

ACES Learning Center Course Syllabus Summer ACT Intensive Workshop

Course Description

The ACT workshop provides students with an opportunity to show their readiness for college by testing English, Reading, Math, Science, and Writing (Essay). Top universities expect students to demonstrate considerable ability in these areas. The Summer ACT Intensive Workshop teaches students how to prepare for the SAT and potentially earn the scores required by the most selective colleges.

The ACT is fast-outpacing the SAT as the most popular college-admissions examination. The course covers the structure of the test, including question types and scoring, highlighting differences between the ACT and the SAT. The course also covers general test-taking strategies and development of a personal plan-of-action for test preparation. The course includes a crash-course in English grammar and reading skills, math through trigonometry, and fundamental science, logic, and data-analysis skills used in the ACT Science section.

Traditional test-prep courses offer lectures to teach students test strategies, which are important. However, after the students have mastered these strategies, they still need to increase their familiarity with the test in order to increase not only their accuracy but also their speed. Based on this understanding and our experience with a variety of standardized tests, we developed our own intensive training program. For the last five years, we have employed the method in our Summer and Winter SAT Intensive Workshops and achieved dramatic results. The method works, and is used in the ACT Intensive Workshop.

The Summer ACT Intensive Workshop meets for four weeks, Monday through Friday, 7 hours a day. Class time is divided equally between lectures and lessons, practice tests, and review of problems from the practice tests, including a thorough analysis of any missed problems. The first weeks focus on the English, Reading, and Writing sections, while the last week covers Math and Science. Students take actual test sections in both the morning and afternoon, while Fridays are reserved for full practice tests, where classes follow the exact script, timing, and limited break-times of the official ACT test.

What we have seen from past years' classes:

- A drastic increase in students' scores.
- Students' reading speed and accuracy significantly increase after about 10 practice tests and improve the more they take. Since actual test questions are used, instead of simulated questions from non-official sources, they are precise indicators of the students' skill levels.
- Group discussion as well as some degree of peer pressure in the group makes students not repeat the same mistakes, and memory greatly improves. However, the overall environment is collaborative, so there is no competition among the students but only improvement.
- Less idle time: Students are constantly engaged in doing the problems because of time constraints as opposed to lectures where students often don't pay attention.
- Since the teacher fully analyzes and explains the test questions after each section, students can understand where they are struggling and create goals for the next test they take. When students are aware of their weaknesses on the test, it is easier for them to know where to focus their energy in preparation and to know what pitfalls to be aware of.

Course Objectives and Student Competencies

1. Learn and review key test-taking strategies and test content material.
2. Develop sufficient speed and accuracy to achieve a top score.

Course Schedule:

Date	Subject	Topics	Content & Strategies
Week 1	Diagnostic Practice Test Test Overview English	Grammar Review: Verb tense, irregular past participles, Gerunds and Infinitives, Pronoun case and agreement, Idioms and preposition/verb pairs, punctuation and possession, identifying run-on's and fragments, misplaced modifiers and ambiguous reference, countable and uncountable nouns	Process of elimination, pacing, using Context, using Your Ear, Identifying question type Identifying and using key words and lead words
Week 2	Reading	Main idea, topic sentences, transitions, sequence, structure, and flow; Identifying purpose, eliminating redundancy, Implied cause and effect and inference, inferring meaning of context-dependent words, synthesizing information and generalizing	Question Types: Main Idea, Inference, Detail, Vocabulary-in-Context, and Function Recognizing incorrect answers: Distortion, Misused detail, Out-of-scope (Extraneous), Unsupported Absolute, and Contrafactual.
Week 3	Writing (Essay)	Overview of the new ACT Essay prompt Structure of a top-scoring essay	Understanding different perspectives Writing a concise, clear thesis statement Developing good examples
Week 4	Math and Science	Science facts: Phase changes, chemical reactions, pH scale, kinematics, gravity, density, genetics, cell biology, natural selection, planetary astronomy Conflicting Viewpoints Questions Math Review: Arithmetic, Algebra, Coordinate Geometry, Area, Perimeter, and Volume, Triangles, Matrices Logarithms, Sequences and Series, Trigonometry, Probability, Complex Numbers, Absolute Value	Questions Types: Data Representations, Research Summaries, and Conflicting Viewpoints. Understanding charts and tables, Identifying trends, Precision and accuracy, Hypotheses and supporting detail Analyzing strengths and weaknesses, making a long-term study plan