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How to read olsat 8 scores

Are you struggling with ACT Reading scores between 14 and 24? You're not alone—hundreds of thousands of students are scoring in this range. But many don't know the best ways to break out of this score range and score 26 or higher. Here, we'll discuss how to improve your ACT Reading score effectively, and why it's so important to do so. Unlike other fluffy articles out there, I'm focusing on actionable strategies. Put these eight strategies to work, and I'm confident you'll be able to improve your ACT score. Brief note: This article specifically targets lower-scoring students—i.e., those scoring below 26 on ACT Reading. If you're already above this range, my perfect 36 ACT Reading score article is more appropriate for you as it contains more advanced strategies. In this article, I'm going to discuss why scoring high is a good idea, go over what it takes to score a 26, and then jump into our top ACT Reading tips and strategies. Stick with me—this is like building a house. You need to lay a solid foundation before you can put up the walls and pretty windows. Similarly, we need to make sure we understand why you're doing what you're doing before we can dive into tips and strategies. In this guide, I talk mainly about getting to a 26. But if your goal is a 24 or lower, these concepts still equally apply to how you should study. This is a pretty long article, so here's what we'll be covering (in case you want to skip around or review a section): Getting a 26 on the ACT: Understand the Stakes At this score range of 14-24, improving your ACT Reading score to a 26 or higher will dramatically boost your chances of getting into better colleges. Let's take a popular school as an example: the University of California, Riverside. The average ACT score of admitted applicants to UC Riverside is 23 (out of 36). Its 25th percentile score is 22, and its 75th percentile score is 28. Furthermore, its acceptance rate is 56%. In other words, a little more than half of all applicants are admitted. But the lower your ACT score is, the worse your chances are of getting in. In our analysis, if you score around 22, your chance of admission drops to just 43%. But if you raise your score to 26, your chance of admission goes up to 75%—that's a really good chance of admission! And the higher your score gets, the more certain you are to get in. In short, improving your ACT Reading score will bump up your average composite score. And improving your ACT composite score, even by just 5 points, can make a huge difference in your chances of getting into your target colleges. For the Reading section, this is especially true if you want to apply to humanities majors and programs, such as English or communications. They expect you to have a strong Reading score. If you have a low one, they'll doubt your ability to do college-level humanities work. Even if you're a math superstar and are applying to a science major, schools still need to know that you can process difficult texts at a college level. A low Reading score will cast huge doubt on you. It's really worth your time to improve your ACT score. Hour for hour, it's the best thing you can do to raise your chance of getting into college. Curious what chances you have with a 26 ACT score? Check out our expert college admissions guide for a 26 ACT score. Know That You Can Get a 26 ACT Score or Higher This isn't just supposed to be a vague happy-go-lucky message you see in a fortune cookie. I mean, literally, you and every other student can do this. In my job here at PrepScholar, I've worked with thousands of students scoring in the lower ranges of around 14-20. Time after time, I see students who beat themselves up over their low scores and think improving them is impossible. They often say the following: "I know I'm not smart." "I just can't read passages quickly, and I don't know how to improve my ACT Reading score." "I was never good at English, and my English teachers have never told me I did a good job." This breaks my heart. Because I know that, more than anything else, your ACT score is a reflection of how hard you work and how smartly you study. Not your IQ and not your school grades. Not how Mr. Crandall in 10th grade gave you a C on your essay. The key point here is that ACT Reading is designed to trick you—and you need to learn how. Here's why: the ACT is a weird test. When you take it, don't you feel as though the questions are different from those you've seen in school? I bet you've had this problem: with ACT Reading passages, you often miss questions because of an "unlucky guess." You try to eliminate a few answer choices, but the remaining choices all seem like they are equally likely to be correct. So you throw up your hands and randomly guess. The ACT is purposely designed this way to confuse you. Literally millions of other students have the exact same problem you do. And the ACT loves this. Normally, in your school's English class, your teacher tells you that all interpretations of a text are valid. You can write an essay about anything you want, and English teachers aren't usually allowed to tell you that your opinion is wrong. They can get in trouble for telling you what to think, and they feel bad about restricting your creativity. But the ACT has an entirely different problem. It's