

ACT Test

The ACT[®] test assesses high school students' general educational development and their ability to complete college-level work.

- The multiple-choice tests cover four skill areas: English, mathematics, reading, and science.
- The Writing Test, which is optional, measures skill in planning and writing a short essay.

Facts about the ACT

What was the national average ACT composite score for 2007?	21.2
Is that an increase or decrease from 2006?	It is an increase from 21.1 in 2006.
What is the source of the 2007 ACT national average?	The scores of all ACT-tested 2007 high school graduates (more than 1.3 million students)
What is the highest possible ACT score?	36
What subject areas do the ACT questions cover?	English, math, reading, science, and writing (optional)
How many questions are asked?	English: 75 Math: 60 Reading: 40 Science: 40 Total: 215
In how many states is the ACT administered?	50
Which Ivy League schools accept ACT scores for admission purposes?	All of them

Other Frequently Asked Questions about the ACT

How much does it cost to take the ACT?

The 2007–2008 basic registration fee is \$30.00, which includes sending score reports to up to four college choices. The basic registration fee for the ACT Plus Writing is \$44.50.

How long does the test take?

Just over 4 hours for the ACT without the Writing Test, including administration instructions and breaks. Actual testing time is 2 hours and 55 minutes, broken down as follows:

English: 45 minutes
Math: 60 minutes
Reading: 35 minutes
Science: 35 minutes

The ACT Writing Test adds 30 minutes to the testing time.

When are the test dates?

In the 50 United States, the ACT is administered on five national test dates: in October, December, February, April, and June. In selected states, the ACT is also offered in late September.

How do students benefit from taking the ACT?

- The ACT is universally accepted for college admission.
- The ACT is curriculum-based. The ACT is not an aptitude or an IQ test. Instead, the questions on the ACT are directly related to what students have learned in high school courses in English, mathematics, and science. Because the ACT tests are based on what is taught in the high school curriculum, students are generally more comfortable with the ACT than they are with traditional aptitude tests or tests with narrower content.
- The ACT is more than a test. The ACT also provides test takers with a unique interest inventory that provides valuable information for career and educational planning and a student profile section that provides a comprehensive profile of a student's work in high school and his or her future plans.
- The ACT is a good value. As a private, not-for-profit organization governed by educators, ACT is committed to providing services at the lowest possible cost. Accordingly, the ACT provides a comprehensive package of educational assessment and career planning services for college-bound students at a fee that is lower than the fee for the competing admission test.

How often can students take the ACT?

Students may take the ACT as often as they wish but only once per national test date. Many students take the test twice, once as a junior and again as a senior.

Does it help to take the ACT more than once?

ACT research shows that of the students who took the ACT more than once:

- 55% increased their composite score on the retest
- 22% had no change in their composite score on the retest
- 23% decreased their composite score on the retest

ACT at A Glance

The ACT® test contains four curriculum-based, multiple-choice tests that measure academic achievement in the areas of English, mathematics, reading, and science, as well as an optional Writing Test, for which students complete an essay. The specific knowledge and skills selected for evaluation are determined through a detailed analysis of three sources of information. First, the objectives for instruction for grades seven through twelve are examined for all states in the United States that have published such objectives. Second, textbooks on state-approved lists for courses in grades seven through twelve are reviewed. Third, educators at the secondary and postsecondary levels are surveyed and consulted to determine the knowledge and skills taught in grades seven through twelve that are prerequisite to successful performance in postsecondary courses.

ACT English Test

The English Test measures the student's understanding of the conventions of standard written English (punctuation, grammar and usage, and sentence structure) and of rhetorical skills (strategy, organization, and style). Spelling, vocabulary, and rote recall of rules of grammar are not tested. Three scores are reported: a total test score, a subscore in Usage/Mechanics, and a subscore in Rhetorical Skills.

ACT English Test Break Down

75 items, 45 minutes

Content/Skills

Number of Items

Usage/Mechanics 40

Punctuation 10

Grammar and Usage 12

Sentence Structure 18

Rhetorical Skills 35

Strategy 12

Organization 11

Style 12

Total 75

ACT Reading Test

The Reading Test measures the student's reading comprehension as a product of referring and reasoning skills. The test items require the student to derive meaning from several texts by (1) referring to what is explicitly stated and (2) reasoning to determine implicit meanings and to draw conclusions, comparisons, and generalizations. The test comprises four prose passages that are representative of the level and kinds of writing commonly encountered in college freshman curricula. The passages are selected from published sources. Three scores are reported: a total test score, a subscore in Arts/Literature reading skills (based on the prose fiction and humanities sections), and a subscore in Social Studies/Sciences reading skills (based on the social studies and natural sciences sections).

