

Testing Tips

The ACT measures content, but is also a timed assessment. Testing for content and efficiency require specific strategies that we can teach our students to help prepare them for the timed aspect of this assessment. Students will NOT be able to answer all of the questions given the time limit, so they must find a balance between accuracy and speed. Students are NOT penalized for incorrect answers and they get credit for every correct answer. Students should therefore fill in a bubble for every question, even if they did not have time to work out an answer. Here are some additional tips to help improve ACT performance:

TIPS for MATH

Math questions are in order from easier to harder. Have students take the last 30 questions of the test and fill in the A or E row for every question. This means fill in A/F all the way to the end or E/K all the way to the end. This way students can work from the beginning and stress less about completion. If a student reaches question 30 and there is more time, they should start answering each subsequent question and changing the bubbles to the correct answer. If students are confident in math they can bubble only the last 20 questions instead of the last 30 questions.

TIPS for Reading

The Reading test contains four passages. They are always in the same order: Prose, Social Science, Humanities, and Natural Science. These passages do not need to be completed in order. Choose the first or last passage as those are usually the two easiest and start with them. Students can allow themselves to guess the answers more on the middle two passages. Choose any letter set such as A/E and fill in those bubbles for the middle passages. If students are avid readers, ask them to complete 3 passages and then allow themselves to guess the answers on the last passage.

TIPS for English

Each skill is tested 5 times, once on each passage. Usually the shortest answer is the most correct one because they are looking for concise answers. For example if it says 'costly' and 'expensive', costly would be the correct answer. Everything is aligned to the main ideas, so students need to understand the main idea and make sure answers are aligned with the main idea.

TIPS for Science

There is not enough time to read the entire science passages. Read the brief (first paragraph) then scan the rest. Look for italicized words to figure out what they mean. Many questions have to do with reading charts. Sometimes flipping the chart on its side makes it easier to read.

School Wide Tips

Work with all content area teachers about planning for the ACT and preparing students. Have a school wide Kaplan Saturday test day, a School wide SchoolCity test day, or an ACT TestNav Test day. (See **Helpful Links and Information**) **Practice, Practice, Practice.** Building student confidence and teaching them to think and take the test strategically.