



**ACT<sup>®</sup>**

**THEIR  
JOURNEY.  
MANY  
PATHS.**

**$\frac{23}{24}$  COUNSELOR'S  
GUIDE**

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# ACT IS MORE THAN JUST A TEST!

We know students have many paths after they leave high school, and we're here to help. ACT offers products and services that open doors, build confidence, and unleash the potential of your students.

Our focus is to **improve equity and access** to essential resources that identify achievement gaps, target areas for growth, and increase college readiness. Through the ACT Center for Equity in Learning, ACT Fee Waiver Program, and free access to online prep, we are dedicated to helping you support, mentor, and engage

with students in an equitable manner.

Together, we can create **life-changing opportunities** that inspire students to chase their dreams.

In this guide, you'll find all the information you need around the national offering of the ACT test, as well as additional tools and resources to help support you as you serve your students throughout the school year.

**On behalf of everyone at ACT, thank you for the work you do every single day to be a champion for your students!**

# TOP FIVE REASONS STUDENTS SHOULD CHOOSE THE ACT TEST

1

## SAVE \$\$\$\$ ON TUITION

Taking the ACT test can increase their chances of earning new or better scholarships.

2

## TAKE THE RIGHT CLASSES

Their ACT score can help them determine the right classes to take in high school and can help them test out of remedial courses in college, saving them time and money!

3

## COLLEGE AND CAREER PLANNING

The ACT is also a college and career planning tool! Their score report includes a career-ready profile, a college/career planning section, and in [MyACT](#) they can complete their interest inventory and see how well their interests align with possible majors.

4

## BE STEM READY

The ACT gives them the chance to stand out with a unique STEM score — a measure of preparedness for courses in STEM-related majors.

5

## BUILD A SUPERSCORE

They can reflect their best efforts, not just their best test day—when students take the ACT more than once, we'll calculate their superscore using their best subject score from **each** test attempt.

# 2023 / 2024 TEST DATES



\* No test centers are scheduled in New York for the July test date.

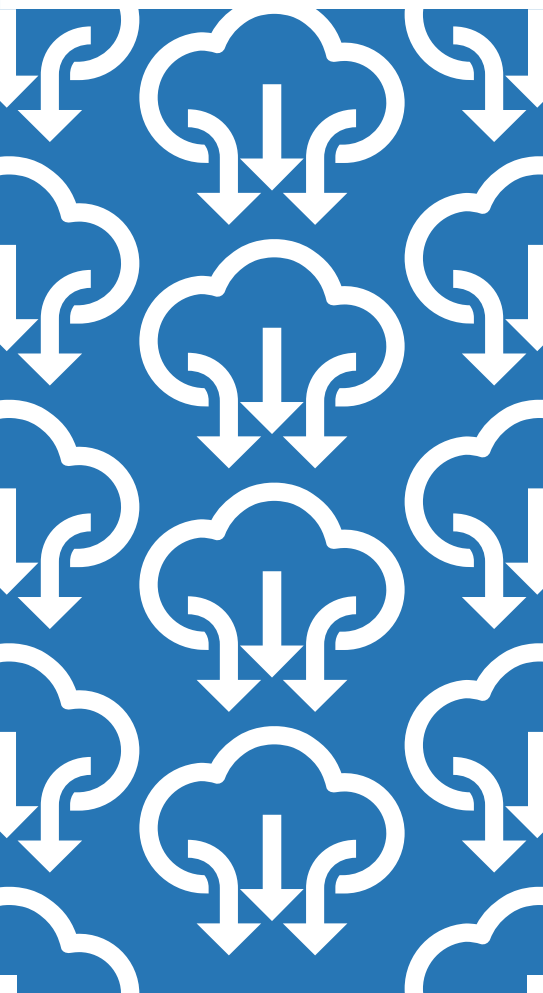
## DOWNLOADABLE CALENDARS

Each test date above has a regular registration deadline and a late registration deadline. Want an easy way to remember all of the dates?

