

The ACT on Computer

Beginning in the spring of 2015, the ACT should be available on computer at those schools and test centers that can accommodate a computer format, but it will still be available in paper format.

As of this time, we do not expect the content or scoring to change. Visit PrincetonReview.com/ACTchanges for ongoing updates as more information becomes available.

THE ACT

The ACT is a standardized test used for college admissions. But you probably already knew that. In this book, we'll tell you all the things you didn't know about the ACT, all to show you how to crack the test and get your best score.

The ACT is a pencil-and-paper exam, usually taken on Saturday mornings. Some states offer a special state-administration during the school day. Non-Saturday testing is available but only for students who live in remote areas or who can't test on Saturdays for religious reasons.

Where Does the ACT Come From?

The ACT is written by a nonprofit organization that used to call itself American College Testing but now just calls itself ACT. The company has been producing the ACT since 1959, introducing it as an alternative to the College Board's SAT. ACT also writes ACT Aspire, ACT Explore, and ACT Plan, which are tests you may have taken earlier in your academic career. The organization also provides a broad range of services to educational agencies and business institutions.

What Does the ACT Test?

The nice people who write the ACT—we'll refer to them as "ACT" from now on—describe it as an assessment of college readiness, "a curriculum- and standards-based educational and career planning tool that assesses students' academic readiness for college."

We at The Princeton Review have always been skeptical when any standardized test makes broad claims of what it can measure. In our opinion, a standardized test is just a measure of how well you take that test. Granted, ACT has spent an extraordinary amount of time analyzing data and providing the results of their research to various educational institutions and agencies. In fact, ACT has contributed to the development of the Common Core Standards Initiative, an educational reform that aligns diverse state curricula into national uniform standards.

With all due respect to ACT and the various state and federal agencies working on the Common Core, we still think the ACT is just a measure of how well you take the ACT. Many factors other than mastery of the "curriculum-based" content determine your performance on a standardized test. That's why we'll teach you both the content you need as well as crucial test-taking strategies.

Power Booking

If you were getting ready to take a history test, you'd study history. If you were preparing for a basketball game, you'd practice basketball. So if you're preparing for the ACT, study the ACT!

What's On the ACT?

The ACT consists of four multiple-choice, timed tests: English, Math, Reading, and Science, always given in that order. The ACT Plus Writing also includes an essay, with the Writing test given after the Science test. (ACT calls them tests, but we may also use the term “sections” in this book to avoid confusion.) In Parts II–VI, we’ll thoroughly review the content and strategies you need for each test.

1. English Test (45 minutes—75 questions)

In this section, you will see five essays on the left side of the page. Some words or phrases will be underlined. On the right side of the page, you will be asked whether the underlined portion is correct as written or whether one of the three alternatives listed would be better. This is a test of grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, and rhetorical skills. Throughout each essay, commonly known as a “passage,” there will also be questions about overall organization and style or perhaps about how the writing could be revised or strengthened.

2. Math Test (60 minutes—60 questions)

These are the regular, multiple-choice math questions you’ve been doing all your life. The easier questions, which test basic math proficiency, *tend* to come first, but the folks at ACT can mix in easy, medium, and difficult problems throughout the Math test. A good third of the test covers pre-algebra and elementary algebra. Slightly less than a third covers intermediate algebra and coordinate geometry (graphing). Regular geometry accounts for less than a quarter of the questions, and there are four questions that cover trigonometry.

3. Reading Test (35 minutes—40 questions)

In this test, there will be four reading passages of about 800 words each—the average length of a *People* magazine article but maybe not as interesting. There is always one prose fiction passage, one social science passage, one humanities passage, and one natural science passage, and they are always in that order. After reading each passage, you have to answer 10 questions.

4. Science Test (35 minutes—40 questions)

No specific scientific knowledge is necessary for the Science test. You won’t need to know the chemical makeup of hydrochloric acid or any formulas. Instead, you will be asked to understand six sets of scientific information presented in graphs, charts, tables, and research summaries, and you will have to make sense of one disagreement between two or three scientists. (Occasionally, there are more than three scientists.)

