

# ACT Reading Test

35 Minutes

4 Passages

10 Questions per passage

## Content

### *Literary Narrative/Prose Fiction:*

Excerpts from short stories, novels, memoirs or personal essays

### *Humanities:*

Excerpts on architecture, dance, ethics, literary criticism, philosophy, music, etc.

### *Social Studies:*

Excerpts on anthropology, biography, business, education, geography, political science, sociology, etc.

### *Natural Science:*

Excerpts on anatomy, biology, astronomy, chemistry, geology, medicine, meteorology, technology, etc.

## Type of Questions

### *Paraphrase:*

75% of the time, the questions you are reviewing contain something that has been rephrased from the passage

### *Inference:*

The remaining 25% of the questions require you to reason your way to the correct answer.

In order to test these two skills, you might be asked to:

- Find main ideas
- Locate and interpret details
- Understand a sequence 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

## Tips for the ACT Reading Test

1. *Pace yourself.*  
9 minutes per passage
2. *Read each passage carefully.*
3. *Circle/underline key ideas, unfamiliar words, etc. when reading through the passages.*
4. *Refer back to the passages when answering the questions.*

## Basis for Essay Evaluation

Does your essay:

- Express judgments by taking a position on the issue in the writing prompt?
- Maintain a focus on the topic throughout the essay?
- Develop a position by using logical reasoning and by supporting your ideas?
- Organize ideas in a logical way?
- Use language clearly and effectively according to the conventions of standard written English?

## Tips for the Essay Test

### 1. *Pace yourself.*

You have 30 minutes to write the test.

### 2. *Pre-write. Write. Review.*

### 3. *Practice.*

Do timed writing exercises. You can find practice ACT writing prompts at [ACTstudent.org](http://ACTstudent.org)! (You can also find examples of good and bad responses to the sample essay prompt above.)

## ACT Essay Test 30 minutes

### Sample Prompt

Educators debate extending high school to five years because of increasing demands on students from employers and colleges to participate in extracurricular activities and community service in addition to having high grades. Some educators support extending high school to five years because they think students need more time to achieve all that is expected of them. Other educators do not support extending high school to five years because they think students would lose interest in school and attendance would drop in the fifth year. In your opinion, should high school be extended to five years?

In your essay, take a position on this question. You may write about either one of the two points of view given, or you may present a different point of view on this question. Use specific reasons.

### How would you outline a response?

Need more practice with the ACT? Kaplan, a respected company for test preparation, is offering FREE, online ACT cram sessions covering the Science and Math sections on February 28<sup>th</sup> and March 1<sup>st</sup>. Go to <http://www.kaptest.com/college-prep/getting-into-college/free-practice-test> to register.