We've created downloadable calendar files for you to import into your Google or Outlook calendar or into Apple Calendar!

See the files below and read through the [instructions](#) for easy import.

[Calendar Import File: Outlook\\_Google](#)  
[Calendar Import File: iCal](#)



# FEE WAIVERS



Have students  
set up  
registration  
reminders at  
**act.org/bts.**



Counselors can access more information on fee waivers for the ACT test and other support materials at [act.org/the-act/supportmaterials](https://act.org/the-act/supportmaterials). You can request up to four fee waivers on behalf of each qualifying student.

## Fee waivers cover:

- Basic registration fees for up to four ACT tests, with or without the writing test
- Free access to The Official ACT Self Paced Course, Powered by Kaplan
- Test Information Release (TIR) reports—the opportunity for students to request a copy of their questions and answers at registration on three select test dates each year
- Unlimited additional score reports to be sent to colleges or scholarship agencies after testing from any individual National or State and District Test
- College application fees—students can request to have their application fees waived or deferred if they have taken the ACT with a fee waiver.

*Note: Students must obtain the Waiver or Deferral of College Admissions Applications Fee form from you and send it to the college directly.*



Students who have taken the ACT with a fee waiver can send an unlimited number of score reports for free including their superscore or scores from any individual test, even those taken previously during the ACT National Test and State and District Testing.





# NAVIGATING JUNIOR AND SENIOR YEAR

There is A LOT to keep track of as students begin wrapping up their final years of high school and preparing for college, career, and beyond. Here are some touchpoints to make sure students are staying on course in their junior and senior years.

# FALL

## JUNIORS

This is the time for juniors to begin laying the groundwork for their college or career plans. Starting off on the right foot with this checklist will help them feel confident from the start to finish.

### Map out their junior year:

Using a paper or online calendar, pencil in **ACT test dates**, test prep opportunities, campus visits, and college fairs.

### Plan a testing schedule:

Juniors who take the ACT test in the fall can **use their score report** to confirm strengths and uncover areas for improvement, which can lead to more confidence and improved performance if they test again.

- **ACT test prep materials**, including free practice tests, are available to practice skills and help students do their best.
- Choose a TIR date: **Test Information Releases** allow students to purchase a copy of their test questions, their answers, and correct answers — which can be a great study tool. TIRs are only available 3 test administrations each year (September, April, and June in 2023-2024).

### Collect helpful information:

Students can sign up for the monthly newsletter at [act.org/student](https://act.org/student) for helpful articles and important dates sent directly to their inbox. Juniors can also **download the Junior Year eBook** to read helpful tips for the upcoming year.

### Think beyond the classroom:

Encourage participation in **extracurricular activities** and taking on leadership roles, or **volunteering** with an organization whose mission is meaningful to them.

### Connect with college and career mentors:

Students can talk with their parents about career goals, ask teachers about their college and career experience, and meet with you, their counselor, to learn more about the resources you have to offer.

### Identify interests:

Free quizzes help students pinpoint their unique skills and better understand how their strengths align with plans after graduation.

- ACT offers a free Interest Inventory in MyACT to help students discover careers related to their interests, abilities, and values.

### It's not early to think about financial aid:

Students should discuss **financial aid** and financing their college plans with parents early. Attend events or webinars about financial aid.





# FALL

## SENIORS

With big decisions on the horizon, seniors have a lot on their to-do lists. Help them stay on top of their future planning this fall.

### Map out their senior year:

Using a paper or online calendar, pencil in ACT test dates, FAFSA and scholarship application deadlines, college application deadlines, and other important dates.

### Achieve their best score:

Increasing their score by even one point can help qualify for scholarships and boost admission prospects. Retaking the ACT in the fall will result in an **ACT Superscore**, combining the best score in each subject to put their best score forward and reflect their best abilities.

### Apply for financial aid and scholarships:

Now is the time students should be talking to you and to their top colleges' financial aid offices, as well as getting all their financial aid application forms ready. Seniors should complete the **FAFSA\*** as soon as possible after October 1, and continue to research and apply for scholarships and grants.

