

TEN-YEAR TRENDS DATABASE

USER GUIDE

This user guide provides an overview of ACT’s Ten-Year Trends Database, including the topics addressed, the types of dashboards provided and how to interpret them, and the dropdown menus you can use to refine the information provided in the dashboards. Currently, the database houses information on the ACT-tested high school graduating classes of 2010 through 2019. You can access the database from act.org/researchdigest.

TOPICS

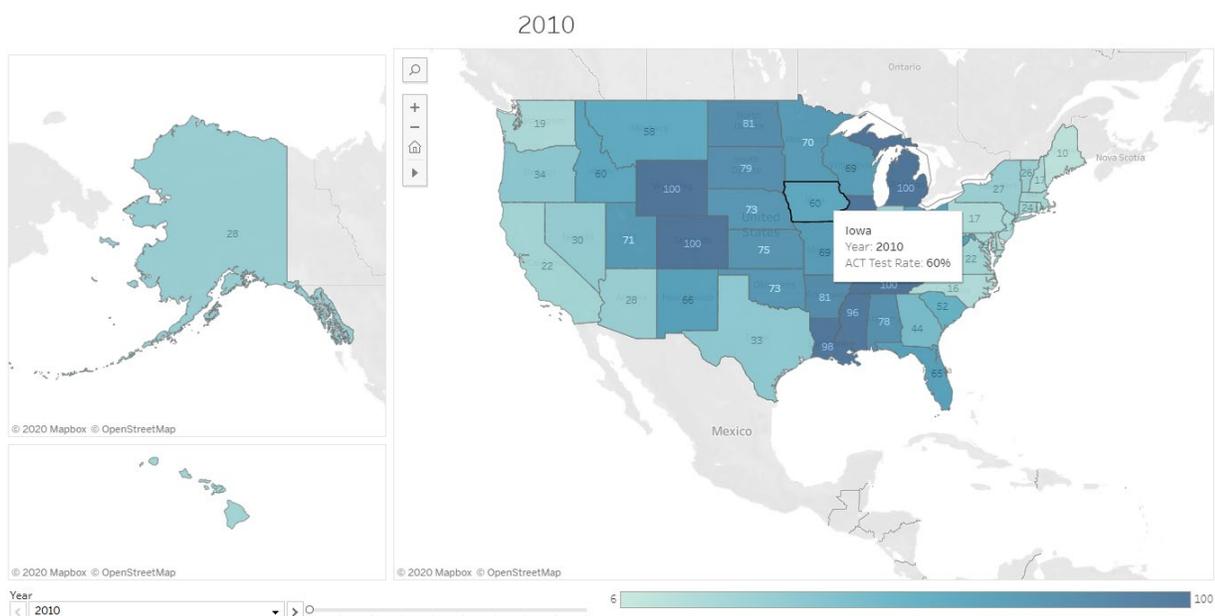
There are two primary topics covered in the database, each represented by a single dashboard.

- ACT Test Rate:
 - Percentage of high school graduates taking the ACT over a ten-year period
- Student Characteristics:
 - Count or percentage of ACT-tested students by student characteristics over a ten-year period.

ACT TEST RATE DASHBOARD

The first dashboard provides a choropleth map of the United States showing the ACT test rate by state. The ACT test rate is the percentage of high school graduates in that state who took the ACT at least once during high school. Each state in the map is shaded in proportion to the test rate such that states with lower test rates are lighter in color and states with higher test rates are darker in color. As seen in the legend in the bottom right of the dashboard, the ACT test rates for the 2010 high school graduating class ranged from a low of 6% to a high of 100%.

ACT Test Rate, 2010-2019



You can access the state name, the high school graduation year, and the ACT test rate by hovering your cursor over the state. The screen shot provides an example with the cursor hovered over the state of Iowa.

