

# News You Can Use



April 2009

ACT provides this monthly newsletter to inform students and their parents about college and career planning. ACT is a not-for-profit organization that serves millions of people in schools, colleges, professional associations, businesses and government agencies with programs and services that help people achieve their education and career goals. **Visit [www.actstudent.org](http://www.actstudent.org) for more information and services.**



## College Planning ACT<sup>®</sup>

### Taking the road trip

While finding a place that fits is important, it is just one piece of the puzzle. College visits are test-drives and each visit should be carefully planned. This is the time to ask a lot of questions.

Take time out before your visit to review school materials and make a list of questions you want to ask while on campus. Feel free to ask other questions that may come to mind while you're there.

The campus tour guide is a great resource. Ask the guide about the strength of coursework, the ability to schedule necessary classes, extracurricular activities, and any other specific questions you have. Spend time on campus outside of the formal tour, possibly during an arranged overnight stay. Visit the student union and strike up a conversation with a student. Find out why they chose the school. Ask about resources available to students, such as healthcare, recreation, the library, computer labs, etc.

If your school of choice is too far away to take a weekend visit, consider online virtual campus tours as an option. This resource also allows you to ask questions and gain more information about the institution so that you can make an informed decision.

The information and experience you gain will help you make some very important decisions, but it should also be an enjoyable time to think about what lies ahead.

## In the home stretch

Graduating seniors are nearing the finish line of college planning. Though it may seem like the hard work is finished, it's no time to give in to "senioritis."

More and more colleges and universities are carefully monitoring grades and extracurricular involvement throughout senior year. Keep up on schoolwork and extracurricular leadership roles.

Decisions still need to be made. Financial aid offers will arrive soon, if they haven't already, and this may impact attendance decisions. Review offers—and all of the other decision-making factors—when choosing a school. It is possible to appeal the financial aid package, but often the first offer will be the best one.

Start thinking about how to spend your summer after graduation. Would a job provide more perspective on a future career? Is volunteering a wise use of time? How about getting a head start on your freshman year by taking courses at a local college that will transfer to your institution of choice? Now is a good time to decide how you'll spend your time between graduation and the fall term.

## Checklists for high school juniors and seniors

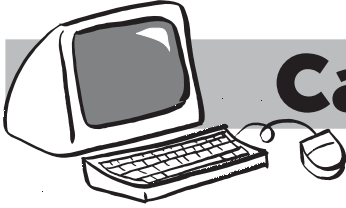
The school year may be coming to a close, but there's still college planning work to do! Keep the following in mind:

For juniors:

- List, compare and visit colleges
- Take the ACT®
- Prepare a target list of college campus visits
- Prepare questions for each visit
- Compare college costs
- Visit [www.actstudent.org/college/11.html](http://www.actstudent.org/college/11.html) for more college planning resources

For seniors:

- If not already done, complete the FAFSA right away and submit it for financial aid consideration
- Watch for the Student Aid Report (SAR), which should arrive in your mail about four weeks after the FAFSA is filed
- Visit colleges that have invited you to enroll
- Track important financial aid and scholarship deadlines, submitting forms as needed
- Compare financial aid packages offered by different schools
- Decide which school to attend and notify the school
- Track and observe deadlines for submitting all required fees and paperwork to the school
- Notify the schools you will not be attending of your decision
- Read, sign and send in the promissory note if borrowing money
- Notify the college you will be attending of any outside scholarships you receive
- Have your counselor send your final transcript in May or June to the college you will be attending



## Careers

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### Math and science required for fastest growing careers

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics' "Occupational Outlook Handbook," 15 of the 20 fastest growing careers of the next decade require math and science proficiency. Some of the fastest growing fields include: network systems and data communications analysts, home healthcare providers, computer software engineers, medical assistants, veterinarians and financial analysts.

Though not all of these positions require four-year degrees, they do require strong abilities in math and science. ACT recommends students take a minimum of three years of math (Algebra I and higher—not including general math, business math or consumer math) and at least three years of natural sciences (earth science, biology, chemistry, physics, etc.)

Look at your EXPLORE<sup>®</sup>, PLAN<sup>®</sup> and ACT scores for some guidance in career planning. Consult your school counselor for suggestions on classes to enhance your knowledge set. Visit ACT's World-of-Work Map at [actstudent.org/wwm/plan\\_world.html](http://actstudent.org/wwm/plan_world.html) to see careers that align with your skills and interests. Use this information to plan beyond high school and into a career.



## Check It Out

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### ACT helps parents prepare for college, too

College planning can be difficult not only for the student, but for parents, too. For parents that need tips on sorting through the ins and outs of college planning, we offer [actparent.org](http://actparent.org) as an online guide to understanding this process. The website offers college and career planning checklists, frequently asked questions about the ACT, and other general information that parents may find helpful in assisting a student transitioning into college.

In addition to the various college and career planning resources, [actparent.org](http://actparent.org) also provides access to current and past issues of the monthly *ACT Parent* newsletter. *ACT Parent* provides timely information on financial aid, testing and more. While visiting the website, parents can sign up to be one of the first to receive the electronic newsletter in their e-mail inbox each month.

Parents are among the most influential people in a teenager's life. At [actparent.org](http://actparent.org), gain the knowledge needed to become a mentor for your teen through this time of discovery and decisions.

## SCAM ALERT!

Please be advised that ACT does not sell or provide any personally identifiable information, including ACT scores, to any ACT test preparation companies. Further, ACT is not affiliated with and does not endorse any ACT test preparation company. We provide ACT score information to scholarship providers only if given permission by the student or the provider is one of the federal or state programs detailed in the ACT student materials.

At ACT, we recognize the importance of protecting the privacy of personal information. Therefore, we adhere to the ACT Data Use Policy which can be found at: <http://www.actstudent.org/datause.html>.

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## ACT is now on Twitter!

Follow us on Twitter for daily updates on upcoming registration deadlines, test taking tips, and other helpful "tweets". Sign up and follow **ACTStudent** today at <http://twitter.com/ACTStudent>.



## Test date reminder

The next national ACT test date is June 13, 2009. The registration deadline is May 8. Late registration is available May 9–22. Register online today at [www.actstudent.org](http://www.actstudent.org).

The September test date will be available nationwide beginning this fall. With the expansion to all 50 states and D.C., students across the country can meet early college scholarship and admissions deadlines by testing as early as possible in the fall.

Online registration for the 2009–2010 test dates (including September) will be available beginning mid-July at [www.actstudent.org/regist/dates.html](http://www.actstudent.org/regist/dates.html).

An optional Writing Test is available in addition to the multiple-choice achievement test. Go to [actstudent.org/writing](http://actstudent.org/writing) to find out about the Writing Test, including the colleges that require it.

While on the website, check out our test prep aids. Free sample questions are available along with test-day tips, a list of what to bring and approved calculators for use on the Math Test.

For information on test dates, the ACT multiple choice and writing tests, and other useful tips for college and/or career planning, visit [www.actstudent.org](http://www.actstudent.org).