- Review the free **eBook** and **Financial Aid Checklist** resources for more information.

\*Due to changes to the FAFSA for this upcoming aid year, students will have access to the FAFSA on December 1, 2023.

### Narrowing down their college lists:

We recommend that students **pare down their final lists** and apply to 5-10 colleges, making their final list based on college fit, application due dates, cost to apply, and likelihood of admission.

### Apply for financial aid and scholarships:

Seniors can review the **Ultimate Guide to Applying for College eBook** and submit applications to their top-choice colleges in the fall, keeping in mind **early decision and early action deadlines**, as well as rolling admissions.

- **Collect application materials** like application forms, transcripts, test scores, and **letters of recommendation**. Remind students to keep their calendars up to date with deadlines for applications, scholarships, test dates, etc.
- **Complete application essays and finalize resumes**. **Application essays** are an effective way for students to communicate unique strengths to admissions officials. Encourage students to keep an ongoing list of their accomplishments to help them **craft an application resume that stands out**.



# WINTER

## JUNIORS

Winter months provide a time to reflect and reorganize for the coming year.

### Assembling a college list:

Students can begin honing in on the factors that are important to them in choosing a college, and putting together their **college list** to help compare their options.

- Also consider **alternative paths** like technical school or the military.

### College Fairs:

Help students be prepared to make the most of **college fairs** as they begin their college exploration.



### Keep coursework on track:

Students should be **reviewing their coursework with counselors** and planning for the rest of high school, making sure to include core courses as well as any college prerequisites (particularly around foreign language and science) in their schedule.

### Create a college email address:

Students are going to start receiving lots of emails from colleges already and they want to be best prepared through the application process in the fall. Remind them to set up a college application email address that is separate from the one they use for school.



## SENIORS

Things are starting to fall into place for seniors, as they await admissions decisions

### Finalize financial aid plans:

As **financial aid packages** are received, students should determine the net cost of attendance to **estimate the cost** of college and compare their offers. They should also review the SAR from their FAFSA.

### Avoiding the senior slide:

Letting grades drop can affect scholarship opportunities and college admission decisions for seniors. Encourage students to **stay on track and finish strong**.

### Get serious about scholarships:

Many scholarship deadlines are between February 1 and March 1—help your seniors identify opportunities they may not even know about with our list of scholarships that require an **ACT score** or help them complete a general search online.



# SPRING

## JUNIORS

Spring of junior year is prime time to take the ACT and continue planning for their final year of high school.

### Juniors should consider **taking the ACT in February or April:**

At this point in their high school experience, they should have completed all the coursework covered on the test. Testing now also gives them a baseline score and experience if they choose to retest in fall.

- Remember, ACT offers a **fee waiver program** for students who may be having trouble paying for the ACT test.

- Remind students to opt in to the **ACT Educational Opportunity Services (EOS)**, so they can get discovered by more colleges. EOS is a free service that can broaden college searches and improve financial aid opportunities.

### Go on college visits:

As juniors begin assembling their school lists, college visits can help them narrow their choices and find the perfect fit.

- **Virtual College Visits:** Students can learn a lot about colleges **without leaving their homes**.
- **Campus Tours** offer a firsthand view of campus life; students can get the most out of in-person visits with **these quick tips** as well as an in-depth **eBook** from ACT.

### Identifying support networks:

**Getting help from the right people**, including family members, mentors, and school counselors, can help students better navigate the college admission process and reach their future goals. This is also a great time to start **thinking about references and letters of recommendation**.

### Plan ahead for college or career:

Whether they are thinking about continuing their education after high school or launching a career, students should consider taking the **ACT WorkKeys® Assessment** and earning their National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC).

- **Dual Enrollment programs** are also a great opportunity to get a head start on college credits.



# SPRING

## SENIORS

Acceptance letters and graduation preparations mark the home stretch.

### Admissions decisions are on the way in March and April

Students should compare financial aid packages and make final campus visit to decide, if needed. Parents and counselors can help students solidify their decision before contacting their chosen college to confirm enrollment.

