ACT PREP TIPS

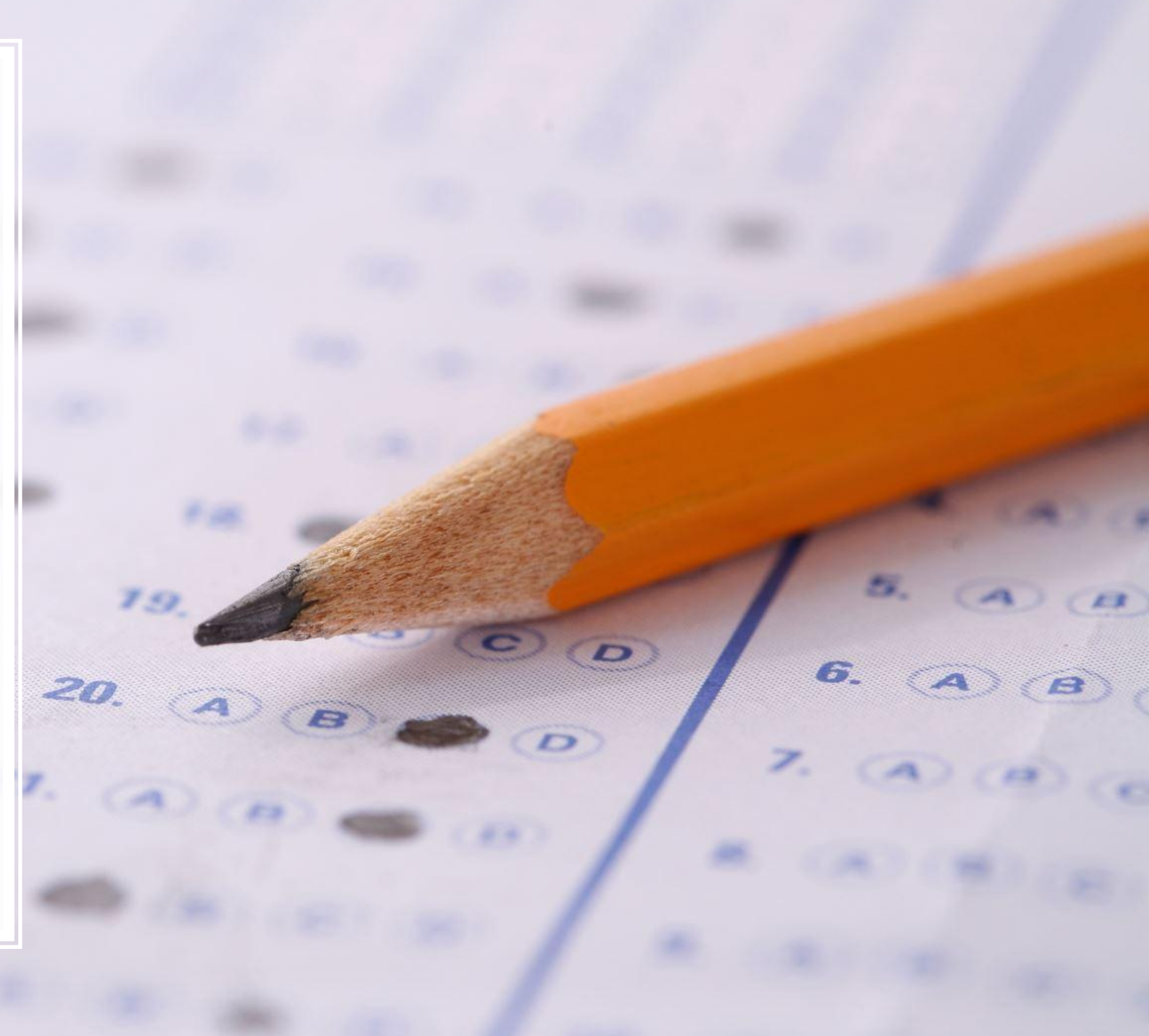
Strategies to help
improve your ACT score



