

# PREPARING FOR THE ACT

A Guide for EBRPSS Parents & Families

2016-2017

The **ACT**<sup>®</sup>



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## How is the ACT scored?



You'll earn one ACT score (1 to 36) on each test (English, Math, Reading and Science) and a composite ACT score, which is an average of these four tests. Usually, when people ask about your score, they're referring to your composite ACT score. The composite score falls between 1 and 36. The national average is about 21. If, for example, you scored 31 on the English, 30 on the Math, 29 on the Reading and 30 on the Science, your composite ACT score would be 30.

You'll receive subscores in English, Math and Reading that range between 1 and 18. These scores provide you with more detail about your performance, but they are not actually used by colleges or universities. Learn more about interpreting your ACT score report.

The ACT includes an optional essay, known as the writing test. If you take the writing test, you will receive a writing test subscore and a combined English/writing score. Visit [www.ACT.org](http://www.ACT.org) for detailed information about how your ACT writing test will be scored.

## What is the ACT and why is it important?

Created by ACT Inc., the ACT is an entrance exam used by most colleges and universities to make admissions decisions. The idea (in theory, at least) is to provide colleges with one common criterion that can be used to compare all applicants. The weight placed on ACT scores varies from school to school. Other important factors that schools consider in their admissions decisions are your high school GPA, academic transcripts, letters of recommendation, interviews and personal essays. For more specific information on the importance of ACT scores at the schools you're interested in, contact the admissions offices directly.

The ACT is offered nationally every year in September, October, December, February\*, April and June.

## What specifically does the ACT test?

The ACT has four sections: English, Reading, Math and Science, as well as an optional 40-minute writing test. Some schools may require the writing test, so be sure to ask before you take it. Learn more about what's on the different sections of the ACT.





Are you taking the ACT or the SAT? Do you know the differences between the tests?

Choosing the right test is an extremely important piece of the college process. If you are still having trouble figuring out which test is best for you after reading the infographic to the right, you should take both!

Take free practice tests and figure out what test is going to get you the best results.

Take a free QUIZ and find out the best test for you!

Utilize the link below to access the free QUIZ provided by The Princeton Review:

<http://www.princetonreview.com/college/should-i-take-the-act-or-sat-quiz>



## Should I take the ACT or the SAT?

SAT or ACT? Do you know which test is right for your child? Colleges accept both tests equally, so the choice is up to you! Here's what you need to know to compare the exams.

	SAT	ACT
<b>Why Take It</b>	Colleges use SAT scores for admissions and merit-based scholarships.	Colleges use ACT scores for admissions and merit-based scholarships.
<b>Test Structure</b>	Math Reading Writing and Language Essay (Optional)	Math Reading Writing and Language Science Essay (Optional)
<b>Length</b>	3 hours (without essay) 3 hours, 50 minutes (with essay)	2 hours, 55 minutes (without essay) 3 hours, 40 minutes (with essay)
<b>Reading</b>	5 reading passages	4 reading passages
<b>Science</b>	None	1 science section testing your critical thinking skills (not your specific science knowledge)
<b>Math</b>	Covers: Arithmetic Algebra I & II Geometry, Trigonometry and Data Analysis	Covers: Arithmetic Algebra I & II Geometry and Trigonometry
<b>Tools</b>	Some math questions do not allow you to use a calculator	You can use a calculator on all math questions
<b>Essays</b>	Optional. The essay will test your comprehension of a source text.	Optional. The essay will test how well you evaluate and analyze complex issues.
<b>How it's scored</b>	Scored on a scale of 400-1600	Scored on a scale of 1-36

## When should I take the ACT?


Students have traditionally taken the ACT in the spring of their junior year and, if necessary, again in the fall of their senior year. However, more and more students are choosing to take their first ACT earlier, such as during the fall of their junior year. This gives them more flexibility to retake the ACT test one or more times, or to take the SAT or SAT Subject Tests.

Test Dates	Registration Dates
June 11, 2016	May 6, 2016
September 10, 2016	August 5, 2016
October 22, 2016	September 16, 2016
December 10, 2016	November 4, 2016
February 11, 2017	January 13, 2017
April 8, 2017	March 3, 2017
June 10, 2017	May 5, 2017

## How Many Times Can You Take the ACT?

You are allowed to take the ACT **up to 12 times**. Of course you're limited by time and test dates, so actually taking the ACT 12 times would involve multiple retests every year. The ACT is administered 6 times throughout the year, in September, October, December, February, April, and June.