5. Optional Writing Test (30 minutes)

The ACT Plus Writing contains an “optional” writing test featuring a single essay. We recommend you take the “ACT Plus Writing,” version of the test because many if not most schools require it. While on test day you may think you don’t need it, you might later decide to apply to a school that requires a writing score. The last thing you want is to be forced into taking the whole ACT all over again...this time *with* the Writing test. The essay consists of a prompt “relevant” to high school students on which you will be asked to write an essay stating your position on the prompt. Two people will then grade your essay on a scale of 1 to 6 for a total score of 2 to 12. In this book, we will teach you how to write the best possible essay for the ACT.

How Is the ACT Scored?

Scores for each of the four multiple-choice tests are reported on a scale of 1 to 36 (36 being the highest score possible). The four scores are averaged to yield your composite score, which is the score colleges and universities primarily use to determine admission. Next to each score is a percentile ranking. Percentile ranking refers to how you performed on the test relative to other people who took it at the same time. For instance, a percentile ranking of 87 indicates that you scored higher than 87 percent of the people who took the test and the other 13 percent scored higher than you.

Closed Loop

The ACT tests how well you take the ACT.

Some of the scores have subcategories. English is broken down into Usage/Mechanics and Rhetorical Skills. In these subcategories, scores are reported on a scale of 1 to 18 (18 being the highest score possible). They are also reported as percentiles.

If you decide to take the ACT Plus Writing test, you will receive standard ACT scores plus two additional scores. One will be a scaled score from 1 to 36, which combines your performance on the Writing test and the English test. The other will be a subscore, ranging from 2 to 12, which reflects how you did on your essay. Neither score contributes to your composite score.

On your score report, ACT also indicates if you met their “College Readiness Benchmark Scores:” 18 in English, 22 in Math, 21 in Reading, and 24 in Science. ACT maintains that these benchmarks can predict college “success,” defined by a “50 percent or higher probability of earning a B or higher in the corresponding college course or courses.” These scores and their meaning have been determined by ACT’s own research and data, not by any studies done by colleges and universities themselves.

When Should You Take the ACT?

If you haven't already, go to ACTStudent.org and create your free ACT Web Account. You can register for tests, view your scores, and request score reports for colleges through this account. You can also view the specific test dates and centers for the upcoming academic year.

In the United States, U.S. Territories, and Canada, the ACT is given six times a year: September, October, December, February, April, and June. Internationally, the September test date is not offered, and in New York State the February administration is not available.

Many states also offer an additional ACT as part of their state testing. Check with your high school to see if and when your state offers a special ACT. Your school will register you automatically for a state ACT. You must register yourself for all other administrations.

Traditionally, most students have waited until the spring of their junior year to take the ACT. Many high schools still recommend spring of junior year because the content of the Math test includes topics some curricula do not cover before then. However, these topics appear in only a handful of questions, and many juniors take their first ACT in the fall or winter.

We recommend that you consider your own schedule when picking your test dates. Do you play a fall sport and carry a heavier load of extracurricular activities in the fall? Is winter a quiet time in between semesters? Do you act in the spring musical and plan to take several AP exams? Have you been dreaming of attending Big State University since you were a toddler and already plan to apply early decision? Let the answers to these questions determine your test dates. But we recommend taking your first test as early as your schedule allows.

How Many Times Should You Take the ACT?

For security reasons, ACT will not let you take the exam more than twelve times. But we certainly hope no one is dismayed by this restriction. There are certainly better things to do with your time on a Saturday morning, and we don't believe any college will accept "taking the ACT" as an extracurricular activity!

The Princeton Review recommends that you plan to take the ACT two to three times. If you achieve your goal score in your first administration, great. Take the money and run. On the other hand, if after three tests you have reason and motivation to take the ACT again, do it. On your first day of college, you will neither remember nor care how many times you had to take the ACT.

Does ACT "Super Score"?

The term "super score" or "super composite" is used by students, maybe even colleges, but not by ACT. ACT sends a separate score report for each test date and will send reports only for the dates you request. ACT does not combine scores from different test dates.