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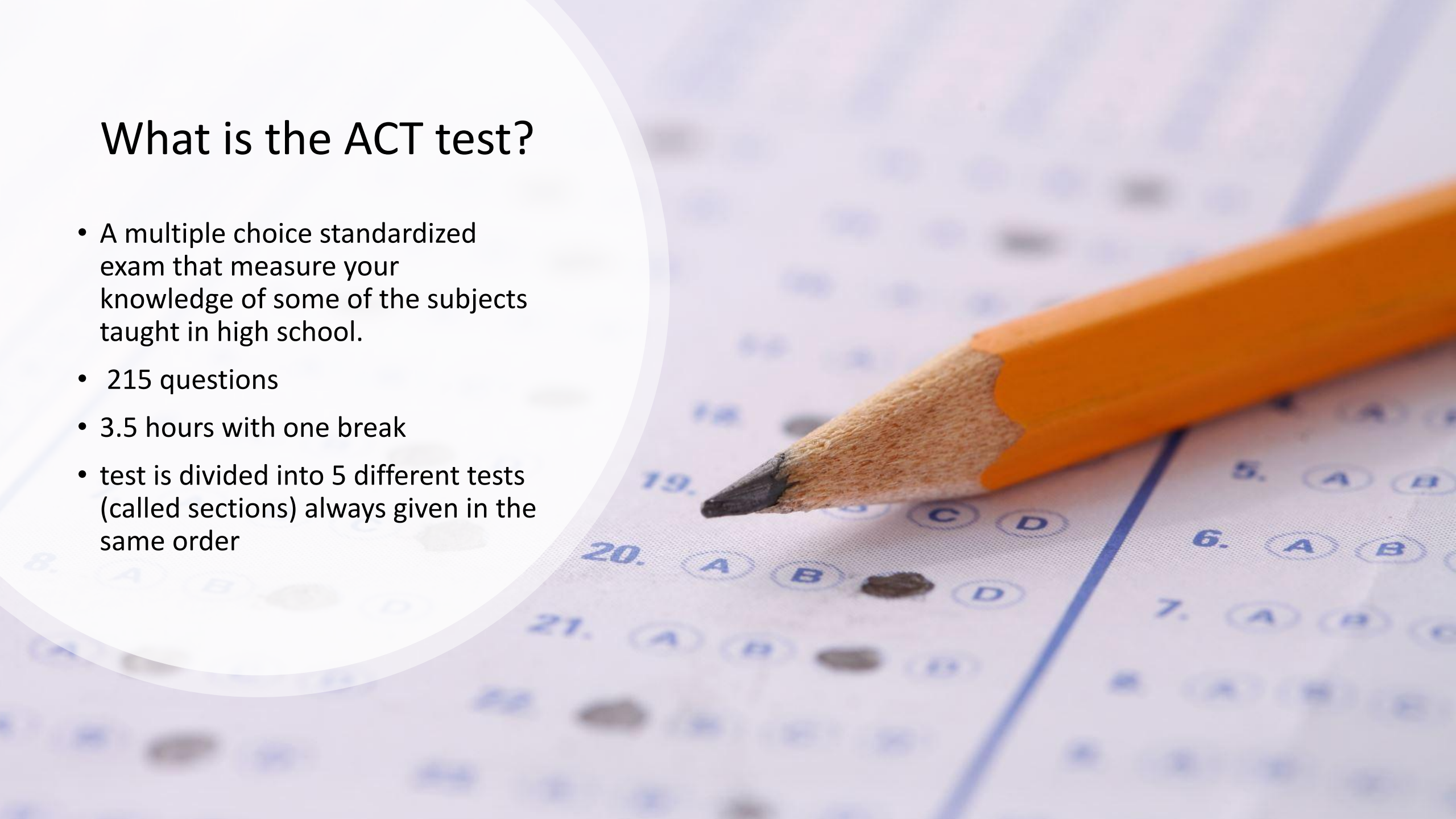
THE ACT TEST

- The test measures academic achievement
- It does NOT measure your intelligence or ability
- This means, you can increase your score by preparing for this test



What is the ACT test?

