

Introduction to the ACT- Illinois' Required High School Assessment



ZION-BENTON
TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT *126*
COMMITTED TO EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE

Agenda

- Digital ACT Overview
 - Value for Students
 - Test Specifications
- School Preparation
 - Classroom Instruction
 - Additional Resources
 - In-School Assessments (3x/year)
- Information for Assessment Day Tomorrow

ACT[®]



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Overview and Importance

What is the ACT?

- It is a college entrance exam that measures relevant reading, writing, science, and numeracy skills needed for post-secondary academic success
- It is a curriculum-based education and career planning tool for high school students that assesses the mastery of college and career readiness skills

Why is it important for students to take AND do their best on the ACT suite of assessments?

- Provides increased **post-secondary opportunities** for students
- Historically used for **admissions** at many colleges and universities
- Is used for **placement** in coursework at many colleges and universities
- Provides access to **scholarships**
- Is a **graduation requirement** for the state of Illinois

Differences Between SAT and ACT

SAT	ACT
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2 sections: Reading & Writing, Math• 1 optional writing• 800 point section scores (2) added together for a total composite	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Four tests: English, Math, Reading, and Science• 1 optional writing• 4 section scores (1-36) averaged for a composite
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 184 minutes (3 hours & 4 minutes)<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ RW: 64 minutes (2 MC modules)◦ Math: 70 minutes (2 MC modules)◦ Writing: 50 minutes (Free Response)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 215 minutes (3 hours & 35 minutes)<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ English: 45 minutes (MC)◦ Math: 60 minutes (MC)◦ Reading: 35 minutes (MC)◦ Science: 35 minutes (MC)◦ Writing: 40 minutes (Free Response)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Small bits of text for each question• Questions organized by question type• Adaptive (module 2 based on performance in module 1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Passage-based questions• Linear

Do not worry! Both assessments measure similar skills. The District will provide additional practice and support so students are confident in the new format!

ACT and ISBE Benchmarks: *What We Know*

ACT Test Score	College Courses	ACT Benchmark	Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) Benchmark
English	English Composition 1	18	Unknown
Mathematics	College Algebra	22	Unknown
Reading	American History, Other History, Psychology, Sociology, Economics, Political Science	22	Unknown
Science	Biology	23	Unknown but will be used for science proficiency

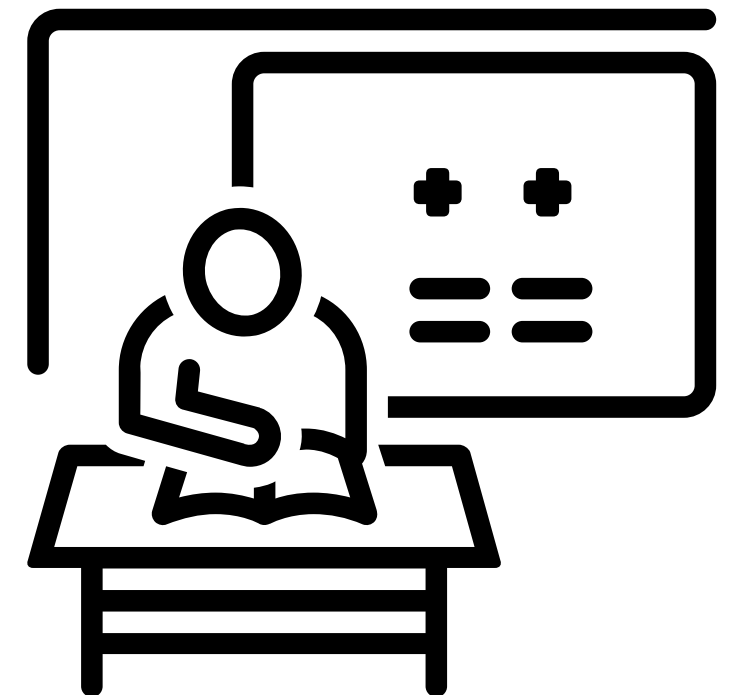
ACT Research & Policy: “Students who meet an ACT benchmark have a 75% chance of earning a C or higher grade in the corresponding college course or courses.”

Preparation: Classwork

- Integrated **Writing** and **English** skill practice in English classes
- Integrated **Reading** skill practice in social science classes
- Integrated **Math** skill practice in math classes
- Integrated **Science** skill practice in science classes
- Review and reflection on Fall and Winter Assessment Day results in classes the next day



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Preparation: Additional Resources

Huntington ACT Prep Class

- District 126 provided access to an outside ACT prep class second semester junior year that is **FREE** of charge if you complete 75% of the course
 - 18 sessions/ 2 hours per session + two full-length practice tests

Huntington
LEARNING CENTER®

ZB Library

- **FREE** Guided ACT course via EBSCOlearning available at <https://tinyurl.com/ZBTHSACTPrep>
- Other hard copy and digital resources

Varsity Tutors

- **FREE** Online Tutoring Platform for District 126 Students
 - Ultimate ACT Review Session (2 hours)
 - Two-week boot camp (8 sessions, 2 hours each)
 - 8 week prep class (1 session/week, 2 hours each)
 - Section specific “cram sessions”
 - Section specific 2 week prep classes
 - Self-paced test prep



Preparation: In-School Assessments

Fall and Winter Assessment Days: September 11 & December 11)

- Full practice ACT - English, Math, Reading, and Science
 - **7:50 am -11:15 am**

How to Prepare for Test Day

- Get a good night's rest
- Eat a well-balanced breakfast
- **Come to school with a fully charged device**
- Do your best
 - Stay focused and use all the time provided
 - Read and respond to every question

How to Prepare After Test Day Using Your Results

- Review your test results in the Horizon platform
 - Answers and section scores will be available by Wednesday at 12:00 pm
 - Set growth goals
 - Participate in classroom lessons
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District 126 ACT Assessment Schedule

Assessment	Date	Portal	Purpose	Scores
PreACT 9 PreACT 10 ACT	Wednesday, September 11	Horizon Education	Baseline Score Practice Inform Instruction	Available same day via the Horizon Education portal
PreACT 9 PreACT 10 ACT	Wednesday, December 11	Horizon Education	Practice Measure Growth Inform Instruction	Available same day via the Horizon Education portal
PreACT 9 PreACT 10 ACT	Tuesday, April 15	ACT	See above + State Accountability Graduation Requirement - ACT (Grade 11)	Available as early as 10 days after the assessment



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Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Should I be worried if my score is lower than I expected?

- The first test is practice. It may take exposure to the new format, additional class practice, and review with teachers to get a more accurate representation of performance.
- Even if lower than expected in the fall, students have made significant gains when they invest in the preparation opportunities we offer.
 - It is not uncommon for students to grow several points in one year with practice and preparation.

Which college entrance exam is preferred by colleges - ACT or SAT?

- Colleges will generally accept scores for either an ACT or SAT.

What if my college or university no longer uses test scores for admissions or if I am not sure I plan to go to college?

- Even if the college you plan to attend does not require a score, ACT is a state requirement for graduation and is often used for post-secondary placement and scholarship purposes. It also measures some of the same skills needed to pass certification exams in a number of fields.



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