Most of you reading this are probably wondering, Why on earth would I take the ACT 12 times? I agree that this would be a bit excessive, but there are definitely **good reasons to take the ACT at least more than once**.

Please see the notification in the red box to the left. 

### Why Take the ACT More Than Once?

Students almost always improve when they retake the ACT. Sitting for the real test is valuable experience - it helps you gauge your level and identify your areas of weakness so you know what you need to study. The real test gives you experience with handling the pressure of test day, knowing what you need to bring, and managing your time. Plus if you get stressed out about the test, you'll figure out ways to calm your nerves and focus on the test.

If you end up scoring much lower than expected when you take the test, you might have had a fluke test day. Maybe you were tired or ill that day, or got unlucky with the reading passages or essay question. If this happens, you should register to take the test again on the next available test date.

# General Test Tips



- Carefully read the instructions on the cover of the test booklet.
- Read the directions for each test carefully.
- Read each question carefully.
- Pace yourself—don't spend too much time on a single passage or question.
- Pay attention to the announcement of five minutes remaining on each test.
- Use a soft-lead No. 2 pencil with a good eraser. Do not use a mechanical pencil or ink pen; if you do, your answer document cannot be scored accurately.
- Answer the easy questions first, and then go back and answer the more difficult ones if you have time remaining on that test.
- On difficult questions, eliminate as many incorrect answers as you can, then make an educated guess among those remaining.
- Answer every question. Your scores on the multiple-choice tests are based on the number of questions you answer correctly. There is no penalty for guessing.
- If you complete a test before time is called, recheck your work on that test.
- Mark your answers properly. Erase any mark completely and cleanly without smudging.
- Do not mark or alter any ovals on a test or continue writing the essay after time has been called. If you do, you will be dismissed and your answer document will not be scored.

# Multiple Choice Tips

## English

- Be aware of the writing style used in each passage.
- Consider the elements of writing that are included in each underlined portion of the passage. Some questions will ask you to base your decision on some specific element of writing, such as the tone or emphasis the text should convey.
- Be aware of questions with no underlined portions—that means you will be asked about a section of the passage or about the passage as a whole.
- Examine each answer choice and determine how it differs from the others. Many of the questions in the test will involve more than one aspect of writing.
- Determine the best answer. Read and consider all of the answer choices before you choose the one that best responds to the question.
- Reread the sentence, using your selected answer.

## Mathematics

- Read each question carefully to make sure you understand the type of answer required.
- If you choose to use a calculator, be sure it is permitted, is working on test day, and has reliable batteries. Use your calculator wisely.
- Solve the problem.
- Locate your solution among the answer choices.
- Make sure you answer the question asked.
- Make sure your answer is reasonable.
- Check your work.

## Reading

- Read the passage(s) carefully.
- Read and consider all of the answer choices before you choose the one that best responds to the question.
- Refer to the passage(s) when answering the questions.

## Science

- Read the passage carefully.
- Refer to the scientific information in the passage when answering the question.
- Read and consider all of the answer choices before you choose the one that best responds to the question.
- Note conflicting viewpoints in some passages.

## Download a Free Study Guide

Download this free preparation booklet for access to test information, complete practice tests with scoring keys, and a writing prompt.

[PREPARING FOR THE ACT](#) [ PDF | 1.4MB | 64PGs ]

[PREPARING FOR THE ACT - SPANISH](#) [ PDF | 1.5MB | 72PGs ]



## Calculator Tips

- Review the latest information on permitted and prohibited calculators.
- You are not required to use a calculator. All the problems can be solved without a calculator.
- If you regularly use a calculator in your mathematics work, use one you're familiar with when you take the mathematics test. Using a more powerful, but unfamiliar, calculator is not likely to give you an advantage over using the kind you normally use.

## May I Use a Calculator? Yes, But...Certain Rules Apply.

The ACT Calculator Policy (effective September 1, 2014) is designed to ensure fairness for all examinees, avoid disturbances in the testing room, and protect the security of the test materials.

A permitted calculator may be used on the ACT mathematics test only.

It is your responsibility to know whether your calculator is permitted.

Accessible calculators such as audio/"talking" or Braille calculators may be allowed under the accessibility policies for the ACT test.

## Do Not Use These Calculators!

Using the TI-89 is the most common reason students are dismissed from the ACT test for prohibited calculator use.

