



# Taking the ACT® ... What's in it for ME?

## A Guide for Students & Parents

**S**o, you are going to be taking the ACT during a school day and you might be thinking, **why this test and what is it going to do for me?** By having the opportunity to take the ACT sponsored by your school district, you will be opening doors of opportunity to choose from when you graduate. Your teachers, parents, and school leaders all believe in your ability to succeed after high school and want to provide you with a jump start on all the possibilities that exist for you.

### **Do I need to do anything to sign up?**

Your school will provide all necessary details for you to sign-up for the ACT and participate in a pretest session prior to the testing date.

### **What if I'm not sure of my plans after high school?**

Don't sweat it! Planning for your future is not something you do once—it's a continuous process. Choosing a career or to attend college are big decisions. After you take the ACT, you will receive a personalized score report. The Interest Inventory on your score report suggests careers and occupations based on your interests. This is a great place to begin exploring what you may like to do after graduation.

### **What is EOS and should I say "yes" to participate?**

Taking the ACT allows you the opportunity to have colleges and scholarship agencies contact you based on your academic interests, extracurricular interests and ACT scores. This free, voluntary option can open lots of possibilities for you once you graduate. You will never know what else may be out there for you without gridding **yes** under the Educational Opportunity Service section of your answer folder during the pretest session.

### **Do I need to study?**

Since the ACT is based on what you are already learning, the best way to prepare is to take challenging courses in high school. The harder you work in school, the more prepared you'll be for the test. To get familiar with the test, try out a free practice test and learn some test taking tips at:

[www.actstudent.org/testprep](http://www.actstudent.org/testprep)

### **What's on the ACT?**

The ACT is directly related to what you are learning in most of your high school courses. The ACT tests are four curriculum-based, multiple-choice tests in English, mathematics, reading, science, and an optional 30-minute Writing Test, which tests essay composition skills. The ACT is the only college admissions test that is based on your number of correct answers – with no penalty for guessing.

- English Test – 75 items, 45 minutes
- Mathematics Test – 60 items, 60 minutes
- Reading Test – 40 items, 35 minutes
- Science Test – 40 items, 35 minutes
- Writing Test\* – 1 prompt, 30 minutes

\*Check with your counselor to see if your school participates in the optional writing test

Did you know ACT has a website just for students?

You can get free testing tips, check out student blogs, get college and career planning ideas and much more!

[www.actstudent.org](http://www.actstudent.org)

### What can I do with my scores?

Discuss them with your counselor and family and use them in planning your senior year. Your scores will be mailed to the address you provide on your answer folder. About a week later, you will be able to access them online at [www.actstudent.org](http://www.actstudent.org). When you complete your answer folder in the pretest session you can choose up to four colleges to which you can send your scores for free. The ACT is accepted by all four-year colleges and universities, including all Ivy League Schools and the NCAA®.

### How do I use my scores at school?

You can use your scores, the Interest Inventory results and the College Readiness Benchmark indicators as a tool in planning your senior year. You might even decide to continue increasing your college readiness, by taking additional academic courses your senior year.

### What if I need accommodations?

If you currently receive test accommodations in school as part of your Individualized Education Program (IEP) or a Section 504 Plan, ask your counselor whether accommodations have been requested for you for the ACT.

### Are there tips to help me while I am taking the ACT?

- Carefully read the instructions on the cover of the test booklet.
- Read the directions for each test carefully.
- Read each question carefully.
- Pace yourself—don't spend too much time on a single passage or question.
- Pay attention to the announcement of five minutes remaining on each test.
- Use a soft lead No. 2 pencil with a good eraser; do not use a mechanical pencil or ink pen.
- Answer the easy questions first, then go back and answer the more difficult ones.
- On difficult questions, eliminate as many incorrect answers as you can, then make an educated guess among those remaining.
- Answer every question. Your scores on the multiple-choice tests are based on the number of questions you answer correctly. There is no penalty for guessing.
- If you complete a test before time is called, recheck your work on that test.

## Additional Family Resources and Web sites



**Family First Parent** — Guide to help first generation families navigate the college process - <http://www.act.org/path/secondary/pdf/FamilyFirstParents.pdf>



**Family First Student** — Guide to help first generation families navigate the college process - <http://www.act.org/path/secondary/pdf/FamilyFirstStudent.pdf>



**Get Set For College** - Newspaper style publication to promote college readiness and how to access postsecondary options <http://www.act.org/path/secondary/pdf/GetSetforCollege.pdf>



**Preparing for the ACT** - Guide that includes general test-taking strategies, ways to prepare for the test, and full length practice tests. <http://www.act.org/aap/pdf/preparing.pdf>



**Parent Web site** - <http://www.act.org/path/parent>



**Student Web site** -- <http://www.actstudent.org>