Achievable

ACT DUMP SHEET

# Test format and strategy

## Three required sections, two optional

| Section | Questions | Time | Pace | What it tests |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **English** | 50 (40 scored) | 35 min | 42 s | Revising and editing short essays: Production of Writing 38—43%, Knowledge of Language 18—23%, Conventions of Standard English 38—43% |
| **Math** | 45 (41 scored) | 50 min | 67 s | Math through the start of 12th grade: Preparing for Higher Math 80% (number and quantity, algebra, functions, geometry, statistics and probability), Integrating Essential Skills 20% |
| **Reading** | 36 (27 scored) | 40 min | 67 s | Key Ideas & Details 44—52%, Craft & Structure 26—33%, Integration of Knowledge & Ideas 19—26% |
| **Science** (optional) | 40 (34 scored) | 40 min | 60 s | Interpreting data, experiments and competing models in biology, chemistry, Earth and space science, and physics |
| **Writing** (optional) | 1 essay | 40 min | — | An argumentative essay on an issue, weighing your perspective against at least one of three given |

Testing time: **2 h 5 min** for the three required sections, **2 h 45 min** with Science or Writing, **3 h 25 min** with both, plus a **short break after Math**.

## Scoring

- Each multiple-choice section: **1—36**
- **Composite** (1—36): the average of **English, Math and Reading**, rounded to the nearest whole number
- Science and Writing **never count** toward the Composite
- **STEM score:** the average of Math and Science
- **ELA score:** the average of English and Reading, plus Writing if you take it
- **Writing: 2—12**, across four domains
- **No passing score:** each college sets its own targets
- Test more than once and ACT reports a **superscore**: your best English, Math and Reading across test dates

## Every question

- **Four answer choices** on every multiple-choice question
- **No penalty for a wrong answer:** never leave a question blank
- Each section hides **unscored field test questions**, unlabeled: treat every question as scored
- English, Reading and Science ask for the **best** answer: read every choice before you pick
- Math asks for the **correct** answer: work it out, then find it; not there? **Reread the question**
- Do the **easy questions first**; guess, **flag** a hard one and come back
- Stuck? **Eliminate** what you know is wrong and make an educated guess

## Math tools

- A permitted calculator is allowed on **Math only**, and every problem can be solved without one
- **CAS calculators are banned** (TI-89, TI-Nspire CAS); check yours against ACT's calculator policy
- Online, **Desmos** is built in, and your own permitted calculator is allowed too
- **No formula sheet:** memorize the formulas on the math sheets
- Practice with the **same calculator** you will bring on test day

## Test day

- Register through **MyACT**, upload a recent **photo**, and choose Science and Writing by the late deadline
- Paper, a test center computer, or your own device: **always at a test center**
- Bring your **admission ticket** and an original, valid **photo ID**
- Report by the time on your ticket, usually **8:00 a.m.**: late arrivals are not admitted
- On paper: **No. 2 pencils** with erasers, no mechanical pencils or pens
- Phones and smartwatches **off and out of sight**, the break included
- One test per date; **no limit** on retakes, and no retaking a single section

## Practice like the real thing

- Take practice tests **timed and without pausing**
- Review every question you **missed or guessed on**, and look for the patterns