

The **ACT reading** test is a 40-question, 35-minute test that measures your ability to read closely, reason logically about texts using evidence, and integrate information from multiple sources.

The test questions focus on the mutually supportive skills that readers must bring to bear in studying written materials across a range of subject areas. Specifically, questions will ask you to determine main ideas; locate and interpret significant details; understand sequences of events; make comparisons; comprehend cause-effect relationships; determine the meaning of context-dependent words, phrases, and statements; draw generalizations; analyze the author's or narrator's voice and method; analyze claims and evidence in arguments; and integrate information from multiple texts.

The test comprises four sections, three of which contain one long prose passage and one that contains two shorter prose passages. The passages represent the levels and kinds of text commonly encountered in first-year college curricula.

Each passage is preceded by a heading that identifies what type of passage it is (e.g., "Natural Science"), names the author and source, and may include important background information to help you understand the passage. Each section contains a set of multiple-choice test questions. These questions do not test the rote recall of facts from outside the passage or rules of formal logic, nor do they contain isolated vocabulary questions. In sections that contain two shorter passages, some of the questions involve both of those passages.

Five scores are reported for the reading test: a total test score based on all 40 questions; three reporting category scores based on specific knowledge and skills; and an Understanding Complex Texts indicator. The approximate percentage of the test devoted to each reporting category is:

1. Key Ideas and Details (55–60%)

This category requires you to read texts closely to determine central ideas and themes. Summarize information and ideas accurately. Understand relationships and draw logical inferences and conclusions, including understanding sequential, comparative, and cause-effect relationships.

2. Craft and Structure (25–30%)

These questions ask you to determine word and phrase meanings; analyze an author's word choice rhetorically; analyze text structure; understand the author's purpose and perspective; and analyze characters' points of view. Interpret authorial decisions rhetorically and differentiate between various perspectives and sources of information.



3. Integration of Knowledge and Ideas (13–18%)

This category requires you to understand authors' claims, differentiate between facts and opinions, and use evidence to make connections between different texts that are related by topic. Some questions will require you to analyze how authors construct arguments, and to evaluate reasoning and evidence from various sources.

Tips for Taking the Reading Test

✓ Read each passage carefully.

Before you begin answering a question, read the entire passage (or two shorter passages) carefully. Be conscious of relationships between or among ideas. You may make notes in the test booklet about important ideas in the passages.

✓ Refer to the passages when answering the questions.

Answers to some of the questions will be found by referring to what is explicitly stated in the text of the passages. Other questions will require you to determine implicit meanings and to draw conclusions, comparisons, and generalizations. Consider the text before you answer any question.

This excerpt is from “2019-2020 Preparing for the ACT® Test”:

<https://www.act.org/content/dam/act/unsecured/documents/Preparing-for-the-ACT.pdf>