

THREE-STEP METHOD FOR IMPROVING YOUR ACT SCORE

The reason this works so well is all ACT tests, whether practice or live, have similar timing, format, content and difficulty. Therefore, errors you make on one test, unless corrected and understood, tend to be repeated on follow up tests. The Three-Step Method works well for students who actively do it, regardless of GPA. Family members can help with such things as monitoring, tutoring, timing and scoring if needed. If outside help is needed, teachers are usually the best resource. It is common for students using the Three-Step Method to see a **3-8 point improvement** between their practice and live ACT test scores.

Step 1. **Practice (5 hours).**

- You completed an ACT test preparation workshop with test taking strategies and an authentic, full-length, strictly timed practice ACT test.
- You should have circled your answers in the test booklet, then transferred them to your answer sheets.

Step 2. **Correct your errors and understand why you made each error (4+ hours).**

- To correct your errors, transfer the right answers (red capital letters on your answer sheets) from your answer sheets to your test booklet.
- For each question you answered wrong, compare your wrong answer with the right answer. Be sure to refer to the passage to more fully understand the reason(s) you made each error.
- There may be more than one reason for an error.

Following are the five most common reasons for errors and their recommended solutions:

- 1. Poor pacing.** Use a watch or clock and time intervals throughout the test.
Too slow - be aware of the time allowed for each section of each test. A major problem is dwelling on questions. Strictly self-time each test with a watch or clock.
Too fast - be sure to carefully read all of the answer options. Review questions.
- 2. Poor concentration.**
Too careless – be sure to carefully read all of the answer options.
Too tired – you should be well-rested and fed to maintain a high level of concentration.
Too stressed – do relaxation exercises and study the outstanding “Reducing Test Anxiety” site: www.ets.org/s/praxis/pdf/reducing_test_anxiety.pdf
- 3. Improper rule usage.** Review the rule in a basic textbook, or see a teacher
- 4. Weak content knowledge, or marginal skills in reading or writing.**
If outside help is needed, first see a **TEACHER(S)**. It is helpful if the teacher is familiar with the ACT. Be sure to bring your test booklet when seeking outside help.
If further outside help is needed, see a tutor or a learning center (Sylvan, Kaplan, Princeton Review, Erickson, etc.).
Reading improvement. www.helpmyreading.com/Site/Client_Instruction.html
- 5. Learning problems or other issues** – see your counselor or Dr. Bernier

Step 3. **Practice again (3 hours).**

- To get a more accurate measure of your score improvement and to see if you are in the “Expected Score Range” colleges will expect given your GPA, take another full-length, strictly timed, pencil to paper, ACT practice test. Repeat step one above.
- Repeat step two above.
- ACT recommends the following resources for additional practice tests:
“The Real ACT Prep Guide by ACT”, by Peterson’s. This guide contains three full-length practice tests, answers, explanations and tips. Available in bookstores or on-line.
OR
“Preparing for the ACT”. Free. Ask your school for a previous year’s test booklet. Contains one full-length practice test, answers and tips.