

Resources for Families



In This Section:

- Various Resources

Free Publications for Families **ACT**[®]

ACT developed the following resources to assist families with planning and preparing for education after high school. You are encouraged to print and reproduce any of these materials for distribution to educators, students, or parents. All of these resources are available at www.act.org/ew/resources.



Why Take EXPLORE

This brochure is designed to help students and parents understand the benefits of taking ACT's 8th- or 9th-grade EXPLORE program. It provides tips for preparing for EXPLORE, describes EXPLORE content, and answers frequently asked questions about EXPLORE.

www.act.org/ew/resources/explore.html



Por qué presentar el examen EXPLORE

Spanish version of *Why Take EXPLORE* for students and parents.

www.act.org/ew/resources/explore.html



Make High School Count

A twelve-page student-centered publication designed to encourage students to make the most of their high school years. For 8th- and 9th-grade students. A parent version is also available.

<http://mappingyourfuture.org/downloads/mhscstudents.pdf>



Why Take PLAN

This brochure is designed to help students and parents understand the benefits of taking ACT's 10th-grade PLAN program. It provides tips for preparing for PLAN, describes PLAN content, and answers frequently asked questions about PLAN.

www.act.org/plan/pdf/plan_why_take.pdf



Por qué presentar el examen PLAN

Spanish version of *Why Take PLAN* for students and parents.

www.act.org/plan/pdf/plan_why_take_span.pdf



Family Firsts: Guide for Parents of First-Generation College Students

A four-page guide to assist families of first-generation college students with the issues they may encounter when considering college. Looks at why students should go to college, what parents can do to support their child, and where the money will come from.

www.act.org/ew/resources/more/FamilyFirstParents.pdf



Los primeros en la familia

Spanish version of the four-page Family Firsts guide for parents of first-generation college students.

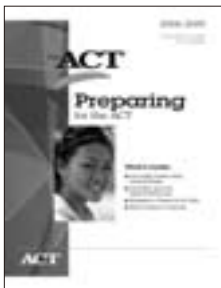
www.act.org/ew/resources/more/FamilyFirstSpanish.pdf



Family Firsts: Guide for First-Generation College Students

A sixteen-page publication designed to encourage first-generation students to consider attending college. Looks at the benefits of going to college, what it takes to get there, and who can help. It also discusses how to choose a college and how to finance a college education.

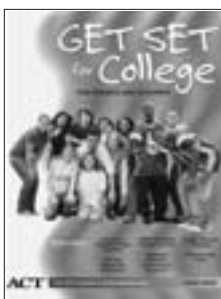
www.act.org/ew/resources/more/FamilyFirstStudents.pdf



Preparing for the ACT

This booklet includes descriptions of the skills measured by the ACT tests, test-taking strategies, general information about test day, and complete practice tests, including a writing prompt. A sample answer document, scoring key, and scoring instructions are also included. Free copies are available through the high school counseling office.

www.act.org/aap/pdf/preparing.pdf



Get Set for College

A publication developed to help students and parents successfully manage the task of planning for college by viewing the process as a series of six logical steps. It also provides ACT test preparation information, college selection strategies, and suggested activities and planning resources for students and parents.

www.act.org/path/secondary/pdf/GetSetforCollege.pdf

ACT Test Prep Resources for Students



ACT Online Prep™—Student Version— \$19.95

- Internet-based test prep directly from the makers of the ACT! Includes real ACT practice tests and practice for the optional Writing Test. Customized test prep focuses on individual student needs. Available at www.actstudent.org/testprep or through the ACT registration process.

***The Real ACT Prep Guide*— \$25.00 including shipping**

- Includes three practice tests used in previous actual test administrations—each with an optional Writing Test—a review of important topics in English, math, science, and writing, and key test-taking strategies. All you need to know about the ACT is here! Order your copy at www.actstudent.org/testprep or through the ACT registration process.

