ACT Registration

The **BIG** Idea

- How do I register for the ACT? What do I need to know for the test day?

AGENDA

Approx. 45 minutes

I. Warm Up: ACTing Ahead
    (5 minutes)

II. ACT Registration (30 minutes)

III. Test Day the Right Way
     (5 minutes)

IV. Wrap Up: Looking Ahead
    (5 minutes)

MATERIALS

❏ **STUDENT HANDBOOK PAGES:**

- Student Handbook page 64, ACTing Ahead

- Student Handbook page 65, Test Day the Right Way

❏ **FACILITATOR PAGES:**

- Facilitator Resource 1, ACT Registration Notes (completed necessary test day information)

❏ #2 pencils (class set)

❏ Chart paper

OBJECTIVES

During this lesson, students will:

- Identify tasks to do before the test day.

- Register for the ACT college entrance exam.

- Understand test day procedures.

OVERVIEW

The New York State lottery slogan, "You've got to be in it to win it" – can be paraphrased for the ACT college entrance exam: "You've got to be registered to take it." Therefore, during this lesson, students will register for the test. You will help the class navigate the process, identifying what's required and important to fill out now, and what can be addressed later when students have more time.

Students who have credit card information or a fee waiver #, plus a valid e-mail address registered online, can print out their tickets (printing can also be done later, at home, once the student has established an online account). **Note: Online registration is the preferred way to sign up for this test.** All other students will fill out paper forms, which must be obtained from the guidance counselor.

Students who bring checks or money orders will put them with their finished paper forms into the ACT registration packet envelopes (provided with the application), and give them to you to be mailed (*requires three first-class stamps). The other students will take home their finished paper copies to mail along with payment.

PREPARATION

❑ Make arrangements for the computer lab.

❑ Determine how many students will <u>not</u> be registering online (i.e., students who will bring in checks or money orders, or students who will need to take them home to send in later with payment). Contact the school counselor to obtain ACT registration packets for each of these students. **Note:** Registration packets can also be ordered online and mailed to individual students; or quantities can be ordered by school counselors and mailed to the school. Registration packets CANNOT be downloaded and printed out from the website.

❑ Obtain your high school code number from the school counselor.

❑ Enlist the help of the guidance counselor, and/or host teacher for this lesson. They can circulate and help students who have questions during the process. If both are able to co-facilitate this lesson, assign one to help students registering online, the other for students filling out paper forms. **Note: the online and paper forms do not match, so providing instructions to both groups simultaneously will be challenging.**

❑ To familiarize yourself with the ACT online registration , go online to www.actstudent.org/regist/index.html and follow the process to register for the ACT online, so you will be familiar with it. Create your own web account — you can use your own name and information or make this up — and continue through the application until the last page, when you will be asked for payment. You can exit at this point.

❑ Look through an ACT registration packet and review the instructions, which may change from year to year. Note that each packet has ACT TEST DATE LABELS to affix to the front of the envelope, and a bubble sheet that students will use to fill in their information. The pamphlet has a lot of valuable information about registering, making changes, planning for test day, etc., that you may find useful.

❑ Note the amount of postage required for mailing paper forms, and purchase stamps. Note that students will use the envelope containing their materials to mail in the bubble form.

❑ Find out when and where the ACT will be given near your students' school. This information is available at http://www.actstudent.org/regist/centers/. (**Note:** This should be the same information you provided in **Lesson 1, Activity IV: Getting into the Act, with ACT).** You may want to do several different "city" searches, plugging in the names of neighboring towns. Some locations are very limited in how often they offer the test, whereas other test sites have many more test dates. Jot down the test dates, locations, and code numbers for each test center.

❑ For each school, make a copy of **Facilitator Resource #1, ACT Registration Notes,** and fill in the following information:
  - Test dates (from website)
  - Locations (from website)
  - Site codes (from website)
  - High school code (from guidance counselor)
  Make enough copies of this sheet to give to every student as a handout.

