

Getting to Know the ACT 11th & 12th Grade October 2008 Workshop

Purpose:

The purpose of the *Getting to Know...* workshop is to inform junior and senior students what they should expect with the ACT exam. Students will learn tips and suggestions for taking the exam, as well as participate in a mock test experience. In addition, students will learn the process for Talent Search to assist with payment for the test (required paperwork, preparation, deadlines, etc.).

Learning Outcome & Assessment:

Upon completion of this workshop, students will be able to list four items they should bring to the ACT, as well as two techniques for answering questions on the exam.

Packing List:

- School file
- Change of address cards
- PACPs (one per student)
- Green "mood" pencils (one per student)
- New TS Folders (one per student)
- Extra Talent Search ACT flyers
- 2008-2009 ACT fee waivers (one per student)
- **A-C-Teasers** handout (one per student)
- **ACT Sample Test** packet (one per student)
- **Strategies for Taking the ACT** booklet (one per student)
- 1 timer per workshop
- Assessments (five per workshop)

1. Housekeeping items (10 - 15 minutes)

Hand out new Talent Search folders & PACPs. Have students complete PACPs as well as *Change of Address* cards (if necessary). Go through any returned mail, as needed. While students are completing paperwork, mention that this is a "campus visit year" and they will visit an area college in April or May (instead of the April workshop).

2. ACT Paperwork (5 - 10 minutes)

Ask students if they received the ACT Flyer for the year. Hand out extra flyers to those students who lost or did not receive a flyer in the mail and ask those students to complete a change of address card. Review with students the process for Talent Search covering the cost for the ACT, being certain to emphasize the earlier TS deadlines. Explain the fee waiver form as you distribute one to each student. Ask students to write down (perhaps inside their TS folders) the fee waiver number on their form. Have all students at workshop, whether juniors or seniors, sign their section of the fee waiver form and then collect forms to keep on file.

3. A-C-Teasers Quiz/Handout (10 minutes)

Start by asking how many students have taken the ACT already. How did it go? What was it like? Ask those who have taken the test if they would want to share some "words of wisdom" about the test. Let students know that today's workshop is about preparing for the ACT, which starts with learning about what to expect on the test. One place to start is: **What do you need to take with you to the test?** Ask students to start listing items they should bring, while you distribute Talent Search pencils (they can keep the pencils). Items to mention:

- Admission Ticket
- Calculator
- Snack
- 3 or 4 sharpened No. 2 pencils (even if mechanical pencil, bring more than one)
- Watch
- Photo ID (required!)

Distribute handout to students with quiz face down and let students know that even though they might have some knowledge of the ACT already, we're going to find out what they know with a few *A-C-Teasers*. Have students flip handout over and "begin." Once students have completed the quiz, follow-up with the answers.

1. **WRONG** – The ACT does not have a guessing penalty (though the SAT does). Even if you don't know the answer to a question, NEVER leave it blank. There's a chance you might guess right!
2. **WRONG** – The ACT is accepted by more schools than the SAT. So, if you're going to take one or the other, side with taking the ACT. Of course, check with your college of interest to confirm which scores they accept, just to make sure. Overall, it's a pretty safe bet with the ACT.
3. **WRONG** – At this time, very few colleges in the country require the writing portion of the ACT. A few colleges *recommend* taking the test, but it is an optional portion of the test. You should decide whether to take the ACT Writing based on the admissions policies of the schools to which you will apply. A list of colleges requiring the test can be found at www.act.org/aap/writing/. Have students write this address on their handout.
4. **RIGHT** – But more than just the science and math, you can write on the test booklet for **all** sections. You paid for it, so feel free to write all over the test. This is more than allowable, it's an excellent tip! One of the biggest mistakes students make with the test is doing the work in their heads. Write down your work, cross out the choices you know to be wrong, underline/circle important parts of the reading sections, etc.
5. **WRONG** – The structure of the test does not change. Whether you take the test in New York City or Arkansas, it will always follow the same order: English, Math, Reading, Science Reasoning, and optional Writing. The times allotted for the sections also do not change. More on the format later in the workshop.
6. **RIGHT** – Of course they do! A common misconception is that Ivy Leagues only look at SAT scores for admission, which just isn't true.
7. **WRONG** – Jumping from section to section of the ACT, even if you didn't finish a particular section, is **NOT OKAY**. As in never. See the ground rules section of the ACT Strategies booklet.
8. **WRONG** – Residual ACT tests, those taken on a college campus, are not considered by other colleges for scholarship qualification. At the college where you take the test, it's a possibility, but mostly those scores are used for placement. Taking the national test on the national test date at a designated testing site is the most sure thing for scholarship consideration.
9. **WRONG** – There are no questions relating to calculus on the ACT. Math questions cover content in the following areas: pre-algebra, algebra, plane geometry, coordinate geometry, and trigonometry. See the ACT Strategies Booklet for more info.
10. **WRONG** – You'll get a combined English/Writing score, but neither the Writing Test score nor the combined English/Writing score factor into your overall composite. English, Math, Reading, and Science are the only scores reflected in the composite number. Overall, if writing isn't your real strength, it might be best to skip it.

4. **ACT Test Drive (15 minutes)** ****This portion of the workshop can be omitted, if not enough time****

Have students turn over their *A-C-Teasers* handout and explain that one way to prepare for the test is to take a sample/mock ACT test. Remind them that TS has books with sample tests they can borrow, if they haven't received/borrowed one already. Ask students to select either English or Math to take (if time permits, they could take both). Distribute the sample ACT test booklets. Students can use the bubble sheet on their handout for answering. Instruct students to leave booklets closed until told to begin. When ready, have students begin and time their test. *English or Math portion = 9 minutes.*

Once completed, ask students if they were able to finish. Each section of the English test should take about 9 minutes to complete (actual ACT = 5 sections with 15 questions, at 45 minutes). The math test should require about 1 minute of time per question (actual ACT = 60 questions at 60 minutes). Follow-up questions: *Did you write on the test booklet? Did you cross out the wrong answer choices? Did you watch the time? Leave any bubbles blank? Go back and check your work?* Tip to mention: *the instructions at the beginning of each section on the ACT do not change, so save time by skipping that part.* Quickly review the answers with students; mention you have the answer explanations they can see after the workshop.

5. **ACT Strategies Booklet (Time Remaining)**

Distribute to each student one *ACT Strategies* booklet. With whatever workshop time remains, review the *ACT Strategies* booklet. Be sure to highlight the *3 Things...*, to be featured on all handouts this year. You could mention that Talent Search has ACT Prep materials they can borrow (if they didn't already receive a test prep book), including the *ACT in a Box* from Kaplan.

*****LEARNING ASSESSMENT***** While reviewing the ACT Strategies Booklet, have 5 volunteers complete the assessment.