However, many schools (and the common app) will ask you to list the score and test date of your best English, best Math, best Reading, and best Science and then calculate a "super composite" based on these scores. Therefore, if you worry that some scores will rise as others fall when you take the ACT again, the "super composite" will reflect your best results.

The Princeton Review recommends strongly that you consult each school you're applying to. While ACT will send only the test dates you request, you should decide which and how many dates to send based on your scores and the school's guidelines about super scoring. Moreover, some schools require that you submit all test scores from every administration, and you should abide by any such requirements.

How Do You Register for the ACT?

The fastest way to register is online, through your ACT Web Account. You can also obtain a registration packet at your high school guidance office, online at ACTStudent.org/forms/stud_req, or by writing or calling ACT at the address and phone number below.

ACT Student Services
2727 Scott Blvd
PO Box 414
Iowa City, IA 52243-0414
319.337.1270

Registration Tip #1

The registration includes ACT's survey on your grades and interests, but you are not required to answer these questions.

To save time, you can provide only the required information, marked by an asterisk.

Registration Tip #2

If you take the December, April, or June test, sign up for the Test Information Release. Six to eight weeks after the test, you'll receive a copy of the test and your answers. This service costs an additional fee and is available only on these test dates. You can order the Test Information Release up to 3 months after the test date, but it's easier to order it at the time you register. It's a great tool to help you prepare for your next ACT.

Bookmark ACTStudent.org. You will start at this portal to view test dates, fees, and registration deadlines. You can also research the requirements and processes to apply for extended time or other accommodations. You will also start at ACTStudent.org to access your account to register, view your scores, and order score reports.

Check the site for the latest information about fees. The ACT Plus Writing costs more than the ACT (No Writing), but ACT also offers a fee waiver service. While you can choose four schools to send a score report to at no charge, there are fees for score reports sent to additional schools.

Test Security Changes

As part of the registration process, you have to upload or mail a photograph that will be printed on your admissions ticket. On test day, you have to bring the ticket and acceptable photo identification with you.

Standby testing is available, but you have to register in advance, usually before the prior Monday. Check ACTStudent.org for more information.

HOW TO PREPARE FOR THE ACT

The Princeton Review materials and test-taking techniques contained in this book should give you all the information you need to improve your score on the ACT. For more practice materials, The Princeton Review also publishes *1,296 Practice ACT Questions*, which includes six tests' worth of material.

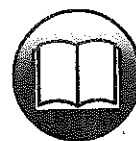
Other popular coaching books contain several complete practice ACT exams. We strongly advise you *not* to waste your time taking these tests. In some cases, the questions in these books are not modeled on real ACT questions. Some of them cover material that is not even on the real ACT. Others give the impression that the ACT is much easier or more difficult than it really is. Taking the practice tests offered in these books could actually hurt your score.

One reason these coaching books do not use real ACT questions is that the folks at ACT won't let them. They have refused to let anyone (including us) license actual questions from old tests. You may have chosen our book because it contains full-length practice ACT exams. Rest assured that these tests are *modeled very closely after actual ACT exams*, with the proper balance of questions reflecting what the ACT actually tests.

Cynics might suggest that no one else can license ACT exams because ACT sells its own review book called *The Real ACT Prep Guide*. We think *The Real ACT Prep Guide* is well worth the price for the five real tests it contains (make sure you buy the third edition). We recommend that you either buy the book or ask your high school to send away to ACT for actual ACT tests. You can also buy real ACT tests on ACT.org. You should get a copy of *Preparing for the ACT Assessment* from your counselor. It's free, and it contains a complete, real ACT. The same test can be downloaded for free from ACT's website.

While we advise you to obtain these practice tests to further your preparation for the ACT, it is important that you use them properly. Many students like to think that they can prepare by simply taking test after test until they get the scores they want. Unfortunately, this doesn't work all that well. Why? Well, in many instances, repetitive test-taking only reinforces some of the bad test-taking habits that we address in this book. You should use practice tests for the following three key purposes:

- to build up familiarity with the exam
- to learn how to avoid the types of mistakes you are currently making
- to master our techniques and strategies so you can save time and earn more points



**More great titles by
The Princeton Review**
1,296 ACT Practice Questions offers the equivalent of 6 whole ACT practice tests.

