

# What is a Good ACT Score?

The highest possible score on the ACT is 36. The current national average ACT score is 20.8

A "good" ACT score depends on the colleges and universities you are considering. A score of 23 on the ACT is above the current national average and will make you a strong applicant at many universities, but it may fall below the average score for accepted students at more selective colleges. The higher your ACT score, the more options are open to you. Read on to learn more about ACT scores.

## Average ACT Scores

The ACT is scored on a scale of 1–36, and the average ACT score for the class of 2018 is 20.8. There are 4 sections on the ACT: English, Math, Reading, and Science. Each section is scored out of 36 points. Your composite ACT score is an average of your 4 section scores.

Here are the national average scores for each section of the high school class of 2018.

### SECTION

### AVG ACT SCORE

|         |      |      |      |         |      |         |      |
|---------|------|------|------|---------|------|---------|------|
| English | 20.3 | Math | 20.7 | Reading | 21.4 | Science | 21.0 |
|---------|------|------|------|---------|------|---------|------|

|           |      |
|-----------|------|
| COMPOSITE | 20.8 |
|-----------|------|

If you are close to these averages, you will likely be accepted into a considerable number of colleges and universities, but may not be considered at more selective schools. The score colleges use to determine admission is the composite score. **Your COMPOSITE SCORE is the average of your English, Mathematics, Reading, and Science test scores.**

Some will superscore, usually for scholarship purposes. Superscoring means a college or university will take the highest score for each of the subtests from a student's multiple testing results.

**A: Your individual test scores and your composite score.**

**This score is based on a scale of 1-36**

**YOUR COMPOSITE SCORE**

Still, there are more numbers on your score report than just those! Learn how to read your ACT scores, and use this ACT scoring guide to focus on the numbers that are most important to colleges.

Your raw score for each test is the total number of questions you correctly answered. Remember, there is no penalty for wrong answers, so you shouldn't leave any blanks!

ACT converts your raw scores to the scale of 1–36. Each test has its own conversion scale.

ACT Percentiles: next to each score is an ACT percentile ranking. Your percentile rank shows how you performed on the test relative to other people who took it on the same day. For example, a percentile ranking of 87% means you scored higher than 87% of the students who took the test, and the other 13% scored higher than you.

No worries! Colleges are not using your ACT subscores as part of your application.

Using Your ACT Score Report to identify your strengths and weaknesses, so you know what to focus on if you decide to take the ACT again. Are you strongest in English and Math? Work to raise those scores as high as you can.

### **College-Readiness Benchmark Scores**

On your score report, ACT also indicates if you met their "**College Readiness Benchmark Scores**":

- **18 in English**
- **22 in Math**
- **22 in Reading**
- **23 in Science Reasoning**

ACT maintains that these benchmarks can predict college "success," defined by a "50 percent or higher probability of earning a B or higher in the corresponding college course or courses." Still, these are not absolute; it is important to not assume that these numbers will make or break you in college. These scores and their meaning have been determined by ACT's own research and data, not by any studies done by colleges and universities themselves.

**Below Average ACT Scores**

Scores below 15 on the ACT are considered low at just about any four-year

college. You can overcome low scores with a great GPA or an outstanding college application. But even if you're accepted, the school may ask you to take some remedial courses before enrolling.

### Good ACT Scores for YOUR Goals

A good score on the ACT is one that puts you within the average range of scores for the colleges of your choice. College profiles report the middle 50% range of test scores for entering first-year students. [For example, if a school says ACT range is 21-24, it means that the middle 50% of applicants have scores that fall within those numbers. 25% will be higher, 25% will be lower].

Do your scores fall well within the range? That school could be a good match! Do your scores fall in the lower end, or even below, the school's average range? It is important not to be discouraged if you do not achieve as you hope; there will always be options for college admission! Admission to a particular school is still possible with some ACT prep and a strong overall application. The ACT is only part of the entire application.