ACT Reading Test Break Down

40 items, 35 minutes

Content Area Number of Items

Prose Fiction 10

Humanities 10

Social Studies 10

Natural Sciences 10

Total 40

ACT Mathematics Test

The Mathematics Test assesses the mathematical skills that students have typically acquired in courses taken up to the beginning of grade twelve. The test requires students to use their reasoning skills to solve practical problems in mathematics. The problems assume knowledge of basic formulas and computational skills but do not require memorization of complex formulas or extensive computation. **The use of calculators is permitted on the Mathematics Test.** Four scores are reported: a total test score and a subscore in Pre-Algebra/Elementary Algebra, Intermediate Algebra/Coordinate Geometry, and Plane Geometry/Trigonometry.

ACT Mathematics Test

60 items, 60 minutes

Content Area Number of Items

Pre-Algebra 14

Elementary Algebra 10

Intermediate Algebra 9

Coordinate Geometry 9

Plane Geometry 14

Trigonometry 4

Total 60

ACT Science Test

The Science Test measures the student's interpretation, analysis, evaluation, reasoning, and problem-solving skills required in the natural sciences. The test is made up of seven sections, each of which consists of some scientific information (the stimulus) and a set of test items. The scientific information is conveyed in one of three different formats. One score, a total test score, is reported for the ACT Science Test.

ACT Science Test

40 items, 35 minutes

Content Format Number

Area of Items

Biology Data

Representation 15

Earth/Space Research

Sciences Summaries 18

Chemistry Conflicting

Physics Viewpoints 7

Total 40

ACT Writing Test

The Writing Test is an optional 30-minute essay test that measures writing skills emphasized in high school English classes and in entry-level college composition courses. The test consists of one writing prompt that describes two points of view on an issue, and students are asked to write a response about their position on the issue. The prompts are designed to be appropriate for response in a 30-minute timed test and to reflect students' interests and experiences. Students have the option of registering for the ACT or the ACT Plus Writing. The Writing Test may not be taken alone.

Scoring the ACT Writing Test. Taking the Writing Test does *not* affect students' scores on the multiple-choice tests or their Composite score. Rather, students who took both the English and Writing tests receive two additional scores: a Combined English/Writing score on a scale of 1–36 and a Writing subscore on a scale of 2–12. Students also receive comments on their essays, and images of the essays are available to their high school and the colleges to which scores are reported from that test date.

ACT Noncognitive Components

The noncognitive components of the ACT include the High School Course/Grade Information questionnaire, the ACT Interest Inventory, and the Student Profile Section. Students respond to them when they register for an established ACT test date.

High School Course/Grade Information—To increase the usefulness of ACT results, the High School Course/Grade Information questionnaire asks students about the courses they have completed or plan to take in high school and the grades they have received.

ACT Interest Inventory—The ACT Interest Inventory is completed when students register for the ACT. The Unisex Edition of the ACT Interest Inventory (UNIACT) consists of 72 items. The six UNIACT scales were developed to parallel Holland's six interest and occupational types.

Student Profile Section—The Student Profile Section (SPS) collects responses about students' educational and vocational aspirations, plans, abilities, accomplishments, and needs.

2007/ 2008 Test Dates and Registration Deadlines

Test Date Registration Deadline Late Registration (regular fee) (late fee required)

(Test Dates)	(Regular Fee - \$30)	(Late Fee Required)
June 14, 2008	May 9, 2008	May 10–23, 2008
Sept. 13, 2008*	Aug. 12, 2008	Aug. 13 – 22, 2008
Oct. 25, 2008	Sept. 19, 2008	Sept. 20 – Oct. 3, 2008
Dec. 13, 2008	Nov. 7, 2008	Nov. 8 – 20, 2008
Feb.7, 2009**	Jan. 6, 2009	Jan. 7 – 16, 2009
April 4, 2009	Feb. 27, 2009	Feb. 28 – Mar. 13, 2009
June 13, 2009	May 8, 2009	May 9 – 22, 2009