

PREPARING FOR THE COLLEGE APPLICATION PROCESS

9th & 10th

Graders

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Purpose?

To Prepare, Learn, and

Find

- Preparing 9th & 10th graders for college applications
- Learning college application vocabulary
- Finding reliable resources for your answers

9th & 10th Grade Matter!

Grades



- Grades impact your future
- **GPA** includes 9th & 10th grades

Classes



- Plan for prerequisites
- Class rigor counts—try **Honors**
- Prepare for **AP** in later years
- Build strong study & time management skills

Testing



- Start **ACT & SAT** practice
- Focus on understanding the test, not the score
- Try an SAT or ACT question daily

GPA & Transcript

- Computing GPA
 - Unweighted A=4, B=3, C=2, D=1, F=0
 - 3 As, 2 Bs, 1 C, 1D then $GPA = (3*4+2*3+1*2+1*1)/7=3.0$
 - Weighted
 - Honors Courses A=5, B=4, C=3, D=1, F=0
 - (all Honors) 3 As, 2 Bs, 1 C, 1D then $GPA = (3*5+2*4+1*3+1*1)/7=3.85$
 - AP Courses A=6, B=5, C=4, D=3, F=0

Some colleges
recalculate GPA
using core courses
only.

- Check transcripts twice a year
 - Always check for mistakes and correct them immediately

Rigor Definition

Challenge Yourself

Take AP and
Honors Courses

Variety

Have a combination of
core and elective AP
courses. Check out the
MCS course catalog

Stay Prepared

Full schedules throughout
HS (not the min only). 32
credits is better than the
minimum required 26.
Layout all 4 years now to
find needed prerequisites

Honors vs. AP

Advanced

Placement

- AP is a college-level class (CollegeBoard)
- Standardized exams in May
- Exam is recommended but not required
- Graded on a scale of 1-5
- College credit varies with scores over 3 (University of Alabama gives credit for 3+ while some colleges require a 5 for credit)
- AP scores aren't sent with applications, but some schools require self-reporting

Honors

Honors is an accelerated version of a regular class



College Entrance

Exams

SAT - Scholastic Aptitude Test

ACT - American College Test

Either test is accepted by all colleges and universities

Try both then concentrate on the one that fits you the best

ACT is more like a HS test as it measures what you know in 5 different subjects (Reading, Math and English. Science & Writing are optional)

ACT: What's New!

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE CHANGES COMING IN APRIL 2025



@thecollegereviewpoints

ONLINE TEST

BEGINNING WITH THE APRIL 2025 EXAM:

STUDENTS CAN CHOOSE TO TAKE THE ACT ON A COMPUTER AT AN OFFICIAL ACT TESTING CENTER (NOT AT HOME)

THE APRIL, JUNE, & JULY TEST DATES WILL OFFER BOTH THE NEW ONLINE FORMAT AND THE TRADITIONAL PAPER VERSION (OLD FORMAT)

BY SEPTEMBER, ALL NATIONAL TEST DATES WILL FEATURE BOTH ONLINE AND PAPER OPTIONS WITH THE NEW TEST FORMAT, WITH SCHOOL-DAY TESTING ADOPTING THE NEW FORMAT IN SPRING 2026.



SHORTER TEST

IN THE NEW TEST FORMAT

THE OVERALL ACT EXAM LENGTH WILL BE REDUCED BY ONE-THIRD, WITH THE NEW EXAM TAKING 2 HOURS AND 5 MINUTES

THIS MAKES THE EXAM 70 MINUTES SHORTER & 9 MINUTES SHORTER THAN THE DIGITAL SAT

PLUS, MORE TIME PER QUESTION!

THE READING & ENGLISH PASSAGES WILL BE SHORTER & THERE WILL BE FEWER QUESTIONS PER SECTION (44 FEWER QUESTIONS OVERALL!)

THE MATH SECTION WILL REDUCE FROM 5 ANSWER OPTIONS TO 4



OPTIONAL SCIENCE

IN THE NEW TEST FORMAT

STUDENTS TAKING THE ONLINE EXAM IN APRIL, JUNE OR JULY WILL HAVE THE OPTION TO TAKE THE SCIENCE SECTION

STUDENTS TAKING THE PAPER FORMAT IN APRIL, JUNE OR JULY WILL STILL BE REQUIRED TO TAKE THE SCIENCE SECTION

IN SEPTEMBER, BOTH THE PAPER AND ONLINE EXAM WILL OFFER STUDENTS THE OPTION TO TAKE THE SCIENCE SECTION



SCORING

THE NEW TEST FORMAT

ENGLISH, READING, & MATH WILL REMAIN THE CORE SECTIONS OF THE ACT, DETERMINING THE REPORTABLE SCORE

THE COMPOSITE SCORE WILL BE THE AVERAGE OF THESE THREE SECTIONS ON A 1-36 SCALE

STUDENTS WHO TAKE THE OPTIONAL SCIENCE SECTION WILL RECEIVE A SEPARATE STEM SCORE: AVERAGE OF MATH & SCIENCE SCORES

SUPERSCORE: HIGHEST SCORES FOR EACH SUBJECT WITH THE TEST DATE - BASED ON ENGLISH, READING, MATH



WHAT'S NOT CHANGING

WITH THE NEW TEST FORMAT

UNLIKE THE CHANGES WITH THE SAT, THERE IS NO NEW CONTENT BEING INTRODUCED TO THE ACT - ONLY SHORTENING THE SECTIONS/TIMES