The following types of calculators are prohibited:

Calculators with built-in or downloaded computer algebra system functionality. Prohibited calculators in this category include:

TEXAS INSTRUMENTS		CASIO	
• All model numbers that begin with TI-89 or TI-92		• Fx-CP400 (ClassPad 400)	
• TI-Nspire CAS		• ClassPad 300	
• Note: The TI-Nspire (non-CAS) is permitted		• ClassPad 330	
HEWLETT-PACKARD		• Algebra fx 2.0	
• HP Prime		• All model numbers that begin with CFX-9970G	
• HP 48GII		• Handheld, tablet, or laptop computers, including PDAs	
• All model numbers that begin with HP40G, HP49G, or HP50G		• Electronic writing pads or pen-input devices	

## The Following Types of Calculators Are Permitted, But Only After They Are Modified As Noted:

- Calculators that can hold programs or documents—**remove all documents and remove all programs that have computer algebra system functionality**
- Calculators with paper tape—**Remove the tape**
- Calculators that make noise—**Turn off the sound**
- Calculators with an infrared data port—**Completely cover the infrared data port with heavy opaque material such as duct tape or electrician's tape (includes Hewlett-Packard HP38G series, HP39G series, and HP48G)**
- Calculators that have power cords—**Remove all power/electrical cords**



To be safe, just keep it simple...

## Additional Calculator Information

- Examinees may bring any 4-function, scientific, or graphing calculator as long as it is a permitted calculator modified if needed as described above.
- In a computer-based testing environment, an on-screen calculator may be provided.
- Sharing calculators during the test is not permitted, and the test proctor will not provide a calculator.
- Examinees are responsible for ensuring that their calculator works properly. If their calculator uses batteries, the batteries should be strong enough to last throughout the testing session.
- Examinees may bring a spare calculator and extra batteries.



# Writing Tips



- Carefully read the instructions on the cover of the test booklet.
- Do some planning before writing the essay; you will be instructed to do your prewriting in your writing test booklet. You can refer to these notes as you write the essay on the lined pages in your answer folder.
- Do not skip lines and do not write in the margins. Write your essay legibly, in English, with a No. 2 pencil. Do not use ink, a mechanical pencil, or correction fluid.
- **Carefully read and consider all prompt material.** Be sure you understand the issue, its perspectives, and your essay task.
- The prewriting questions included with the prompt will help you analyze the perspectives and develop your own.
- Use these questions to think critically about the prompt and generate effective ideas in response. Ask yourself how your ideas and analysis can best be supported and organized in a written argument.
- Use the prewriting space in your test booklet to structure or outline your response.
- Establish the focus of your essay by making clear your argument and its main ideas. Explain and illustrate your ideas with sound reasoning and meaningful examples.
- Discuss the significance of your ideas: what are the implications of what you have to say, and why is your argument important to consider?
- As you write, ask yourself if your logic is clear, you have supported your claims, and you have chosen precise words to communicate your ideas.
- Take a few minutes, before time is called, to read over your essay:
  - ⇒ Correct any mistakes in grammar, usage, punctuation, and spelling.
  - ⇒ If you find any words that are hard to read, recopy them.
  - ⇒ Make any corrections and revisions neatly, between the lines. Do not write in the margins.

# Test Descriptions

## Get to know the test

The ACT® test contains four multiple-choice tests: English, mathematics, reading, and science. The ACT with writing includes the four multiple-choice tests and a writing test.

<b>ENGLISH</b>	75 questions	45 minutes	Measures standard written English and rhetorical skills.
<b>MATHEMATICS</b>	60 questions	60 minutes	Measures mathematical skills students have typically acquired in courses taken up to the beginning of grade 12.
<b>READING</b>	40 questions	35 minutes	Measures reading comprehension.
<b>SCIENCE</b>	40 questions	35 minutes	Measures the interpretation, analysis, evaluation, reasoning, and problem-solving skills required in the natural sciences.
<b>OPTIONAL WRITING TEST</b>	1 prompt	40 minutes	Measures writing skills emphasized in high school English classes and in entry-level college composition courses.