a national test, meaning it needs a level playing field for all students around the country. It's even used in many states as a statewide standardized test. As a result, the test needs to be rock solid. And every question must have a single, unambiguously, 100% correct answer. There's only ever one correct answer. Find a way to eliminate three incorrect ones. Imagine if this weren't the case. Imagine that a Reading question had two answer choices, both of which might be plausibly correct. When scores come out, every single student who got the question wrong would probably complain to ACT, Inc., about the test being wrong or misleading. If this were true, ACT, Inc., would then have to throw out the question, which is a huge hassle. Have too many of these incidents, and there'd be a big scandal about the ACT failing to do its job. ACT, Inc., wants to avoid this nightmare scenario. Therefore, every single Reading passage question has only one correct answer. This is an important concept to remember. It makes your life a lot easier—all you have to do is eliminate the three wrong answer choices to get the single right one. But the ACT purposely disguises this fact to make life more difficult for you. It asks questions that are typically worded as so: It can reasonably be inferred that: Which of the following best describes: The author's contemporaries for the most part believed: Notice a pattern here? The ACT always disguises the fact that there's only one unambiguous answer. It tries to make you waver between two or three answer choices that are most likely. And then you guess randomly. And then you get it wrong. You can bet that students fall for this. Millions of times every year. Students who don't prepare for the ACT in the right way don't appreciate this. But if you prepare for the ACT in the right way, you'll learn the tricks the ACT plays on you. And you'll raise your score. The ACT Reading section is full of patterns like these. To improve your score, you just need to do the following: Learn the types of questions the ACT tests, such as the ones above Learn strategies to solve these questions using skills you already know Practice with a lot of realistic questions so you learn from your mistakes The point is that you can learn these skills, even if you don't consider yourself a good reader or a great English student. I'll go into more detail about exactly how to do this. First, though, let's see how many questions you need to get right to get a 26 on Reading. What It Takes to Get a 26 in ACT Reading If we have a target score in mind, it helps to understand what you need to get that score on the actual test. Remember that we're aiming for a Reading test score of 26, out of 36. Here's the raw score to ACT Reading Score conversion table. (If you could use a refresher on how the ACT is scored and how raw scores are calculated, read this guide.) Raw Scaled Raw Scaled Raw Scaled 40 36 29 26 19 19 9 12 39 35 28 25 18 18 8 11 38 34 27 24 17 17 7 10 37 33 26 23 16 16 6 10 36 32 25 23 15 16 5 8 35 32 24 22 14 15 4 7 34 31 23 21 13 14 3 6 33 30 22 21 12 14 2 5 32 29 21 20 11 13 1 3 31 28 20 19 10 12 0 1 30 27 Source: Official ACT Practice Test 2017-18 Note that if you're aiming for a 26 in ACT Reading, you'll need a raw score of 29/40. This is a 72% score. This has serious implications for your testing strategy. In essence, you only need to get right about 3/4 of all Reading questions. We'll go into more detail below about what this means for your approach to this ACT section. Whatever you're scoring now, take note of the difference you'll need to get to a 26. For example, if you're scoring a 20, you'll need to answer about eight more questions correctly on ACT Reading in order to get a 26. Once again, if your goal is a 20, the same analysis applies. Just find your target raw score using the chart above. OK—so far we've covered why scoring a higher ACT Reading score is important, why you're fully capable of improving your score, and the raw score you'll need to get in order to hit your target score of 26. I hope a lot of this was useful and changed how you thought about ACT prep. Now, we'll get into the real, working strategies you should use in your ACT Reading prep. 8 Strategies to Improve Your Low ACT Reading Score In this section, we introduce our eight best strategies that are guaranteed to raise your low ACT Reading score. Strategy 1: Save Time on Reading Passages by Switching Your Reading Strategy From the thousands of students I've worked with, by far the most common problem students have with ACT Reading passages is that they keep running out of time before they can get through all the questions. This is a problem because, unlike ACT Math, the passage questions aren't arranged in order of difficulty. Therefore, by not completing all the questions in time, you could miss easy questions at the end that you would have gotten right if you didn't only had enough time. What's the cause of this? The most common one I see is that students are reading the passages in far more detail than they actually need to be. Once again, this is a consequence of what you learn in English class. In English, you've probably gotten (stupid) tests that quiz you about what Madame Bovary said in a particular scene, or what color Tom's T-shirt was. So of course you've learned to pay attention to every single detail. The