

ACT Overview- FAQ

Overview ACT information:

State ACT Testing is for all juniors in public school in Utah. The 2018 and 2019 ACT is comprised of reading, English (grammar and usage), math, science, and writing subtests. These tests provide scores that predict the likelihood that students will attain a grade of “C” or better in a college entry-level course. For example, the science sub-test score predicts the likelihood a student is prepared to achieve a “C” or better in an entry-level college science class. The ACT is not a knowledge test, but rather, is a test of critical thinking, problem solving, reading comprehension, and higher-level thinking skills that are important indicators of preparation for college and career.

The state ACT test administration results in the following scores for students:

- ACT composite (average of math, English, reading and science)
- ACT sub test scores (individual scores for each subtest component – i.e., math score, science score, English score, reading score).
- ACT STEM score (combination of science and math)
- ACT Writing score (test scores for the writing component which are separate from the composite score)
- ACT English Language Arts (ELA) score (combination of English, Reading, and Writing scores)

Parents can find more information about the ACT and scores by going to [ACT information for students and parents](https://www.act.org/content/act/en/products-and-services/the-act.html) (<https://www.act.org/content/act/en/products-and-services/the-act.html>)

Can students opt-out of just the writing portion of the ACT?

Writing is part of the test administration. Students cannot opt-out of just the writing portion.

Who is eligible to take the state-funded ACT?

Students who are *enrolled* as juniors in a public high school, or students who are homeschooled who would be a junior by birthdate if they were enrolled in their public high school are eligible to take the state-funded ACT. Students may only take the state-funded ACT one time.

What does the ACT measure?

- Long-term academic skills (as opposed to end-of course knowledge)
- Higher order analytical skills
- Problem solving skills
- Complex reading skills
- Data analysis skills
- Attention to details
- Ability to write well (ACT, 2017)

When are Utah’s 2019 ACT State Testing dates for 11th grade students?

2019 Paper Testing Dates

Wednesday, February 20, 2019

State ACT Paper Test Day

February 20 – 22, 25 - 28 - March 1, 4 - 6, 2019
Paper testing window for students with accommodations

March 12, 2019
Makeup paper test date

March 12 – 15, 18, 2019
Accommodated paper makeup test dates

April 2, 2019
Emergency paper test date

April 2 – 5, 8, 2019
Accommodated paper emergency test dates

2019 Online Testing Dates

February 20-22, 26-28, 2019
Online testing window

February 20-22, 26 -28, 2019
Online accommodated testing window

How long does the ACT take to complete?

The full test with writing takes approximately 4- 5 hours (depending on break schedule option selected between the standard components and the writing component).

How can students take the ACT on national test dates?

High School students can register and pay for the test through ACT.org to take a test on one of the national test dates. Students can take the ACT more than once through national testing, though it is the student's responsibility to arrange and pay for such testing. National testing is separate from state testing and the funding is not interchangeable. Students do not have to be juniors to take the national ACT test (see [ACT.org](https://act.org) for more information).

How can students prepare for the ACT?

The state has purchased licenses for all public high school students in Utah to access the ACT Prep tool, Shmoop. Students can create an account for Shmoop through their school.

You can find information on Shmoop here: [Utah's Shmoop site](https://schools.shmoop.com/utah/) (https://schools.shmoop.com/utah/) Students can also find practice tests and review information through [Utah Futures](https://utahfutures.org/) (https://utahfutures.org/). However, the most important (and most effective) preparation is consistent, high-quality, high-rigor Core standards-based instruction.

Research indicates that:

- Spending *class time* on test prep instead of high quality Core instruction does not make students more prepared for the ACT,
- Key components of successful preparation for the ACT that result in improved student outcomes include a challenging academic atmosphere, demanding academic curriculum, college prep attitude and environment for *all* students, development of critical thinking skills, positive school atmosphere, and a high student on-task rate (University of Chicago Urban Education Institute, 2008).

How are ACT test scores used in Utah high school accountability?

The ACT is not used to measure Utah's Core academic standards for 11th grade students – it is part of the college and career readiness indicator. The ACT is designed to measure skills like critical thinking, problem solving, and reasoning that transfer to college and career, as well as predict the likelihood of student success in 1st year college coursework. The college and career readiness indicator takes into account the percentage of students who achieve an 18 on the ACT (composite score), graduation rates, and the percentage of students who participate in advanced-level coursework (including AP, IB, CE, and CTE pathways).

References:

ACT. (2017). *Technical manual*. Retrieved from http://www.act.org/content/dam/act/unsecured/documents/ACT_Technical_Manual.pdf

University of Chicago Urban Education Institute. (2008). *ACT Test Prep - More is Not Better*.

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