- A multiple choice standardized exam that measure your knowledge of some of the subjects taught in high school.
- 215 questions
- 3.5 hours with one break
- test is divided into 5 different tests (called sections) always given in the same order



The Five Sections of the Enhanced ACT



English Test (35 minutes-50 questions)



Math Test (50 minutes-45 questions)



Break – 10 to 15 minutes



Reading Test (40 minutes - 36 questions)



Science and Reasoning Test (40 minutes-40 questions)

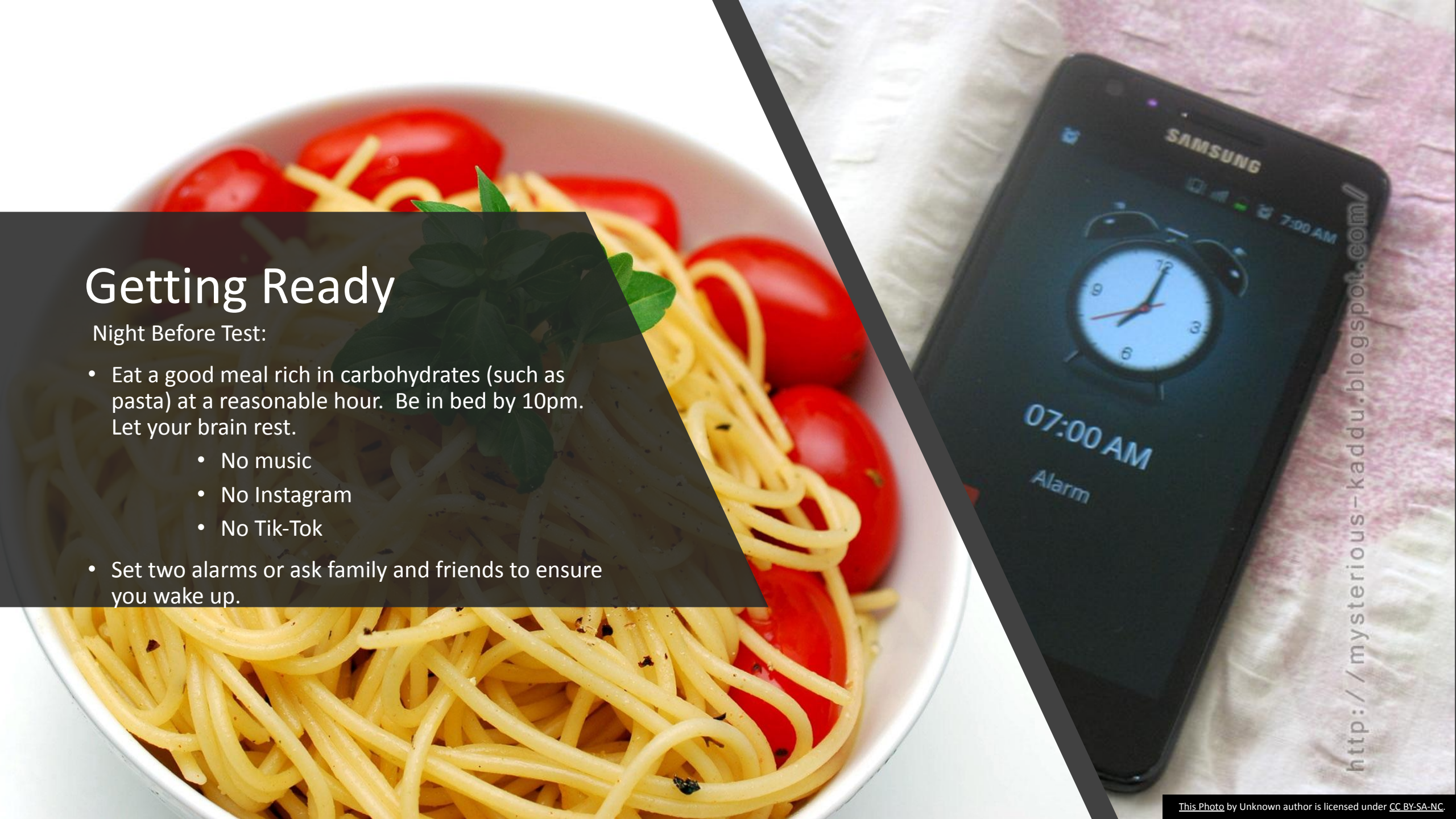


Writing Test (40 minutes)

Getting Ready

Night Before Test:

- Eat a good meal rich in carbohydrates (such as pasta) at a reasonable hour. Be in bed by 10pm. Let your brain rest.
    - No music
    - No Instagram
    - No Tik-Tok
- Set two alarms or ask family and friends to ensure you wake up.