Do I Need to Prepare if I Have Good Grades?

Let's take the hypothetical case of Sid. Sid is valedictorian of his class, editor of the school paper, and the only teenager ever to win the Nobel Prize. To support his widowed mother, he sold more seeds from the back of comic books than any other person in recorded history. He speaks eight languages in addition to being able to communicate with dolphins and wolves. He has recommendations from Colin Powell and Bill Gates. So if Sid had a bad day when he took the ACT (the plane bringing him back from his Medal of Freedom award presentation was late), we are pretty sure that he is going to be just fine anyway. But Sid wants to ensure that when his colleges look at his ACT score, they see the same high-caliber student they see when they look at the rest of his application, so he carefully reviews the types of questions asked and learns some useful test-taking strategies.

I Have Lousy Grades in School. Is There Any Hope?

Let's take the case of Tom. Tom didn't do particularly well in high school. In fact, he has been on academic probation since kindergarten. He has caused four of his teachers to give up teaching as a profession, and he prides himself on his perfect homework record: He's never done any, not ever. But if Tom aces his ACT, a college might decide that he is actually a misunderstood genius and give him a full scholarship. Tom decides to learn as much as he can about the ACT.

Most of us, of course, fall between these two extremes. So is it important to prepare for the ACT?

If you were to look in the information bulletin of any of the colleges in which you are interested, we can pretty much guarantee that somewhere you would find the following paragraph:

Many factors go into the acceptance of a student by a college. Test scores are *only one* of these factors. Grades in high school, extracurricular activities, essays, and recommendations are also important and may in some cases outweigh test scores.

(2015 University of Anywhere Bulletin)

Size Matters

Large schools process more applications, so they rely heavily on standardized test scores. Small schools have the time to read the rest of your application.

Truer words were never spoken. In our opinion, just about *every* other element in your application "package" is more important than your test scores. The Princeton Review (among other organizations) has been telling colleges for years that scores on the ACT or the SAT are pretty incomplete measures of a student's overall academic abilities. Some colleges have stopped looking at test scores entirely, and others are downplaying their importance.

So Why Should You Spend Any Time Preparing for the ACT?

Out of all the elements in your application “package,” your ACT score is the easiest to change. The grades you’ve received up to now are written in stone. You aren’t going to become captain of the football team or editor of the school paper overnight. Your essays will be only as good as you can write them, and recommendations are only as good as your teachers’ memories of you.

On the contrary, in a few weeks you can substantially change your score on the ACT (and the way colleges look at your applications). The test does not pretend to measure analytic ability or intelligence. It measures your knowledge of specific skills such as grammar, algebra, and reading comprehension. Mostly, it measures how good you are at taking this test.

THE ACT VS. THE SAT

You may have to take the ACT anyway, but most of the schools in which you’re interested also accept the SAT. We think the SAT is nowhere near as fair a test as the ACT. Whereas the ACT says it measures “achievement” (which we believe *can* be measured), the SAT says it measures “ability” (which we don’t think can be measured at all; and if it can, the SAT sure isn’t doing it).

What Exactly Are the Differences?

The SAT tends to be less time-pressured than the ACT. However, many of the questions on the SAT are trickier than those on the ACT. The SAT Verbal sections have a stronger emphasis on vocabulary than do the ACT English and Reading tests. The SAT Math section tests primarily algebra and plane geometry and includes no trigonometry at all.

Both tests include an Essay section, although ACT has made the Writing Test optional because some colleges require it while others do not. ACT doesn’t want to force students to take (and pay for) a test they don’t need. The implication then is that many students can ignore the new Writing Test altogether depending on what the schools to which they are applying require.

To find out if the schools in which you are interested require the ACT essay, visit the ACT Writing test page at ACTstudent.org/writing or contact the schools directly.

