

News

You Can Use



October 2011

ACT provides this monthly newsletter to inform students and their parents about college and career planning. ACT is a not-for-profit organization that serves millions of people in schools, colleges, professional associations, businesses and government agencies with programs and services that help people achieve their education and career goals. **Visit www.actstudent.org for more information and services.**



College Planning



Key Dates

October: Voting for the ACT student video contest has begun. The top 10 entries will all be rewarded with scholarship money. The winners will be picked by you and your peers online at www.actstudent.org/videocontest until Oct. 9. Results will be announced the following day.

November: The deadline to register for the Dec. 10 ACT test date is Nov. 4. After that you may register, with a late fee, until Nov. 18.

High school seniors who are making plans to attend college next fall should complete any early admission/decision applications for colleges they are interested in attending.

December: The ACT will be administered on Dec. 10.

Complete and mail college applications with Jan. 1 deadlines.

Start preparing for the FAFSA, because it will be available Jan. 1.

Preparing for life after college

It's really important to be prepared for high school and life after graduation. ACT has a unique system to help make that happen. ACT's **College and Career Readiness System** allows students at a number of grade levels to pave the way for future success. It does so by measuring what a student knows against what he or she needs to know to be successful in college and career. The benefit to you is that you can make changes during your high school years to strengthen academic skills and be ready for college.

The system looks at key transition points that students face:

8th/9th grade

Preparing for high school studies

The **EXPLORE**[®] program is designed to help 8th and 9th graders explore a broad range of options for their future. EXPLORE prepares students not only for their high school coursework, but for their post-high school choices as well. It marks an important beginning for a student's future academic and career success. Make sure to ask your guidance counselor if this program is offered at your school.

10th grade

Planning and preparing for college and the workplace

The **PLAN**[®] program helps 10th graders build a solid foundation for future academic and career success. It also helps students measure their current academic development, explore career/training options and make plans for the remaining years of high school and post-graduation years. Students are also able to get an estimated ACT score based on PLAN results. Make sure to ask your guidance counselor if this program is offered at your school.

11th/12th grade

Being ready for life after high school

The **ACT**[®] test assesses high school students' general educational development and their ability to complete college-level work.

- The multiple-choice tests cover four skill areas: English, mathematics, reading and science.
- The Writing Test, which is optional, measures skill in planning and writing a short essay.

Using your scores for career planning

One of the most difficult challenges students face is finding a career that matches their goals and skills. Included in the results of every EXPLORE, PLAN or ACT exam are results from the "Interest Inventory." When a student registers for one of the exams he or she answers a list of 72 questions based on their likes and dislikes. For example, "how do you feel about helping someone make an important decision," or "how do you feel about teaching people a new hobby?" The ACT Interest Inventory takes those answers and suggests which career fields that may be of interest to them. You can find more information on hundreds of college majors and occupations at www.actstudent.org.



Check It Out

ACT

Research potential careers

Have any ideas of what you might want to be "when you grow up?" ACT has a job profile database to help you learn the details about many professions. The resource can also help you identify whether your skills relate well with any given career, which is very important when considering your future.

"Hiring really comes down to a skill match," said Daniel Nichols, director of recruitment for Inova Health System.

More than 18,000 job titles, ranging from white-collar professional to blue-collar technical positions have been profiled by ACT-authorized job profilers. Extensive research on these jobs has identified the most important

skills and skill levels for employee selection, hiring and training. Check it out by heading to our workforce [website](#).

How do colleges use ACT scores?

ACT scores are one of the tools universities use when selecting students for admission. But they also use score reports for other purposes, such as course placement and student guidance. Here are just four examples of the many ways universities use score reports:

1. **Admissions.** ACT test results — along with high school grades, academic preparation and extracurricular activities — help college admission officers identify which students will thrive at their institution. Scores alone do not determine admission.
2. **Course placement.** ACT scores, academic background and high school grades are used together to determine which college sections would be most appropriate for each student.
3. **Academic advising.** College advisors look at ACT results, high school grades and classes, projected college grades, employment plans and other factors to help students find the perfect fit for his or her course of study.
4. **Scholarships and loans.** Some scholarships may use ACT scores and estimated grades to identify qualified candidates. ACT's unique score report also provides information about a student's educational needs, extracurricular achievements and educational plans. Agencies can use ACT data with other data to evaluate applications for both scholarships and loans.

ACT helps parents prepare for college, too

College planning can be difficult not only for the student, but for parents, too. That's why we've created a resource we'd love for you to show them. For parents who need tips on sorting through the ins and outs of college planning, we offer actparent.org as an online guide to understanding this process. The website offers college and career planning checklists, frequently asked questions about the ACT and other general information that parents may find helpful in assisting a student transitioning into college.

In addition to the various college and career planning resources, actparent.org also provides access to current and past issues of the monthly *ACT Parent* newsletter. *ACT Parent* provides timely information on financial aid, testing and more. While visiting the website, parents can sign up to receive the electronic newsletter in their e-mail inbox each month.

Parents are among the most influential people in a teenager's life. At actparent.org, your parent can gain the knowledge needed to become a mentor through this time of discovery and decisions.

ACT also publishes *Padres ACTivos*, a newsletter written with Spanish-speaking parents in mind. *Padres ACTivos* is the Spanish version of our popular *ACT Parent* newsletter. By subscribing your caretaker can receive valuable information on college planning, including frequently asked questions, and other tips to guide parents through the college planning process.

Tell your Spanish speaking parent to visit act.org/path/spanish/news/index.html to sign up to receive monthly issues of *Padres ACTivos* electronically.

ACT high school poster contest kicks off

ACT kicks off its annual high school student poster design contest starting Monday, Dec. 5. Winning entries will win thousands of dollars in scholarship money.

Students may design and submit posters using visual designs, artwork and tag lines that promote the value of college and the ACT test. Participants must be U.S. high school students who plan to apply for 2012 or 2013 admission to a U.S. two-year or four-year institution.

The student with the winning design will receive a \$5,000 scholarship to the college of his or her choice. In addition, the winning design will be used on the poster printed to display ACT test dates during the 2012–2013 school year and distributed to high schools nationwide. Second- and third-place winners will receive \$2,500 and \$1,000 scholarships, respectively.

Winners will be selected based on creativity, visual appeal and overall impact. The official entry form and poster must be postmarked between Dec. 5, 2011, and Jan 28, 2012. Winners will be announced in March 2012. Contest details will become available at the end of the month at actstudent.org/postercontest.



Test date reminder

The deadline for the Oct. 22 ACT test date has passed, but there is still time to register for the Dec. 10, 2011 test date. The regular registration deadline is Nov. 4, and late registration, with an additional fee, is Nov. 5 through Nov. 18. Register online today at actstudent.org.

Other test dates during the 2011-12 school year are: Feb. 11, 2012; April 14, 2012; and June 9, 2012. Regular registration deadlines for these dates are about five weeks before the test date.

An optional Writing Test is available in addition to the multiple-choice achievement test. Go to actstudent.org/writing to learn more about the Writing Test, including the colleges that require it.

The ACT student website can help with test prep, including many free tools. Sample questions are available, along with [Preparing for the ACT](#), a booklet with a complete practice test, scoring key, writing prompt and sample essays. Plus, the ACT student website has test-day tips, a list of what to bring to the test location and approved calculators for use on the Math Test.

Want more? Sign up for ACT Online Prep™, the only test prep program developed exclusively by ACT test development professionals. At only \$19.95 for a year's use, it's a great tool. For all your questions about the ACT test, visit actstudent.org.