***Preparing for the ACT*— FREE**

- Describes the content of the ACT and includes test preparation suggestions and a complete practice test including the Writing Test. Ask your counselor for a copy of this booklet or download it from www.actstudent.org/testprep.

Online Sample Questions, Test Descriptions, and Test Tips FREE

- Review sample questions online to help familiarize yourself with the ACT test. Five sets of questions are available for English, Mathematics, and Science Tests; four sets are available for the Reading Test. Together, these nineteen sets make up one complete ACT. For each question, there are explanations of both correct and incorrect answers. To prepare for the optional ACT Writing Test, a sample writing test prompt is given with sample responses. Available at www.actstudent.org/testprep.

COLLEGE COMPARISON WORKSHEET			
COLLEGE NAME			
SIZE/LOCATION — distance from home — enrollment — physical size of campus			
ENVIRONMENT — type of school (2 yr. or 4 yr.) — school setting (urban, rural) — location and size of nearest city — co-ed, male, female — religious affiliation			
ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS — deadline — tests required, including Writing Test — average test scores, GPA, rank — notification			
ACADEMICS — your major offered — special requirements — accreditation — student-faculty ratio — typical class size			
COLLEGE EXPENSES — tuition, room, and board — estimated total budget — application fee, deposits			
FINANCIAL AID — deadline — required forms — percent receiving aid — scholarships			
HOUSING — residence hall requirement — food plan			
FACILITIES — academic — recreational — other			
ACTIVITIES — clubs, organizations — Greek life — athletics, intramurals — other			
CAMPUS VISITS — when — special opportunities			

Factors in the College Admission Decision



College admissions officers at over 1,540 colleges and universities are asked to complete the NACAC Admissions Trend Survey each year. The chart below shows how important admissions officers consider various factors when making an admission decision. The number in each cell shows the percentage of all admissions officers responding to the survey that attribute a particular level of importance to a given factor.

Factor	Considerable Importance	Moderate Importance	Limited Importance	No Importance
Grades in College Prep Courses	74%	16%	6%	4%
Standardized Admission Tests	59%	29%	6%	6%
Grades in All Courses	54%	35%	7%	4%
Class Rank	31%	33%	20%	16%
Essay or Writing Sample	23%	35%	21%	21%
Counselor Recommendation	17%	44%	25%	14%
Teacher Recommendation	17%	42%	26%	15%
Work/Extracurricular Activities	8%	39%	35%	18%
Interview	9%	29%	29%	33%
Student's Demonstrated Interest	15%	21%	23%	41%
State Graduation Exam Scores	7%	12%	30%	51%
Subject Tests (SAT II, AP, IB)	7%	24%	33%	36%
Race/Ethnicity	2%	16%	20%	62%
Ability to Pay	2%	7%	15%	76%
State or County of Residence	1%	8%	16%	75%
Alumni Relation	2%	19%	44%	35%

Source: 2006 NACAC Admission Trends Survey

Freshman Year

- Schedule rigorous high school courses. By graduation, you should have taken four years of English, and *at least* three years of math, natural science and social science.
- Take ACT's EXPLORE test. It will help you identify your strengths and weaknesses early in your high school career.
- Review your EXPLORE results with your teachers, counselor, and parents.
- Become familiar with college entrance requirements. Your academic performance (grade point average, class rank, and types of courses you take), ACT test scores, whether they require or recommend the Writing Test, teacher or counselor recommendations, extracurricular activities, essays, and interviews are all important factors at most colleges.
- Research college costs, scholarships, and other forms of financial aid. If you haven't begun to save for college, do so as soon as possible.

Sophomore Year

- Continue to take challenging college prep courses.
- Take ACT's PLAN test. PLAN is great preparation for the ACT. It will also show you if you are learning the skills you will need for college-level work.
- Review your PLAN results with your teachers, counselor, and parents.
- Learn about the training that different careers require.
- Start collecting information about colleges through your school's guidance office or on the Web. You may begin getting brochures from colleges in the mail.
- Build a list of colleges in which you are interested or that you may want to visit.
- Continue researching sources of financial aid. Keep saving!
- Attend local college fairs.