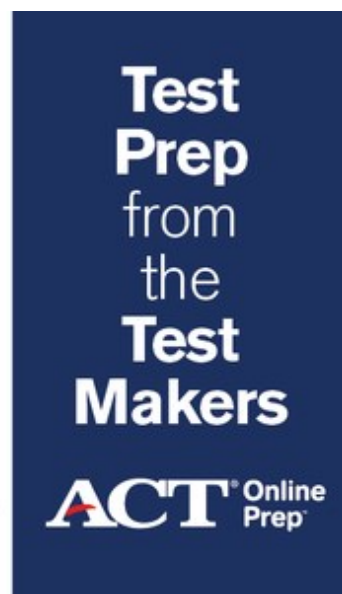
# Test Prep

## Do your best on test day

ACT offers additional ways for you to prepare for test day, including:

- **ACT Online Prep**—The only program designed exclusively by ACT test development professionals.
- **The Official ACT Prep Guide**—An ACT-authorized prep book, with three practice tests, each with an optional writing test.
- **Sample Test Questions**—Practice questions to give you a taste of what to expect on the ACT test.

# ACT Online Prep



# ACT Online Prep

Highlights include:

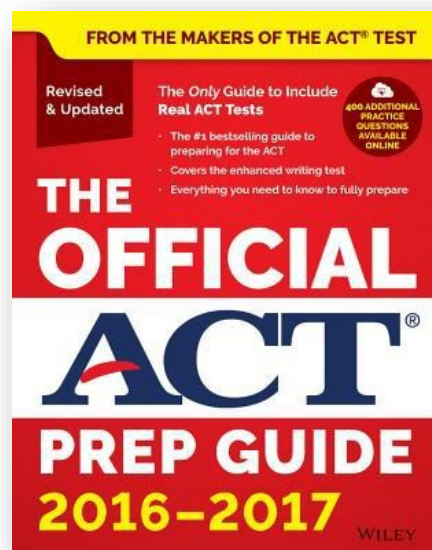
- **Quality learning content**—Our library of lessons helps with reviewing content assessed on the ACT in all four subject tests.
- **Personalized learning path**—Students can get started with ACT Online Prep by taking a short-form ACT test to get a predicted score range. The system will create a learning path specific to students' needs.
- **Guided plan**—Students can stay on track by entering their ACT test date; the learning path will adjust based on that timeframe.
- **Game center**—Students can choose from several different games and compete with other students to test their knowledge.
- **Tests**—Our full-length practice test (which will give students a predicted ACT score) and practice questions are designed to simulate the actual exam, helping students get used to the content and format of the ACT so there will be no surprises on test day.
- **Instructor dashboards**—Instructors can keep track of students' progress at the aggregate classroom level and the individual student level.

## The Official ACT Prep Guide

The only test prep book from the makers of the ACT test

The Official ACT Prep Guide includes:

- Three practice tests
- Explanations for all correct and incorrect answer choices
- All-new test forms, including the writing test\*
- Test-taking strategies for each test section
- Hundreds of additional practice questions in the online bonus content area



# Sample Test Questions

## Want more practice?

Get a taste of the ACT test with practice questions

Familiarize yourself with the instructions and format, then review, analyze, and answer the questions to see if you're correct—and why.

Sample test questions can be accessed by clicking on the link below:

<http://www.act.org/content/act/en/products-and-services/the-act/test-preparation.html>

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## FREE ACT Practice Tests

How will you score? Find out by taking a full-length practice test given under the same testing conditions as the actual exams. You'll learn about the endurance and skill needed to score high on the ACT, and you'll get a personalized score report that shows your strengths and weaknesses.

Please click on the link to access the **FREE ACT Online Demo Test** provided by *The Princeton Review*:

<http://www.princetonreview.com/college/free-act-practice-test#!practice>

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FREE Official SAT & ACT Practice Tests by *PowerScore.com*:

[https://www.powerscore.com/sat/help/content\\_practice\\_tests.cfm](https://www.powerscore.com/sat/help/content_practice_tests.cfm)

## Download a Free Study Guide

Download this free preparation booklet for access to test information, complete practice tests with scoring keys, and a writing prompt.

[PREPARING FOR THE ACT](#) | PDF | 1.4MB | 64PGs |

[PREPARING FOR THE ACT - SPANISH](#) | PDF | 1.5MB | 72PGs |

The  
**Princeton**  
Review®

**POWERSCORE®**  
TEST PREPARATION

# ACT Kaplan Online Prep Live

Live online ACT prep from the experts.



