

“Kids take a lot of practice tests, and they get their scores, but they don’t ever really analyze [questions] they got wrong and where their weaknesses are,” Koenig said. “That is probably the biggest tip ever, and not just [from] me as someone who teaches test prep, it’s what all the research says. ... Time yourself, do practice problems, [and] analyze the wrong answers.”

There are also some other, more specific strategies to help save time, according to Lehman.

“Don’t even waste thirty seconds reading the directions [on the science portion]; you don’t need to,” Lehman said. “They don’t change. It can come down to a matter of a minute; that might be two questions.”

Alex Besse, MHS senior who raised her score to a 31 the second time she took the ACT, said remembering that not all questions are the same is important.

“The questions get harder as the test goes on,” Besse said. “Start at the beginning [of the test] so you get more done, because you don’t want to take longer on the harder questions and not have as much time for the easy ones. It makes more sense to just get the ones you know out of the way.”

According to Besse, she took the ACT a second time to try raising her score in order to be eligible for a scholarship to the university she’s aspiring to attend: The Ohio State University. Lehman said it’s beneficial for students to have an idea of the requirements and ACT scores for schools they’re considering applying to because it gives students and idea of how they need to perform on the tests.

“Have an idea of where you want to go,” Lehman said. “Know what those schools are looking for. ... College is a huge commitment; you want to make sure you’re picking college that fits you first, not necessarily [trying] to be what the colleges want.”

Practice and preparation, not only for the ACT, but for college as well, comes best from putting effort into classes at school, according to Sohn.

“My junior year, I took Honors English and AP [Language and Composition],” Sohn said. “That was really helpful. My science classes helped, too. They don’t actually test you on what you actually learned in your science class, ...but I think just having background knowledge really helped. As long as you challenge yourself and work hard in school, it’s just kind of comes from that.”

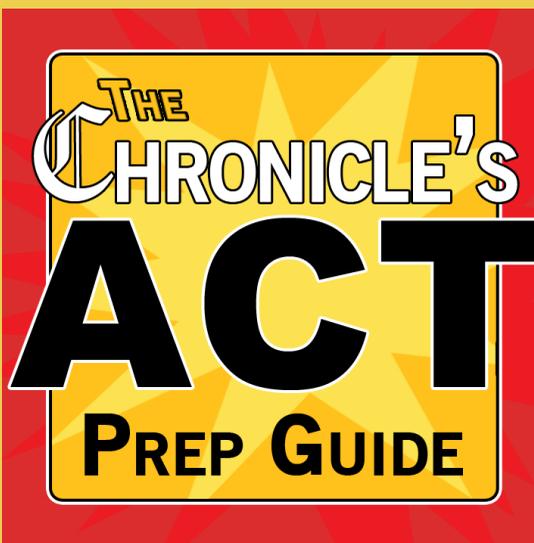
Deaton agreed: he said he was surprised at how many questions on the ACT seemed to come straight from his classes here at MHS.

Looking back in hindsight, Sohn said the most stressful part about the ACT is everything leading up to it. Lehman said students just need to keep calm.

“Understand that those four hours are going to be taxing on you,” Lehman said. “Take the test in your home high school if possible; having to deal with logistical issues is not something you want to have to worry about. The night before...get a lot of sleep; eat breakfast; prepare yourself; it is what it is.”

Deaton offered his most valuable piece of advice for taking the ACT.

“Just calm down,” Deaton said. “[The ACT] is just any ordinary test pretty much. Show them what you’re worth.”



The following information is compiled by *The Chronicle* staff based on the official ACT website, actstudent.org, and also the opinions of students and teachers in Mason High School.

Test Format:

English

75 questions, 45 minutes

Mathematics

60 questions, 60 minutes

Break

10 minutes

Reading

40 questions, 35 minutes

Science

40 questions, 35 minutes

Writing (optional)

1 prompt, 30 minutes

What to bring:



- Admission ticket
- Student ID
- No. 2 Pencils (non-mechanic)
- Timer/ wrist watch
- Calculator
- Water
- Snack for break

Helpful Tips:



“Take it more than once because your score is likely to go up.”

- Alex Besse, senior



“A big chunk of the ACT is pacing.”

-Carol Lehman



“Even if you don’t do any extra help, keeping up in school is important.”

- Sarah Sohn, senior