While we are obviously not tremendously fond of the SAT, you should know that some students end up scoring substantially higher on the SAT than they do on the ACT and vice versa. It may be to your advantage to take a practice test for each one and see which is more likely to get you a better score.



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The Princeton Review

*ACT or SAT? Choosing the
Right Exam For You*



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

In addition to the material in this book, we offer a number of other resource to aid you during your ACT preparation.

With your purchase of this book, you gain access to 2 full-length, online ACT practice tests, which will help reinforce what you'll learn in this book. Go to PrincetonReview.com to register. While you're there, check out PrincetonReview.com/college-advice.aspx for tons of useful information on applying to college, financial aid, college ratings, and more.

Also online—and accessible to everyone—is a resource page we've created to track the upcoming changes to the ACT as this information is released by ACT, Inc. Visit PrincetonReview.com/ACTChanges to find out how these changes will (or won't) affect your test-taking experience, and what additional preparation you may need. We've got you covered!

WHAT IS THE PRINCETON REVIEW?

The Princeton Review is the world's leading test-preparation and educational services company. We run courses at hundreds of locations worldwide and offer Web-based instruction at PrincetonReview.com. Our test-taking techniques and review strategies are unique and powerful. We developed them after studying all the real ACTs we could get our hands on and analyzed them with the most sophisticated software available. For more information about our programs and services, feel free to call us at 800-2Review.

A FINAL THOUGHT BEFORE YOU BEGIN

The ACT does not measure intelligence, nor does it predict your ultimate success or failure as a human being. No matter how high or how low you score on this test initially, and no matter how much you may increase your score through preparation, you should *never* consider the score you receive on this or any other test a final judgment of your abilities.

THE BASIC APPROACH

The ACT test is different from the tests you take in school, and therefore you need to approach it differently. The Princeton Review's strategies are not arbitrary. To be effective, ACT strategies have to be based on the ACT and not just any test.

You need to know how the ACT is scored and how it's constructed.

Scoring

When students and schools talk about ACT scores, they typically mean the composite score, a range of 1–36. The composite is an average of the four multiple-choice tests, each scored on the same 1–36 scale. Neither the Writing test score nor the combined English plus Writing score affect the composite.

The Composite

Whether you look at your score online or wait to get it in the mail, the biggest number on the page is always the composite. While admissions' offices will certainly see the individual scores of all five tests (and their subscores), schools will use the composite to evaluate your application, and that's why in the end it's the only one that matters.

The composite is an average. Add the scores for the English, Math, Reading, and Science tests, and divide the total by four. Do you add one test twice? Um, no. Do you omit one of the tests in the total? Er, no again. The four tests are weighted equally to calculate the composite. But do you need to bring up all four equally to raise your composite? Do you need to be a super star in all four tests? Should you focus more on your weakest tests than your strongest tests? No, no, and absolutely not. The best way to improve your composite is to shore up your weaknesses but exploit your strengths as much as possible.

To lift the composite score as high as possible, maximize the scores of your strongest tests.

You don't need to be a rock star on all four tests. Identify two, maybe three tests, and focus on raising those scores as much as you can to raise your composite score. Work on your weakest scores to keep them from pulling you down. Are you strongest in English and Math, or maybe in English, Reading, and Science? Then work to raise those scores as high as you can. You won't ignore your weaknesses, but recognize that the work you put in on your strengths will yield greater dividends. Think of it this way. If you had only one hour to devote to practice the week before the ACT, you would put that hour to your best subjects.

Structure

Let's review quickly the structure of the ACT. The five tests are always given in the same order.

<u>English</u>	<u>Math</u>	<u>Reading</u>	<u>Science</u>	<u>Writing</u>
45 minutes	60 minutes	35 minutes	35 minutes	30 minutes
75 questions	60 questions	40 questions	40 questions	1 Essay

Enemy #1: Time

How much time do you have per question on the Math test? You have just one minute, and that's generous compared to the time given per question on the English, Reading, and Science tests. But how often do you take a test in school with a minute or less per question? If you do at all, it's maybe on a multiple-choice quiz but probably not on a major exam or final. Time is your enemy on the ACT, and you have to use it wisely and be aware of how that time pressure can bring out your worst instincts as a test-taker.

