

Tips for taking the ACT Science test

- 1) The ACT Science test is always given as the last of the ACT's test sections. Since it requires reading comprehension, stamina can be an issue.
- 2) The ACT Science test is composed of seven passages and 40 questions, which must be answered in 35 minutes. You have approximately 5 minutes per passage.
- 3) Learn the instructions ahead of time so no time is wasted during the test.
- 4) The first few questions for each passage are usually the easiest.
- 5) Don't be afraid of the scientific jargon. Try to break it down and simplify the terminology.
- 6) A few key questions you should ask yourself when reading a science passage are:
 - What is being tested?
 - Why is it being tested?
 - What are the variables?
 - What are the factors that stay the same?
- 7) Jot down brief notes in plain language beside the passages to distinguish major points.
- 8) Read the question and restate it in your own words to be sure you understand what it is asking. Refer back to the passage and state an answer in your own words before looking at the answer choices. Then match your answer to one of the answer choices provided.
- 9) Base your answer only on the content of the passages.
- 10) Pay attention to numbers and abbreviations – don't mix up meters and millimeters.
- 11) There are three types of passages on the ACT Science test. You can use the most appropriate strategies to respond if you recognize the question type.

Data Representation Passages

- There are three of these passages.
- Each passage has five questions.
- Most of the information appears in the charts and graphs.
- Over 90% of these questions can be answered just by using data from the charts and graphs provided. To save time, skip the text altogether, study the charts and graphs then move directly to the questions. Refer back to the text only if necessary.

Research Summary Passages

- There are three of these passages.
- Each passage has six questions.
- The passages discuss a series of studies or experiments. You must analyze the data, judge the experiment on its scientific merit and interpret the results.
- Start by analyzing charts and graphs. Then skim the text to better understand the experiment. Then look at the questions.

Tips for taking the ACT Science test

Conflicting Viewpoints Passages

- There is one of these passages. It has seven questions.
- Two to four scientists will present conflicting viewpoints about a scientific experiment or phenomenon.
- Charts or graphs are rarely used. If there is a graphic, it usually does not contain necessary information.
- Tackle this question last as it takes the longest. Skim the passages, focusing on the introduction and first few sentences of each. This should give you enough context to begin looking at the questions.

Passage Topics

The writers of the ACT tell you to expect content covering biology, earth/space sciences, chemistry, and physics on the Science Reasoning passages. The passages on the Subject Test might discuss data from any of these fields:

- **Biology**, including cell biology, botany, zoology, microbiology, ecology, genetics, and evolution
- **Earth/Space Sciences**, including geology, meteorology, oceanography, astronomy, and environmental sciences
- **Chemistry**, including atomic theory, inorganic chemical reactions, chemical bonding, reaction rates, solutions, equilibriums, gas laws, electrochemistry, organic chemistry, biochemistry, and properties and states of matter
- **Physics**, including mechanics, energy, thermodynamics, electromagnetism, fluids, solids, and light waves

However, the Science Reasoning Test doesn't test you on your knowledge of earth sciences or any other field; it tests you on your understanding of scientific data. Where the data comes from—whether it's taken from chemistry or biology experiments—doesn't matter. In other words, the content is not important as important as your ability to read and interpret the information.

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