

Tips for 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; if you do, your answer document cannot be scored accurately.
- Answer the easy questions first, then go back and answer the more difficult ones if you have time remaining on that test.
- 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.
- Mark your answers properly. Erase any mark completely and cleanly without smudging.
- Do not mark or alter any ovals on a test or continue writing the essay after time has been called. If you do, you will be dismissed and your answer document will **not** be scored.
- If you are taking the ACT Plus Writing, see these [Writing Test tips](#).

Test Day Tips

- Get plenty of rest the night before test day.
- Dress comfortably. Some test centers are warmer or cooler on weekends than during the week. Consider dressing in layers, so you'll be comfortable no matter what the room conditions are.
- Make sure you have [acceptable identification](#). You will **not** be admitted to test without it.
- Be ready to begin testing after everyone has been checked in and seated.

English

- Be aware of the writing style used in each passage.
- Consider the elements of writing that are included in each underlined portion of the passage. Some questions will ask you to base your decision on some specific element of writing, such as the tone or emphasis the text should convey.
- Be aware of questions with no underlined portions—that means you will be asked about a section of the passage or about the passage as a whole.
- Examine each answer choice and determine how it differs from the others. Many of the questions in the test will involve more than one aspect of writing.
- Read and consider all of the answer choices before you choose the one that best responds to the question.
- Determine the best answer.
- Reread the sentence, using your selected answer.

Mathematics

- Read each question carefully to make sure you understand the type of answer required.
- If you choose to use a calculator, be sure it is permitted, is working on test day, and has reliable batteries. [Use your calculator wisely.](#)
- Solve the problem.
- Locate your solution among the answer choices.
- Make sure you answer the question asked.
- Make sure your answer is reasonable.
- Check your work.

Reading

- Read the passage carefully.
- Read and consider all of the answer choices before you choose the one that best responds to the question.
- Refer to the passage when answering the questions.

Science

- Read the passage carefully.
- Refer to the scientific information in the passage when answering the question.
- Read and consider all of the answer choices before you choose the one that best responds to the question.
- Note conflicting viewpoints in some passages.

Tips for Using a Calculator during the ACT Mathematics Test

- Review the latest information on [permitted and prohibited calculators.](#)
- You are not required to use a calculator. All the problems can be solved without a calculator.
- If you regularly use a calculator in your mathematics work, use one you're familiar with when you take the Mathematics Test. Using a more powerful, but unfamiliar, calculator is not likely to give you an advantage over using the kind you normally use.

Tips for the ACT Writing Test

- Carefully read the [instructions](#) on the cover of the test booklet.
- Do some planning before writing the essay; you will be instructed to do your prewriting in your Writing Test booklet. You can refer to these notes as you write the essay on the lined pages in your answer folder.
- Do not skip lines and do not write in the margins. Write your essay legibly, in English.

- **Carefully consider the prompt** and make sure you understand the question it asks—reread it if you aren't sure.
- **Decide how you want to answer** the question in the prompt.
- **Then jot down your ideas** on the topic: this might simply be a list of ideas, reasons, and examples that you will use to explain your point of view on the issue.
- **Write down what you think** others might say in opposition to your point of view and think about how you would refute their arguments.
- **Think of how best to organize** your ideas.
- At the beginning of your essay, make sure readers will see that you understand the issue.
- Explain your point of view in a clear and logical way.
- If possible, discuss the issue in a broader context or evaluate the implications or complications of the issue.
- Address what others might say to refute your point of view and present a counterargument.
- Use specific examples.
- Vary the structure of your sentences, and use varied and precise word choices.
- Make logical relationships clear by using transitional words and phrases.
- Stay focused on the topic.
- End with a strong conclusion that summarizes or reinforces your position.
- If there is time, do a final check of the essay when it is finished.
 - Correct any mistakes in grammar, usage, punctuation, and spelling.
 - If you find any words that are hard to read, recopy them so your readers can read them easily.
 - Make any corrections and revisions neatly, between the lines (but not in the margins).