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Garden City
Community College**

**ACT
Preparation
Handbook
for ETS
Students
2013-2014**

**Helpful Hints for Preparing
and Taking the ACT College
Entrance Exam**



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General 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, ink pen or correction fluid.
- **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.
- **Review your work.** If you **finish a test before time is called, go back and check your work.** Mark your answers neatly. 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** or you will be dismissed and your answer document will not be scored.
- **Complete Practice Tests on-line by going to the following websites:**
 - <http://www.actstudent.org/sampletest/index.html>
 - <http://www.number2.com/>

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.
- Check your **admission ticket** for your test option—ACT (No Writing) or ACT Plus Writing—reporting time, and the reporting location of your test center.
 - **On-line registration:** You **MUST** print your admission ticket directly from your ACT student Web account. You will **NOT** receive an admission ticket in the mail.
 - **Registration by mail:** You will receive your admission ticket in the mail about 2 weeks after we receive your registration packet. However, if you have established your ACT student Web account, you may also print your admission ticket from the Web.
- **Bring your admission ticket to the test center.** It contains Matching Information you must copy exactly onto your answer document to avoid delays in scoring.
- If you're unsure where your test center is located, do a practice run to see how to get there and what time you'll need to leave home to arrive by **8:00 a.m.**



- **Plan to arrive by the time indicated on your admission ticket**, normally by 8:00 a.m. If you arrive earlier than 7:45 a.m., you might have to wait outside until testing staff complete their arrangements.
- Make sure you have **acceptable identification**: (**Current (not expired) official photo ID**: Must be issued by your school, employer, or city/state/federal government (such as driver's license or passport) on which both your name and photo appear. Check website for other options at <http://www.actstudent.org/faq/answers/id.html>). You will not be admitted without proper ID! Be ready to start after everyone has been checked in.

Tips for Using a Calculator during the ACT Mathematics Test



- Know which kinds of calculators are prohibited.
 - **Permitted Calculators:** You may use any four-function, scientific, or graphing calculator, unless it has features described in the Prohibited Calculators list. For models on the Calculators Permitted with Modification list, you will be required to modify some of the calculator's features.
 - **Prohibited Calculators:** **Texas Instruments:** all model numbers that begin with **TI-89** and **TI-92**, and the **TI-Nspire CAS**—The **TI-Nspire (non-CAS)** is permitted.
 - **Hewlett-Packard:** **hp 48GII** and all model numbers that begin with **hp 40G**, **hp 49G**, or **hp 50G**
 - **Casio:** **Algebra fx 2.0**, **ClassPad 300**, and all model numbers that begin with **CFX-9970G**
 - calculators with built-in computer algebra systems
 - pocket organizers
 - handheld or laptop computers
 - electronic writing pads or pen-input devices—The Sharp EL 9600 is permitted.
 - calculators built into cell phones or other electronic communication devices
 - calculators with a typewriter keypad (keys in QWERTY format)—Calculators with letter keys not in QWERTY format are permitted.
- 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 Multiple-Choice Tests



English

- Be aware of the **writing style** used in each passage.
- Consider the **elements of writing** that are included in each underlined part 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 use a calculator, be sure it 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.

ACT English Test Preparation

75 questions – 45 minutes



Usage/Mechanics

- **Punctuation (13%).** Questions in this category test your knowledge of the conventions of internal and end-of-sentence punctuation, with emphasis on the relationship of punctuation to meaning (for example, avoiding ambiguity, indicating appositives).
- **Grammar and Usage (16%).** Questions in this category test your understanding of agreement between subject and verb, between pronoun and antecedent, and between modifiers and the word modified; verb formation; pronoun case; formation of comparative and superlative adjectives and adverbs; and idiomatic usage.
- **Sentence Structure (24%).** Questions in this category test your understanding of relationships between and among clauses, placement of modifiers, and shifts in construction.

Rhetorical Skills

- **Strategy (16%).** Questions in this category test how well you develop a given topic by choosing expressions appropriate to an essay's audience and purpose; judging the effect of adding, revising, or deleting supporting material; and judging the relevance of statements in context.
- **Organization (15%).** Questions in this category test how well you organize ideas and choose effective opening, transitional, and closing sentences.
- **Style (16%).** Questions in this category test how well you select precise and appropriate words and images, maintain the level of style and tone in an essay, manage sentence elements for rhetorical effectiveness, and avoid ambiguous pronoun references, wordiness, and redundancy.

TIPS FOR TAKING ENGLISH TEST:

- Be aware of the **writing style** used in each passage.
- Consider the **elements of writing** that are included in each underlined part 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.

ACT Math Test Preparation

60 questions – 60 minutes



Pre-Algebra/Elementary Algebra

- **Pre-Algebra (23%).** Questions in this content area are based on basic operations using whole numbers, decimals, fractions, and integers; place value; square roots and approximations; the concept of exponents; scientific notation; factors; ratio, proportion, and percent; linear equations in one variable; absolute value and ordering numbers by value; elementary counting techniques and simple probability; data collection, representation, and interpretation; and understanding simple descriptive statistics.
- **Elementary Algebra (17%).** Questions in this content area are based on properties of exponents and square roots, evaluation of algebraic expressions through substitution, using variables to express functional relationships, understanding algebraic operations, and the solution of quadratic equations by factoring.

