

ACT: Test-taking Strategies

English Tips:

1. Choose the most concise answer. Look for straight-forward, logical sentence structure. The best writing says it clearly and concisely!
2. Read the paragraph that contains the underlined portion.
3. Be careful with “No Change” answers (used only about 25% of the time).
4. Read all possible suggested changes before bubbling.

Math Tips:

1. Pay attention to diagrams: they offer clues about which answer choices are most logical.
2. Plug in the answers; however, doing so is time-consuming. Therefore, use this strategy only as a last resort.
3. Using the calculator also eats up time! All questions may be answered without a calculator.
4. Make sure that you answer the question that is asked.
5. Check your work as time allows.

Reading Tips:

1. Pick the passage that is your strength and do it first:
1—Prose fiction; 2—Social Science; 3—Humanities; 4—Natural Science
2. Skim the passage--then read the first and last sentence of every paragraph to help comprehension.

Science Tips:

1. Rely on the visuals: unfamiliar facts and complicated terminology are overwhelming, so ignore and go straight for the graph.
2. But, do read the passages carefully!
3. Do the conflicting viewpoints section LAST!

Writing/Essay Tips:

1. Pre-plan examples: choose examples from art, literature, history, and/or personal experience.
2. Write a great introduction and conclusion!
3. The writing test does not affect your overall composite score, but many colleges want to see this score. Your writing score might be the score that gets you into the college you want!

Test-taking strategies

1. **Pace** yourself!!!
2. **Familiarize** yourself with the content of the ACT tests.
3. **Refresh** your knowledge and skills in the content areas.
4. **Identify** the content areas you have not studied.
5. **Use** process of elimination.
6. **Make** sure that your answer is reasonable, especially in math and science.
7. **Bubble** at the end and fill in EVERY bubble....You must practice waiting until the end to bubble before test day. When the test administrator gives the 5-minute warning, start bubbling. Consider bubbling in three answer choices in a row at once to save even more time.
8. **Answer** every question. There's no penalty for guessing!
9. **Skip** hard questions.
10. **Stay** calm and keep a cool head. Remember, that which does not kill us only makes us stronger!