❑ Be thoughtful about how to address students who are not planning to attend college. The recommendation is that they create an ACT online account and follow the instructions anyway, so they are familiar with the process if they change their minds later.

❑ List the day's **BIG IDEA** and activities on the board.

❑ Make sure all information on **Student Handbook pages 50-51, Plan of Action** is filled out (exception: if students are choosing to leave out credit card and social security information, and fill out later with family members.) **REMINDER: To avoid identity theft or unauthorized purchases, remind students to NEVER share credit card information with anyone.**

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Filling out registration forms can be daunting for anyone, especially teens. Helping students navigate through this process will help ensure that they sign up for the ACT college entrance exam. There are many details that need to be handled correctly, like filling in the appropriate information while registering, remembering to bring your ticket and identification on test day, turning off your cell phone, etc. Hearing the information in advance, and having a checklist to take home, will help.

Students should be urged to establish ACT online accounts, and complete the sign up online. There are many advantages to having an online account for making changes, adding additional information, sending scores to colleges, etc. Students who have Internet access at home, but did not bring credit card information to class, can complete all but the credit card information, then add this last piece of the application at home. They can then print out the ticket on their own. **Students who fill out and mail paper registration forms should also be encouraged to create online accounts as soon as their paper packets have been processed (two to four weeks) and they receive an admission ticket in the mail with their ID number.**

IMPLEMENTATION OPTIONS

If you feel you'll be pressed for time, you can skip **Activity I, Warm Up: ACTing Ahead.**

If you find you're out of class time after the registration process, have students bring **Student Handbook page 65, Test Day the Right Way,** home so they can read it on their own.

ACTIVITY STEPS ···

I. Warm Up: ACTing Ahead (5 minutes)

1. Write "Today: ACT Registration. www.actstudent.org" on the board, and remind students, as they enter, that you are registering for the ACT in class today. Direct students to **Student Handbook page 64, ACTing Ahead.** Give them two minutes to fill in the page.

2. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** As you know, today we're going to register for the ACT. We'll also cover some of the basics you need to know in order to be ready for the exam. The practice questions we did last week will help prepare you for the test itself. But there are other details you can take care of in advance to get ready for test day. So let's take a look at **Student Handbook page 64, ACTing Ahead** to see if you agree, or disagree, with Jasmine's list of "To Do's."

   Read aloud the list from **Student Handbook page 64, ACTing Ahead**, asking for a show of hands as to who agreed or disagreed with each item. Don't comment until you reach the end.

   SAY SOMETHING LIKE: The truth is, every one of Jasmine's concerns is valid, and your "To Do" list should look like hers! Most of the reasons should be self-evident, but if you're wondering why you should consider, for example, what to wear, it's not because you should look good that day; you won't be graded on style. It's because test centers may not traditionally be open on Saturdays, so the rooms may be colder or hotter than during the week, and you want to be comfortable during testing. So it's smart to think ahead and be prepared.

II. ACT Registration (30 minutes)

1. **Getting started:**

   SAY SOMETHING LIKE: Now we're going to register for the ACT. We're doing this together in class so I can help guide you through the process. I will direct you to skip some of the less-important questions now, which you can come back to and fill in when you have more time.

   [Hand out the copies you made of **Facilitator Resource 1, ACT Registration Notes.**]

2. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** This handout will help you keep track of your registration

information. You'll fill it in as you go along, and bring it home for safekeeping.

By a show of hands, how many of you plan to register online, and have credit card information? [Students respond.]

How many of you plan to register online today, but pay at home, later, with credit card information? [Students respond.]

How many of you brought checks or money orders, and plan to register with a mail-in packet? [Students respond. If, at this point, everyone in the class is covered, hand out packets to the mail-in students, and ask the others to log onto the website on the board: www.actstudent.org. If there are students who haven't answered, remind them they are going to follow the process, anyway, using the method they prefer.]

[**Note:** Directions for online registration are underlined below.]

3. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** _For those of you registering online for the ACT, click on "SIGN UP/LOG IN", then go to "Create Account." Follow the prompts and answer the questions to the end of the page asking for your date of birth, social security number and e-mail address. If you don't have a social security number with you, or prefer not to use it, you may leave this blank. Then stop and wait so we can all move forward together._ Students doing the mail-ins, open your packets and take out the registration folder, the sheet with the bubbles. Make sure you use a number two pencil—I have extras for anyone who needs one, and fill in sections A, B, C and D. Then everyone wait before moving on.

[Walk around and check to see that everyone is following along. The online process is easier than the written, so you might want to pay more attention to the writers until they're comfortable filling in the bubbles.]

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: _Online users will be assigned an ACT ID# on the next screen. You can go back and fill in your social security number later, at home, by accessing your account online and updating your information._

Mail-in students, you can also leave your social security number blank, if you prefer. In a few weeks, when you receive your admission ticket in the mail, you can — and should, create an online ACT account using the ID# you will receive on the ticket. All the information you put on this mail-in sheet today will be online waiting for you; they will scan

it into the ACT computer as part of the registration process. Then, when you create an account, your name will automatically link to your information. However, it's important to know that it will only link if you use the exact same identifying information. For example, if you use "Daniel" today, you can't go online and use "Dan."

[Refer students to the transparency of **Facilitator Resource 1, ACT Registration Notes.**]

That's why it's important to fill out this sheet to keep track of what you do here today. You will bring this home with you, to use later, as a record. Obviously you can't fill in the online information yet if you're doing a mail-in packet, but do record the rest so you can match your information later when you do create an online account.

[See if everyone is ready. Field questions if students have them.]

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: *Let's keep going. Online students, continue to the next screen, and create your user ID and password. Also record this information on your handout. Fill in your information. Continue until the page that says "Register Now!" Click this button, and you'll see a page with a beige box at the bottom. If you want to receive college and scholarship info, check the box next to this direction. If you don't, make sure to un-check the box.*

Mail-in students, continue through the letter "O" on your bubble sheet. You will find your high school code on the top of your **ACT Registration Notes** handout. Please note that this is not the code for colleges you want your scores sent to; it is your high school code. Fill this in where it should go. [Direct students.]

Continue, choosing your Test Option – that means you're taking the ACT with or without the writing test - and also, your test date.

[Circulate, making sure everyone is keeping up and completing it correctly.]

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: When you reach the option to select colleges, fill it in if you want your scores sent to prospective colleges. You can find the college codes in your pamphlet. However, if you don't want to fill this in now, you can fill in this information online later. In order to send your scores without an extra charge, you must enter your college codes by noon on Thursday, following the Saturday you take the test. Or, you can send your scores after you get your results to whomever you want for a fee per school. [NOTE: Check the ACT website for current information regarding fees.]

You will note that the sections in the online process are not in the same order as the paper version, which is why your mail-in students are choosing colleges to report scores to now, and the online registrants haven't reached this choice yet. If you prefer, you can ask your mail-in students to skip this now and return to it with the rest of the class; just remember to come back to it.

4. **Sections to Skip:**
   SAY SOMETHING LIKE: _We are going to skip some parts of this registration form that do not need to be filled in today. The ACT application asks you for a lot of personal information, about things like your high school. This information is designed to help you think about your educational future. ACT also gives this information to colleges so they can send you information if they think you are a potential candidate for them. However, it is time consuming and can be answered later._

   For now, we'll skip it. We'll also skip the section called "Your Interest Inventory." If you're online, go straight to the section called "Select Where to Test," click on "US," and continue to Registration Information.

   [**Note:** Mail-in students should also skip the information described above.] Mail-in students, open your registration pamphlet to page 10.

5. **Prohibited Behavior at the Test Center**
   SAY SOMETHING LIKE: _Online students, scroll down and click on the link for "Prohibited Behavior at the Test Center."_ Mail-in students, you'll see the same information on page 10. Everyone, take a moment to read this information.

