

## How to Study For the ACT in A Month

Doing well on the ACT requires extensive practice and familiarity with the exam. To prepare in a month, you have to focus on cramming as much practice into your regimen as possible. Here are some straightforward steps to help you prepare for the ACT in a short period of time:

### 1) Take a diagnostic test

This will help you become more familiar with the exam and indicate which areas are your strengths and which areas are your weaknesses. Take breaks like you would during exam day and make note of how focused you are during each section. Are you losing steam as you get towards the end? Or are you finding it hard to focus near the start? You can work on things like this during your month of practicing.

### 2) Assign weeks to each section

By this I mean that you should assign one section to each week of the month, since there are 4 required sections on the ACT: reading, English, math and science. Before you assign sections to each week of the month, take a look at your diagnostic test. Depending on your course work (if you're preparing during the school year) or other commitments, assign the section you did the worst on, to the least busiest week and the section you did the best on to your busiest week. This way, you put in more time working on the section that you need the most improvement on.

### 3) Practice

This is pretty straightforward. The ACT is an old test so there is plenty of test material to practice with. If you don't want to spend the money to buy test prep books or courses, look for online resources or old tests from the internet to practice with. Really focus on one section a week so that you can improve your score. At the end of each week, do a full section and see if you improved from the diagnostic test. If you didn't, maybe you should change your study habits or spend more time practicing.

If you're signed up to do the optional essay as well, plan to do one (or more) essay prompts as practice each week. This way, you can be prepared for the time limit and types of prompts that will show up on the ACT. You can find past ACT prompts to practice from by doing a quick search.

### 4) Take full tests

Try to take full ACT tests at least once a week, if not more. This will help your endurance (since the ACT is a long test) and will prepare you for the real exam come exam day. Use the same material you would during exam day and only take breaks like you would during the exam. You want to make sure that you can keep your energy up and stay focused during the whole exam. Come exam day, be confident in yourself and make sure to eat and sleep well the days leading up to the exam. The morning of, eat a healthy, filling breakfast and bring snacks to eat during breaks. This way, you can really focus on the exam and not worry about being hungry or tired. Good luck studying!

## How to Build An ACT Study Plan

Building a study plan, and sticking to the study plan, is the best way to study for the ACT. On the ACT, there isn't much to memorize but to do well, you need to practice a lot and make sure that time isn't an issue. There are several factors that go into building an effective study plan that takes into account the format and difficulties of the ACT.

### 1) How much time do you have to study?

Time is the most important factor that should help you build a study plan. If you have more time to study, you can make your plan denser, focusing on certain topics on the test. If you don't have much time to study, you can create a broader study plan, focusing on each of the four sections and taking practice tests or reviewing frequently asked question types.

### 2) What sections do you need the most help on?

At the beginning of your preparations for the ACT, you should take a diagnostic test. If you've already taken the ACT before, take a look at your past test scores. Figure out which section(s) you need the most help on and make sure to plan so that you dedicate the most time to those sections. If there is a certain portion of the ACT you need help on, and don't seem to be improving on, consider getting a tutor or enrolling in a test prep class. Although this won't help everyone, it's worth a shot if you're consistently getting the same score.

### 3) Are you taking the optional writing portion?

If you're taking the writing portion, it would be a good idea to fit time into your study plan to do practice essays. Get used to the types of prompts that show up on the exam and be prepared for the time crunch involved. The more you practice doing the writing section, the more similarities you will find within the prompts. This will make it easier to write faster and better.

Now build your study plan. Divide up your studying between the time you have and the sections you need to work on. Like I said before, make sure to spend the most time on your weaker sections, so you can improve on the test as a whole. Plan to take at least one full exam a week so that you can familiarize yourself with the format of the test and make sure that you can stay focused for the full period of time required for the ACT. Take breaks as you would during the real exam and make sure to time yourself. A lot of people find the time crunch to be their biggest issue, so when you're building your study plan, make sure to not only practice freely, but to practice with a timer as well.

If you're still having trouble building a study plan, find one online and customize it depending on which sections you need the most improvement on and the amount of time you to prepare. Take into account your course load, work schedule and other commitments. You want to make sure that you can fully prepare for the ACT.

During the days leading up to the exam, practice a little bit of each section each day, so you can remember what you learned over the course of your preparations. Find tips and strategies online that you can use during test day and make sure that time is not an issue. Get

comfortable working fast and confidently. Take as many full length tests as you can- this is one of the best ways to prepare. Make sure to get lots of rest, eat healthy food and feel confident before exam day. Don't stress too much and good luck studying!

## How to Succeed On the ACT If You're A "Slow Worker"

We've all been there- the proctor calls out "time's up!", and you still have 5 questions left to answer. This nightmare scenario is one that's all too familiar for us "slow workers" out there, but with the right preparation and practice, you can make sure you're not racing against the clock on test day.

### Familiarize yourself with the test structure

Make sure you're aware of the amount of time you have for each section, and how many questions will be covered. Read the instructions given at the beginning of each section- this information will be the same as what's given on test day, so you can save yourself valuable time by reading it beforehand.

### Time yourself when completing practice tests

Knowing what to expect is the best way to reduce anxiety during the real test! Set aside the full amount of time one afternoon, and allow yourself to work through an entire practice exam with a timer. This way, you'll be able to identify which sections take longer, and focus your efforts on studying there later. Don't let yourself take any shortcuts during this mock exam- bubble in all your responses on the answer sheet, and follow the time constraints.

### Answer the questions you know first, then spend time on the difficult ones

There are a couple of strategies you can use on test day as well to make sure you have enough time to finish. When you first start a section, identify and answer the easiest questions first, then go back and spend more time on the difficult ones. The ACT isn't like a normal exam you take in high school- hard questions are worth just as much as easy ones. Therefore, there is no reason to waste valuable time trying to decipher a difficult question when you can stock up on "gimme points" from the easier questions. If you get stuck on a question, circle it in the test book and come back to it when you have finished all the questions you know how to do.

### Bubble strategically

While some people have success bubbling in all of their answers during the last few minutes of the test, this method is particularly risky for those of us who often work up until the last second. Instead, try bubbling in your answers after every 5 questions. This method is more efficient than bubbling in after every question, but also decreases the possibility of mis-bubbling and creates less pressure for the last few minutes. If you choose not to answer a

question, make sure you have left that question blank on your answer sheet. Check that the question number in your test booklet corresponds to the number you are bubbling next to on the answer sheet- mis-bubbling would be a true tragedy.

The most important advice, however, is to not doubt yourself. Trust your reasoning and the skills you've developed over the past months you've spent preparing, and stay relaxed throughout the test. The ACT isn't out to get you, and with the right preparation and practice, you can finish the exam with some free time to spare.