

What is tested on the Reading portion of the ACT? (from ACT.org)

The reading section measures your ability to read closely, reason logically about texts using evidence, and integrate information from multiple sources.

The section questions focus on the mutually supportive skills that readers must bring to bear in studying written materials across a range of subject areas. Specifically, questions will ask you to determine main ideas; locate and interpret significant details; understand sequences of events; make comparisons; comprehend cause-effect relationships; determine the meaning of context-dependent words, phrases, and statements; draw generalizations; analyze the author's or narrator's voice and method; analyze claims and evidence in arguments; and integrate information from multiple texts.

The reading section is composed of multiple parts. Some parts consist of one long prose passage and others consist of shorter prose passages. The passages represent the levels and kinds of text commonly encountered in first-year college curricula.

Each passage is preceded by a heading that identifies the author and source, and may include important background information to help you understand the passage. Each portion contains a set of multiple-choice questions. These questions do not test the rote recall of facts from outside the passage or rules of formal logic, nor do they contain isolated vocabulary questions. In sections that contain two shorter passages, some of the questions involve both of those passages.

Beginning in 2021, one passage in the Reading Section may be accompanied by a graph, figure, or table that contains information relevant to the reading task. In the passages containing these visual and quantitative elements, some of the questions will ask the student to integrate the information from the passage and graphic to determine the best answer. These items will contribute to the student's score in the Integration of Knowledge and Ideas reporting category.

Content Covered by the ACT Reading Test

Five scores are reported for the reading section: a score for the section overall; three reporting category scores based on specific knowledge and skills; and an Understanding Complex Texts indicator. The approximate percentage of the section devoted to each reporting category is:

Key Ideas and Details (55–60%)

This category requires you to read texts closely to determine central ideas and themes. Summarize information and ideas accurately. Understand relationships and draw logical inferences and conclusions, including understanding sequential, comparative, and cause-effect relationships.

Craft and Structure (25–30%)

These questions ask you to determine word and phrase meanings; analyze an author's word choice rhetorically; analyze text structure; understand the author's purpose and perspective; and analyze characters' points of view. Interpret authorial decisions rhetorically and differentiate between various perspectives and sources of information.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas (13–18%)

This category requires you to understand authors' claims, differentiate between facts and opinions, and use evidence to make connections between different texts that are related by topic. Some questions will require you to analyze how authors construct arguments, and to evaluate reasoning and evidence from various sources.