

WCHS Test Prep Syllabus Mrs. Merkwan and Mrs. Renner

The Test Prep class is designed to familiarize students with both the ACT and the Accuplacer—tests required for admission by most colleges, universities, and tech



schools. Well-prepared students are more likely to score higher on these entrance exams, which may increase their chances of receiving scholarships and enable them to have more options when selecting a school.

Because of the fast-paced design of this course, attendance will be a high priority. Much of the practice is timed, so you may not complete that work outside of the classroom. Students will learn test-taking strategies, review English, math, reading and science content, take practice tests, and discover ways to reduce text anxiety. Although writing is not required for most college admission, we will spend a couple of preparing for the writing section. In addition to the workbook—The Official ACT Prep Guide—you will practice with released ACT and Accuplacer tests and Method Test Prep software within Career Cruising at SDMyLife.

From now on, whenever you see the word **standardized**, think **predictable** instead. The ACT test measures what it says it does: academic achievement. The ACT tests the same information the same way, year after year. For example, there are always 14 plane geometry questions on the ACT, and there are exactly 10 questions on punctuation. You can count on it! Even the way they ask the questions is predictable, based on the need for a standardized product. You will be exposed to the type of questions that will be on the test so you will know how to recognize them and be prepared.

When should you take the ACT? The test is given six times each year in most of the country, usually at 8:00 A.M. on a Saturday morning. The vast majority of American students take the test in the spring of their junior year, but more and more are taking it several times, beginning as early as their freshman year.

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For this course, YOU WILL BE REQUIRED TO REGISTER AND TAKE THE OFFICIAL ACT on Saturday, April 17, 2021 or a full-length retired ACT that same day under the same testing conditions if you decide to wait until June. Registration is due by March 12, 2021. This year, because COVID cancelled SO many tests across the country, we MUST register early. West Central fills FAST with students from Salem, Montrose, Tri-Valley, Baltic, and Dell Rapids.

We will get registered for that exam immediately. If you have a SPECIFIC and legitimate reason that you must miss the test that day, that must be confirmed **BEFORE FEBRUARY 15** by contact from your parents, and you must sit for a full-length (3 hour) exam administered by Mrs. Merkwan and Mrs. Renner.

If you fail to schedule and/or complete the April exam or take the MOCK ACT, your grade will be docked one full letter grade.

IMPORTANT: If you have NOT taken Algebra II, we recommend you do NOT pay to take the actual ACT until you have completed AT LEAST one semester of Algebra II in class!

In this class, you will learn test-taking strategies for the ACT and Accuplacer tests specifically which could also be applied to other classroom tests. You will also spend a great deal of time practicing on retired ACT tests. In most semester-long ACT prep classes, up to three ACT tests are given. PRACTICE is the best way to study and prepare to take the ACT and Accuplacer. From the tests that you take, you will discover both your strengths and your weaknesses, and you can work

specifically on those areas to improve your score. If you really try hard to improve through the completion of these practice tests, you will find that your scores will increase significantly. The more that you practice these tests, the better and more comfortable you will become at taking any standardized test. Previous students have always said, “Remember that no amount of time you spend preparing for the ACT is enough!”

EVALUATION:

Your participation on the computer practice, written practice, and the almost daily sample subject area tests will constitute a portion of your grade. More about grading will be discussed in class. Two or three times during the semester, you will be given **full length** “mock” ACT tests. Your grade for these tests will be based on improvement. The mock tests will be counted as a larger percentage of your grade.

PREREQUISITES:

Students must have a real desire to improve/score well on their ACT and/or Accuplacer. Everyone is in this class for a different reason. Some need to earn a high enough score to enroll in the college of your choice (SDSU requires a score of 18; USD requires 21; the SD School of Mines requires 24); others want to get more scholarship money. Scoring well on the ACT means assistance in the form of scholarships/grants (usually a score of 27 or above for scholarships). Remember, each point that you can raise your ACT above 27 means approximately \$800 to \$1000 per year. In South Dakota, a score of 24 on the ACT will guarantee you \$6500 for the SD Opportunity Scholarship.

EXPECTATIONS:

1. **Be Respectful.** Show respect through your words and actions. Since this class relies heavily on computers, appropriate computer use is very important. Anyone visiting sites that are not appropriate will be removed from the computers and given written work in place of using the technology.

2. **Be Responsible.** Participate in class and complete all assignments. Be HERE!

3. **Be Ready.** Be In Class Ready to Work before the Second Bell

- Do not work on assignments from another class during ACT work time.
- Do not bring food or drinks into the classroom.

• **Cell phones and other electronic devices like Apple watches are not to be seen or heard during ACT work time. They are NOT allowed in the ACT testing center, so get used to that now! If we even SEE a cell phone in class, you will forfeit that day's points, just as you would forfeit the fee you paid for taking the ACT if you bring a cell phone into the ACT or if your phone goes off during the ACT. On practice test days, cell phone must be in cell motel, on teacher back counter, or turned off and left in bag.**