   [Give the students a minute to read the rules. You will note that the order the rules are presented is different online than it is in the pamphlet, so you cannot read it aloud together.]

   SAY SOMETHING LIKE: _Online students, when you're done reading, click the "I understand" box, and continue on to the next screen, where you will select your test date and test option. Test dates are on your ACT registration notes. Then, continue on until you reach the section called "Your High School Courses and Grades." Stop there and wait._

6. **High School Courses**
   SAY SOMETHING LIKE: Mail-in students, go back to page 2, where it says "High School Course/Grade Information." When everyone is on this page, we'll continue.

[There may be confusion here, since the mail-in students may think they were supposed to "skip" this section. But, in fact, they need to do it now. The flipping back and forth was to compensate for the online process having a different order, where returning to a section is harder than flipping back to a page.]

Everyone should now fill in your high school course grade information. This is required. You can always return to it, and make changes online when you have the correct information. But to register, you need to fill it in, to the best of your ability.

[Give students a minute or two to fill in this section.]

7. **Finishing Registration**
   SAY SOMETHING LIKE: Mail-in students, whenever you're ready, turn to page 4, and fill in everything else. This should be self-explanatory, but if you have questions, give me a moment and I'll get to you.

   Online students, continue on to the next screen. Choose "Your Score Report and College Choices." If you definitely know you want your scores reported, select schools using the "add a choice" button. This will direct you to a search engine to find the schools' codes. The first four are free; charges apply after that.

   Please note that you do not have to list schools now. If you are planning to take the exam again, you may want to wait. This information can also be added later, for free, until 12 noon on the Thursday immediately following your Saturday test date, or for a fee after that time.

   If you have a fee waiver, you should know that the waivers apply only to the registration fee. So if you put schools on your application now, your scores will be sent at no extra charge. However, if you decide to wait to send your scores until you know how you did, you will need to pay a fee for each school. But if you want to wait to see how you do, and take the test again, you will be eligible for one more fee waiver. You would have the option of adding colleges then, taking advantage of the four free choices at that time.

   [Depending on who's where in the process now, you may have to adjust your directions to accommodate both the online and mail-in students. If online students have the time, they should fill in, to the best of their knowledge, "Your Plans for the Future." If there isn't time while the mail-in students complete their final page, tell students to return and fill it in later.]

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: *Online students, continue clicking through screens, so you can fill in the correct test code center, based on the information on your handout. Stop when you reach the "Review Your Information" page.*

[Wait for everyone to reach this point.]

8. **Review and Payment**
SAY SOMETHING LIKE: Now, please review all your information, and check it carefully. Make sure it matches what you recorded on your handout!

When you're ready, click "Continue." Online students with credit card information should type it in, and check it twice. When you're ready, click "Submit." You should know that once you submit you cannot cancel and most fees are non-refundable.

[**To avoid identity theft or unauthorized purchases, remind students to NEVER share credit card information with anyone. If students' family members are concerned about these issues, students may complete everything but the credit card information in class, and add this information at home.**]

Judge if your online students have time in class now to print out their admission tickets. If you all share one printer, this may not be possible, and you should advise them to print it out at home, which they can do by accessing their ACT web account. If there is time, however, let them print out their tickets and take them home.

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: If you have mail-in forms, double check your information, and put the bubble sheet in the ACT registration envelope. Affix the correct ACT TEST DATE LABEL to the front of the envelope where indicated. If you're not eligible for a fee waiver, make sure to enclose your check or money order.

Hand out three first-class stamps to each mail-in student and have them put them on their envelopes. Collect the envelopes of all students who've completed their registration; students who have not completed their packets will mail theirs from home.

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: Mail-in students, put your ACT registration pamphlet and the handout with all your information from today's sign-up in a safe place. You can refer to it for information about test day procedures, how to make changes, etc.