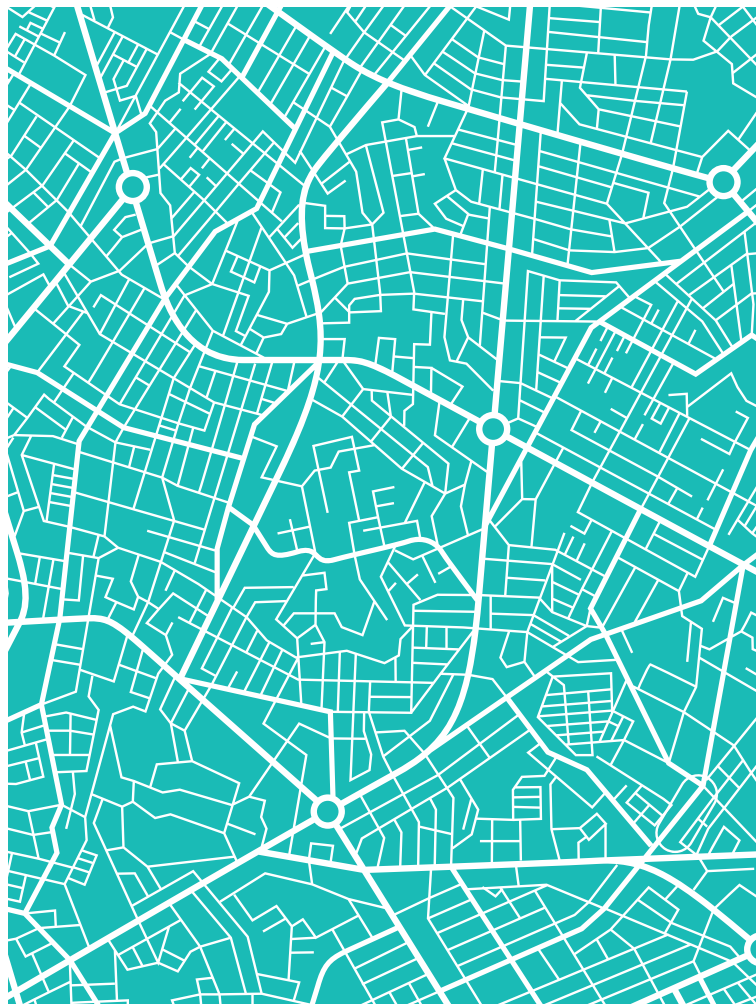
- **Finish enrollment papers** and send final HS transcript if required.

### Remember that calendar they started in the fall?

New graduates should be sure to add orientation, registration, and other important dates for their first semester at college.

### Remind them to check their email:

Colleges are beginning to reach out to your seniors about important payment deadlines and orientation information. Remind them to set up and check their personal student email account for that institution.





# SUMMER

## JUNIORS

It's their last summer as a high school student. There's time to relax ... but they can also **avoid a summer slump** while they think about life after high school.

### Take the ACT in June or July

It's not too late for students to get a baseline score if they didn't test in the spring (plus they can purchase their **Test Information Release** with the June test). Students who have already taken the ACT can consider more **reasons to retest**.

### Continue learning about colleges

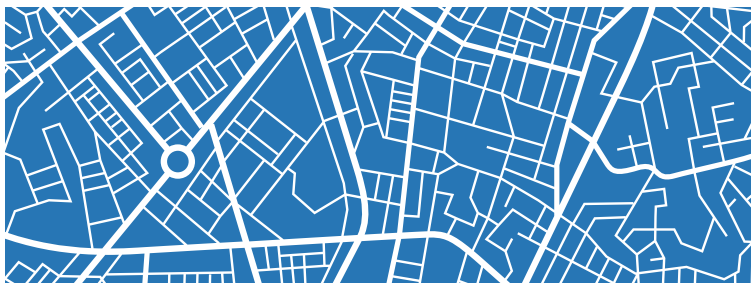
- Students and their families can use summer break to visit their top school choices and research to learn everything they can before application season.
- Current college students who are home for summer break are great resource for networking and getting first-hand information about college life.