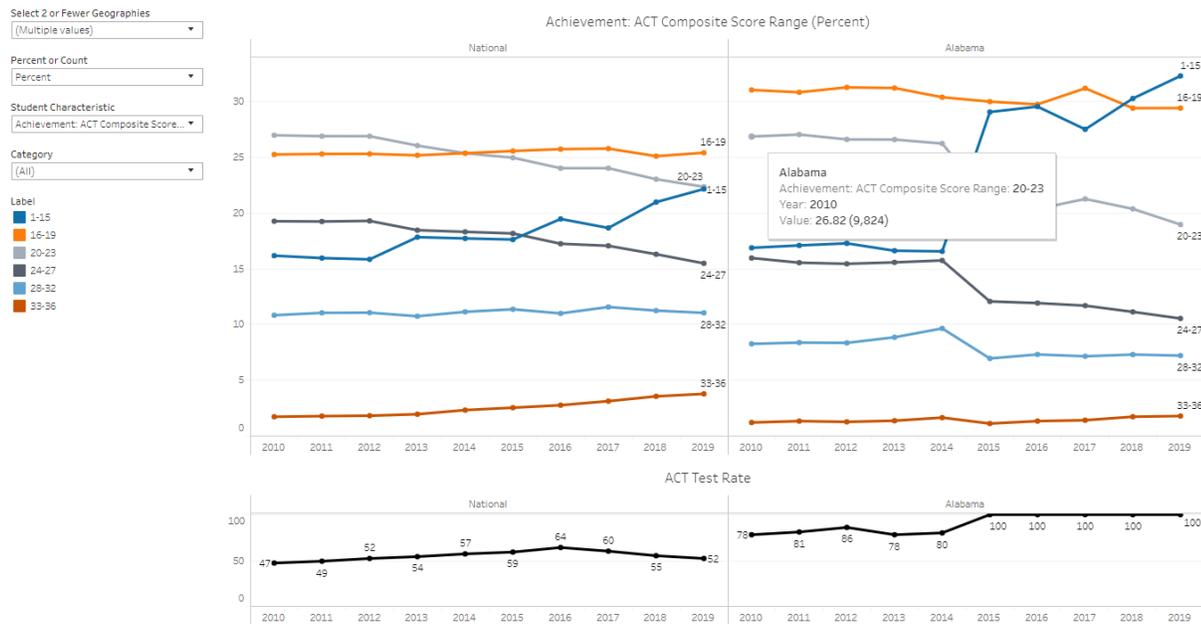
Refining Your Answer

In total, the dashboard contains ACT test rates for the ten years spanning the high school graduating classes of 2010 through 2019. Information for the graduating class of 2010 is shown by default. To see the results for a more recent high school graduating class, simply select the year from the dropdown menu at the bottom left of the dashboard, click the right-facing arrow to the right of the dropdown menu, or slide the cursor the right of the dropdown menu.

STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS DASHBOARD

The second dashboard is a line chart depicting the ten-year trend for a particular characteristic of ACT-tested students. As with the map of ACT test rates, this dashboard contains information for the ten years spanning the high school graduating classes of 2010 through 2019.

Ten-Year Trends in ACT-Tested High School Graduates' Characteristics



The student characteristics available in this dashboard can be organized into three different themes: Academic achievement, student background, and college plans and preferences.

1. Academic Achievement

- ACT Composite score range
- Number of ACT Benchmarks met

2. Student Background

- Family income
- Gender
- Parents' education level
- Race/ethnicity

3. College Plans and Preferences

- Degree aspirations
- EOS Opt-in status
- Planned major category
- Preferred college location
- Preferred college type
- Preferred distance to college

The ten-year trend in the ACT test rates for the geographic entities selected are also provided as context for the ten-year trends in the student characteristic selected. The ACT test rate is the percentage of high school graduates in that geographic entity who took the ACT at least once during high school. Note that abrupt changes in ACT test rates over time can result in abrupt changes to the trend line for a particular student characteristic. In particular, geographic entities with smaller shares of students taking the ACT tend to be less representative of high school graduates in that area, whereas geographic entities with larger shares of students taking the ACT tend to be more representative of high school graduates in that area.