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Prepare the Night Before and Bring the day of -

- Pencils
- Calculator***
- Identification and Registration
- Wrist Watch***
- Tissues (for winter test dates)





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- Morning of the Test:
  - Wake up early, shower
  - Wear comfortable and casual clothing
    - Avoid being too comfortable.
    - Avoid too tight.
    - Dress in layers
  - Eat a healthy, substantial breakfast. As a rule, protein is better than sugar. Avoid heavy foods (such as omelets) that could cause indigestion.
  - Arrive Earlier than usual am so you don't feel rushed.



General ACT Tips

- Read directions before test date!!
- Pace Yourself (Announcements only made when 5 minutes)
- Read questions carefully (annotate)
  - **Write in Your Book**
- Answer easy questions first
- Answer EVERY question (no penalty for guessing)
- Be precise in marking answer and don’t make notes on answer sheet
- Don’t panic! Work the entire time.



1. ACT Triage Strategy

- Each question on the ACT is worth one point.
- The most difficult question is worth the same point value as the easiest question
- Triage the ACT -find the easy questions to answer first and save the difficult questions for last
- This strategy allows your to make the best use of the allotted time

Triage



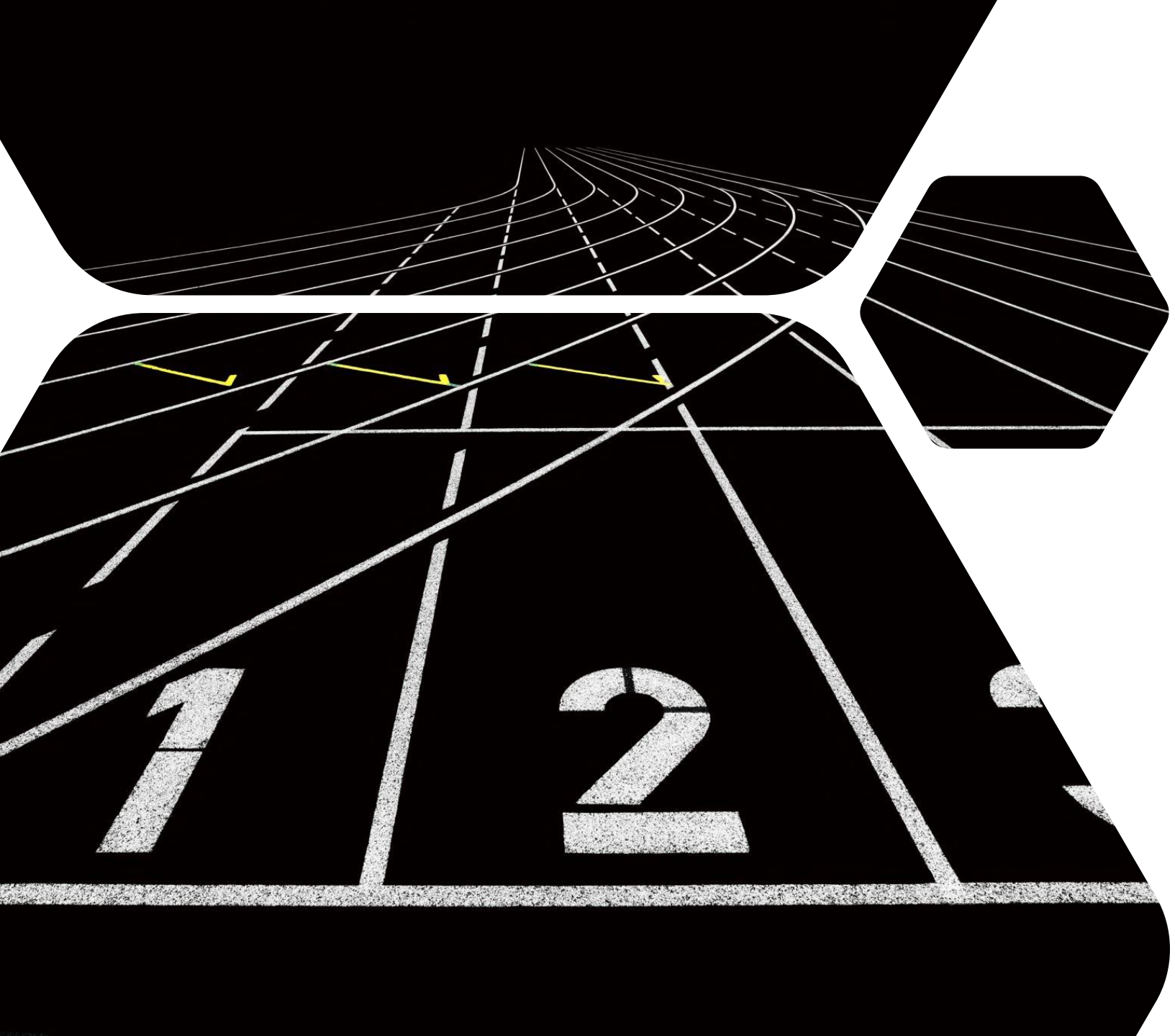
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- Hospital term—treat those patients with the most serious injury/illness first and the least sick/injured last.
- A term that can be applied to ACT—HOW?



