

## General Tips

1. There is no penalty for guessing, so fill in an answer for every question. Use an “educated guess” (eliminate any answers you can) where possible. Otherwise, pick randomly.
2. Often the correct choice is the “simplest” (often “shortest”) selection – check it first. By default, with corrections that are otherwise equally good, the ACT will pick the simplest as the “best” choice.

## Reading Tips

### General Strategy:

- Decide in advance how to prioritize the four passages.
- Work on the passages in that order without regard for their order in the test book.
- Answer/guess on all questions before leaving the passage. It’s too hard to come back later.
- Try to eliminate obviously wrong answers. That will help if you have to guess.
- Try to answer the question in your own words (keep it short). Then look at the answers and pattern match to the right one.

### Basic Approach:

1. Skim the passage.
  - Read the topic sentence (usually first) and last sentence of each paragraph. Determine what each paragraph is about.
    - If it helps, read the passage in chunks of one or two paragraphs each and read questions.
    - If it helps, read the questions first, but only to find referenced line numbers. Mark those line numbers in the reading passage before reading.
  - Skim the middle portions of each paragraph. Clarify any questions about which each paragraph is about.
  - Remember: you’re trying to get the basic idea of the passage, not to understand every word. You want to index the passage so you can more easily find where topics are discussed. Make a few notes in the margins to help you.
  - Try to determine the purpose, central idea, and tone/mood of the passage. Why was it written? What is the main point? How does the author want us to feel?
2. Attack the questions that reference a word and/or line number first.
  - Read the sentences before and after the given line numbers. Check the first (topic) sentence of the paragraph including those line numbers.
  - Try to answer the question in your own words (keep it short). Then look at the answers and pattern match to the right one.
3. Answer any questions that discuss purpose, central idea, or tone/mood.
  - Use the notes you made in your first reading. Go back to the first and last paragraphs as needed. Those paragraphs will generally give you the right idea.
  - Again, try to answer the question in your own words (keep it short). Then look at the answers and pattern match to the right one.
4. Answer any global questions last.
  - Global questions are such that require a re-reading of the whole passage.
  - For these questions, you will probably not be able to write your own answer in advance. Instead, check off each of the items as you re-read the passage.

Prose Section:

1. Identify specific details and facts
2. Draw inferences
3. Understanding character
4. Point of view
5. Cause-effect

Social Science Section:

1. Specific Detail
2. Inference
3. Main Idea and Argument
4. Cause-Effect
5. Point of View
6. Comparison
7. Vocabulary

Humanities Section:

1. Specific Detail
2. Inference
3. Vocabulary
4. Main Idea and Argument
5. Comparison

Natural Science Section:

1. Specific Detail
2. Inference
3. Cause-Effect
4. Comparison
5. Main Idea and Argument
6. Vocabulary
7. Point of View