

Preparing for the ACT – General Test Tips Teacher Guide

The ACT is a nationally recognized benchmark for college and career readiness and assesses students' cumulative knowledge and skills based on standards taught from elementary to high school. The statewide testing date for Tennessee is **Tuesday, April 19, 2016**. In order to do their best, it is important that students know what to expect on the ACT and how to take the test. Below we have provided a set of teacher tips to help you prepare students to do their best.

The ACT – Subject Tests

English	Mathematics	Reading	Science
75 questions	60 questions	40 questions	40 questions
45 minutes	60 minutes	35 minutes	35 minutes

- 1. Begin with the why.** Regardless of whether students are sure of what they will do after high school, the ACT is a useful measure for planning what's next. Though commonly used by colleges as a criterion for admission, scholarship eligibility, and course placement, the ACT isn't just for students who plan to pursue higher education. The skills that students need to succeed on the ACT - such as core academic skills, critical thinking, problem-solving - overlap significantly with career-readiness skills.¹ New this year, each student's ACT score report will include an indicator of career readiness through a projected level of performance toward the National Career Readiness Certificate. You can view a sample student score report ([here](#)).
- 2. Demonstrate a growth mindset.** Because the ACT is a predictable, standardized test, students can increase their scores through strong familiarity with the structure, timing, and format of the test. Review the "[General Test Tips](#)" for students in your classes to ensure that students know exactly what to expect on exam day.
- 3. Perfect practice makes perfect.** When students practice, you should try to replicate exactly what taking the test will be like on the test day. So, even if you are only practicing five questions in one subject area, control the environment to assure that students are learning to pace themselves for an actual test. For instance, students have about 1 minute per problem or less on each section of the ACT.
- 4. Communicate and celebrate.** Just as preparation for the ACT must start well before the test date or the junior year, communicating the purpose and potential impact of the test should take place well before a student takes the exam.
- 5. Make the connection.** Many of the tested standards on the ACT are based on concepts and skills that students build from the second to ninth grades. In order to make the connections more explicit, we have created the [ACT Connections](#) document to help Tennessee educators connect the Tennessee Academic Standards to the ACT subject tests.

¹ *Beyond Academics: A Holistic Framework for Enhancing Education and Workplace Success*
(http://www.act.org/content/dam/act/unsecured/documents/ACT_RR2015-4.pdf)