



ACT Content

Section Overviews



English

- 45 minutes, 75 questions
- About 36 seconds per question
- Remember: **Every question is worth the same amount of points.**
- Strategy: 30 second rule
- Things to note: English is often graded on the hardest curve

English: Punctuation (Commas)

- Sentence: Subject and verb that form a complete thought.
- 1 Independent Clause, 3 ways to add info:
 - Before In the 1950s, the British moved their offices to Dubai from Sharjah.
 - Inside Dubai, like the United Kingdom, *is* a constitutional monarchy.
 - After Daily maximum temperatures in the *Rub' al Khali* average 117 °F, although they can reach as high as 133 °F.
- 2 Independent Clauses
 - FANBOYS! (For, And, Nor, But, Or, Yet, So)

English: Punctuation (Commas)

- Lists
 - More than 2 nouns need commas
 - Adjectives need them if cannot put 'and' between the adjectives

English: Punctuation (Apostrophes)

- Shows ownership
 - Thomas's bike
- If belongs to more than one thing, just add '
 - Travelers' water
- Used to make contractions

English: Punctuation (Colons)

- Semicolon: a replacement for a period for two related sentences

We use a **semicolon** before:

- Thus, furthermore, however, moreover, therefore, nevertheless

We use a **comma** before:

- FANBOYS

Colons: usually there to trip you up

- Must have matching noun-keep subject consistent/logical on both sides of colon
- Never begin with a verb

English: Punctuation (Dashes)

- Can go in place of a semicolon, colon, or comma
 - Very rare on ACT, only select answer if NOTHING else is correct
 - Think of it as an interruption

Words to Know

- It's = it is; its = possessive
- Too, two, to; whose vs. who's; their vs. there vs. they're
- Wordiness
 - Obvious repetition--"Asian Chinese Festivals"
 - Word stuffing--excessive detail that means the same thing
 - 'Ing' and 'ed' verbs
 - She thought my being frank was humorous.
 - Many ways to say because
- Strategy: KISS (Keep it simple, stupid)

Math

- 60 minutes, 60 questions
- About 1 minute per question
- Strategy: 30 second rule
- Things to note: math often has a more relaxed curve
- First 40 correct=25 on that section
- Covers Algebra 1 and 2, Geometry, and 4 Trig questions
- Worry most about the questions that you know-but don't leave questions blank

Reading: Overview

- 35 minutes, 40 questions (4 passages)
- Things to consider: There is only one right answer
- Strategies:
 - Read intro and conclusion in full, read topic sentences, skim body paragraphs
 - Read everything (recommended 2 minutes for reading)
 - Read the questions first, go through passage circling key information from questions

Reading: Author Method

- This is a type of question that asks what the author's purpose is or the purpose of specific lines
 - Look to the answers
 - WHAT type of writing [argument, story, social studies essay, nonfiction essay, etc.]?
 - Are the questions asking you to synthesize or infer?

Reading: Vocabulary

- Do not spend time memorizing ACT vocab
- ACT tries to trick you
 - Strategy: ALWAYS refer to the word **IN CONTEXT**
 - Try replacing the word in the sentence

Reading: Fact Finding

- Questions will ask you to for specific textual information
 - Generally will not give line numbers because that would be too easy
- Strategy: use your pencil
 - Circle names, important words, and dates
 - Jot little reminders off to the side of each paragraph

Science AKA Reasoning Section

- 35 minutes, 40 questions
- Aim for one minute less than the number of questions per passage (there will be about six or seven questions and six or seven passages)
- Strategy: Read the information carefully first, then go to the questions
- Things to consider: Questions get progressively harder for each PASSAGE

Science: Keeping Track of Information

- The science section feels like too much information. You are not going to know or recognize all or even most of the science terms on the test. Do not get bogged down by that.
 - Parse out the information from the science jargon
- Point to the figure being referred to in the question
- Make diagrams for yourself! It's important to know the x and y correlation, but not the exact detailed science behind it.
- Relabel things if it helps you.

Establishing Relationship

- Because the science section has so much technical language, it's important to look for changes, trends, and relationships.
- Direct correlation: x increases as y increases (or vice versa)
- Inverse correlation: x increases as y decreases (or vice versa)
 - Make a note next to the graph of the relationship
- Key: Notice a pattern
 - Is the variable increasing? By how much?
 - This will help you predict.

Science: Calculations

- ACT science section will ONLY ask you to add, subtract, multiply, divide, or find an average in a BASIC way
 - Strategy: use the relationship you found and simply adjust to accommodate the variable

Science: Comparing Viewpoints

- There will be a passage and question set based around different scientific viewpoints on a topic.
- Given 2-5 different written interpretations/theories/etc. And asked questions about them
- Strategy: DRAW PICTURES! (try to relate similarities and differences to find a pattern)
- Validity of viewpoint is irrelevant
- This is just a reading section with fancier words.

Writing

- 40 minutes, 1 persuasive essay
- Scored on a scale of 1-12
 - Here's a secret: it does not matter that much
- Given: 1 introduction topic, 3 differing viewpoints
 - Last year's was like: "Football is an incredibly popular American sport, but it's dangerous!" And the viewpoints were something like 1) "It's too dangerous! It shouldn't be popular!" 2) "It's part of our culture! It's not that dangerous!" and 3) "The athletes know what they're getting into"
- Task: write a persuasive essay arguing for or against the topic, based around the given viewpoints.

Writing: How to Structure

- 8-10 minutes to plan
 - Write thesis
 - Topic sentence 1
 - Supporting evidence
 - Topic sentence 2
 - Supporting evidence
 - Topic sentence 3
 - Supporting evidence

Writing: Essay Outline

1. Intro
 - a. Introduce theme or argument
 - b. Thesis
2. Perspective not aligned with and why it's valid
 - a. BUT why yours is better
3. Perspective aligned with and why it's valid
 - a. BUT why yours is better
4. Your perspective and why it's the BEST
5. Conclusion
 - a. Drive your point home
 - b. Restate thesis

Helpful Tips

- BS information!
- You don't have to argue your personal viewpoint
- Use anecdotes from your own life (if they relate directly)
- Top scoring essays are almost always 2 pages or longer
- First and last paragraphs are what the reader spends most time on
 - Have a clear thesis that argues ONE thing!