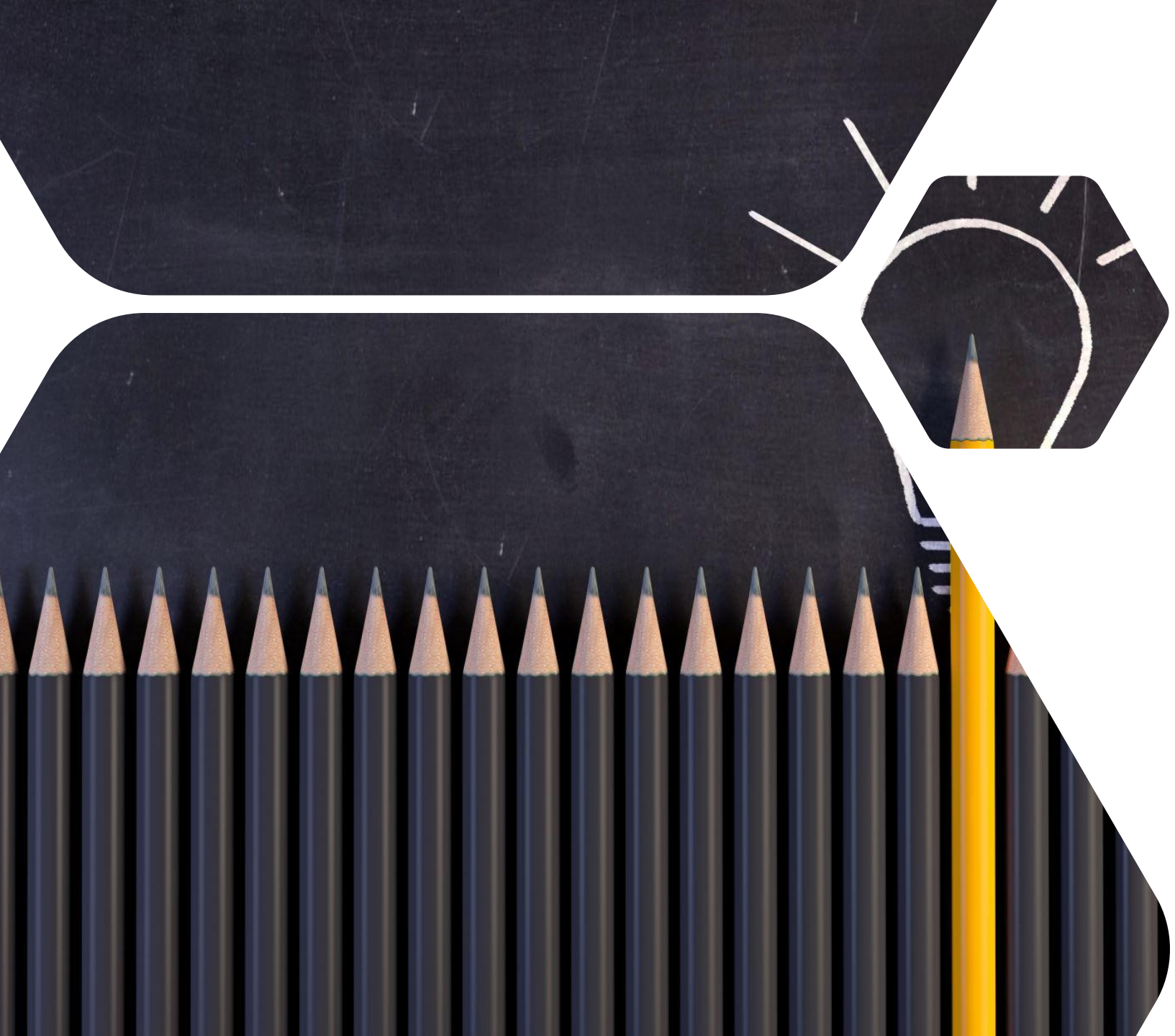
Now, Later, and NEVER

- Answer all questions that you are sure about first
- Answer those you are less sure about second
- Finally, save those that you have no idea about last-and GUESS!!!
    - If you HAVE NO IDEA pick a **specific letter and use that letter every time**



Two Passes

- Do each section in two passes



First Pass

- The object is to answer every question you can answer.
