

ACT Scores and the Science Reasoning Section

1. **Read the questions before you read the charts in Data Representation.** The Data Representation sections contain very little actual writing. So, before you slog through the charts, read the questions first. In many cases, you'll be able to answer the questions by just looking at one chart exclusively.
 2. **Mark up the text.** Physically underline, cross-out, and circle things that stand out to you as you read. Some of the text is going to be pretty heavy, so you'll want to dissect it as you go to make the most sense of it.
 3. **Paraphrase the questions.** Before you read the answers, put those questions into words you would use if you can't understand what they're asking.
 4. **Cover the answers.** Keep your hand over the answers while you read the question. Then, make a wild stab at answering before you uncover your choices. You may just find a paraphrase of your own answer in one of the choices, and odds are, it's the right choice.
- **Answer every question.** Yes, even the hard ones. You won't be penalized for guessing like you would if you were taking the [SAT](#).
 - **Use POE before you guess.** Process of Elimination, that is. Each question will have at least one answer that's way out there. Physically cross off that answer so you won't be tempted to use it, and you'll up your odds of guessing correctly. Then go back and see if you can cross off at least one more.
 - **Start easy.** Answer all of the easy questions first, then move on to the difficult ones. Usually, if you answer the questions in order, this is easy to do because they are ranked from easiest to most difficult. However, if you're one of those people who finds reading the longer passages easier than the shorter passages, start there, where it's easiest for you.
 - **Memorize the directions.** During the test, you won't get extra time to read the directions, so if you take five minutes to figure out what to do, that's five fewer minutes you'll have to get points.
 - **Don't doodle.** On the answer sheet, that is. The ACT is graded by a machine; if your chicken scratch interferes with the reading mechanism, you could miss out on points. Keep the oval sheet as clean as is possible.
 - **Erase completely.** Bring two erasers – one for the heavy-duty erasing you may need to do and another clean eraser to fix up your ovals completely. You don't want erasure marks mucking up your answers and causing you to lose points.
 - **Pace yourself.** You'll have a little less than 30 seconds to answer each question, so keep that in mind. Don't spend three minutes staring off into space or re-reading a longer passage; stay focused.
 - **Bring a watch.** Archaic, yes, what with your cell phone and all, but since you won't be able to have your cell phone on you, bring a watch. There's no guarantee you'll be testing in a room with a working clock.
 - **Reconsider the obvious.** If an answer seems too easy, it may just be. Be sure to read every answer choice and select the best possible answer. The obvious choice may be a distracter.
 - **Don't second-guess.** If you marked B for question 18, there was probably a good reason for it, so don't go back and change it, unless you've found information in a later part of the test to disprove your original theory. Statistics prove that your first guess is usually the best one.
 - **Come back to a toughie.** If you're stuck between two answer choices, circle the question and come back to it with fresh eyes after you've answered the other questions. Remember you have to pace yourself.
 - **Cross-check ovals.** Every five questions or so, double-check your answer sheet to make sure you haven't skipped an oval. There's nothing worse than getting to the end of a test and realizing you missed filling in an oval so

- (1) This is NOT a science test. You do not need to have facts and concepts memorized.
- (2) The [ACT](#) science section tests your ability to analyze graphs and charts.
- (3) Skim (45 seconds) the text for any passage that includes graphs and charts.
- (4) Focus on the axes of the graphs and charts, the data presented, and the relationship between the figures.
- (5) Do not worry about terms you don't understand. The [ACT test](#) will define any term you need to know with the exception of the basics such as melting point, boiling point, density, etc.
- (6) Be careful when working on problems that involve time and rate. The [ACT test](#) will ask questions that concern time of the experiment, as well as the rate or speed of the reaction. Know which concept is being tested.
- (7) Treat the passage without graphs and charts like a reading comprehension passage. You will be tested on the different arguments and overall ideas.
- (8) When working on a passage with graphs and charts and two or more experiments, always identify the differences and similarities between the experiments. This concept WILL be tested.
- (9) Remember to only use the information given in the passage and figures to answer questions. Do not use knowledge from a similar experiment performed in class.
- (10) You do NOT need to be a science whiz to do great on the [ACT science section](#) on the test. With a little [test prep](#) and practice you can master the ACT.