

ACT Facts & Tips

Overview

- Universally accepted by all 4-year colleges and universities in the U.S.
- Given six times per year: February, April, June, September, October, and December.
- Four sections (215 questions): English, Math, Reading, and Science. A writing task (essay) after the test is optional.
- Scored on scale from 1 to 36 based on an average of the four testing sections. The optional essay is not included as part of the composite score.
- Approximately 25% of students taking both the ACT and SAT do markedly better on the ACT.

Registering (and Retesting)

- Order the "test information release" (TIR) for the ACT if it is offered. This means the entire test will be sent back to you so you can analyze which questions you got wrong. The ACT typically offers this service on the *December*, *April*, and *June* exams.
- Take the ACT at least once; however, research shows that of students who took the ACT more than once, 55% increased their composite score on retest.

Prep

- Do at least half of a practice test per week as you prepare for your exam. We recommend using The Official ACT Prep Guide and our web-based ACT prep course.
- For maximum results, increase this to at least one practice test per week in each of the four weeks leading up to your exam. Spend half an hour per night preparing.
- The Science portion of this test deals mostly with graph interpretation and analysis of viewpoints, so don't worry about studying any specific science course materials.

During the Test

- Proper planning and preparation are the keys to success! Go into the ACT with confidence, competitiveness, and try to relax as much as possible.
- Testing time is 2 hours and 55 minutes meaning students should spend about 50 seconds on each question.
- *Answer every question.* Your scores on the multiple-choice tests are based on the number of questions you answer correctly. There is no penalty for guessing.