SCORES FROM TESTS TAKEN PRIOR TO THE ROLLOUT OF THE NEW COMPOSITE SCORE WILL NOT CHANGE

THE ACT WILL STILL BE SCORED 1-36

THE WRITING SECTION IS STILL OPTIONAL (THOUGH MOST COLLEGES DON'T CONSIDER IT)



2025 TEST DATES

REGISTER ON WWW.ACT.ORG

APR 5	ONLINE (NEW FORMAT)
JUN 14	OPTIONAL SCIENCE
JUL 12	PAPER (OLD FORMAT)
	NO CHANGE

SEP 6	BOTH DIGITAL & PAPER OFFER NEW FORMAT WITH OPTIONAL SCIENCE
OCT 25	
DEC 6	

AS OF FEB 2025, REGISTRATION OPEN FOR APRIL/JUNE/JULY EXAMS



ACT OPTIONS

WHEN REGISTERING FOR THE NEW FORMAT

ACT ONLY
\$65

ACT + SCIENCE
\$65 + \$4

ACT + WRITING
\$65 + \$25

ACT + SCIENCE + WRITING
\$65 + \$4 + \$25

FEES THRU JULY 2025



Extracurricular

- Quality vs. quantity
- Inside and outside of school
- Look towards 2-3 with leadership positions



Applying for Art or Music

- Portfolio
- Auditions



Resume

- Start to record all activities (suggest every quarter)
 - Community service
 - Athletics
 - Clubs
 - Religious activities
 - Scouts

Are Minimum Requirements Enough?

- Check out the web sites of colleges of interest
 - Many schools require 3 or 4 years of a world language (Alabama colleges vary)
 - Math requirements vary
 - Fine Arts Credit
- Collegeboard.com
 - Register to obtain an account (Big Future)
 - Explore
 - Colleges
 - Financial Aid
 - Majors

COLLEGE PLANNING TIPS FOR EACH SCHOOL YEAR

TIPS FOR FRESHMAN YEAR



CREATE GOOD
STUDY HABITS
& PRIORITIZE
GRADES



BECOME ACTIVE
IN YOUR
SCHOOL
COMMUNITY



MAP OUT
YOUR
4-YEAR
ACADEMIC PLAN



RESEARCH
& EXPLORE
YOUR INTERESTS



VOLUNTEER
WITH LOCAL
ORGANIZATIONS



GET TO KNOW
YOUR SCHOOL
COUNSELOR

TIPS FOR SOPHOMORE YEAR



TAKE MORE
CHALLENGING
COURSEWORK



STAY INVOLVED IN
CLUBS & TAKE ON
LEADERSHIP ROLES



PRACTICE
STANDARDIZED
TESTING WITH
PSAT/PRE-ACT



ATTEND COLLEGE
FAIRS IN YOUR
AREA



BUILD UPON YOUR
EXTRACURRICULAR
RESUME



VOLUNTEER
6/OR WORK A
SUMMER JOB

TIPS FOR JUNIOR YEAR



FINISH STRONG.
ACADEMICALLY
THE MOST
IMPORTANT YEAR



MAKE IMPACT
IN SERVICE &
LEADERSHIP
ROLES



TAKE THE FALL
PSAT/NMSQT
& SPRING
SAT/ACT



TOUR COLLEGE
CAMPUSES &
BUILD COLLEGE
LIST



BRAINSTORM
COLLEGE
ESSAY IDEAS



PARTICIPATE
IN MEANINGFUL
SUMMER
ACTIVITIES

TIPS FOR SENIOR YEAR



ENROLL IN
HONORS, AP
& DE COURSES



TAKE COURSES
ALIGNED WITH
INTENDED MAJOR



FINALIZE ANY
STANDARDIZED
TESTING



COMPLETE
COLLEGE ESSAY
BEFORE SCHOOL
BEGINS



CONNECT WITH
COLLEGE
ADMISSION
COUNSELORS



APPLY TO
COLLEGES IN
EARLY THE
ROUNDS

Financial Aid

- Scholarships, grants, and loans
- Public vs. Private Colleges
 - private schools may provide significantly more money than public
- FAFSA – Free Application for Federal Student Aid



JCHS Resources

- College counselor
- Guidance page on the JCHS Website
- **JCHS College And Career Information**

<https://www.madisoncity.k12.al.us/domain/611>

- **Alabama Quick College Guide:**

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1X3W78BiOfFQn7JNISnayuypqItDh2k3f/view>

Career Resources

<https://www.bls.gov/ooh/>

<https://www.onetonline.org/>

College Search

<https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/>

Scholarships

<https://www.fastweb.com/>

<https://www.goingmerry.com/>



Online Resources

- **College Board College Search Site**
 - <http://apps.collegeboard.com/search/index.jsp>
- **College Net**
 - www.collegenet.com
- **College View College Search**
 - www.collegeview.com/collegesearch
- **US News College Search**
 - www.usnews.com/usnews/edu/college/tools/brief/cosearch_advanced_brief.php
- **Peterson's College Search**
 - www.petersons.com/ugchannel/code/searches/srchCrit1.asp?sponsor=1
- **School Guides**
 - www.schoolguides.com
- **Go College**
 - www.gocollege.com
- **Any College Search**



Remember!

Visit a college
and take a tour.
Have fun but stay
on track!



T H A N K

Y O U