



How to Register for the ACT

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If you are applying to a U.S. college, you might be required to take the ACT. Because space is limited at each test site, you will want to register early to make sure you don't get closed out. Registering online is recommended and is very straightforward. A mail-in registration is available for those who are unable to register online. There is even a standby option for those who miss the regular deadlines.

Method 1

Registering Online

- 1 Gather your information.** Most of the questions, like your name, address and email, will be easy to answer. But you will also need your social security number, a list of your high school classes and grades, a digital headshot that you can upload, and a credit card to pay registration fees.
 - Completing all the pages will take about 40 minutes, so give yourself plenty of time.
- 2 Go to the ACT registration website.** You can reach the site at <http://www.actstudent.org/regist/index.html>. Use a laptop or desktop computer with Internet Explorer (version 8 or higher), Chrome (version 18 or higher), Firefox (version 7 or higher) or Safari (version 5 or higher). Tablets and mobile phones are not recommended.^[1]
- 3 Create an account.** This account will allow you to register for the test, view and send your scores, and register for additional tests if you decide to take it a second or third time. You'll need to input the usual — name, address, birthday, social security number, email address — and choose a login and password.^[2]
 - Be sure to write down your login and password. You'll need them to login again to check your scores or to register for an additional test.
- 4 Click on "Register to Test."** You will be taken to the first page of the registration packet. This is one of the most important pages because it is where you provide the information needed to contact you and to track your scores. Make sure you answer these questions accurately.
- 5 Complete the profile sections.** The ACT registration packet is divided into several sections. The first couple of sections ask for information that allow the ACT to gather demographic data on students taking the test, and to provide you with personalized suggestions for careers and majors. Nearly all of the questions in these sections are optional. You only need to answer those marked with a red asterisk.
 - You will be asked to answer questions about your high school, education plans, career interests, financial aid needs and demographic background.
- 6 Choose your test date.** After you complete the profile sections, you will be taken to the test registration section. Use this section to choose your test date. You will also be asked to input your high school classes, grades and GPA.
- 7 Select your test option — ACT with or without writing.** Some colleges require the ACT Writing Test, while others don't. If the schools you are applying to require the writing test, sign up for the "ACT Plus Writing" option. The ACT site has a search feature that allows you to find those colleges that require the writing test, and those that don't.^[3]
- 8 Choose the colleges to receive your scores.** You can send your scores to up to four colleges for free if

you list them before you take the test. If you know which schools you will be applying to, you will save money by designating those schools when you register for the test.^[4]

- You do not have to list schools to receive your scores at this time. You can sign into your account at any time to have them sent. But sending scores to more than four schools, or sending the scores after the test is taken, will cost you \$12 per school.

9 Pick your test center. Your high school probably offers the ACT, but not every school offers the test on every date. If your school isn't offering the ACT on the date you want to take it, or if all seats are full, you can use your zip code to find other centers near you.

10 Confirm your information. You are almost done. You will now be asked to confirm all the information you have entered. Check it carefully. You don't want a typo or a missed field to prevent you from registering.

11 Pay for the test. You will need a credit card to pay for the test. The basic fee for the ACT without writing is \$42.50, and \$58.50 for the ACT plus writing. Late registration fees, additional score reports and other fees for optional services can increase this cost substantially. Once you have paid, you will not be able to cancel your registration.^[5]

- The ACT offers fee waivers to those who qualify. Eligibility is verified by your school, so talk to your counselor if you need a waiver.^[6]

12 Upload your picture. The ACT requires you to upload your photo before you print your ticket. The photo will be printed on the ticket so that the test administrator can confirm you are the one taking the test.^[7]

- You don't need to upload your photo when you register, but if you don't upload it by the photo deadline, your registration will be cancelled. Uploading it when you register will make sure you don't forget.
- Make sure you are the only one in the photo, it is clear and you are easily recognized. Don't wear a hat, dark glasses or anything else that would make it hard to see your face. Use a plain background and face the camera.
- The photo should be portrait mode and less than 5MB. Use a JPG, JPEG, PNG or BMP format. If you scan your photo, it must print clearly as a 2"x2" image.

Method 2

Registering by Mail

1 Request a Register-by-Mail packet. If you prefer to register by mail, you can get a mail packet at your school's guidance, career or college office. If your counselor doesn't have any, you are homeschooled, or you otherwise do not have access to school resources, you can request a packet online by going to http://forms.act.org/student/stud_req.html.

- You must register by mail if you don't have a credit card or a fee waiver, or if you are younger than 13.^[8]
- International students must register online.^[9]

2 Fill out the packet. The information requested by the register-by-mail packet is the same information requested by the online registration option. You will be asked about your high school classes and grades, about your career interests, and about your college plans. You will also be asked to choose a test center and date.

- You will need to supply a recent photo of your head and shoulders. You can include a printed photo with your registration, or you can go online to upload one to your account if you have an ACT web account.

3 Mail your completed registration paperwork. Be sure to allow 7–10 days for delivery. The packet must be received by the deadline date to avoid late registration fees.

- You will receive your test ticket in the mail. You can also go onto your ACT web account and print a

ticket, the same way someone who registers online does.

- 4 Create an ACT web account.** Even though you are registering by mail, you will want to create an online account at www.act.org to check your scores. You will also be able to upload your photo.

Method 3

Registering for Standby Admittance

- 1 Sign onto your ACT account.** If you miss the regular registration periods, you can register for standby testing. You must have a standby ticket before the test date to be allowed into the testing center. This does not guarantee you a seat, but you need a ticket to have any chance to take the test that day.^[10]
 - The standby request period ends about a week before the test date.
 - There will be extra fees for standby registration.
- 2 Choose a large testing center.** You must choose a specific testing center when you register as a standby test taker. Choosing one of the larger testing locations will give you a better chance of being admitted, as it is more likely to have room for you.
- 3 Arrive early.** Testing spots are given on a first-come, first-served basis, so you should get there early to ensure that test materials, seats, and staff are available. You might not be admitted otherwise. Arriving early, however, increases your chance at a spot.^[11]
 - If you are not admitted to the test center, the ACT will refund the fees paid for your standby registration.^[12]

Tips

- Check with your college to see when they need test scores submitted. You will want to take the test well before this date to make sure you don't miss the college application deadline.
- Pay attention to deadlines. You will be charged additional fees if you register late. Your registration will also be cancelled if you don't upload your photo by the photo upload deadline.
- Register early. Centers often fill up, and there are penalty fees for registering after the deadline.
- Be sure to choose a secure password for your ACT student account. This account will have a lot of personal information that you might not want compromised.

Sources and Citations

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