Research shows that students who study with teachers for the ACT® are more engaged, confident, and prepared. The problem? More than 3 million high school students take the ACT each year and personalized live online test prep hasn't been scalable at an accessible price.

ACT and Kaplan have partnered to change this with Online Prep Live™—the affordable college assessment prep program that goes beyond one-size-fits-all tools to provide students with personalized study resources and live online instruction.

- Live sessions taught by Kaplan-certified instructors keep students motivated and engaged
- Previously recorded sessions provide flexibility when students need it
- Guided learning plans, adjusted for the ACT test date, enable students to tackle learning in manageable segments
- ACT practice tests ease anxiety and help students understand areas they have mastered and subjects they should continue reviewing
- A social community of teachers and peers supports students outside of classroom hours
- In-depth guidance helps students upgrade their abilities for increased college and career readiness

## READY TO ORDER?

ACT Kaplan Online Prep Live is available to all students taking the ACT test.

Learn more.

[act.org/onlinepreplive](https://act.org/onlinepreplive)



# PreACT™ A new way to prepare for the ACT® test

## PreACT provides students with a realistic ACT test experience

Each year nearly 3 million high school juniors and seniors take the ACT to gain insights into their college and career readiness. PreACT, administered in grade 10, gives students practice with the ACT test and empowers them, their parents, and educators with these valuable insights even sooner.

### PreACT provides:

Early indication of progress and ideas for improvement—PreACT gives students an estimated ACT test score and can be used as an indicator of college and career readiness. Reports include data to help teachers and counselors target interventions, inform classroom instruction, and guide students in course selection.

Fast, robust reporting—Reports are ready quickly, so teachers and students can get to work turning PreACT insights into action. Reports include information about student interests that counselors can use to advise students in thinking about college majors and careers.

Easy, flexible, and affordable administration—PreACT encompasses paper-based, multiple-choice tests in English, math, reading, and science. PreACT can be administered on any date between September 1, 2016, and June 1, 2017, and is priced at just \$12 per student tested—making it a flexible and affordable way to give students low-stakes practice in a high-stakes environment.

The choices a student makes in high school help chart a course for life after it. Educators can use insights from PreACT report data to help students prepare for success—and start making informed choices well before graduation.

### More Than a Score

Report data can help guide action plans for students to increase success in high school courses and on the ACT. Students also receive a personalized view of college and career possibilities—based on their answers to the ACT Interest Inventory—which can help them start thinking about career paths. Parents and counselors can use the data to help students choose high school courses most relevant to career areas of interest.

### Meaningful to Educators

Educators quickly receive PreACT reports to evaluate individual student data and patterns of performance across content areas. Shorter testing times also mean more time to focus on classroom teaching and student learning. PreACT enables counselors to have earlier and more informed conversations with students about topics such as course selection, career plans, postsecondary options, and potential scholarships.



## The Next Step

After students take PreACT, they can use ACT Online Prep™ to continue preparing for the ACT anytime, anywhere. This sequence of solutions is designed to help students expand their post-high school opportunities, gain deeper understanding about their potential, and chart a sure course toward their college and career future.

## Opening Doors to Opportunities

Students may opt to have their information shared with colleges and scholarship agencies when they take PreACT, providing greater opportunities for recruitment and scholarship awards.



