

Tips for taking the ACT Reading test

- 1) The Reading portion of the ACT has 40 questions that must be answered in 35 minutes.
- 2) There are four rather lengthy passages with 10 questions each. The order of difficulty of the questions is random.
- 3) There are four types of passages that appear in this order:
 - **Prose Fiction:** usually excerpts from novels or short stories. Pay attention to plot and character development, tone, style, and mood when reading the passage.
 - **Social Science:** variety of subjects ranging from anthropology to economics to politics. Pay attention to the key names, dates, and concepts mentioned and to cause-effect relationships and the chronology of events. Formal tone; try to identify author's views.
 - **Humanities:** cultural matters, particularly art and literature. Often similar to Social Science but rather than political context, Humanities passages focus on artistic or literary significance. Be sensitive to author bias.
 - **Natural Science:** present scientific arguments or experiments and explain the reasoning behind them and their significance. Pay attention to cause-effect relationships and comparisons.
- 4) Reading Test questions require you to:
 - Identify specific details and facts
 - Determine the meaning of words through context
 - Draw inferences from given evidence
 - Understand character and character motivation
 - Identify the main idea of a section or the whole passage
 - Identify the author's point of view or tone
 - Identify cause-effect relationships
 - Make comparisons and analogies
- 5) Read the passage first, then answer the questions. Make general notes of main concepts and key components in the margins as you read. Mark seemingly important details.
- 6) Keep probable questions in mind as you read: author's viewpoint, author's goal, tone, theme, major elements.
- 7) When answering questions about specific details, put the question into your own words and try to find the answer in the text before reading the answer choices. Then see which answer choice best matches your idea.
- 8) Skip questions that seem particularly long or require a lot of re-reading. But always answer every question for one passage before moving on to the next passage.

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

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