

# ACT Test Taking Tips

The ACT is a widely used college admission standardized test. It has four mandatory subject tests: English, Reading, Mathematics, and Science. There is also an optional Writing test which some colleges require.

## General Tips

- Answer the questions you find easiest first. Come back to the others later.
- Don't spend more than a minute or two on any question.
- As you work on a section, keep track of how much time remains. (It's a good idea to bring a reliable watch.)
- Answer every question. There is no penalty for guessing.
- Be careful to mark only one answer choice per question.
- Write in the test book in any way that will help you.
- Consider all answer choices before you choose one. Use the process of elimination to narrow your choices.

## English Section Tips

- Consider the writing style used for each section. The correct answer choice will be the one that works best with the writing style used.
- When asked a question about something that is underlined, consider how the underlined portion fits with the rest of the section.
- Examine each answer choice to see how it differs from the others.
- For items that include "No Change" as an answer choice, choose this as your answer only if you are sure none of the other answer choices are correct.
- Reread the underlined portion with your answer choice to be sure it is correct.

## Reading Section Tips

- Read the passage carefully before you read the questions.
- Focus on the main ideas in the passage. Underline these. Don't get lost in the details.
- Try to identify how ideas in the passage are connected.
- Refer back to the passage as you answer each question.

## **Mathematics Section Tips**

- Work out the problem before looking at the answer choices. When done, choose the answer choice that matches your answer. If none match, redo the problem.
- Don't overly rely on your calculator. Some problems are best worked out manually. Some don't even require calculation.
- The questions focus much more on reasoning than on calculation. If you find yourself doing complicated calculations, you're probably on the wrong track.
- Make sure your answer choice makes sense. A calculation error can lead you to a wrong answer choice.
- Check your work.

## **Science Section Tips**

- Given the complexity of the passages, it may help to make some simple notes as you read them.
- Cross out irrelevant information.
- Don't be overly concerned with any technical terminology. Technical terms usually have little to do with the correct answer choice.
- Be watchful for conflicting viewpoints in some of the passages.

## **Writing Section Tips**

- Organization of your response is very important. Use a five-paragraph essay that includes an introduction, supporting paragraphs, and a conclusion.
- Plan your response before you begin to write it.
- Stay with the topic throughout your response.
- Vary your sentence structure and word choices.
- Use specific examples wherever possible.
- Write legibly.
- If you have time, check your grammar, usage, punctuation, and spelling.

**These tips can help you get the most out your knowledge, skills, and abilities when you take the ACT.**

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