

Tips for taking the ACT Math test

- 1) The math portion of the ACT contains 60 questions, and you have 60 minutes to complete that part of the test. So you have roughly 1 minute per question. Every question you answer correctly is worth 1 point toward your raw score on the test.
- 2) The math test gradually increases in difficulty, so the front half of the test is where you can really make a difference in your score. Here's the general breakdown of difficulty:
 - **Easy:** Questions 1 through 20
 - **Medium:** Questions 21 through 40
 - **Hard:** Questions 41 through 60
- 3) Take two passes on the ACT Math test. This maximizes the number of questions you can answer with confidence and saves time for tougher questions.
 - **Pass 1:** Start with Question 1 and work your way forward, answering questions that look relatively quick and easy and jumping over those that look difficult or time-consuming. Don't guess during this pass.
 - **Pass 2:** After you've answered all the quick and easy questions, circle back to the first question you skipped over and work your way forward to the end again.
- 4) Identify the most time-consuming questions. You may consider skipping over questions that:
 - Are very long and wordy.
 - Seem purposely confusing and don't make a lot of sense even the second time you read them.
 - Have large or complicated numbers that involve long or difficult calculations.
- 5) Some questions may look more complicated than they are. For example, the questions that are in sets of 3, all relating to the same information, are usually pre-algebra, and they're easily solvable even though they may look complicated.
- 6) Remember it is multiple-choice math. Before you begin long, complex calculations, look at the answer choices. Could you test these five options by plugging them into the problem? Can you eliminate some choices using estimation? The answer is on the paper; you just need to find it. Keep in mind that a little persistence on questions you don't know how to solve can pay off. By taking a little time to try out answer choices, you can usually eliminate one or two bad answers, even if you can't find the right one.
- 7) Be sure to always fill in every question with your best guess. If you are blindly guessing, choose an answer choice that is similar to other answer choices. Don't guess the answer choice that is completely different from the other choices.
- 8) The figures in the math test are almost always drawn to scale, so if you can't work out a problem, go with the answer that best fits the drawing.

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- 9) Know your formulas. You will not be given any formulas on the test, so be sure to review area, circumference, triangles, and basic math equations.
- 10) There will be 4 or 5 trig questions. Students who are taking pre-calculus or trigonometry in school should be fine. You need to know sin, cos, tan; the sin & cos curves; and the unit circle. If you have not studied these topics in school, these are likely questions that you should bubble in an answer for and move on to problems you are more familiar with.
- 11) Write it out. Do not attempt to do all the math in your head. You may be able to answer some of the easier questions at the beginning with no calculations, but by the time you reach the middle of the ACT math section, problems require multiple steps and students who write out at least part of the problem, earn higher scores. Avoid careless errors, increase your accuracy, and improve your score by working problems in the test booklet.
- 12) Keep track of the questions that you guess on. If you have time at the end of the math test — or if you have an unexpected brainstorm — you can revisit these questions and make a more educated guess.
- 13) Monitor your time closely, and when your 60 minutes of math are almost up, take a moment to guess at all the remaining answers — don't leave any blank. With a bit of luck, you may pick up a few additional points on some of these questions.