# East Baton Rouge Parish School System



## Resources for Students and their Families

<p><b>ACT Student app for iPhone® and iPod® touch</b></p> <p><a href="http://www.148apps.com/app/431920584/">http://www.148apps.com/app/431920584/</a></p>	<p><b>ACTStudent</b> helps users anticipate and manage the ACT test experience. Using the “Practice” feature, students can answer answers to practice items and gain feedback from their attempts. The “Account” feature allows users to log in for limited, read-only access to their own registration and score information.</p>
<p><b>ACT Student Web Account</b></p> <p><a href="http://www.actstudent.org">www.actstudent.org</a></p>	<p>Students can set up an ACT Web Account to register for the ACT.</p> <p>The student account allows students to make changes to their test option, test date, or test center; add, change, or delete college choices; receives e-mail updates from ACT about registration; view scores; and request additional score reports.</p>
<p><a href="http://www.actstudent.org/onlineprep">www.actstudent.org/onlineprep</a></p>	<p>ACT Online Prep offers practice tests with real ACT Test questions; a diagnostic test and personalized Study Path, and comprehensive content review for each of the ACT’s four multiple-choice tests—English, Mathematics, Reading, and Science.</p> <p>Student Edition: \$19.95</p>
<p><b>ACT Question of the Day</b></p> <p><a href="https://www.number2.com/exams/act/daily/question/index.cfm?s=0">https://www.number2.com/exams/act/daily/question/index.cfm?s=0</a></p>	<p>Visit <a href="https://www.number2.com/exams/act/daily/question/index.cfm?s=0">https://www.number2.com/exams/act/daily/question/index.cfm?s=0</a> where a new ACT Test practice question is posted each day—FREE!</p>
<p><b>ACT College Readiness Standards</b></p> <p><a href="http://www.act.org/standard">www.act.org/standard</a></p>	<p>ACT’s College Readiness Standards clearly describe the skills and abilities typically demonstrated by students scoring in particular ranges on ACT EXPLORE, ACT PLAN, and the ACT Test.</p>
<p><b>ACT College Readiness Benchmarks</b></p> <p><a href="http://www.act.org/education/benchmarks.html">www.act.org/education/benchmarks.html</a></p>	<p>ACT’s College Readiness Benchmarks are the minimum ACT test scores required for students to have a high probability of success in credit-bearing first-year college courses—English Composition, social sciences courses, College Algebra, or Biology.</p>
<p><b>World-of-Work Map</b></p> <p><a href="https://www.act.org/content/act/en/education-and-career-planning.html">https://www.act.org/content/act/en/education-and-career-planning.html</a></p>	<p>When students receive scores from one of ACT’s assessments, they receive a personalized report. This report suggests map regions and career areas on the World-of-Work Map for students to explore.</p>

[www.act.org](http://www.act.org)



# East Baton Rouge Parish School System



## Resources for Students and their Families

<b>ACT Profile</b>  <a href="http://www.act.org/content/act/en/products-and-services/act-profile.html">http://www.act.org/content/act/en/products-and-services/act-profile.html</a>	ACT Profile allows students, along with parents, counselors, and other helpers, ... Personalized major and career maps help you explore a world of possibilities.
<b>ACT Parent Newsletter</b>  <a href="https://forms.act.org/path/parent/news/subscribe.html">https://forms.act.org/path/parent/news/subscribe.html</a>	A monthly newsletter to help parents guide students from middle school and high school toward college and careers.  Subscribe for FREE!
<b>March2Success</b>  <a href="http://www.march2success.com">www.march2success.com</a>	FREE tool designed to help students in the following areas: SAT/ACT Practice Tests and Flashcards. Offers 7 full length practice tests for both the SAT and ACT.
<b>"Using your ACT Results"</b>  <a href="http://www.act.org/content/dam/act/unsecured/documents/Using-Your-ACT-Results.pdf">http://www.act.org/content/dam/act/unsecured/documents/Using-Your-ACT-Results.pdf</a>	The ACT Student Report contains a student's ACT Test results and basic explanations of what they mean. This booklet provides more information keyed to the three parts of the Student Report: scores, College Reports, and education and career planning.
<b>"Get Set for College"</b>  <a href="http://www.act.org/path/secondary/pdf/GetSetforCollege.%20pdf">http://www.act.org/path/secondary/pdf/GetSetforCollege.%20pdf</a>	This guide can help students make some important decisions about their future education. Included are: six steps to simplify college planning, information on ACT Test preparation, suggested activities and planning resources, college selection strategies, and financial aid facts.
<b>"Get Set for College"</b>  <a href="http://www.act.org/content/act/en/education-and-career-planning.html">http://www.act.org/content/act/en/education-and-career-planning.html</a>	The <b>parent version</b> helps parents and students research colleges, discuss the information, and work together to decide which colleges are most appropriate. This brochure is meant to help parents for opportunities and challenges ahead and make planning for college a little easier.
<b>"The Real ACT Prep Guide"</b>  <a href="https://www.amazon.com/Official-ACT-Prep-Guide-2016/dp/1119225418">https://www.amazon.com/Official-ACT-Prep-Guide-2016/dp/1119225418</a>	This is the only official ACT Test preparation guide provided by ACT. Included are five practice tests with an optional Writing Test, explanations for all right and wrong answer choices, an in-depth look at the optional Writing Test and how it is scored, and valuable test-taking strategies.  Used: \$16.76—New: \$26.05

[www.ebrschools.org](http://www.ebrschools.org)



**The ACT Guide for Parents & Families is a  
publication of the  
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