### Research admissions deadlines

Their senior year is going to go fast. It's important for them to understand **how college admissions deadlines work** so they don't miss an opportunity.

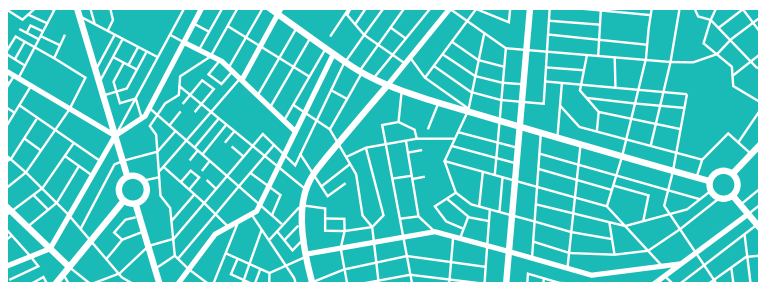
### Start the application process

Over summer, students can begin brainstorming essay ideas, contacting potential references, and identifying people to ask for a written recommendation. Use the **Ultimate Guide to Applying for College eBook** as a guide.



## SENIORS

Congratulations! Seniors are on their way to college and career success. Take a bow, counselor!



# ADDITIONAL RESOURCES



# TEST PREP OPTIONS

## The Official ACT® Self-Paced Course

Powered by Kaplan

The Official ACT® Self-Paced Course offers official test content and test-day strategies anywhere, anytime with on-demand tutorials led by an expert teacher. The course is organized with over 30 video lessons that include all official ACT practice questions, plus additional guided and independent practice items. The course also allows students to track and measure progress throughout, with five full length official practice tests included.

Students who register for the ACT test with a fee waiver get 1 year of free access to The Official ACT® Self-Paced Course.

### Features:

- Over 30 short video lessons including ACT official content
- 2,000 ACT test questions to practice and gain confidence
- Five full-length ACT practice tests to get familiar with the test format
- Built-in course syllabus

## The Official ACT® Live Online Classes

Powered by Kaplan

Students learn test content and test-day strategies in a virtual classroom led by an expert from Kaplan who can answer questions and adapt to student needs in real time.

### Features:

- 16 hours of live online instruction
- Flexible class options
- Off-camera teachers for additional support
- Access to everything in The Official ACT Self-Paced Course, including 30 short, self-paced video lessons, 2,000 ACT test questions, and five full-length ACT practice tests

## The Official ACT® Tutoring

Powered by Kaplan

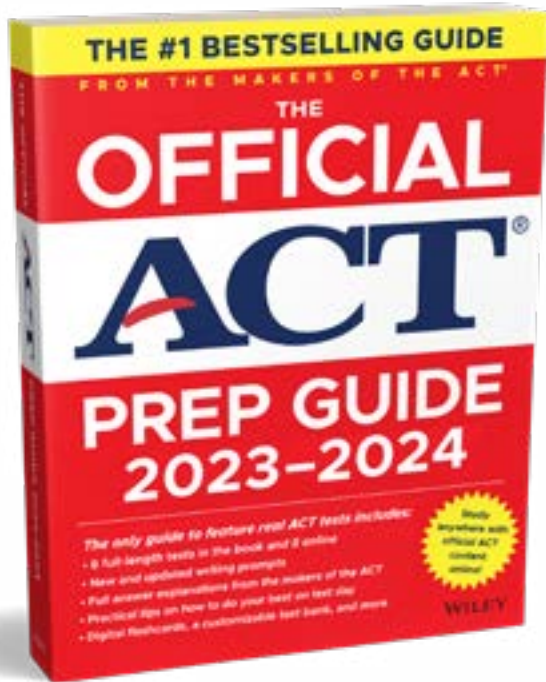
Students get a personal guide to ACT success with individual sessions packed with test strategies. With Official ACT Tutoring, students will learn test content and test-day strategies in individual sessions led by an expert from Kaplan, who will adapt to their needs in real time, answer questions, and provide personalized recommendations.