- By answering every question of which **you're sure**, you will never have to hear the words "pencils down" and know there are several more questions that you could have done.



Second Pass

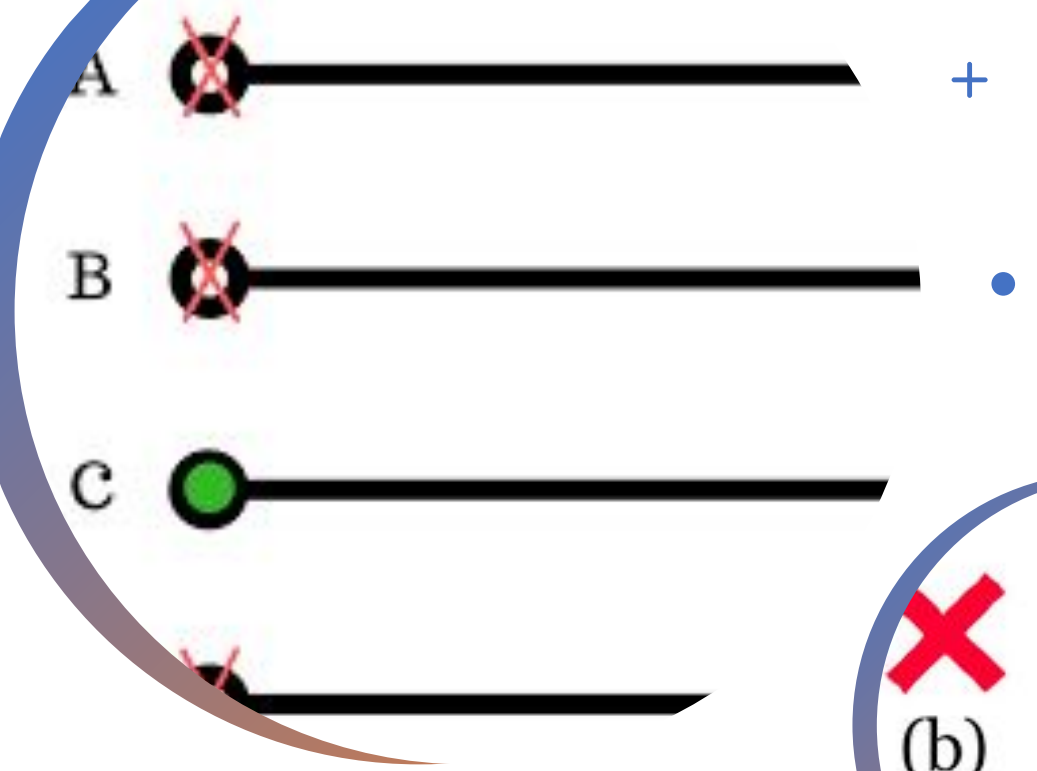
- Come back to those questions you skipped over in the first pass
- Ask yourself “what questions do I want to do now?”
- Obviously some of the questions will be easier than others, start with those.
- For questions that you have no idea how to answer, or even attempt to answer, guess.

