

The ACT® at a Glance

Like the ACT, the SAT is a nationally administered, standardized paper-and-pencil test that helps colleges evaluate candidates. All colleges now accept scores from the SAT and ACT interchangeably. This means you'll have the opportunity to decide on which test you'll perform better. And in many cases, students prepare for and take both exams. Is the SAT vs. ACT – what's best for you?

Generally, you'll take the ACT for the first time in the spring of your junior year. This allows you to reserve the summer months for college applications or enough time to re-take the test during the fall of your senior year if you're not satisfied with your score.

The Anatomy of the ACT

How long is the ACT test? Without the optional Writing Test, the ACT exam lasts 2 hours and 55 minutes, or 3 hours and 25 minutes with the Writing Test. The order of test sections and the total number of questions covered in each test section never changes:

Sections

English - 45 Minutes

40 Usage/Mechanics Questions

35 Rhetorical Skills Questions

Mathematics - 60 Minutes

14 Pre-Algebra Questions

10 Elementary Algebra Questions

9 Intermediate Algebra Questions

9 Coordinate Geometry Questions

14 Plane Geometry Questions

4 Trigonometry Questions

Reading - 35 Minutes

10 Social Studies Questions

10 Natural Sciences Questions

10 Literary Narrative or Prose Fiction Questions

10 Humanities Questions

Science - 35 Minutes

15 Data Representation Questions

18 Research Summary Questions

7 Conflicting Viewpoint Questions

Writing Test - 30 Minutes - You write in response to a question about your position on an issue

The ACT English Test

On the ACT English Test, you'll have 45 minutes to answer 75 questions—that's about 30 seconds per question! The test is divided into 5 passages, each with about 15 questions.

You're not being tested on spelling or vocabulary. Rather, the ACT English Test is designed to assess your understanding of the conventions of English—punctuation, grammar, sentence structure—and of rhetorical skills. Rhetorical skills are more strategic including things like organizing the text and making sure it's styled clearly.

The ACT Math Section

On the ACT Math Test, you'll have 60 minutes to answer 60 questions—that's 1 minute per question! Questions include Pre-Algebra, Elementary and Intermediate Algebra, Coordinate and Plane Geometry, and Trigonometry.

The ACT Reading Section

On the ACT Reading section, you'll be tested on Social Studies, Natural Sciences, Literary Narrative or Prose Fiction and Humanities. You'll have 35 minutes to answer 40 questions—that's about 50 seconds per question! The section contains four passages, each followed by 10 questions.

The ACT Science Section

On the ACT Science Test, you'll be given passages containing various kinds of scientific information—drawn from the fields of biology, chemistry, physics, geology, astronomy, and meteorology—which you'll have to understand and use as a basis for inferences. You'll have 35 minutes to answer 40 questions—that's about 50 seconds per question! The section contains seven passages, each followed by 5-7 questions.

The ACT Writing Section

The optional ACT Writing Test is 30 minutes long, includes one essay, and is always the last section of the test. You'll be given a topic or an issue and expected to take a position on it, supporting your point of view with examples and evidence.

Your ACT Score

Some of the most common questions we get from students and parents are: "What does this ACT score mean?" and "What is a good ACT score?"

Each of the four multiple-choice ACT test sections (English, Mathematics, Reading, and Science) is scored on a scale of 1-36. You will also receive a composite score, which is the average of your four test scores (1-36).

Your score report also includes national rankings where you can compare your performance against students across the country. For instance, if you ranked in the 90th percentile on the Mathematics Test, you did better than 89 percent of other students, while 10 percent fared better than you.

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<http://www.brightonrotaryevents.org/act-what-is-it>