### Features:

- 5 hours of private, one-on-one tutoring with an expert, online tutor
- Access to on-demand video lessons you can watch anytime
- 5 official ACT practice tests
- A customizable question bank with 2,000+ official ACT questions
- Personalized homework assigned by your tutor



# THE OFFICIAL ACT® PREP GUIDE



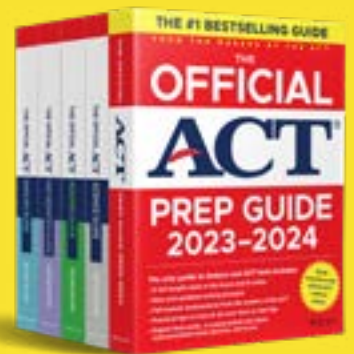
The comprehensive guide provides students with information from registration through results and includes **EIGHT** full-length practice tests and online practice questions. Plus, students get detailed explanations for every answer and practical tips on how to boost their score on the English, math, reading, science, and optional writing tests.

**In addition to expert advice from the test's creators on preparing for test day, the guide offers:**

- 8 full-length official ACT practice tests – 6 in book, 2 online
- 400+ digital flashcards
- Short online lessons and assessments
- Convenient mobile app to study on the go

## The Official ACT Prep and Subject Guides 2023-2024 Complete Set

Everything students need to do their best on the ACT test. The Official ACT Prep & Subject Guides 2023-2024 Complete Set is the only study resource including official practice questions and full explanations covering all sections of the ACT. This set delivers maximum practice in one convenient package—and helps them save big on prep. Subject guides can also be purchased individually for students wanting focused test prep in a specific area.





# ACT TEST PREP COMPARISON CHART



## Description

### PREPARING FOR THE ACT® TEST

(Booklet)

Helpful hints and test-taking strategies, as well as one complete practice ACT.

### THE OFFICIAL ACT PREP GUIDE

Real test questions and detailed explanations for every answer to help students get familiar with the format so they can approach the ACT with confidence.

### THE OFFICIAL ACT SUBJECT GUIDES

Step-by-step information for each section test, allowing students to familiarize themselves with the types of questions they can expect to see on test day.

### THE OFFICIAL ACT PREP GUIDE SET

(Best Value)

The go-to resource for students who want to improve their ACT scores and increase their confidence across all sections.



## Why Choose This Option

An introduction to the format and layout of the test.

A comprehensive guide to fully prepare for the test in book format.

Concept-based outlines for the section students plan to focus on.

Save over \$30 on this prep combo that offers both comprehensive and subject-specific tips and strategies.



## Format



Download



Book & Online  
Features



Book



Book & Online  
Features



## Price

FREE

\$39.95

\$20.95  
each

\$89.95

# ACT TEST PREP COMPARISON CHART



## Description

### THE OFFICIAL ACT SELF-PACED COURSE

Powered by Kaplan

Test content and test-day strategies available anywhere, anytime with on-demand tutorials led by an expert from Kaplan.

### THE OFFICIAL ACT LIVE ONLINE CLASS

Powered by Kaplan

Test content and test-day strategies provided in a virtual classroom led by an expert from Kaplan who can answer questions and adapt to student needs in real time.

### THE OFFICIAL ACT TUTORING

Powered by Kaplan

Learn test content and test-day strategies in individual tutoring sessions led by an expert from Kaplan.



## Why Choose This Option

The 6-month unlimited access subscription provides ample opportunity to prepare for the test and interact with thousands of practice items.

Access to everything in The Official ACT Self-Paced Course plus 16 hours of live instruction.

Tutor will adapt to your needs in real time, answer your questions, and provide you with personalized recommendations.