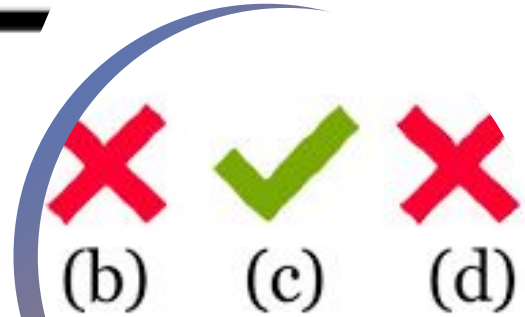




Scoring More Points with ACT Triage

- Deciding whether you will do a question **now, later, or never** is a crucial part of improving your results on the ACT.
- Points of ACT triage - help you invest your time more profitability. By using the two-pass approach and the concept of triage, you will spend the **majority of your time working on questions that seem easy or at least doable.** In the end, you score more points!!







2. POE Strategy

- The Process of Elimination (POE for short) enables you to make your guesses really count.
- Incorrect answer choices are often easier to spot that correct ones.
  - **SO CROSS THEM OUT!**

Practice

1. What is the capital of Malawi?
   a. New York
   b. Lilongwe 
   c. Paris
   d. Shanghai

3. Leave Nothing Blank Strategy



- For questions that you have no idea how to answer, or even attempt to answer, guess.
- Be a Smart Guesser—USE POE
- Stay with one letter choice



ACT English Information

ACT English Grammar

- 75 multiple choice questions; 45 minutes , 36 seconds per question
- Question given in conjunction with a passage
- Sentence Structure, Grammar and Usage, Punctuation, Rhetorical Skills
- The English section tests not only grammar rules but also punctuation errors as well

ACT expects students to know what they want—It's more than just pure grammar!

- In a series of 3 or more items, put a comma before the "and"
- Shorter sentences are preferred to longer sentences



- Skim the entire passage first (roughly 1.5 minutes). Focus on **gramma**r and **revision** skills, **not comprehension**.
- Answer diction and grammar questions first; they are usually the easiest to answer quickly.
- **Listen for errors as you read** the answer choices. You can often hear an error as you say a sentence in your head.
- Read ALL answers carefully; answers often look similar, sometimes **differing only by a comma.**
- “NO CHANGE” is the correct choice about 25% of the time.



ACT Math Information

- 60 multiple choice questions; 60 minutes
- 1 minute per question!
- Algebra I and II, Arithmetic, Geometry, Trigonometry
- This is 7th-11th grade math
- It’s the wording in the question that makes this section difficult
- Only four Trig problems, but two can be done without having even learned Trig! They are out to intimidate you!



60 QUESTIONS/60 MINUTES

(1 question per minute)

- <u>Pre-Algebra/Elementary Algebra</u>

  24 Questions

- <u>Intermediate Algebra/Coordinate Geometry</u>

  18 Questions

- <u>Plane Geometry/Trigonometry</u>

  14 Questions 4 Questions

ACT Math Strategies

1

Know how to estimate- this will improve your efficiency and score!