Junior Year

- Continue to take challenging college prep courses.
- Consider putting together a portfolio that highlights your special skills and talents.
- Schedule college visits. If possible, your visit should include a campus tour, a chance to sit in on a class, a meal in the campus dining hall, meetings with faculty and students, and an interview with an admissions counselor.
- Start preparing for the ACT. Ask your counselor for your free copy of *Preparing for the ACT* and review the contents.
- As part of your preparation for the ACT, consider purchasing ACT test prep products (*ACT Online Prep* or *The Real ACT Prep Guide*) or access free materials at www.actstudent.org.
- Investigate scholarship opportunities.
- Request admissions and scholarship applications from your top colleges.
- Get an estimate of how much financial aid your family may qualify for by completing ACT's Financial Aid Need Estimator at www.act.org/fane.
- Begin comparing the costs of colleges that you are considering.
- Check with the colleges you are considering to determine whether you need to take the optional ACT Writing Test.
- Register for the ACT or ACT Plus Writing online at www.actstudent.org.
- Take the ACT or the ACT Plus Writing.

Senior Year

August

- Register for the ACT (if you didn't take it as a junior or if you are not satisfied with your score).
- Review ACT results and retest, if necessary.

August–December

- Visit with your school counselor to make sure you are on track to graduate and fulfill college admission requirements.
- Consider taking courses at a local university or community college.
- Ask for personal references from teachers, school counselors, or employers early in the year. Follow your school's procedure for requesting recommendations.
- Visit with admissions counselors who come to your high school.
- Attend a college fair.
- Begin your college essay(s).
- Apply for admission at the colleges you've chosen.
- Send ACT test scores—If the colleges you've applied to are different than the colleges you listed to receive your ACT scores when you registered for the ACT, go to www.actstudent.org to send additional score reports.
- See your school counselor for help finding financial aid and scholarships.

January–May

- Complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) as soon after January 1 as possible.
- Keep working hard all year; second semester grades can affect scholarship eligibility.
- Ask your guidance office in January to send first semester transcripts to schools where you applied. In May, they will need to send final transcripts to the college you will attend.
- Visit colleges that have invited you to enroll.
- Continue to look for scholarship opportunities.
- Watch the mail for your Student Aid Report (SAR)—it should arrive three to six weeks after the FAFSA is filed.
- Compare financial aid packages from different schools.
- Decide which college to attend; most colleges require a decision by May 1.
- Notify schools you will not attend of your decision.
- Notify your college about any outside scholarships you received.

Request for Waiver or Deferral of College Admission Application Fee **ACT**[®]

This form must be signed by both the student and an authorized high school official.

Directions to High School Official: Photocopy this page and complete the form for individual students for whom payment of the admission application fee will be a hardship.

Directions to Student: Send this completed form along with your college application to the institutions to which you wish to apply. Keep in mind that individual institutions may consider the request but are not obligated to waive or defer payment.

TO: Director of Admission

_____ (printed name of college/university)

RE: _____ (printed name of student)

High School Official's Statement: Please consider waiving or deferring payment of the college admission application fee for the student named above. This student has applied for a waiver of the ACT test fee on the basis of one or more of the indicators of economic need adopted by ACT. Based on my knowledge of the student's circumstances, I believe that payment of the college admission application fee would be a hardship.

Signature of high school official

Printed name of high school

Printed name of high school official

High school telephone number

Student's Statement: Please consider waiving or deferring payment of my college admission application fee. I certify that I meet the guidelines for economic need required for a waiver of the ACT test fee. Furthermore, I agree to adhere to all policies your institution may have related to waiving or deferring the college admission application fee.

Signature of student

Student's Social Security Number (optional)

Student's street address

Student's city, state, and ZIP code

(Do not use this form to request waiver of ACT test fees; do not send this form to ACT.)