosed and documented disabilities who plan to test with alternate test formats (large print, braille, pre-recorded audio, or screen reader software). If you plan to test with a regular-print test booklet, use **Preparing for the ACT Test**, which includes information on taking the test as well as the four multiple-choice tests, a writing prompt, and scoring keys.

This document offers general test-taking strategies, describes test content, provides specific tips for each test, and lets you know what to expect on test day. Also a writing test is included (which may be read to you if you require oral presentation) and scoring instructions. If you have been authorized for an oral presentation of the ACT, the entire test may be read to you. Braille, pre-recorded audio, screen reader software, and reader accommodations will use the triple time row in the timing table.

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

For more information on ACT’s Policy for Requesting Accommodations for the ACT Test, the process of requesting test accommodations on the ACT, and resources for students and parents, see [www.act.org/the-act/accommms](http://www.act.org/the-act/accommms).

You may also want to consider *The Official ACT® Self-Paced Course, Powered by Kaplan®* to learn test content and strategies in a virtual classroom. To view all of our test preparation options, go to [www.act.org/the-act/testprep](http://www.act.org/the-act/testprep).

**NOTE: The word “read” in this document also refers to any means authorized for you to test with oral presentation—listening to pre-recorded audio or having someone read the tests to you from a script.**

## Additional Screen Reader Resources

To access screen reader compatible practice tests go to <https://practice.actdigitalservices.org/tao/Main/login>.

Only JAWS or NVDA screen readers are compatible. Chrome should be used for English, reading, and writing. Firefox should be used for mathematics and science. To access the graphs and charts in the mathematics and science sections, you will need tactile graphics in your preferred braille code. You can request these free paper based supplemental materials using the order form link above.

# Overview of the ACT

The ACT test consists of four multiple-choice sections—English, mathematics, reading, and science—with an optional writing section.

Some colleges and universities require or accept ACT writing scores, so you may consider taking the writing section.

## General Preparation

### Your Test Format(s)

Practice tests are available in the standard format as well as the following alternate formats:

- **Large print**—for students with visual impairments. Printed in 18-point font.
- **Braille**—for blind students. Also includes tactile graphics.
- **Pre-recorded audio**—for students with a reading disability who require oral presentation of the entire test. Also includes a regular-print test booklet for you to follow along. Access practice tests at: <https://audio.act.org/practice/index.html>
- **Tactile graphics**—a separate booklet of tactile graphics for visually impaired students requiring oral presentation or a screen reader. Tactile graphics are needed with screen reader software to access the math and science tests.
- **Screen reader software**—for blind or visually impaired students. Only JAWS or NVDA are compatible. Access practice tests at: <https://practice-two.actdigitalservices.org/tao/Main/login>.

You may order your free alternate format practice test: <https://www.act.org/content/dam/act/unsecured/documents/Alt-Format-Practice-Tests-Order.pdf>

Before your practice session, confirm with your test coordinator what accommodations were authorized for you, including timing. After your practice session, if you think you need additional or different accommodations, or need to change your testing window, contact your test coordinator immediately.

### Your Test Option

When you requested Special testing, you chose one of two Test Options: the ACT (no writing) or the ACT with writing. You cannot take the writing section without first taking all four multiple-choice sections. If you registered for Special testing and your authorized accommodations are only for the writing test, you will be moved to a national testing center.

Both test options are available through Special testing during the designated testing windows. Visit [www.act.org/the-act/accomm](http://www.act.org/the-act/accomm) for more detail.

### Your Testing Window

Large print format assessments can usually be taken at a national testing center. For other alternate formats you must complete all sections during the two-week window associated with a National test day. You must complete a test section (English, mathematics, etc.) in one test session. Keep in mind that you are not guaranteed approval of your accommodations in time to test during your preferred window. As soon as you receive your Decision Notification, check with your test coordinator for the specific date(s), time, and location of your test session(s). When you receive your decision notification from your test coordinator, check for the specific date(s), times and location of your test session(s).

# Test-Taking Strategies

## General Strategies for the ACT

If you 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. It makes sense to practice taking the ACT to avoid such an outcome.

