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2025 ACT Test Changes

Significant changes are coming to the ACT in 2025 as a response to feedback from test-takers and educators. The latest ACT test changes deliver a more flexible test that's less stressful and empowers students with more control over their testing experience. In this guide, we'll review what is changing on the ACT and what's staying the same so students know what to expect on test day. Keep reading to learn how the latest ACT test changes will affect the exam format and ACT scores.

New Composite Score

The new ACT composite score will be calculated using English, math, and reading scores but will continue to be on a scale from 1 (lowest) to 36 (highest). April, June, and July 2025 online National (Saturday) ACT tests will have composite scores calculated in this new method. Then, starting in September 2025, ACT composite calculations for all test modalities will adopt this composite scoring method.

ACT Test Format

The new ACT is much more flexible than the current exam; however, students will continue to be able to choose their test format. Depending on which testing experience they prefer, students can opt to take the ACT online or via paper-and-pencil. This multi-option test format allows students to test the way they feel more comfortable and show off their best performance.

What Is a Good ACT Score? (2025)

- A good ACT score is a composite score of 24 or higher, which would put you in the top 25% of test takers.
- The national average composite score for the class of 2023 was 19.5, and a “perfect” score on the ACT is the maximum composite score of 36.
- The ACT essay is optional and scored separately from the composite score on a scale from 2 to 12.
- What is considered a “good” ACT score will ultimately depend on the individual college or university you are applying to. Different schools will have different ACT score ranges.
- Schools are re-evaluating their standardized testing policies, and there is an emerging trend of colleges and universities reinstating testing requirements for admissions.
- When setting your ACT score goal for the upcoming admissions season, it's a good idea to look at the score averages for the schools you're applying to. Read on for more information about how the ACT is scored, including ACT scores for top universities, ACT score percentiles, and mor.

When is the ACT changing?

The latest changes to the ACT go into effect at different times depending on where and how test-takers plan to take the exam. Starting in April 2025, all students who choose to take the ACT National Online on a Saturday will be able to take advantage of the test enhancements. Next, **in September 2025, all students taking the ACT on a Saturday, either online or on paper, will experience the new test.** Lastly, in Spring 2026, schools and districts will have these options available.

When will the new ACT test registration become available?

Registration is currently open for the April, June, and July 2025 ACT test dates. Student can choose to test on paper for these dates or they can choose to test online. If testing online, they will see the enhancements and will have the options to test with or without science.

What is changing on the ACT in 2025?

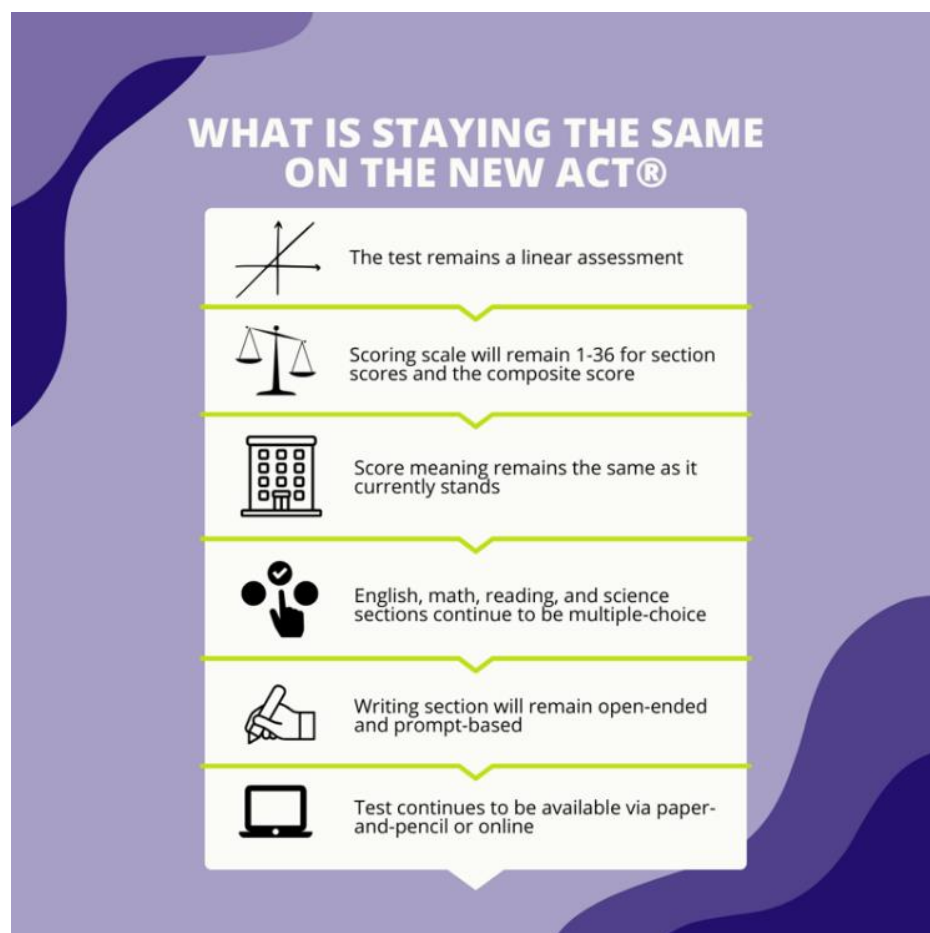
- There are many significant changes coming to the ACT in 2025:
- The ACT will have an overall shorter testing time

