

NFC ACADEMY

The **ACT**[®]



INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW TO THE ACT

Have you improved your grades this year? Check!

Have you asked for recommendations? Check!

Did you participate in extracurricular activities? Check!

Have you researched and visited different colleges? Check!

Don't worry! After this course, you will have all the information you need to register, study for, and hopefully do well on the ACT.

OBJECTIVES

- Understand the purpose of the ACT and how to register.
- Describe the testing process.
- Outline strategies for preparing for the test.
- Make a personal best plan for the days leading up to the exam.

WHAT CAN YOU EXPECT ON TEST DAY?

You may be wondering what exactly is on the test. Basically, most of what you learned in high school! The ACT is a test of knowledge, unlike the SAT, which tests aptitude or, as some say, intelligence. Theoretically, if you did well in high school, you should do well on the ACT. However, the ACT focuses more on the skills you've learned than on memorization of facts, so you do not have to

remember everything you ever learned. Instead, if you learned how to read and understand what you read, solve math problems, reason scientifically, and write clearly, you are in great shape!

- Test time: Three hours (without the optional Writing section)
- Four multiple-choice sections
 1. **English**
 2. **Mathematics**
 3. **Reading**
 4. **Science**
- An optional **Writing** section

English Test Overview

75 questions, 45-minute test

This portion of the ACT tests your command of English. It includes **five passages** and asks you to **identify errors in usage and mechanics**, such as punctuation and grammar, and **rhetorical skills**, such as organization and style.

Mathematics Test Overview

60 questions, 60-minute test

The math portion will test your knowledge and reasoning skills typically acquired by the end of Grade 11: **pre-algebra, algebra, geometry,** and **trigonometry**. It is assumed that you know some basic formulas and computational skills, but you are not expected to remember complex formulas or extensive computational strategies. You are permitted to use a calculator. Most types of calculators are allowed but check the ACT's website to make sure that your specific calculator isn't on the restricted list.

Reading Test Overview

40 questions, 35-minute test

For this section, you will need good reading comprehension and strategies for reading both **narrative (fiction)** and **informational (nonfiction) text**. Passages may be **literary** passages, such as stories, memoirs, or poems, or informational passages about **science, social studies,** and **humanities** subjects.

Science Overview

40 questions, 35-minute test

On this portion of the test, you do not need to remember specific facts, such as the atomic numbers of elements or in which phylum an animal belongs. Instead, questions focus on **analyzing and explaining visually represented data, drawing information from research summaries, and analyzing conflicting viewpoints**. The questions are arranged in sets, so you may answer more than one question about a graph, table, summary, or description of viewpoints.

Writing Overview

1 prompt, 40-minute test

If you choose to take the Writing section of the ACT, you will compose **one argumentative essay**. The prompt includes a definition and description of an issue and three different points of view on the issue. You state and develop your own position on the issue, which might be one of the perspectives given in the prompt and explain the relationship between your perspective and one or more of the other points of view. The position you take is not factored into scoring. The essay tests your ability to **make and articulate judgments, develop and sustain a position on an issue, organize your writing in a logical way, and communicate clearly and effectively**.

Scoring the ACT

Is a 24 good? What about a 17? I got a 28—should I retest?

You may know that the scaled scores for the multiple-choice sections of the ACT run from 1 to 36, but what does that number mean? Colleges differ in how they use the ACT score. Some accept students with higher ACT scores, based on the premise that higher-scoring students are better prepared for college. Others simply want an indicator of the students who attend their schools. To understand how ACT scores are used, you should check with the colleges that you may want to attend.

Your ACT score as reported will either be a **composite score** or a test score. Both composite and **test scores** are scaled from 1 to 36, with the average score around 20. However, scaled scores are converted from the raw scores. If you got 32 of 45 questions right on a test, your **raw score** is 32, but that does not mean your test score will be 32. Instead, it will be converted to a scaled test score and may be closer to the mid-20s. Scaled scores depend on the answers all students gave, so it is impossible to say what raw score you will need in

order to get a scaled **score**. Just do your best work and don't worry about the numbers.

The optional Writing section is scored on a scale from 2 to 12. Your essay is read and scored by two independent, trained readers using a 6-point scoring rubric. The rubric consists of four *domains*: Ideas & Analysis, Development & Support, Organization, and Language Use & Conventions. The sum of the two readers' scores is your score. If you take the Writing section, then on your Score Report you will also receive an ELA (English Language Arts) score, which combines the English, Reading, and Writing scores. The ELA score is reported on a scale from 1 to 36.

If you want to know what your score means and how it is calculated, visit the site in the resource section to learn about the relationship between raw scores, composite scores, scaled scores, and ***national rank***.

GRADING INFORMATION

GRADING COMPONENTS

Lessons	35%
Quizzes	25%
Projects	10%
Tests	30%

GRADING SCALE

100-90	A
89-80	B
79-70	C
69-60	D
Below 60	F