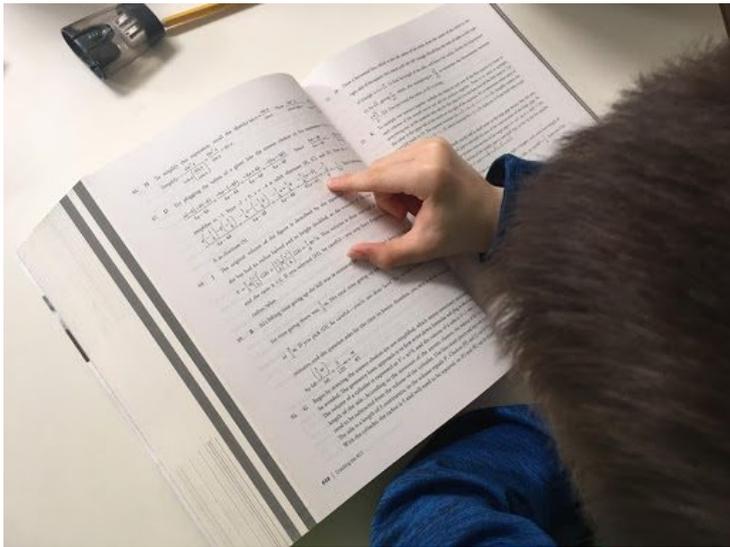


ACT Tips



ACT Tips

The ACT is April 24th for most juniors, so here are some tips to help get the best score possible.

General Tips

Familiarize yourself with the test

- English - 75 questions in 45 minutes
- Math - 60 questions in 60 minutes
- Reading - 40 questions in 35 minutes
- Science - 40 questions in 35 minutes

- Take a practice test if you're able

You're more likely to get a higher score if you understand how the test works and can see what you need to work on.

- Underline!

You are allowed to write in your test booklet, use it to your advantage.

- Don't leave any questions blank

Points are not taken off for wrong answers, but you can't get any points for questions you don't answer. Choose one letter choice (for example C/H) for each question that you designate as Never (see below) or any questions left if you run out of time.

- Categorize Questions

Every question is worth the same, so don't spend too long on questions that will take too much time for you to answer, or you don't understand at all. Categorize the questions into Now, Later, and Never. Now questions are questions you know you can do, answer them straight away. Later questions are questions that will take some time to work out, but you know you can do. Circle Later questions and come back to them. Never questions are ones that you know you'll struggle to answer or will take too much time to answer.

- Watch the clock!

You want to be able to budget your time well to get the most points possible.

- Use the Elimination Method

The correct answer can become more obvious when you start to get rid of the answers you know aren't right.

- You're first answer is usually the right one

Check your answers if you have time, but only change your answer if you know you got it wrong.

- Set a Goal Score

Determine the approximate number of questions you'll need to answer to reach your score. It's very possible you'll run out of time taking each test, so you need to know how many questions you need to get right for your score to help your pacing.

Test Day Tips

Aim for *at least* 8 hours of sleep the night before

- Eat a good breakfast

Make sure you have everything you'll need

- Calculator
- Change of batteries for calculator/charger for calculator (you don't want your calculator to die in the middle of the test!)
- #2 pencils
- A watch

- An ID

English

- There are 5 passages on this test of 75 questions
- You have about 30 seconds for each question on this test

The types of questions are split into two categories: usage and mechanics, and rhetorical skills

- Usage and Mechanics - Grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, and usage of words
- Rhetorical Skills - Organization and style

- Figure out what the question is asking by determining what is changing in each answer choice
- If you aren't sure there should be commas, there probably shouldn't be

The most concise answer is probably the right one

- You don't want redundancy!

- Read over punctuation rules (semicolons, commas, colons, dashes, etc.)

Learn the difference between different words (affect/effect, they're/there/their, etc.)

- Affect - action effect - end result
- They're - they are There - place Their - belongs to them

- Context clues can be a big help on this test, so don't just read the underlined portion
- Use your ear. What sounds right? But always try and determine the actual problem with the sentence as well

Math

- About 1 minute for each question
- This test usually has 33 Algebra, 23 Geometry, and 4 Trigonometry questions

Use your calculator! It can save a great deal of time

- Make sure you answer all numbers correctly

- The questions DO get progressively harder on the Math test, but what's difficult for someone else might be a Now question for you
- When doing questions that require you to check different numbers, start from C. After checking C, you should be able to tell if the correct number will be higher or lower, thus eliminating two answers right there
- Read ALL of the question, you don't want to miss any important information
- The answers given can help you see how you need to solve the question
- Take the questions one step at a time, don't overwhelm yourself

Reading

- 4 passages and 40 questions
- The types of passages are always Fiction and Literary Narrative, Social Sciences, Humanities, and Natural Science

Identify your Now passages to determine what order you'll go in

- What type of passage do you prefer when taking practice tests?
- Passages with several medium-sized paragraphs may be easier than passages with a few longer paragraphs or passages with many short paragraphs. 8-10 paragraphs with 15 lines each is the ideal passage length
- Look at the type of questions, are there a lot that point to exactly where you should look in the passage? Those can be a great time-saver
- Passages with questions with shorter answers and shorter questions are generally easier
- Don't spend too long determining the order though, you only have 35 minutes!

- Read the information at the top of the passage first then go through the questions to see what you'll be looking for. And remember to underline important information!
- Only spend about 2-3 minutes reading the passage, don't try to read everything in depths

- The easiest questions will be the ones where you can pull information directly from the passage.
- Questions that ask you to find what is implied are also questions that can usually be answered Now
- Questions to do later are ones that don't have any direct line to reference or word you recognize. While doing the Now questions you may come across what the Later questions were referencing, this will help when you go back and finish your Later questions

Science

- This test is all about scientific reasoning skills, not scientific knowledge on specific topics
- 6 or 7 passages

The passage are all either Data Representation, Research Summaries, or Conflicting Viewpoints

- Data Representation - Figure-based. 6 questions for 2 passages
- Research Summaries - Will usually have figures, but have more text. They describe several experiments. 7 questions for 3 passages
- Conflicting Viewpoints - Text-based. You can use Reading test skills on this passage. You are comparing different views on a topic. 7 questions for 1 passage
- Knowing the types of passages can help you determine which you should do Now, Later, or Never

Look for passages that have graphs and/or charts that you can easily analyze

- Smaller graphs and charts are what you want. Ones with only 3-4 columns/rows or 3-4 lines
- Look for ones that have easy-to-spot trends
- Numbers are easier to read on this test than symbols or words that you don't fully understand

- If you see a passage on a topic you know, it's probably a Now passage
- Shorter answers are easier questions, specifically ones that feature relationship words

On questions that feature yes/no, look at the reasons given

- This is always true, but especially when you don't know if the answer is yes or no. The reasons given are a huge help to the Elimination Method.

- Be ready to not get to fully look at each passage, just focus on getting your goal number of points

There are many more tricks to do better on the ACT. Study Island, Khan Academy, and classes/teachers for the ACT can be a big help. If you can buy an ACT prep book, (e.g. *The Princeton Review's Cracking the ACT*) they come with many tips and often include practice tests.

You can do this Bulldogs!