## Format



On-Demand Videos



Virtual Classroom



Online



## Price

**\$119**

(access for 6 months)

**\$549**

(access for 6 months)

**\$749**

# CALENDAR IMPORT INSTRUCTIONS

## How to Import ACT Dates and Deadlines into Google Calendar:

1. Click on "Calendar Import File: Outlook\_Google" on the previous page. This will open the file in your web browser. Once it opens, download the file then save it to your desktop as a .csv file.
2. Log in to your work Google/Gmail account if you haven't already and open your Google Calendar.
3. In the Calendar, click on the "gear" icon and, in the drop-down menu, select "Settings".
4. In the menu on the left-hand side of the screen, click "Import & Export".
5. Under Import, click on "Select file from your computer". Choose the "Calendar Import File: Outlook\_Google" .csv file that you just saved earlier. You can then choose to import it into your work calendar, or any other calendars you may have from the drop-down menu.
6. Click Import, then click OK to close the confirmation window. Done!

## How to Import ACT Dates and Deadlines into Outlook Calendar:

1. Click on "Calendar Import File: Outlook\_Google" above. This will open the file in your web browser. Once it opens, download the file then save it to your desktop as a .csv file.
2. In Outlook, in the bottom left-hand corner, click the Calendar icon.
3. Click File in the top-right menu, then click "Open & Export" on the left menu.
4. Click "Import/Export".
5. An Import and Export dialog box will appear. Click "Import from another program or file" then click "Next".
6. Select "Comma Separated Values" then click "Next".
7. Click on the "Browse" button and find and select the "Calendar Import File: Outlook\_Google" file you just saved to your desktop. Then, under Options back in the dialog box, select "Allow duplicates to be created". Click "Next".
8. Select "Calendar" as the destination folder then click "Next".
9. Check the box next to "Import 'Calendar Import File: Outlook\_Google' into folder: Calendar".
10. Click "Finish". You will not receive a confirmation pop-up, but the dates should be on your calendar – done!

## How to Import ACT Dates and Deadlines into Apple Calendar:

1. Click on "Calendar Import File: iCal" above, download the file, then save it to your desktop as an .ics file.
2. In Apple Calendar, select File > Import, then find and select the "Calendar Import File: iCal" you just saved to your desktop.
3. Click "Import".
4. Choose a calendar to add the events to, then click "OK". You will not receive a confirmation pop-up, but the dates should be on your calendar – done!

# COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS IS MORE THAN JUST ACADEMIC KNOWLEDGE

ACT has found that high school students' social and emotional skills, as measured by the **Mosaic by ACT Social Emotional Learning Assessment**, are correlated with their **ACT test scores** and, relatedly, to their **college readiness**.

Our framework builds upon the five core CASEL competencies. The Mosaic by ACT SEL and CASEL competencies complement and reinforce one another to drive positive gains in academic achievement and student well-being.



KEEPING AN OPEN  
MIND



MAINTAINING  
COMPOSURE



SUSTAINING EFFORT



GETTING ALONG  
WITH OTHERS



SOCIAL  
CONNECTION

**Download Tools** to Navigate the Way to College, Career and Beyond

Learn more at [act.org/sel](https://act.org/sel)



# PREPARE YOUR STUDENTS FOR WORKPLACE SUCCESS

There's never been a more challenging time to be an educator. Ensure your students are career ready and boost their employability with ACT® Workforce Solutions.

ACT® WorkKeys® is the cornerstone of our solutions, offering assessments, curriculum, and certifications that build and measure essential workplace skills needed to boost job performance and increase opportunities for career readiness and success. By completing the assessments, students can earn the ACT® WorkKeys® National Career Readiness Certificate® (NCRC®).

## WITH ACT WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS, YOUR SCHOOL CAN:

1. Administer WorkKeys Assessments
2. Provide test prep with ACT® WorkKeys® Curriculum
3. Help students match their interests to job skills profiles
4. Award college credit for the WorkKeys NCRC

Learn more at [act.org/workkeysforeducators](https://act.org/workkeysforeducators)

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# **23 24** COUNSELOR'S GUIDE

For more information visit [act.org](https://act.org)