Enemy #2: Yourself

Many people struggle with test anxiety in school and on standardized tests. But there is something particularly evil about tests like the ACT and SAT. The skills you've been rewarded for throughout your academic year can easily work against you on the ACT. You've been taught since birth to follow directions, go in order, and finish everything. But that approach won't necessarily earn you your highest ACT score.

On the other hand, treating the ACT as a scary, alien beast can leave our brains blank and useless and can incite irrational, self-defeating behavior. When we pick up a No. 2 pencil, all of us tend to leave our common sense at the door. Test nerves and anxieties can make you misread a question, commit a careless error, see something that isn't there, blind you to what is there, talk you into a bad answer, and worst of all, convince you to spend good time after bad.

There is good news. You can—and will—crack the ACT. You will learn how to approach it differently than you would a test in school, and you won't let the test crack you.



These strategies can be applied to each section of the ACT. We'll show you how in the chapters ahead.

ACT STRATEGIES

Personal Order of Difficulty (POOD)

If time is going to run out, would you rather it run out on the hardest questions or the easiest? Of course, you want it to run out on the points you are less likely to get right.

You can easily fall into the trap of spending too much time on the hardest problems and either never getting to or rushing through the easiest. You shouldn't work in the order ACT provides just because it's in that order. Instead, find your own Personal Order of Difficulty (POOD).

Make smart decisions quickly for good reasons as you move through each test.

The Best Way to Bubble In

Work a page at a time, circling your answers right on the booklet. Transfer a page's worth of answers to the scantron at one time. It's better to stay focused on working questions rather than disrupt your concentration to find where you left off on the scantron. You'll be more accurate at both tasks. Do not wait to the end, however, to transfer all the answers of that test on your scantron. Go one page at a time on English and Math, a passage at a time on Reading and Science.

Letter of the Day (LOTD)

Just because you don't *work* a question doesn't mean you don't *answer* it. There is no penalty for wrong answers on the ACT, so you should never leave any blanks on your scantron. When you guess on Never questions, pick your favorite two-letter combo of answers and stick with it. For example, always choose A/F or C/H. If you're consistent, you're statistically more likely to pick up more points.

Now

Does a question look okay? Do you know how to do it? Do it *Now*.

Later

Will this question take a long time to work? Leave it and come back to it *Later*. Circle the question number for easy reference to return.

Never

Test-taker, know thyself. Know the topics that are your worst and learn the signs that flash danger: Don't waste time on questions you should *Never* do. Instead, use more time to answer the *Now* and *Later* questions accurately.

Pacing

The ACT may be designed for you to run out of time, but you can't rush through it as fast as possible. All you'll do is make careless errors on easy questions you should get right and spend way too much time on difficult ones you're unlikely to get right. Let your (POOD) help determine your

pacing. Go slowly enough to answer correctly all the *Now* questions but quickly enough to get to the number of *Later* questions you need to reach your goal score.

In Chapter 3, we'll teach you how to identify the number of questions you need to reach your goal score. You'll practice your pacing in practice tests, going slowly enough to avoid careless errors and quickly enough to reach your goal scores.

Process of Elimination (POE)

Multiple-choice tests offer one great advantage: They provide the correct answer right there on the page. Of course, they hide the correct answer amid 3–4 incorrect answers. It's often easier to spot the wrong answers than it is to identify the right ones, particularly when you apply a smart Process of Elimination (POE).

POE works differently on each test on the ACT, but it's a powerful strategy on all of them. For some question types, you'll always use POE rather than wasting time trying to figure out the answer on your own. For other questions, you'll use POE when you're stuck. ACT hides the correct answer behind wrong ones, but when you cross off just one or two wrong answers, the correct answer can become more obvious, sometimes jumping right off the page.

POOD, Pacing, and POE all work together to help you spend your time where it does the most good: on the questions you can and should get right.