Intermediate Algebra/Coordinate Geometry

- **Intermediate Algebra (15%).** Questions in this content area are based on an understanding of the quadratic formula, rational and radical expressions, absolute value equations and inequalities, sequences and patterns, systems of equations, quadratic inequalities, functions, modeling, matrices, roots of polynomials, and complex numbers.
- **Coordinate Geometry (15%).** Questions in this content area are based on graphing and the relations between equations and graphs, including points, lines, polynomials, circles, and other curves; graphing inequalities; slope; parallel and perpendicular lines; distance; midpoints; and conics.

Plane Geometry/Trigonometry

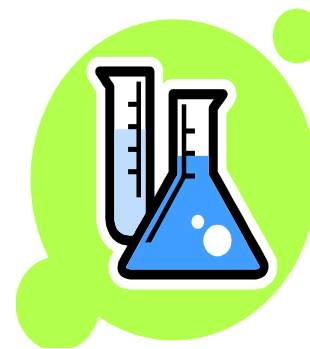
- **Plane Geometry (23%).** Questions in this content area are based on the properties and relations of plane figures, including angles and relations among perpendicular and parallel lines; properties of circles, triangles, rectangles, parallelograms, and trapezoids; transformations; the concept of proof and proof techniques; volume; and applications of geometry to three dimensions.
- **Trigonometry (7%).** Questions in this content area are based on understanding trigonometric relations in right triangles; values and properties of trigonometric functions; graphing trigonometric functions; modeling using trigonometric functions; use of trigonometric identities; and solving trigonometric equations.

TIPS FOR TAKING MATH TEST:

- Read each question carefully to make sure you **understand the type of answer** required.
- If you use a calculator, be sure it 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.

ACT Science Test Preparation

40 questions - 35 minutes



Calculators **may not** be used on the Science Test.

The content of the Science Test includes biology, chemistry, physics, and the Earth/space sciences (for example, geology, astronomy, and meteorology).

Advanced knowledge in these subjects is not required, but background knowledge acquired in general, introductory science courses is needed to answer some of the questions. The test emphasizes scientific reasoning skills over recall of scientific content, skill in mathematics, or reading ability. The scientific information is conveyed in one of three different formats:

- **Data Representation (38%).** This format presents graphic and tabular material similar to that found in science journals and texts. The questions associated with this format measures skills such as **graph reading, interpretation of scatterplots, and interpretation of information presented in tables, diagrams, and figures.**
- **Research Summaries (45%).** This format provides descriptions of one or more related experiments. The questions focus on the **design of experiments** and the **interpretation of experimental results.**
- **Conflicting Viewpoints (17%).** This format presents expressions of **several hypotheses** or views that, being based on differing premises or on incomplete data, are inconsistent with one another. The questions focus on the **understanding, analysis, and comparison of alternative viewpoints or hypotheses.**

The test assumes that students are in the process of taking the core science course of study (three years or more) that will prepare them for college-level work and have completed a course in Earth science and/or physical science and a course in biology.

The test presents seven sets of scientific information, each followed by a number of multiple-choice test questions.

The questions require you to:

- recognize and understand the basic features of, and concepts related to, the provided information
- examine critically the relationship between the information provided and the conclusions drawn or hypotheses developed
- generalize from given information and draw conclusions, gain new information, or make predictions



TIPS FOR TAKING SCIENCE TEST:

- **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.



ACT Reading Test Preparation

40 questions – 35 minutes

The Reading Test is based on four types of reading selections: social studies, natural sciences, prose fiction, and humanities. The Social Studies/Sciences subscore is based on the questions in the social studies and the natural sciences sections of the test, and the Arts/Literature subscore is based on the questions in the prose fiction and humanities sections of the test.

- **Social Studies (25%).** Questions in this category are based on passages in the content areas of anthropology, archaeology, biography, business, economics, education, geography, history, political science, psychology, and sociology.
- **Natural Sciences (25%).** Questions in this category are based on passages in the content areas of anatomy, astronomy, biology, botany, chemistry, ecology, geology, medicine, meteorology, microbiology, natural history, physiology, physics, technology, and zoology.
- **Prose Fiction (25%).** Questions in this category are based on intact short stories or excerpts from short stories or novels.
- **Humanities (25%).** Questions in this category are based on passages from memoirs and personal essays and in the content areas of architecture, art, dance, ethics, film, language, literary criticism, music, philosophy, radio, television, and theater.

Specifically, questions will ask you to use referring and reasoning skills to:

- determine main ideas
- locate and interpret significant details
- understand sequences of events
- make comparisons
- comprehend cause-effect relationships
- determine the meaning of context-dependent words, phrases, and statements
- draw generalizations
- analyze the author's or narrator's voice and method

The test comprises four prose passages that are representative of the level and kinds of reading required in first-year college courses; passages on topics in social studies, natural sciences, fiction, and the humanities are included.

Each passage is accompanied by a set of multiple-choice test questions. These questions do not test the rote recall of facts from outside the passage, isolated vocabulary items, or rules of formal logic. Instead, the test focuses on the complementary and supportive skills that readers must use in studying written materials across a range of subject areas.

TIPS FOR TAKING READING TEST:

- **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.