Power up: Reading ACT Prep, Week 6

Laura Halstied, Michell Eike
Published by *K20 Center*

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Time Frame 35 minutes

Essential Question(s)

- How can I increase my ACT score?

Summary

In this reading ACT prep activity, students practice using the ACT online test application TestNav, to prepare for the upcoming online ACT test. Students explore the tools available to them during the ACT and practice answering ten ACT questions and potentially using the TestNav tools. This is the sixth activity in a 10-week "Power Up" series for ACT prep.

Learning Goals

- Understand how to navigate TestNav for the online ACT reading test.
- Explore available tools for the online ACT reading test.

Attachments

- Activity Slides—Reading ACT Prep, Week 6.pdf
- Activity Slides—Reading ACT Prep, Week 6.pptx
- TestNav Tasks—Reading ACT Prep, Week 6 - Spanish.docx
- TestNav Tasks—Reading ACT Prep, Week 6 - Spanish.pdf
- TestNav Tasks—Reading ACT Prep, Week 6.docx
- TestNav Tasks—Reading ACT Prep, Week 6.pdf

Materials

- Activity Slides (attached)
- TestNav Tasks handout (attached; one per student)
- Personal device with internet access (one per student)

5 minutes

Introduction

Teacher's Note: ACT Enhancements

The following resource has been updated to better align with the test changes that began in April 2025 for the online test and in September 2025 for the paper-pencil test. Some outside resources linked are based on the previous version of the ACT. Learn more about enhancements to the ACT in 2025.

This practice resource, while aligned to a previous version of the ACT, still provides valuable practice for students.

Introduce the activity using the attached **Activity Slides**. Share the essential question on **slide 3** and the learning objectives from **slide 4**. Move to **slide 5** and use the Preflections strategy to have students respond to the question: *What tools do you think would be helpful for an online ACT test?*

Provide time for students to think about the question and talk to a student next to them before asking for a few volunteers to share. If students struggle with coming up with ideas, display **slide 6** and review a couple of the tools that students can use on the online ACT.

25 minutes

Activity

Pass out the attached **TestNav Tasks** handout to each student. Display **slide 7** and have students use their personal device to navigate to home.testnav.com or access the application on their device if the application is installed. Tell students to follow the steps on the slide to get to an untimed reading practice test. The options of *Text to Speech* and *Screen Reader* are not available during the actual ACT unless the student has accommodations. Direct students to "Reading - Untimed" for this activity.

Once all students have located the untimed practice test, move to **slide 8**. Give students 10-15 minutes to explore the TestNav features and complete their handout by taking notes regarding different tools. Display **slide 9** and ensure that students have explored each of the tools available for the ACT reading test.

After students have had enough time to explore each online tool, display **slide 10**. Have students move to question 31 of the untimed reading test. Tell students they will have ten minutes to read the passage and respond to questions 31-40. Explain that this provides time to use the online tools while responding to questions. Remind students that, when taking the ACT, they should spend approximately ten minutes on each reading passage and corresponding ten questions. Begin the 10-minute timer on slide 10 and have students complete the practice questions. (Please note: As of April 24, 2025, TestNav is still showing 40 questions for the untimed reading test. This may change in the future.)

Teacher's Note: Purpose of Answering Questions

Students won't get feedback on their answers. The purpose of the activity is to get really familiar with the online platform to save time when taking the actual ACT. Students look at the third passage and corresponding questions this week because those questions should not have been looked at when exploring the available tools.

5 minutes

Wrap-Up

Move to **slide 11** and re-visit the question from the beginning of the lesson. Tell students to talk to a partner about the tools that are available for the online test. Ask for students to share one tool they plan to use during the test or a tool they do not think is valuable and do not plan to use. Remind students that the purpose of today's activity was to become comfortable with the tools and learn how to navigate the online test so that they can pace themselves during the actual ACT.

Teacher's Note: Time Constraints

Each student should decide their best approach to taking the ACT reading section test. Many students may prefer not to use the online tools available to ensure they have time to answer all of the questions in the time provided.

Display **slide 12** and inform students that they may access a new ACT practice question of the day through their ACT account. Directions for accessing the question are on the slide. Move to **slide 13** and tell students they are making great progress towards increasing their ACT score. Remind students that a great way to increase their ACT reading score is to read for twenty minutes a day.

Research Rationale

Standardized testing in high schools has long stood as a metric for assessing college readiness and school accountability (McMann, 1994). While there has been debate surrounding the accuracy of such metrics, as well as concerns regarding fairness, many institutions of higher education continue to make these scores part of the admissions process (Allensworth & Clark, 2020; Black et al., 2016; Buckley et al., 2020). Aside from admissions, it is also important to keep in mind that standardized test scores can also provide students with scholarship opportunities they wouldn't otherwise have (Klasik, 2013). Though the topic of standardized testing continues to be debated, effective test prep can ensure that our students are set up for success.

With several benefits to doing well on college admissions tests, it is important to consider how best to prepare students for this type of high stakes test. Those students from groups that may historically struggle to find success, such as those in poverty or first generation college students, especially stand to benefit from effective test preparation (Moore & San Pedro, 2021). The American College Test (ACT) is one option students have for college admissions testing that is provided both at national centers and school sites. Taking time to understand this test including the timing, question types, rigor, and strategies for approaching specific questions can help to prepare students to do their best work on test day and ensure their score is a more accurate representation of what they know (Bishop & Davis-Becker, 2016).

Resources

- Allensworth, E. M., & Clark, K. (2020). High school GPAs and ACT scores as predictors of college completion: Examining assumptions about consistency across high schools. Educational Researcher, 49(3), 198-211.
- Bishop, N.S. & Davis-Becker, S. (2016). Preparing examinees for test taking: Guidelines for test developers and test users. 2nd edition. Crocker, L. (Ed). In Handbook of Test Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 38(2), 336–363. http://www.jstor.org/stable/44984542
- Buckley, J., Baker, D., & Rosinger, K. (2020). Should state universities downplay the SAT? Education Next, 20(3).
- K20 Center. (202). K20 Center 9-minute timer. [Video]. YouTube. https://youtu.be/9gy-1Z2Sa-c?si=a7h75m0FduaHBSsU
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- Klasik, D. (2013). The ACT of enrollment: The college enrollment effects of state-required college entrance exam testing. Educational Researcher, 42(3), 151–160. http://www.jstor.org/stable/23462378
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