Be Ruthless

The worst mistake a test-taker can make is to throw good time after bad. You read a question but don't understand it, so you read it again. And again. If you stare at it really hard, you know you're going to just *see* the answer. And you can't move on, because really, after spending all that time it would be a waste not to keep at it, right?

Wrong. You can't let one tough question drag you down, and you can't let your worst instincts tempt you into self-defeating behavior. Instead, the best way to improve your ACT score is to follow our advice.

- Use the techniques and strategies in the lessons to work efficiently and accurately through all your Now and Later questions.
- Know your Never questions, and use your LOTD.
- Know when to move on. Use POE, and guess from what's left.

In Parts II–VI, you'll learn how POOD, Pacing, and POE work on each test. In Chapter 3, we'll discuss in greater detail how to use your Pacing to hit your target scores.

Use Your Pencil

You own the test booklet, and you should write where and when it helps you. Use your pencil to literally cross off wrong answers on the page.

SCORE GRIDS

On each test of the ACT, the number of correct answers converts to a scaled score 1–36. ACT works hard to adjust the scale of each test at each administration as necessary to make all scaled scores comparable, smoothing out any differences in level of difficulty across test dates. There is thus no truth to any one test date being “easier” than the others, but you can expect to see slight variations in the scale from test to test.

This is the score grid from the free test ACT makes available on its website, ACT.org. We’re going to use it to explain how to pick a target score and pace yourself.

Scale Score	English	Math	Reading	Science	Scale Score
36	75	59–60	40	40	36
35	73–74	57–58	39	39	35
34	71–72	55–56	38	38	34
33	70	54	—	37	33
32	69	53	37	—	32
31	68	52	36	36	31
30	67	50–51	35	35	30
29	66	49	34	34	29
28	64–65	47–48	33	33	28
27	62–63	45–46	32	31–32	27
26	60–61	43–44	31	30	26
25	58–59	41–42	30	28–29	25
24	56–57	38–40	29	26–27	24
23	53–55	36–37	27–28	24–25	23
22	51–52	34–35	26	23	22
21	48–50	33	25	21–22	21
20	45–47	31–32	23–24	19–20	20
19	42–44	29–30	22	17–18	19
18	40–41	27–28	20–21	16	18
17	38–39	24–26	19	14–15	17
16	35–37	19–23	18	13	16
15	33–34	15–18	16–17	12	15
14	30–32	12–14	14–15	11	14
13	29	10–11	13	10	13
12	27–28	8–9	11–12	9	12
11	25–26	6–7	9–10	8	11
10	23–24	5	8	7	10

PACING STRATEGIES

Focus on the number of questions you need to hit your goal scores.

English

For English, there is no order of difficulty of the passages or their questions. The most important thing is to finish, finding all the Now questions you can throughout the whole test.

Math

Spend more time to do fewer questions, and you'll raise your accuracy. Let's say your goal on Math is a 24. Find 24 under the scaled score column, and you'll see that you need 38–40 raw points. Take all 60 minutes and work 45 questions, using your Letter of the Day (LOTD) on 15 Never questions. You'll get most of the questions you work right, some wrong, and pick up a couple points on the LOTDs.

Look at this way: How many *more* questions do you need to answer correctly to move from a 24 to a 27? As few as five. Do you think you could find five careless errors on a practice test that you *should* have gotten right?

Reading

When it comes to picking a pacing strategy for Reading, you have to practice extensively and figure out what works best for you.

Some students are slow but good readers. If you take 35 minutes to do fewer passages, you could get all of the questions right for each passage you do. Use your LOTD for the passages you don't work, and you should pick up a few additional points.

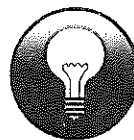
Other students could take hours to work each passage and never get all the questions right. But if you find all the questions you can do on many passages, using your LOTD on all those Never questions, you could hit your target score.

Which is better? There is no answer to that. True ACT score improvement will come with a willingness to experiment and analyze what works best for you.

Science

In the Science lessons, you'll learn how to identify your Now, Later, and Never passages.