### Here are four strategies to help you prepare for the ACT:

- ✓ *You may request extra time if you receive it at school.*

Any additional time authorized by ACT will be noted on your Decision Notification and on the roster sent to your test coordinator. Confirm with your test coordinator how much time has been authorized for you in each section. If you are authorized for an oral presentation of the ACT, you will automatically be given triple time, which is the maximum allowable extended time.

- ✓ *Get familiar with the content of the sections.*

Review the information in this document. Note which content areas make up a large proportion of the sections. The topics included in each content area are examples of possible topics; they do not include all possibilities.

- ✓ *Update your knowledge and skills in the content areas.*

Review content areas that you have studied but are not fresh in your mind. Refresh your knowledge in the content areas that make up large portions of the test.

- ✓ *Study content areas you are not familiar with.*

If some content areas of the ACT are unfamiliar to you, consider taking coursework in those areas before you take the test.

## Tips for Taking the Multiple-Choice Sections

Each multiple-choice section contains questions with either four or five answers from which you are to choose the correct or best answer. Here are several strategies to help you prepare:

- ✓ *Pace yourself.*

It is important that you have enough time to read the passages/questions and figure out your responses. First, work with your test coordinator to determine the time authorized for you in each section. For each section, subtract the number of minutes you estimate you will spend skimming the passages or reading the information provided, then divide the total number of remaining minutes allowed by the number of questions to determine the estimated time you should spend on each question. If possible, spend less time on each question and use the remaining time allowed for a section to review your work and return to the questions in that section that were most difficult for you.

The time limits set for each section give nearly everyone enough time to finish all questions. However, you will want to pace yourself to avoid spending too much time on one passage or puzzling over an answer to a specific problem. Go on to other questions and come back if there is time.

- ✓ *Use the tactile graphics effectively.*

If you have a visual impairment, you may also be approved to test with tactile graphics that allow you to access charts and graphs in the mathematics and science tests. Tactile graphics are provided as supplemental items for auditory presentations (human reader or screen reader software). They contain labels and numbers in braille, so ensure your test coordinator has requested the braille code you read. Your test coordinator is not permitted to explain or describe the graphics in any way, with the exception of what is written in the reader's script available to them. Tactile graphics are embedded in braille test books.



✓ *Read the directions carefully.*

Before you begin each section, read the directions carefully.

- The English, reading, and science sections ask for the best answer. Read and consider all of the answer choices and choose the answer that best responds to the question.
- The mathematics section asks for the correct answer. You may want to work out the answer you feel is correct and look for it among the choices given. If your answer is not among the choices provided, reread the question and consider all the answer choices.

✓ *Read each question carefully.*

You need to understand exactly what each question asks. Some questions will require you to go through several steps to find the correct or best answer, while others can be answered more quickly.

✓ *Answer the easy questions first.*

A good strategy is to answer the easy questions and skip the questions you find difficult. After answering the easy questions, go back and answer the more difficult questions if you have time.

✓ *Use logic on more difficult questions.*

When you return to the more difficult questions, try to use logic to eliminate incorrect answers. Compare the answer choices to each other and note how they differ. Such differences may provide clues as to what the question requires. Eliminate as many incorrect answers as you can, then make an educated guess from the remaining answers.

✓ *Answer every question.*

Your scores in the sections will be based only on the number of questions that you answer correctly; there is no penalty for guessing. Try to answer every question within the time allowed for each section.

✓ *Review your work.*

If there is time left after you have answered every question in a section, go back and check your work. You will not be allowed to go back to any other section or mark responses to a section after time has been called.

## **When testing on an answer document:**

✓ *Be precise in choosing your responses.*

If you are taking the ACT on paper make sure that you properly select the desired answer on your answer document. Marks on your answer document that extend beyond the intended oval may be scored as incorrect.

If you are approved to mark answers in the test booklet, make sure your final answers are clearly legible, so your test coordinator can accurately transfer them to your answer document. You may choose to be present during the transcription which allows you to clarify your choice if your test coordinator is unable to determine which answer you chose.