2

Learn how to use a calculator – graphing functions and matrix problems

3

Be sure to eliminate the wrong answers

4

Follow your personal order of difficulty – start with your easiest section

5

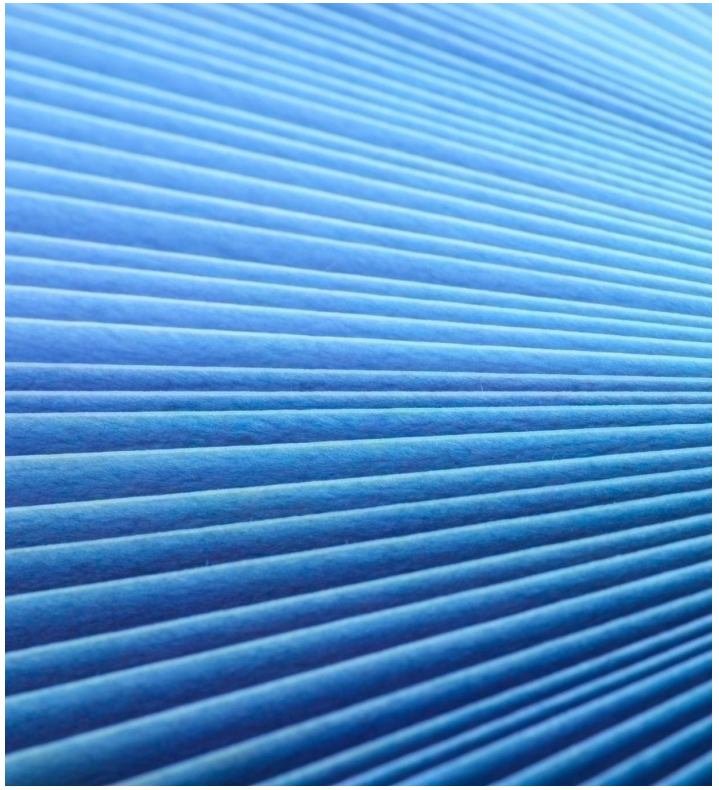
Read the question carefully – they predict where students will misread the question– you can count on that answer as being one of your choices – they do this to trap students

Draw a picture if one is not provided. Figures given are not drawn to scale, so mark them with given measures or symbols.

Know the following translations: ***of*** means multiply and ***per*** means divide.

Know **the area and perimeter formulas** for triangles, rectangles, and circles, and how to find the volume and surface area of a box.

If a problem is given in terms of fractions, decimals, or percent, consider using an alternate form to find the answer.





- If the question and/or answer set are given in terms of variables only**, substitute simple numbers to help determine the answer.**
- Most answers are listed from **least to greatest**, so you can use a technique called *back solving* to find the correct answer.
- Do not **overuse your calculator**! The test is written so that every problem can be solved without a calculator. **Set up the problem in your test booklet first** and take a moment to consider what **a reasonable answer would be** before using the calculator.

ACT Reading Information



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Reading 40 multiple choice questions; 35 minutes, less than 1 min to answer each question

- There are 4 types of passages you will encounter on the ACT.

1. Prose Fiction (10): Most interesting to read, but often the hardest questions! Most time-consuming!
2. Social Sciences (10): politics, history
3. Humanities (10): arts, culture
4. Natural Science (10): ***Typically the easiest!***



ACT Reading Strategies

- Don’t take the test in the order it’s presented! Do the easiest section for you first, because you know you’ll get those right. Save the hardest for last.
- Timing is everything! Pace yourself!
- Pay attention to distracters. Distracters are designed to distract your way of thinking, break your concentration, and throw you off track.
- Translate the question - What are they REALLY asking



- Read the passage actively (3 minutes); underline or circle any key points. Read with awareness of the author's goal, tone, and theme.
- If a question refers to a specific line of the passage, read one line above and below the indicated line to better understand the context.
- Save difficult questions (such as inferring) for last and answer easier questions (such as vocabulary) first. Note: It is best to finish one passage completely before going on to the next.



ACT Science Information

Instead of calling it Science Reasoning, think of it as Technical Reading.

- Basic understanding of the scientific method will help you
- Not much science knowledge is needed
- Read and understand charts and graphs
- Opposites – when a student encounters 2 answer choices that are direct opposites, one will almost always be the correct answer.



40 QUESTIONS/35 MINUTES

(5 minutes per passage)

- Data Representation: 15 questions
- Research Summaries: 18 questions
- Conflicting Viewpoints: 7 questions

If a passage seems difficult, skip it; *data representation* passages are often the easiest.

When reading passages, aim at a general understanding on the first reading and do not dwell on a specific aspect of data. If the passage contains conflicting viewpoints, consider similarities and differences between the scientists' arguments.

When reading tables and charts, focus on labels, trends in data, and maximum or minimum values. Look for connections between multiple data representations.

References

act.org

princetonreview.com