Our advice is to be aggressive. Spend the time needed on the easiest passages first, but keep moving to get to your targeted raw score. Identify Never questions on Now Passages and use your LOTD. Alternatively, find the Now questions on as many Later passages as you can get to.



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PACING CHARTS

Revisit this page as you practice. Record your scores from practice. Set a goal of 1–3 points in your scaled score for the next practice test. Identify the number of questions you need to answer correctly to reach that goal. The score grids provided in Part VIII come with their specific scales. You can use those, or use the score grids in this chapter.

English Pacing

Scale Score	Raw Score	Scale Score	Raw Score	Scale Score	Raw Score
36	75	27	62–63	18	40–4
35	73–74	26	60–61	17	38–39
34	71–72	25	58–59	16	35–37
33	70	24	56–57	15	33–34
32	69	23	53–55	14	30–32
31	68	22	51–52	13	29
30	67	21	48–50	12	27–28
29	66	20	45–47	11	25–26
28	64–65	19	42–44	10	23–24

Remember that in English, your pacing goal is to finish.

Prior Score (if applicable): _____

Practice Test 1 Goal: _____

Practice Test 2 Goal: _____

of Questions Needed: _____

of Questions Needed: _____

Practice Test 1 Score: _____

Practice Test 2 Score: _____

Math Pacing

Scale Score	Raw Score	Scale Score	Raw Score	Scale Score	Raw Score
36	59–60	27	45–46	18	27–28
35	57–58	26	43–44	17	24–26
34	55–56	25	41–42	16	19–23
33	54	24	38–40	15	15–18
32	53	23	36–37	14	12–14
31	52	22	34–35	13	10–11
30	50–51	21	33	12	8–9
29	49	20	31–32	11	6–7
28	47–48	19	29–30	10	5

Our advice is to add 5 questions to your targeted raw score. You have a cushion to get a few wrong—nobody's perfect—and you're likely to pick up at least a few points from your LOTDs. Track your progress on practice tests to pinpoint your target score.

Prior Score (if applicable): _____

Practice Test 1 Goal: _____ Practice Test 2 Goal: _____

of Questions Needed: _____ # of Questions Needed: _____

+5

+5

= # of Questions to Work: _____ = # of Questions to Work: _____

Practice Test 1 Score: _____ Practice Test 2 Score: _____

Reading Pacing

Scale Score	Raw Score	Scale Score	Raw Score	Scale Score	Raw Score
36	40	27	32	18	20-21
35	39	26	31	17	19
34	38	25	30	16	18
33	—	24	29	15	16-17
32	37	23	27-28	14	14-15
31	36	22	26	13	13
30	35	21	25	12	11-12
29	34	20	23-24	11	9-10
28	33	19	22	10	8

Experiment with Reading by trying fewer passages, more time per passage and then adding more passages, more questions. Identify first how many questions you need.

Prior Score (if applicable): _____

Practice Test 1 Goal: _____

Practice Test 2 Goal: _____

of Questions Needed: _____

of Questions Needed: _____

How many passages to work: _____

How many passages to work: _____

Practice Test 1 Score: _____

Practice Test 2 Score: _____

Science Pacing

Scale Score	Raw Score	Scale Score	Raw Score	Scale Score	Raw Score
36	40	27	31–32	18	16
35	39	26	30	17	14–15
34	38	25	28–29	16	13
33	37	24	26–27	15	12
32	—	23	24–25	14	11
31	36	22	23	13	10
30	35	21	21–22	12	9
29	34	20	19–20	11	8
28	33	19	17–18	10	7

Use this chart below to figure out how many passages to work.

Target Score	# of passages to attempt
< 20	5 passages
20–23	5–6 passages
24–27	6–7 passages
> 27	7 passages

Prior Score (if applicable): _____

Practice Test 1 Goal: _____ Practice Test 2 Goal: _____

of Questions Needed: _____ # of Questions Needed: _____

How many passages to work: _____ How many passages to work: _____

Practice Test 1 Score: _____ Practice Test 2 Score: _____



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