- The ACT will have a reduced number of questions
- More time allowed per question on the ACT
- The number of math question answer choices on the ACT will be reduced from 5 to 4
- The ACT science section will be offered as optional (like the writing section)
- The ACT composite score will only consist of English, math, and reading scores
- If test-takers choose to take the science section, their ACT score report will include a science score and a STEM score.

What's staying the same when the ACT changes in 2025?

While there are many upcoming changes to the ACT, several key features will remain the same:

- The ACT score scale will remain 1-36 for all sections and for the composite score
- ACT score meaning will remain the same as it currently stands
- The ACT remains a linear assessment and is NOT computer adaptive
- The ACT test will continue to feature multiple-choice questions in the English, math, reading, and science sections
- The open-ended, prompt-based writing section on the ACT will remain unchanged
- Students will continue to be able to choose whether to take the test on paper or online.



What are the different versions of the ACT (as of 2025)?

There will be four types of ACT available to students, starting in 2025 when the ACT offers the flexibility to choose whether to take science:

- The standard ACT (English, reading, and math)
- The ACT plus science
- The ACT plus writing
- The ACT plus science and writing

Why is the ACT changing?

The creators of the ACT listened to input from both students and educators, implementing changes to enhance the testing experience and better align it with college readiness standards. The enhanced ACT seeks to provide an improved testing experience by shortening the overall exam length and allowing more time per question. Additionally, ACT intends to lower the cost of the standard test required for a college reportable composite score. The updated ACT will be more modern and flexible, giving students greater autonomy over how they take the ACT and which subjects they choose to be evaluated on.

How to Study for the New ACT

Studying for the enhanced ACT will be similar to studying for the current ACT. A new, full-length practice test is available on the ACT website, but current practice tests and ACT prep are still a great way to prepare. This is because the types of knowledge and skills measured on the new ACT will remain the same.

ACT Test Changes FAQs

Below, are common questions about the upcoming ACT test changes.

Is there a cost difference between the ACT with and without science?

The “core” version of the ACT, containing English, math, and reading costs \$65. Tests taken with the science section will cost \$69. Fee waiver programs will continue to apply to the new test as well. Pricing for the 2025-2026 testing year will be made available when registration opens for those test dates later in 2025.

Will colleges require applicants to provide an ACT science score?

Many colleges will continue to require or recommend applicants provide an ACT science score. Earning a good score on the ACT science section can make you a more competitive applicant, especially for STEM programs. Ultimately, there will continue to be different requirements for different schools and programs so it's important to research college admissions requirements before applying.

Is the new ACT easier than the current version?

While the latest ACT version is shorter than the current version, it is not an easier exam. Rather, this new ACT allows students to tailor their testing experience to fit their needs, such as by offering optional science and writing sections. The new test also gives test-takers more time to answer each question with the goal of reducing test anxiety.

Will students have the ability to opt out of reporting science scores?

No, students can cancel their entire ACT score but cannot suppress it by section. This rule may change in the future, but as it currently stands, if test-takers opt to take the science section, it will be included in their ACT score report and seen by college admissions officers.

Will international ACT test-takers have the ability to choose between taking the paper-and-pencil test or the digital version?

No, due to ongoing international supply chain delays and reduced security, the international ACT will only be offered as a digital option, with the exception of students requiring an accommodation.

Will previous ACT score composites be recalculated next fall? For example, will rising seniors have their old composite scores recalculated?

No, previously issued ACT scores will not change due to the upcoming test changes.

Will the ACT and SAT score conversions remain the same with these ACT test changes?

There will be no significant impact on ACT scores from these upcoming test changes. Any future concordance tables between ACT and SAT would be the normal iterations and not driven by these test enhancements. Use our SAT/ACT Score Conversion Calculator below to see your converted score.