

Tips for taking the ACT

The ACT: Information about the Test

1. English Section - 36 points
 - a. 45 minutes, 5 passages, 75 questions
 - b. Multiple choice - 4 answer choices per question
 - c. Mechanics: sentence structure, grammar, usage, punctuation (about 40 questions)
 - d. Rhetorical: writing style, strategy, revision, organization (about 35 questions)
2. Math Sections - 36 points
 - a. 60 minutes - 60 questions
 - b. Multiple choice - 5 answer choices per question
 - c. Pre-algebra and elementary algebra (about 24 questions)
 - d. Intermediate algebra and coordinate geometry (about 18 questions)
 - e. Plane geometry and trigonometry (about 18 questions)
3. Reading Section - 36 points
 - a. 35 minutes, 4 passages, 40 questions
 - b. Multiple choice - 4 answer choices per question
 - c. Content Area Passages: prose fiction, humanities, social studies, natural sciences
 - d. Questions: extract detail, draw conclusions, determine main points and tone, define vocabulary in context.
4. Science Section - 36 points
 - a. 35 minutes, 7 passages, 40 questions
 - b. Multiple choice - 4 answer choices
 - c. Subject Passages: biology, chemistry, earth/space science, physics
 - d. Analyze charts and graphs (about 15 questions)
 - e. Compare data from multiple experiments (about 18 questions)
 - f. Scrutinize the viewpoints of two hypotheses (about 7 questions)
5. Writing Section - 12 Points
 - a. 30 minutes
 - b. Read short prompt, plan, and write an essay in response to prompt
 - c. Argue a position on an issue, write a focused & organized essay, use logic & detail to support your argument, use language effectively.

SCORING THE TEST - What do I need to score BIG?

A total score of 31-32 is in the 99th percentile. To get this, you can miss approximately 5 questions on each test for English, reading, and math; however you can only miss 2 science questions. You need an 11/12 for the writing section. (Writing scale score is meshed with your English score for a composite.)

****No points taken off for incorrect or blank answers...No points given either. SO GUESS!****

Places to go to practice:

1. There is a free ACT review every Thursday in room 321 on the English Hall. It is from 3:00 - 3:45. You don't have to sign up, just drop in by 3:10.
2. Study Island has a section for ACT in the test prep section. There are lessons for all four subjects tested, as well as three full-length practice tests. This is the most useful site for specific help on a subject area.
3. The following link has practice test items for all four subjects of the test (as well as other test taking tips). This is the most useful site for test practice:

<http://www.actstudent.org/sampletest/>

If you have questions about the test or about how to prepare for it, please see your guidance counselor or Mrs. Pittman (room 321) any time before the test.

This is an important test that can help you get into college and find scholarships. Please take it seriously and prepare for it.

Most Common things to know for ACT English Test

12 Classic Grammar Errors REVIEW

Error 1: It and They (Singulars and Plurals)

Singular nouns must match with singular verbs and pronouns, and plural nouns must match with plural verbs and pronouns.

Incorrect Sentence: If a student won't study, they won't do well.

Correct Singular: If a student won't study, he won't do well.

Correct Plural: If students won't study, they won't do well.

Error 2: Commas or Dashes (Parenthetical Phrases)

This is tested more often than any other on this test. Parenthetical phrases must begin and end with the same punctuation mark. Such phrases can be recognized because without them, the sentence would still be complete. This is called a parenthetical phrase. It can be marked with commas, parentheses, or dashes. But the same mark is needed at both ends of the phrase.

Sentence: Bob – on his way to the store, saw a lizard.

Correction: Bob - on his way to the store - saw a lizard.

Error 3: Run-ons and Comma Splices

You cannot combine two sentences into one with a comma (though you can with a semicolon or conjunction).

Sentence: Joe's a slacker, Sara isn't.

Correction: Joe's a slacker; Sara isn't. OR Joe's a slacker, but Sara isn't.

Note: Usually, only one major event should happen in each sentence. You can put two things together in a sentence in three ways: combine with a comma and a conjunction (as, and, but), or use a semicolon, or subordinate one of the events.

Error 4: Fragments

Sentence: Emily listened to music. While she studied.

Correction: Emily listened to music while she studied.

Error 5: Misunderstood punctuation marks

The test doesn't care much for tricky rules of punctuation, but it does care that you know common marks and match their use to their meanings.

Period (.)	Exclamation Mark (!)	Semicolon (;)	
Question Mark (?)	Comma (,)	Colon (:)	Dash (-)

Error 6: -ly Endings (Adverbs and Adjectives)

Distinguish the difference between adverbs (the -ly words) and adjectives. They are both modifiers (refer to or describe another word or phrase in the sentence).

Nouns and pronouns are modified by adjectives. Verbs and adjectives are modified by adverbs.

Sentence: Anna is an extreme gifted child, and she speaks beautiful, too.

Correction: Anna is an extremely gifted child, and she speaks beautifully too.

Error 7: Its and It's (Apostrophe Use)

Apostrophes are used primarily for two purposes: possessives and contractions. NEVER use an apostrophe to make a pronoun possessive, only nouns. When you run two words together to form a contraction, use an apostrophe.

Sentence: The company claims its illegal to use it's name that way.

Correction: The company claims it's illegal to use its name that way.

Error 8: There, Their, They're (Proper word usage)

KNOW THE DIFFERENCE: There Their They're Are Our Your You're Where Were

Error 9: Sang, Sung, Brang, Brung (Verb Forms)

One irregular verb commonly tested on the ACT is "bring".

Sentence: I've brung my umbrella to work. (Brang and brung aren't used in standard English.)

Correction: I've brought my umbrella to work.

Error 10: -er and -est, More and Most (Comparatives and Superlatives)

Words with -er or with more compare ONLY 2 things.

If there are MORE THAN 2, use -est or most.

Sentence: Bob is the fastest of the two runners.

Correction: Bob is the faster of the two runners.

Note: Don't use words "more" or "most" if you can use the -er or -est endings instead.

Error 11: Confusing BETWEEN and AMONG

As a rule of thumb, use the word "between" only when there are two things involved, or when comparisons in a larger group are made between pairs of things. When there are more than two things, or an unknown number of things, use among.

Sentences: I will walk among the two halves of the class.

I will walk between the many students in class.

Corrections: I will walk between the two halves of the class. I will walk among the many students in class.

Error 12: Confusing Less and Fewer

Use the word "less" only for uncountable things. When things can be counted, they are "fewer".

Sentence: I have fewer water than I thought, so I can fill less buckets.

Correction: I have less water than I thought, so I can fill fewer buckets.