If you are taking the ACT using screen reader software or online, be sure you select the intended response.

*Note: For paper based testing, all answers must be marked on the answer document unless you were approved to mark them in the test booklet. If responding to a scribe the answers must be marked on the answer document.*

✓ *Erase completely.*

If you want to change a multiple-choice answer on paper, make sure you erase completely. Do not cross out answers or use correction fluid or tape; you must erase. Smudges or unintended marks may cause errors in scoring.

✓ *Starting the next section.*

You may not go on to the next section until your test coordinator instructs you to begin work on that section.

- You do not have to use all of the extended time you were authorized for. Once standard timing has elapsed, if you are testing individually and have checked your work, you can notify testing staff you are ready to move on to the next section.
- If you are testing with a group of students authorized for the same timing guidelines, you may not begin the next section until standard time has elapsed and everyone is ready to proceed.

## Get Ready

Prepare well in advance for the ACT.

- Know what to expect on test day. Review this document and visit [www.actstudent.org](http://www.actstudent.org) for more information, including an overview of each test subject, multiple test prep resources, and a comprehensive test day checklist.
- Contact your test coordinator if you are unclear about your accommodations or what will happen on test day.
- Take the practice tests and review your responses using the answer keys.
- Get plenty of rest the night before the tests.

## Before Test Day

- Contact your test coordinator for the date(s), time and location of your test session(s).
- If you currently use any testing aids (such as color overlays, highlight pens, or an FM|DM system) as a test accommodation in school and want to use them when you test, confirm with your test coordinator that you were authorized by ACT to use these during testing and bring them with you on test day.
- Before you will be admitted to test you must present original, current (valid) photo identification issued by a city/state/federal government agency or your school. If you do not have one and your test coordinator does not know you personally, ask your counselor for an ACT Student Identification Form.

## On Test Day

### Report on Time

- You must report for testing at the time and location scheduled by your test coordinator. If you are late, you will not be admitted to test.

### 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](http://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.
- Watch or other timing devices. You may bring a watch, timer, or stopwatch to pace yourself during testing, but it may not have an alarm or connect to the internet. You may not use your cell phone as a timing device. Your watch or other timing device must be removed and placed on your desk while in the test room, so that it remains visible during testing. If an alarm sounds, you'll be dismissed and your test will not be scored.
- Calculator. If you wish to use a calculator (use of a calculator is not required), it is your responsibility to ensure the calculator is permitted according to the [ACT Calculator Policy](#).
- Snacks. You may consume snacks and drinks outside the test room during the break.

### What NOT to Bring

- Textbooks, foreign language or other dictionaries (unless authorized by ACT in advance), 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
- Ear plugs

## Taking the Test

If you finish before time is called, review your work in that section. Do not return to a previous section and do not work ahead. If you are satisfied with your responses, place your answer document inside your test booklet and close the cover. If you are testing with a group, sit quietly until your test coordinator gives you additional instructions. If you are testing individually, notify your test coordinator when you have completed the section. Standard time must have elapsed prior to beginning a new section.

If you are taking all the sections in one session, you may have a short break after the first two sections. If you are taking the ACT with writing, you may have time after the science section to relax and sharpen your pencils. Depending on

your authorized timing guidelines, you may be approved for breaks as needed. Check with your test coordinator.

Do not leave the building during a break because some buildings have automatic locking doors and you may be locked out. If you leave the room during testing, you will not be allowed to make up lost time.

At the conclusion of testing, you will be asked to read and sign a statement certifying truthful identification of yourself. You will be required to sit quietly until you are dismissed. After all answer documents and test booklets have been collected and counted, your test coordinator will dismiss you.

