

The ACT Test Content

ACT English Test (5 passages, 75 questions, 45 min)

The English test asks students to assume the role of a writer who analyzes essay-length texts and makes editorial decisions to improve the writing. Students apply revision and editing skills that are necessary for writing effectively in college and career. Four scores are reported for the English test: an overall score based on all 75 questions and three reporting-category scores.

Production of Writing (29–32%):

- **Topic Development:** Demonstrate an understanding of, and control over, the rhetorical aspects of texts. Identify the purposes of parts of texts, determine whether a text or part of a text has met its intended goal, and evaluate the relevance of material in terms of a text's focus.
- **Organization, Unity, and Cohesion:** Ensure that a text is logically organized, flows smoothly, and has an effective introduction and conclusion.

Knowledge of Language (13–19%): Demonstrate effective language use with precision and concision in word choice and consistency in style and tone.

Conventions of Standard English (51–56%):

- Revise and edit issues with the following aspects of writing:
 - **Sentence structure and formation**
 - **Punctuation**
 - **Usage**

ACT Mathematics Test (60 questions, 60 min)

The material covered on the test emphasizes the major content areas that are prerequisites to successful performance in entry-level courses in college mathematics. Recall of complex formulas and extensive computation are not required.

Preparing for Higher Mathematics (57–60%):

- **Number and Quantity (7–10%):** Demonstrate knowledge of real and complex number systems. Reason with numerical quantities in many forms, including expressions with integer and rational exponents, and vectors and matrices.
- **Algebra (12–15%):** Solve, graph, and model multiple types of expressions. Interpret and use many different kinds of equations (e.g., linear, polynomial, radical, exponential relationships). Find solutions to systems of equations, even when represented by a simple matrix equation, and apply results to real-world contexts.
- **Functions (12–15%):** Demonstrate knowledge of function definition, notation, representation, and application. Use functions including linear, radical, piecewise, polynomial, and logarithmic. Manipulate and translate functions, as well as interpret and use important features of graphs.
- **Geometry (12–15%):** Apply knowledge of shapes and solids, using concepts such as congruence and similarity relationships or surface area and volume measurements. Apply understanding to composite objects, and solve for missing values in triangles, circles, and other figures. Use trigonometric ratios and equations of conic sections.

Integrating Essential Skills (40–43%): Synthesize and apply your understandings and skills to solve more complex problems.

Modeling: This category represents all questions that involve producing, interpreting, understanding, evaluating, and improving models.

ACT Reading Test (5 passages, including one paired-passage set; 40 questions, 35 min)

The reading test measures students' ability to read closely, reason logically about texts using evidence, and integrate information from multiple sources. Questions focus on the mutually supportive skills that readers apply when studying written materials across a range of subject areas. Five scores are reported for the reading test: an overall score based on all 40 questions, three reporting category scores based on specific knowledge and skills, and an Understanding Complex Texts indicator.

Key Ideas and Details (55–60%): Read texts closely to determine central ideas and themes. Summarize information and ideas accurately. Understand relationships and draw logical inferences and conclusions, including understanding sequential, comparative, and cause-effect relationships.

Craft and Structure (25–30%): Apply vocabulary knowledge to determine word and phrase meanings; analyze an author's word choice rhetorically; analyze text structure; understand the author's purpose and perspective; analyze characters' points of view. Interpret authorial decisions rhetorically and differentiate between various perspectives and sources of information.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas (13–18%): Understand authors' claims, differentiate between facts and opinions, and use evidence to make connections between texts that are related by topic. Some questions will require students to analyze how authors construct arguments and to evaluate reasoning and evidence from various sources.

ACT Science Test (40 questions, 35 min)

The test presents several sets of authentic scientific scenarios that are built around important scientific concepts and are designed to mirror the experiences of students and working scientists engaging in real science. The content of the test includes biology, chemistry, Earth/space sciences (e.g., geology, astronomy, and meteorology), and physics. Advanced knowledge in these areas is not required, but background knowledge acquired in general, introductory science courses may be needed to correctly answer some of the questions. The science test focuses on multidimensional assessment, with questions that assess science content in concert with science skills and practices.

The scientific information appears in one of three formats:

- **Data Representation (30–40%):** This format presents graphic and tabular material similar to that found in science journals and texts.
- **Research Summaries (45–55%):** This format provides descriptions of one or more related experiments.
- **Conflicting Viewpoints (15–20%):** This format presents two or more explanations for the same scientific phenomena that, because they are based on differing premises or incomplete data, are inconsistent with one another.

Four scores are reported for the science test: a total test score based on all 40 questions and three reporting category scores:

Interpretation of Data (45–55%): Manipulate and analyze scientific data presented in scientific tables, graphs, and diagrams (e.g., recognize trends in data, translate tabular data into graphs, interpolate and extrapolate, and reason mathematically).

Scientific Investigation (20–30%): Understand experimental tools, procedures, and design (e.g., identify controls and variables) and compare, extend, and modify experiments (e.g., predict the results of additional trials).

Evaluation of Models, Inferences, and Experimental Results (25–35%): Judge the validity of scientific information and formulate conclusions and predictions based on that information (e.g., determine which explanation for a scientific phenomenon is supported by new findings).

ACT Writing Test (Optional)

The writing test is a 40-minute essay task that measures students' writing skills—specifically, writing skills taught in high school English classes and entry-level college composition courses. The test consists of one prompt that describes a complex issue and provides three different perspectives on the issue. Students are asked to read the prompt and write an essay in which they develop an argument to support their own perspective on the issue.

Five scores are reported for the writing test: an overall score and four domain scores that are based on the analytic scoring rubric. The overall score is the rounded average of the four domain scores. The four writing domains are:

Ideas and Analysis (25%): Generate productive ideas that are relevant to the situation and engage critically with multiple perspectives on the given issue.

Development and Support (25%): Explain and explore ideas, offer rationale, discuss implications, and illustrate through examples.

Organization (25%): Organize ideas with clarity and purpose, and guide the reader through the discussion.

Language Use and Conventions (25%): Use written language to convey arguments with clarity. Adjust the style and tone of the writing to communicate effectively.