

## Sample ACT Syllabus

16 sessions

### Overview

The following syllabus includes recommendations for the structure of sessions and related homework assignments by content area, focusing on one section of the test at a time. It begins with content coverage, then moves to timing and strategy, and ends with 3 timed practice tests.

Homework assignments should be done in order, focusing first on the content of that session, and then working on assignments from previous lessons, to build and then reinforce material. For students who require more support, you should dedicate session time to targeting sub-topics as needed.

We encourage you to adjust the session structure and homework assignments according to your student's progress.

### Required Texts

- *RA*: The REAL ACT Prep Guide, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition
- *MS*: Math & Science Workout for the ACT, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition (Princeton Review)
- *ER*: English & Reading Workout for the ACT, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition (Princeton Review)

### Required Additional Resources for Tutors

Free math worksheets by topic, from fractions to logarithms. This is the site that you will use the most for subject-specific math homework:

<https://www.kutasoftware.com>

### Optional Additional Texts

If your student has exhausted the tests available in *RA* and/or needs additional material:

- Princeton Review: *Cracking the ACT* (2014 Edition): Great additional resource with 3 good practice tests. Particularly good for its Science (Fighting Scientists in particular).
- Kaplan ACT (2015): Good for students who struggle with math. It has a much larger section on math than the other books, and easier math sections on practice tests to build students up to the real thing.

### Before the first session:

- Assign Part I in *ER* and *MS* to lay the groundwork for the ACT (scoring, basic strategy, etc.)
- Take the free practice test included in “Preparing for the ACT” PDF on the ACT website: <http://www.act.org/aap/pdf/Preparing-for-the-ACT.pdf>
  - Ask your students to send you overall section scores, the incorrect problems *and* problems that were difficult via the [ACT Log](#).

### Session 1: Overview of the test, English (I)

In session

- Intro to tutoring, schedule until the test, and goals for the ACT.
  - Review academic history, current academic classes, and math class history to adjust syllabus.
  - Specifically cover range of math topics on the test to see what has been covered in school already, what needs to be reviewed, and what has never been covered.
- Intro to the test
  - Review four sections
  - Review scoring and overall rules
  - Review general test strategy, including guessing and POE
- Review diagnostic test holistically: what was easy, what was hard, what made no sense
- English: Explanation of how the section works, overall section strategy, and the different types of questions
- Punctuation Questions
  - Cover commas, semi-colons, dashes, colons, apostrophe rules and common apostrophe/contraction tricks on the test
- Rhetorical Skills questions
  - Introduction to separate question type, how to read the questions, just enough to do homework

#### Homework

- ER: Read pages 16-23. Do remaining Exercises 1A-2C on pages 27-31
- ER: Do English passages 40-45, untimed

### **Session 2: English (II)**

#### In session

- Review English homework from log and punctuation exercises from ER
- English Rhetorical Skills
  - Additions and specificity, deletions, transitions, author's goal, etc.
  - Look at these questions on homework as well as new passages together
- Grammar
  - Subject-verb agreement, misplaced modifiers, I vs. me, parallel construction, pronoun agreement, correct prepositions

#### Homework

- Student-specific assignments on grammar
- RA: 42-48 English passage, untimed
- MS: Read 15-22

### **Session 3 Science (I): Data Representation**

#### In session

- Review homework from log
- Intro to Science: Data Representation passages

- Go over four question types, passage methodology
- Do untimed practice passages together

#### Homework

- MS: 28-31 Data representation passages untimed
- RA: 100-104 Data representation passages with explanations for each answer
- ER: 46-48 English passage untimed, but log time

### **Session 4: Reading (I)**

#### In session

- Review homework from log
- Intro to Reading: Four different passage types, question types, personal order
- Intro to line strategy for Social Science, Humanities, and Natural Science
  - Break down each passage by associated line questions and answer as you read
  - Do untimed passages together to practice strategy
  - Natural Science: Use passages like science textbooks in session (like ER 150-151 or RA), use strategies from school

\* NOTE: Once your students can do Reading passages in 10 minutes and do them well, start timing them, and reducing their time each week. If they're working on individual passages, they should cut down from 10:00 to 9:30, and then 9:00. If they're working on entire sections, students should start at 40 minutes, then cut to 38 minutes before going to 35. Sometimes students can make the jump somewhere in this process, but it helps to work gradually!

#### Homework

- ER: 146-151 Reading, untimed but log time
- MS: 36-39 Data representation, untimed but log time

### **Session 5: Math (I): Basic Algebra and Graphing Review**

#### In session

- Review homework from log
- Math fundamentals
  - Vocabulary, arithmetic, number lines, integer rules, fractions, percentages
- Algebra
  - Simple equations, proportions, FOIL
- Functions
  - Definition, domain and range, composite functions
- Graphing
  - Midpoint formula, distance formula/Pythag. Shortcut, equation of a line, slope, parallel and perpendicular slope, equation of a circle
- Relationship between equations and graphs
  - Piecewise functions
  - Systems of equations and their relationships to graphs
  - Solving for intersections on a graph

#### Homework

- MS: Math problems 104-105, 135-136

- Math topics: TBD (use Kuta software to generate subject-specific worksheets)
- ER: 168-169 Reading, untimed but log time

**Note:** Coverage of content should be prioritized over time management; so early assignments should be untimed. When you ask students to log how long it takes to complete a passage, make it clear that this is just to help you as a tutor—they don't need to start at standard testing time!

