

ACT Tips for Multiple Choice

Only the Answer Matters

A machine, not a person, will score your test. This scoring machine does not care how you came to your answers; it cares only whether your answers are correct and readable in little oval form. Any work that you complete in your test booklet will not be considered.

You've Already Got the Answers

When you look at any ACT multiple-choice question, the answer is already right there in front of you; hidden among a bunch of incorrect answer choices. Your job on each question is to find the right answer. Because the answer is right there, begging to be found, you have two methods you can use to try to get the correct answer:

1. Look through the answer choices and pick out the one that is correct.
2. Look at the answer choices and eliminate wrong answers until there's only one answer left.

If you can readily identify the correct response, mark it and move on. If not, try to eliminate at least one incorrect response. This will increase your odds of guessing the correct response from the remaining choices. There are different strategies for eliminating answer choices depending on the type of question.

Guessing and the ACT

We've said it once, but it's important enough to bear repetition: whenever you can't answer a question on the ACT, you must guess. You are not penalized for getting a question wrong, so guessing can only help your score.

Random Guessing and Educated Guessing

Educated Guessing is appropriate for questions where you can work to eliminate at least two choices for the question before guessing, leaving you with a 50/50 chance of choosing the right answer. This process of elimination may also jog a memory or "Aha!" moment that leads you to the right answer. "Always guess" really means "always eliminate as many answer choices as possible and then guess."

Random Guessing is appropriate for those questions where you simply do not have a clue what the question is asking or how to even begin to answer. Don't waste precious time on these questions. Choose a letter and bubble it in. Mark the question in the test book in case you have time to come back to it. A question further along in the test might bring new light to the question.

Do not leave questions blank. If you are hesitating between two answers, choose one to bubble but make clear notes in the test book so that you can be reminded of your thinking if you have time to come back to it.

A Note to the Timid Guesser

Some students feel that guessing is like cheating. They believe that by guessing, they are getting points they don't really deserve. Wrong. The test is designed to acknowledge a student's ability to think through a question and provide an educated guess. If they did not want you to guess, they would penalize you for doing so.

<http://www.sparknotes.com/testprep/books/act/chapter2.rhtml>