Online students, if you printed out tickets, put them with your handout, bring them home, and keep them in a safe place. However, if you do lose a ticket, you can print out a replacement from your web account. Likewise, for mail-in students, look for your admission ticket in two to four weeks. Or, if you establish an ACT online account, you can print it out from there. Further information about lost or missing tickets, and how to make changes to your registration information, can be found on the ACT website.

For those of you mailing your packets from home, make sure you check the *registration* deadline and send the packet at least a week in advance of that date. Also remember that the envelope is oversized, and requires extra postage.

III. Test Day the Right Way (5 minutes)
1. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** All right, good work! Put your registration materials in a safe place to take home. Then, turn to **Student Handbook page 65, Test Day the Right Way**. It is a list of test-day suggestions. Let's read through them together.

[Call on students to read each suggestion aloud, if there is time. If not, suggest they read this on their own.]

V. Wrap Up: Looking Ahead (5 minutes)
1. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** Congratulations to you all! You are now registered, or close to being registered, for the ACT entrance exam. You are on the right path toward planning your future, and taking a big step toward reaching your goals.

Here are some last-minute things to remember:
* If you are mailing your registration from home, or completing your online application at home, do it by the deadline.
* If you filled out a paper application, look for your ticket in the mail. If it doesn't arrive in two to four weeks, call the ACT office telephone number which you'll find online, or in your pamphlet (Contact#: 319-337-1270).
* Online students: log onto the ACT website and finish the application sections we skipped. Mail-in students, you will do this when you receive your ticket and open an online account using the ID# on your ticket.
* Visit the ACT website to take more practice tests.
* Revisit Jasmine's "To Do" list and start making one of your own.

OK, that's it for today. But remember you still have things to do! I'll see you next week.

ACT Registration Notes

MY <u>HIGH SCHOOL</u> CODE # is _____

Upcoming ACT Test Date, Location, Site Code: _____ _____ _____

Upcoming ACT Test Date, Location, Site Code: _____ _____ _____

(circle the date you chose on your registration form)

Registration deadline for my chosen date: _____

Date I complete or mail in registration: _____

My name as spelled on form: _____

My address as spelled on form: _____

_____

ACT ID# (if not using SS#): _____

E-mail address used on form:_____

Username for ACT account: _____

Password for ACT account:_____

Additional info needed to complete registration: _____

Deadline for this info:_____

ACTing Ahead

Jasmine is an 11ᵗʰ grader who wants to take the ACT college entrance exam. She made this list of things she thinks are important to do before test day.

Write "A" if you agree, or "D" if you disagree, in each blank.

1. Go online to the ACT website and read about the test.   _____

2. See when the test is offered near my house.   _____

3. Sign up!   _____

4. Set up a ride to and from the test site.   _____

5. Make sure whoever's driving knows how long it takes to get there (or, do a trial run).   _____

6. Decide what to wear.   _____

7. Check if I should bring a calculator. If yes, put in new batteries.   _____

8. Think about breakfast that day. What will I eat?   _____

9. Do practice questions for each ACT test subject.   _____

10. Decide what time to leave that morning so I won't be late.   _____

11. Plan how to calm down if I feel stressed during the test.   _____

Test Day the Right Way

- Check your ticket for test option (ACT, or ACT PLUS with writing), test location, and reporting time.

- Bring admission ticket with you.

- Bring acceptable official photo identification (see ACT website, www.act.org, for what's OK.)

- Bring several sharpened #2 pencils with good erasers.

- Bring an acceptable calculator ((see ACT website, www.act.org, for what's OK.)

- Make sure calculator works and put in fresh batteries.

- Bring a watch so you can pace yourself.

- Bring your glasses if you need them.

- Arrive at the time indicated on your ticket (usually by 8:00 a.m., 7:45 recommended.)

- Expect to be processed for check-in before going to your assigned room.

- Turn OFF your cell phone and/or pager. *If it goes off during testing, you will be dismissed and your test will not be scored.*