### **Session 6: The essay (if taking the writing section)**

#### In session

- Review homework from log
- Go over essay scoring, separate from composite, task of the essay
- Look at rubric to see what ACT looks for, and sample essays [online](#) and/or in RA book. If you look in RA book, talk about what the best essay does *wrong* as well as what it does right.
- Go through example prompt and make outline together to through process.

#### Homework

- Write essay based on sample outline together, untimed.
- ER: 166-167, 17-171, Reading untimed but log time.
- ER: 49-54 English, timed based on last logged time.

### **Session 6: Science (II): Research Summaries and Essay (II)**

#### In session

- Review homework from log and essay
- Science: Intro to Research Summaries
  - Go over new question type about experimental procedure and general passage strategy (keep it simple)
  - Do practice passages together (untimed)
- Essay
  - Practice making outlines and examples from prompts. Do untimed and then timed practice drills.

#### Homework

- RA: 105-108 Passage and explanation of answers
- MS: 32-35, 44-45 Research summary passages
- Write essay, untimed but log time

### **Session 7: Reading (II)**

#### In session

- Review homework from log
- Reading: Review Fiction passages
  - Cover two types of passages, question sub-types
  - Go over strategy, do both long prose and dialogue passages together

#### Homework

- ER: 144-145, 164-165 Fiction passages, untimed but log time
- ER: 70-75 English, timed

- Write essay, timed

### **Session 8: Math (II) Geometry and Basic Trig**

#### In session

- Review homework from log
- Geometry
  - Area of a circle, area of a sector, circumference, arc length, inscribed angles, parallel line rules, area and volume
  - Special Triangles
- Basic Trig
  - SOHCAHTOA
  - Solving for a missing side of a triangle

#### Homework

- MS: Read 120-132, problems 133-134, 137-139
- Math topics: TBD (use Kuta for subject-specific worksheets)
- Write essay, timed

### **Session 9: Science (III): Contradictory Viewpoints/Fighting Scientists**

#### In session

- Review homework from log
- Science: Intro to Contradictory Viewpoints
  - Go over methodology and question types, and do practice passages together.
  - Use RA passages for best examples
  - Make sure students underline, circle, and write down short summaries of each main hypothesis for comparison questions!

#### Homework

- RA: 110-114 Passage and explanation of answers
- MS: 58-59, 74-77 Science passages
- Math topics: TBD (reinforcement of topics from last week if necessary, especially SOHCAHTOA)
- ER: 76-81, English, timed

### **Session 10: Reading (III)**

#### In session

- Review homework from log
- Review Reading section in general. Fine tune strategy for each section and strategies for harder question types.
- Make personal order for full practice section.
- Timed drills together

#### Homework

- ER: 184-191 Full Reading section, untimed but log time
- MS: 146-152 math problems
- Write essay, timed

### **Session 11: Math (III) Advanced Math Topics**

### In session

- Review homework from log
- Review math topics on material so far
- Advanced math topics
  - Matrices, geometric series, imaginary and complex numbers, and harder trigonometric topics (Law of Sines and Law of Cosines, sinusoidal functions)

### Homework

- Math topics: TBD (use Kuta for subject-specific worksheets)
- Complete sections but not all at once:
  - MS: 162-179, Full math section, untimed but log time
  - RA: 180-187, Complete Reading section, 40 minutes
  - RA: 188-201, Complete Science section, 40 minutes
  - RA: 152-163, Complete English section, standard time

## **Session 12: Complete Sections**

### In session

- Review homework from log.
- Review timing strategies for each section and finalize POOD for Reading and Science
- Review topics TBD.

### Homework

- RA: Practice test 2, with results entered in the log, including breakdown of each question

Note: If timing is too difficult, try one in-between practice test with 38-minute sections before going from 40-minute to 35-minute sections for Reading and Science.

## **Session 13: Practice Test I**

### In session

- Review test from the log
- Review topics and strategies TBD

### Homework

- RA: Practice test 3, with results entered in the log, including breakdown of each question

## **Session 14: Practice Test II**

### In session

- Review test from the log
- Review topics and strategies TBD

### Homework

- RA: Practice test 4, with results entered in the log, including breakdown of each question

## **Session 15: Practice Test III**

### In session

- Review test from the log
- Review topics and strategies TBD

#### Homework

- TBD: Trouble-shooting based on test results, focusing on topics, sections, or timing, or additional practice test (RA Test 5)

#### **Session 16: Final Review**

##### In session

- Final review of homework, material, POOD for each section
- Test expectations and goals
- Protocol and plans for test day (and the night before!)

\*\*\* Make sure to call or text your students the night before the test to wish them good luck!