

# ACT: Breaking Down the Test

Subject	Number of Questions	Time Limit	Range of scores
English/Grammar	75 questions	45 minutes	1 – 36
Math	60 questions	60 minutes	1 – 36
Reading Comprehension	40 questions	35 minutes	1 – 36
Science	40 questions	35 minutes	1 – 36
Writing *	1 essay	40 minutes	2 – 12

\* Optional writing section for any ACT given on weekend; mandatory for SHS Juniors in early spring.

## 1. English/Grammar: 5 essays or passages

### A. Usage and Mechanics

- Punctuation: comma, apostrophe, period, semi-colon rules
- Grammar and usage: agreement between subject/verb, pronoun/antecedent, verb formation, adjectives/adverbs
- Sentence structure: clauses, placement of modifiers, shifts in construction

**B. Rhetorical skills:** developing a given topic appropriate to audience and essay's purpose; judging the effect of adding, revising, or deleting material; judging the relevancy of statements in context; organizing ideas; choosing precise/appropriate words; avoiding ambiguous pronoun references.

## 2. Math Section: Pre-Algebra, Elementary Algebra, Intermediate Algebra, Coordinate Geometry, Plane Geometry, Trigonometry

- Calculator active
- Requires students to quickly identify ways to solve problems
- Requires students to work faster and more strategically than they have in math class
- Questions are not ordered by topic, so students have to switch from statistics, algebra, and geometry as they work through the math section

## 3. Reading Comprehension: 4 passages

- 4 topic areas in the same order on all ACT tests
  - Prose fiction/literary narrative
  - Social science
  - Humanities
  - Natural Science
- 5 main types of questions
  - Main Idea
  - Detail
  - Vocabulary
  - Function and Development
  - Implied Ideas

## 4. Science: Data representation, research summaries, conflicting viewpoints

- 7 passages: may contain graphs, charts, experiment summaries, or conflicting viewpoints
- This section tests your scientific skills (i.e. understanding the scientific method and results of experiments, reading graphs/charts/tables) NOT specific facts or topics

## 5. Writing: Students respond to a prompt and must organize and support their ideas in written format