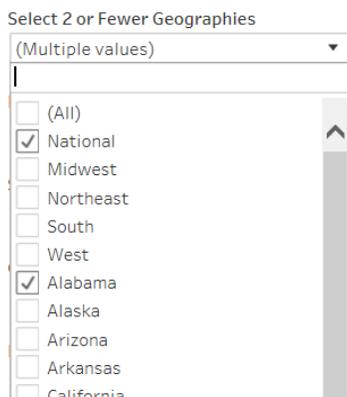
Refining Your Answer

The dashboard will be pre-populated with particular information by default. For example, the chart will present information for the National and Alabama ACT-tested population by default unless some other student population is chosen. Use the dropdown menus to the left of the charts to help refine the information presented in the dashboard.

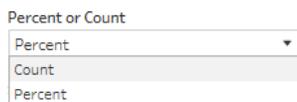
Select 2 or Fewer Geographies. This dropdown menu (as shown below) will allow you to limit the ten-year trend provided to include only those students who reside within the particular geographic areas chosen. Options to choose from include national, any of the four US geographic regions (i.e., Northeast, Midwest, South, West), and any of the fifty states or the District of Columbia. To choose a geography from the menu, click on the downward arrow on the right side of the box, and click on the geography of interest. Information in the chart will update to reflect your change. Only up to two geographic areas can be displayed at one time.

The geographic regions provided in the database are defined by the U.S. Census Bureau as comprising the following states:

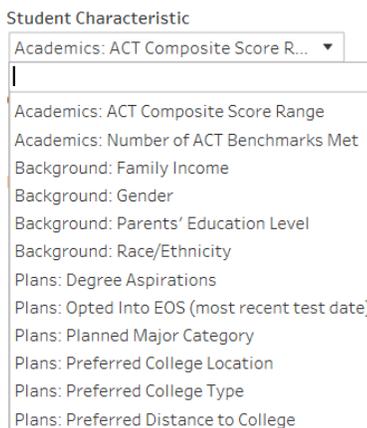
- Northeast: CT, ME, MA, NH, NJ, NY, PA, RI, VT
- Midwest: IL, IN, IA, KS, MI, MN, MO, NE, OH, ND, SD, WI
- South: AL, AR, DE, DC, FL, GA, KY, LA, MD, MS, NC, OK, SC, TN, TX, VA, WV
- West: AL, AZ, CA, CO, HI, ID, MT, NV, NM, OR, UT, WA, WY



Percent or Count. This dropdown menu (as shown below) allows you to view the ten-year trend in either the count or the percentage of students possessing a particular student characteristic. To choose an option from the menu, click on the downward arrow on the right side of the box, and then click on the option of interest. Information in the chart will update to reflect your change. Only the count or the percentage can be selected and viewed at one time.



Student Characteristic. This dropdown menu (as shown below) allows you to change the student characteristic in which a ten-year trend is presented. To choose a characteristic from the menu, click on the downward arrow on the right side of the box, and then click on the characteristic of interest. Information in the chart will update to reflect your change. Only one student characteristic can be selected at a time.



Category: This dropdown menu (as shown below) lets you further refine the 10-year trend by allowing you the option of selecting those categories within a particular student characteristic that are of greatest interest to you. For example, you may only be interested in viewing the ten-year trend in the percentage of students in the ACT Composite Score Range of “24-27.” To select from the menu one or more categories for a particular student characteristic, click on the downward arrow on the right side of the box, and then click on the category or categories of interest. Information in the chart will update to reflect your change. Note that the “Student Characteristic” and “Category” dropdown menus are each conditional on information selected in the other menu.

Category

24-27

(All)

1-15

16-19

20-23

24-27

28-32

33-36

STEP-BY-STEP INSTRUCTIONS FOR AN EXAMPLE QUESTION

In this example, you work in the Office of Enrollment Management at a public university in Georgia and are you interested in the number of high school graduates with an ACT score between 20 and 27 within two adjacent states in which your institution recruits—Alabama and Tennessee.

Step 1: Select Geography Select 'Alabama' and 'Tennessee' from the dropdown menu.

Step 2: Select Percent or Count Select 'Count' from the dropdown menu.

Step 3: Select Student Characteristic Select 'Achievement: ACT Composite Score Range' from the dropdown menu.

Step 4: Select Category Select '20-23' and '24-27' from the dropdown menu.

After following all five steps, the interface should display the information found in the chart below.

Ten-Year Trends in ACT-Tested High School Graduates' Characteristics