## The ACT Content Area Test Timing

| Timing   | Test 1—<br>English   | Test 2—<br>Mathematics | Test 3—<br>Reading | Test 4—<br>Science | Writing<br>Test |
|--|--|------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| Standard time, multiple days; or standard time, breaks as needed, single day<br><i>Note: Total break time cannot exceed 90 minutes</i> | 45 minutes   | 60 minutes             | 35 minutes         | 35 minutes         | 40 minutes      |
| Standard time, multiple choice; double time, writing only, single day  | 45 minutes   | 60 minutes             | 35 minutes         | 35 minutes         | 80 minutes      |
| One and one-half time, single day or multiple days   | 70 minutes   | 90 minutes             | 55 minutes         | 55 minutes         | 60 minutes      |
| Double time, multiple days   | 90 minutes   | 120 minutes            | 70 minutes         | 70 minutes         | 80 minutes      |
| Triple time, multiple days   | 135 minutes<br>(or 180 minutes when testing with a human reader or pre-recorded audio) | 180 minutes            | 105 minutes        | 105 minutes        | 120 minutes     |

## 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.
- You may not look at any section of the test outside of the designated time for that test.
- For testing with screen reader software, you may not access an electronic device, (other than your testing computer and mouse or refreshable braille display in kiosk mode) 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 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.

## Content of the ACT Sections

### English Section

The English section consists of several essays, or passages, each followed by a set of multiple-choice questions.

- Some questions refer to the passage as a whole, or to underlined or highlighted portions of the passage and offer several alternatives to that portion. You decide which answer choice is most appropriate in the context of the passage.
- Many questions offer "NO CHANGE" to the passage as one of the choices.

The English section puts you in the position of a writer who makes decisions to revise and edit a text. Essays in different genres provide a variety of rhetorical situations. These passages are chosen for their appropriateness in assessing writing and language skills and to reflect students' interests and experiences.

Four scores are reported for the English section: a score for the section overall and three reporting category scores based on specific knowledge and skills. The approximate percentage of the section devoted to each reporting category is:

#### Production of Writing (29–32%)

This category requires you to apply your understanding of the purpose and focus of a piece of writing.

- **Topic Development:** Demonstrate an understanding of, and control over, the rhetorical aspects of texts. Identify the purposes of parts of texts, determine whether a text or part of a text has met its intended goal, and evaluate the relevance of material in terms of a text's focus.

- **Organization, Unity, and Cohesion:** Use various strategies to ensure that a text is logically organized, flows smoothly, and has an effective introduction and conclusion.

#### Knowledge of Language (15–17%)

These questions require you to demonstrate effective language use through ensuring precise and concise in word choice and maintaining consistency in style and tone.

#### Conventions of Standard English (52–55%)

These questions require you to apply an understanding of the conventions of standard English grammar, usage, and mechanics to revise and edit text.

- **Sentence Structure and Formation:** Apply understanding of sentence structure and formation in a text and make revisions to improve the writing.
- **Punctuation:** Recognize common problems with standard English punctuation and make revisions to improve the writing.
- **Usage:** Recognize common problems with standard English usage in a text and make revisions to improve the writing.

## Tips for Taking the English Section

### ✓ *Be aware of the writing style used in each passage.*

The passages cover a variety of topics and are written in a variety of styles. It is important that you take into account the writing style used in each passage. When responding to a question, be sure to understand the context of the question. Consider how the sentence containing an underlined portion fits in with the surrounding sentences and into the passage as a whole.

### ✓ *Examine the underlined or highlighted portions of the passage.*

Before responding to a question with an underlined or highlighted portion, carefully examine what is underlined in the text. Consider the elements of writing included in each underlined or highlighted portion.

- Some questions will ask you to base your decision on some specific element of writing, such as the tone or emphasis the text should convey.
- Some questions will ask you to choose the alternative to the underlined or highlighted portion that is NOT or LEAST acceptable.

The answer choices for each question will contain changes in one or more of those elements of writing.

### ✓ *Be aware of questions with no underlined portions.*

You will be asked some questions about a section of the passage or about the passage as a whole, in light of a given rhetorical situation. Questions of this type are often identified by a question number in a box located at the appropriate point in the passage.

Questions about the entire passage are placed at the end of the passage and introduced by a horizontal box enclosing the following instruction: "Questions \_\_ and \_\_ ask about the preceding passage. For paper testing, these questions are as a whole." For online testing, similar instructions will appear above the individual questions.

### ✓ *Note the differences in the answer choices.*

Many of the questions in the section will involve more than one aspect of writing. Examine each answer choice and how it differs from the others. Be careful not to choose an answer that corrects one error but causes a different error.

