

ACT HINTS

General Helps: (Subject specific helps on following pages)

Manage your time. YOU DON'T KNOW AN ANSWER, **MARK**, AND MOVE ON.
Chances are that the next question is easier.

NEVER leave an answer blank (Guess and move on)

Keep your head up and use every minute available. **Never put your head down if you finish early!** This temporarily puts your “brain to sleep” making it hard to focus on the rest of the test. If you have extra time double or triple check your answers. Plug in the answers choices and eliminate them to make sure you haven't made a mistake.

Eliminate the answers that are most unlikely and go with your gut

Guesses will be much better **right after** you read the question than if you wait until the end of the test and blindly guess.

Pick one answer choice (A,B,C,D,F) and use the same one for all questions that you have to **blind guess**. For example, if you run out of time and have to quickly guess, use the same answer for every question guessed.

WRITE in your test booklet! Students that write in the test booklet consistently score higher than students that don't. Use the margins for calculating, underline words,

~~cross-out~~ words, or ANYTHING that will help you figure out the answers.

Mark the questions in the booklet so you can come back to it.

Mark out known wrong answers (to save time when you come back).

Make your best guess, and then move on.

Watch your time. You'll get way more questions right if you give yourself the chance to complete the entire test.

Peppermint and Spearmint gum/candy can make your brain feel alert/refreshed.

MATH

- A 33 (is possible) on math without knowing ANY trig
- Errors in calculation and dropping negative signs can cost you a point or more

- Can you work it **without a calculator?** Then do it! Students often misuse their calculators finding incorrect answers. Use a calculator to work operations that go beyond simple arithmetic
- ONLY do one calculator operation at a time, and write out the results of each calculation as you go

Mental Math, estimation, and common sense can be used many times (SAVING PRECIOUS TIME)

Plug in potential answers to see if it will work (start with C when trying this)

Math Blitz Strategy: to make 24+ on the math section

- Blitz the first 20 questions, moving through them in only 10 minutes
- Allow 20 minutes for the middle 20 questions
- Full 30 minutes for the last 20 questions

Cherry Picking Strategy: to make 24-

- Slow down on the earlier questions
- (improve accuracy on one you know how to answer)
- Take more guesses on the tougher ones

KNOW these formulas:

Area -	square	rectangle	triangle
	circle	trapezoid	parallelogram

Circumference - circle

Volume –	cube	rectangular	cylinder
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Pythagorean theorem

Equation -	line	circle
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Sine	Tangent	Cosine
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Cosecant	Secant	Cotangent
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You will NOT need to know the following:

Volume -	spear	cone	pyramid
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Surface area -	sphere
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Law of cosines or sines

READING

- Every answer is contained in the content
- Skim and Scan (before you read the questions)
- Look for:
 1. What is being said?
 2. Who is saying it?
 3. Where is everything taking place?
 4. Why is this being said? What is the purpose of the passage?

ENGLISH

- Stop looking for the right answer choice and look for the **BEST** answer choice.
- “**No Change**” can be the correct answer, sometimes even back to back questions
- The **SHORTEST** answer is, more often than not, the **correct answer**
- The **LONGEST** answer and “;” answers are usually **wrong**.

Semicolon

- ACT almost never uses semicolons as super commas.
- 6 or 7 questions may have semicolon answer choices, but only 1 or 2 uses are actually correct.

Colon

- For the purpose of the ACT, a colon can't be used to separate a subject from its verb, and it shouldn't interrupt a predicate
- The part of the sentence that comes before the colon must be able to stand on its own as a complete sentence

Comma usage - KEY to a high score. **KNOW** rules concerning commas.

- More often than not you'll need to remove unnecessary commas rather than add essential commas
- “When in doubt, commas out”
- Commas are used to separate ideas
- Commas cause pauses
- No solo comma
- Use commas to set off nonessential phrases from the part of the sentence they modify, but don't use commas for essential phrases

- As many as 15 questions on the ACT English test concern commas in some fashion

SCIENCE

3 types of passages

- Data representation
- Research summary
- Conflicting viewpoints

Skim graphs and pictures first!

Don't overthink

Use the infographics

Spot contradictions

GOOD LUCK!!!

Remember this is an **OPEN BOOK TEST**. **ALL of the answers** are there

Subtest	Benchmark Score	Questions	Passages	Minutes	Time/ Question	Time/ Passage	Score based on
English	18	75	5	45	30 sec	8 min	Editing ability (grammar/composition skills)
Math	22	60		60			ability to solve word problems skills/accuracy in pre-algebra, algebra, and geometry
Break	10-15 minutes ALWAYS take snack/drinks for breaks! Caffeination and sugar will help you through the rest of the test.						
Reading	22	40	4	35			
Science	23	40	6-7	35			