### ✓ *Determine the best answer.*

When a question asks you to choose the best alternative to an underlined or highlighted portion, consider the following approach:

- Decide how the underlined or highlighted portion might best be phrased in standard written English or in terms of the particular question posed.
  - ~ If the underlined or highlighted portion is the best answer, select "NO CHANGE."
  - ~ 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, 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](http://www.act.org/calculator-policy.html) for details about prohibited models and features.*

*The use of talking calculators must be approved in advance by ACT.*

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 functions: definition, notation, representation, and application. Use functions including linear, radical, piecewise, polynomial, 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 nonroutine 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

### ✓ *Calculator usage.*

All of the mathematics problems can be solved without a calculator. Some may wish to check their answers (computations) with 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.*

A best practice would be to use scratch paper to work out the solutions to some problems. This will allow you the ability to go back and check your work, correcting any mistakes. You may wish to glance over the answer choices after reading the question. It may take longer working backwards from the answer choices.

### ✓ *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 makes sense.*

Sometimes an error in computation will result in an answer that is not practically possible for the situation described. Always ask yourself, does this answer make sense to this problem.

### ✓ *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; 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 such as a graph, figure, or table that contains information relevant to the reading task. In a 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 of 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 required, but background knowledge acquired in general, introductory science courses may be needed to correctly answer some of the questions.

The science section focuses on multidimensional assessment, with questions that assess science content in concert with science skills and practices.

The questions require you to:

- recognize and understand the basic features of, and concepts related to, the provided information
- examine critically the relationship between the information provided and the conclusions drawn or hypotheses developed
- generalize from given information to gain new information, draw conclusions, or make predictions

*Note: You are not permitted to use a calculator in the science section.*

Four scores are reported for the science section: a score for the section overall and three reporting category scores based on scientific knowledge, skills, and practices. The approximate percentage of the section devoted to each reporting category is:

### Interpretation of Data (40–50%)

This category asks you to manipulate and analyze scientific data presented in scientific tables, graphs, and diagrams (e.g., recognize trends in data, translate tabular data into graphs, interpolate and extrapolate, and reason mathematically).

### Scientific Investigation (20–30%)

This category requires you to understand experimental tools, procedures, and design (e.g., identify controls and variables) and compare, extend, and modify experiments (e.g., predict the results of additional trials).

### Evaluation of Models, Inferences, & Experimental Results (25–35%)

These questions ask you to judge the validity of scientific information and formulate conclusions and predictions based on that information (e.g., determine which explanation for a scientific phenomenon is supported by new findings).

The science section presents information in three formats:

- **Data Representation (25–35%):** This format presents graphic and tabular material similar to that found in science journals and texts. The questions associated with this format measure skills such as recognizing relationships among data in tables and graphs; interpolation and extrapolation; and translating tabular data into graphs.
- **Research Summaries (45–60%):** This format provides descriptions and results of one or more related experiments. The questions focus on the design of the experiments and the interpretation of experimental results.
- **Conflicting Viewpoints (15–20%):** This format presents two or more explanations for the same scientific phenomena that, because they are based on differing premises or incomplete data, are inconsistent with one another. The questions focus on the understanding, analysis, and comparison of alternative viewpoints or hypotheses.

## Tips for Taking the Science Section

### ✓ *Read the passage carefully.*

Before you begin answering a question, read the scientific material provided. It is important that you read the entire text and examine any tables, graphs, or figures. You may want to take notes about important ideas. Some of the information sets will describe experiments. You should consider the experimental design, including the controls and variables, because questions are likely to address this component of scientific research.

### ✓ *Note the different viewpoints in passages.*

Some material will present conflicting viewpoints, and the questions will ask you to distinguish among them. It may be helpful for you to take notes summarizing each viewpoint about specific portions of the section.

## Writing Section (Optional)

If you register for the ACT with writing, you will take the writing section after the four multiple-choice sections. Your score in the writing section will not affect your scores on the multiple-choice or your Composite score.

The writing section is a 40-minute essay test that measures your writing skills—specifically, writing skills taught in high school English classes and in entry-level college composition courses.

The section consists of one writing prompt that describes a complex issue and provides three different perspectives on the issue. You are asked to read the prompt and write an essay in which you develop your own perspective on the issue. Your essay must analyze the relationship between your own perspective and one or more other perspectives. You may adopt one of the perspectives given in the prompt as your own, or you may introduce one that is completely different from those given. Your score will not be affected by the perspective you take on the issue.

Five scores are reported for the writing section: a single subject-level writing score reported on a scale of 2–12 and four domain scores that are based on an analytic scoring rubric. The subject score is the rounded average of the four domain scores. The four writing domains are:

### Ideas and Analysis

Scores in this domain reflect the ability to generate productive ideas and engage critically with multiple perspectives on the given issue. Competent writers understand the issue they are invited to address, the purpose for writing, and the audience. They generate ideas that are relevant to the situation.

### Development and Support

Scores in this domain reflect the ability to discuss ideas, offer rationale, and bolster an argument. Competent writers explain and explore their ideas, discuss implications, and illustrate through examples. They help the reader understand their thinking about the issue.

### Organization

Scores in this domain reflect the ability to organize ideas with clarity and purpose. Organizational choices are integral to effective writing. Competent writers arrange their essay in a way that clearly shows the relationship between ideas, and they guide the reader through their discussion.

### 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

### ✓ *You may request extra time.*

If you were authorized for additional time in the writing section, the amount of time ACT has authorized for you will be noted on your decision notification and on the roster sent to your test coordinator.

Even if you were not approved for extra time on the multiple-choice sections, you still may be authorized for double time in the writing section.

### ✓ *Pace yourself.*

- If you are approved for extra time, check with your test coordinator to determine the time authorized for you in the writing section.
- If you are approved to dictate your essay to a scribe, ask your test coordinator about the procedures for dictating your essay, reviewing your work, and making corrections.
- If you are approved to use a computer, computer voice-activated software, or braille for the essay, ask your test coordinator for instructions and the time allowed.

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.

*Note: If you are approved to dictate your essay to a scribe, you will need to allow time to dictate all notes, the final essay, and any corrections you want made.*

### ✓ *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.

If you are using a scribe, the scribe may write down your notes or outlines, but you must clearly indicate what is and is not part of your final essay. You can refer back to these notes (or have them read to you) as you write the essay or dictate it to the scribe.

*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.

✓ *Write (or print) your essay legibly in the answer document.*

If you take the writing section on paper, and the readers cannot read what you have written, they will not be able to score your essay. You must write your essay using a soft lead No. 2 pencil (not a mechanical pencil or ink pen) on the lined pages in the answer document. You may not need all the lined pages, but to ensure you have enough room to finish, do not skip lines.

✓ *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 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.

If you have been approved for a scribe, you are responsible for dictating all corrections to the scribe and making sure they are made as requested. The scribe will only make corrections dictated by you. The scribe will read aloud what you have dictated at your request. Your readers take into account that you had a fixed amount of time to write your essay.

✓ *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 section 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.

Check with your test coordinator for the time allowed and response mode approved for you on the writing section, and then conduct your practice session using that time limit and response mode.

If you plan to take the ACT with writing and test with braille, a practice braille writing test booklet is available.

# 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 you are taking the ACT (no writing) with standard time limits, the four multiple-choice tests require 2 hours and 55 minutes to complete. (The writing test will require an additional 40 minutes.) Take them in order, with a 10- to 15-minute break between Tests 2 and 3.
- If you are approved for extra time, check with your test coordinator to determine how much time ACT has authorized for you on each test. Try to take each practice test without interruption.
- You will need only sharpened, No. 2 pencils and good erasers. Remove all other items from your desk.

*Note: Only writing instruments and testing aids approved in advance by ACT will be allowed on test day.*

- 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.
  - ~ If you are testing with standard time limits, 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.
  - ~ If you are testing with extra time, set your timer for five minutes less than the time allowed for each test according to the timing guidelines authorized for you by ACT.

- Use only the time authorized for you on each test.
- If you will be marking your responses in your answer document yourself, you can use the sample multiple-choice answer document found in the publication **Preparing for the ACT Test—Special Testing Scoring Keys**.
- 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 8 to time each section of the test.
- If you plan to take the ACT with writing, read the directions on the first page of the practice ACT writing test (page 19). These are the same directions that will appear in your test booklet on test day. Start your timer, then read the prompt on page 20. After you understand what the prompt is asking you to do, plan your essay (using page 21) 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.
- A screen reader accessible practice test is available at <https://practice.actdigitalservices.org>. To access the practice tests, select Guest access.



# Practice Writing Test

Your Signature: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Do not print.)

Print Your Name Here: \_\_\_\_\_

|                     |  |   |     |  |   |      |  |  |  |
|---------------------|--|---|-----|--|---|------|--|--|--|
| Your Date of Birth: |  |   |     |  |   |      |  |  |  |
|                     |  | - |     |  | - |      |  |  |  |
| Month               |  |   | Day |  |   | Year |  |  |  |

## Form 21BM20



# WRITING TEST BOOKLET

**You must take the multiple-choice tests before you take the writing test.**

## Directions

This is a test of your writing skills. You will have **forty** (40) minutes to read the prompt, plan your response, and write an essay in English. Before you begin working, read all material in this test booklet carefully to understand exactly what you are being asked to do.

You will write your essay on the lined pages in the **answer document** provided. Your writing on those pages will be scored. You may use the unlined pages in this test booklet to plan your essay. Your work on these pages will not be scored.

Your essay will be evaluated based on the evidence it provides of your ability to:

- clearly state your own perspective on a complex issue and analyze the relationship between your perspective and at least one other perspective
- develop and support your ideas with reasoning and examples
- organize your ideas clearly and logically
- communicate your ideas effectively in standard written English

Lay your pencil down immediately when time is called.

**DO NOT OPEN THIS BOOKLET UNTIL TOLD TO DO SO.**



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## Extracurricular Activities and Codes of Conduct

For many students, extracurricular activities are a meaningful part of the high school experience. These activities allow students to develop their skills in areas such as sports, music, and drama while building relationships with peers and gaining experience performing or competing. But at many schools, students who participate in extracurricular activities are subject to special codes of conduct. These codes often establish high standards for academic performance and behavior, and students must meet the standards to stay eligible for their activities. Should students who participate in extracurricular activities be subject to special codes of conduct?

*Read and carefully consider these perspectives. Each suggests a particular way of thinking about the question above.*

### Perspective One

All school rules and standards must apply equally to every student. It is unfair to hold students who play sports or music to higher standards than students who do not.

### Perspective Two

Participation in school activities is a privilege, not a right. It is fair to ask students to earn this privilege by studying hard and behaving themselves.

### Perspective Three

School programs should be open to all students. Not all students can meet high standards, which means not all students can participate in extracurricular activities.

### Essay Task

Write a unified, coherent essay in which you address the question of whether students who participate in extracurricular activities should be subject to special codes of conduct. In your essay, be sure to:

- clearly state your own perspective and analyze the relationship between your perspective and at least one other perspective
- develop and support your ideas with reasoning and examples
- organize your ideas clearly and logically
- communicate your ideas effectively in standard written English

Your perspective may be in full agreement with any of those given, in partial agreement, or completely different.

## Planning Your Essay

*Your work on these prewriting pages will not be scored.*

Use the space below and on the back cover to generate ideas and plan your essay. You may wish to consider the following as you think critically about the task:

Strengths and weaknesses of different perspectives on the issue

- What insights do they offer, and what do they fail to consider?
- Why might they be persuasive to others, or why might they fail to persuade?

Your own knowledge, experience, and values

- What is your perspective on this issue, and what are its strengths and weaknesses?
- How will you support your perspective in your essay?

### Note

- For your practice essay, you will need scratch paper to plan your essay and four lined sheets of paper for your response.
- On test day, if you are taking the paper test, you will receive a test booklet with space to plan your essay and an answer document with four lined pages on which to write your response.