ACT is different. For a passage that's 90 lines long, there will be only 10 questions. Many of these don't even refer to specific lines—they talk about the point of the passage as a whole, or the tone of the author. The number of questions that focus on small, line-by-line details is low. Therefore, it's a waste of time to read a passage line by line, afraid that you'll miss a detail they'll ask you about. The best way to read a passage: skimming it on the first read-through. This is why I recommend that all students try this ACT Reading passage strategy: Skim the passage on the first read-through. Don't try to understand every single line or write notes predicting what the questions will be. Just get a general understanding of the passage. You want to finish reading the passage within three minutes, if possible. Next, go to the questions. If the question refers to a line number, go back to that line and try to make sense of the text around it. If you can't answer a question within 30 seconds, skip it. (More on this strategy later.) These steps are important because Reading questions ask about far fewer lines than the passage actually contains. For example, lines 5-20 of a passage might not be relevant to any question that follows. Therefore, if you spend time trying to deeply understand lines 5-20, you'll be wasting time you could've spent elsewhere. Some students take this strategy to the extreme by reading the questions before the passage. If a question refers to any specific line or lines, they mark those in the passage. This then gives them a guide to focus on important lines when they actually start to read the passage. Different strategies work for different students. You need to try out different ones so you can see which one gives you the best results. But by and large, I'm confident that you're spending way too much time reading the passage. Strategy 2: Learn to Eliminate the 3 Wrong Answers I talked above about how the ACT always has one unambiguously correct answer. This has a huge implication for the strategy you should use to find the right ACT Reading answer. Here's the other way to see it: out of the four answer choices, three of them have something that is totally wrong about them. Only one answer is 100% correct, which means the other three are 100% wrong. You know how you try to eliminate answer choices and then end up with a few at the end that all seem equally likely to be correct? You're not doing a good enough job of eliminating answer choices. Remember—every single wrong choice can be crossed out for its own reasons. You have to learn how to eliminate three answer choices for every single Reading question. "Great, Allen. But this doesn't tell me anything about how to eliminate wrong answer choices." Thanks for asking. There are a few classic wrong answer choices the ACT loves to use. Here's an example: Imagine you just read a passage focusing on how human evolution shaped the environment. It offers a few examples. First, it talks about how the transition from earlier species such as Homo habilis to neanderthals led to more tool usage like fire, which caused wildfires and thus shaped the ecology. It then talks about Homo sapiens 40,000 years ago and their overhunting of certain species, such as the woolly mammoth, to extinction. Sounds like a plausible passage, right? It fits into that weird style of ACT Reading passages that's oddly specific about a topic you're likely never thought deeply about before. We then run into a question asking, "Which of the following best describes the main subject of the passage?" Here are our possible answer choices: A: The transition between Homo habilis and neanderthals B: The study of evolution C: How the environment shaped human evolution D: The plausibility of evolution E: The influence of human development on ecology (Note that we're using five answer choices for illustration even though the ACT only has four.) As you're reading these answer choices, a few of them probably started sounding really plausible to you. Surprise! Each of the answers from A-D has something seriously wrong with it. Each one is a classic example of a wrong answer type given by the ACT. Let's look at how we can tell these are incorrect. Wrong Answer 1 (A): Too Specific A: The transition between Homo habilis and neanderthals This type of wrong answer focuses on a smaller detail in the passage. It's meant to trick you because you might think to yourself, "Well, I see this was mentioned in the passage, so it's a plausible answer choice." Wrong! Think to yourself: can this answer choice really describe the entire passage? Can it basically function as the title of this passage? In this case, you'll find that A is just way too specific to convey the point of the overall passage. Wrong Answer 2 (B): Too Broad B: The study of evolution This type of wrong answer has the opposite problem than the one above—it's way too broad. Yes, theoretically the passage is about the study of evolution, but only one aspect of it (human evolution) and particularly as it relates to its impact on the environment. To give another crazy example—let's say you talked to your friend about losing your cell phone. He says the main point of your conversation was the universe. Well, while you were talking about the universe in some form (you're part of the universe just like everyone else is!), this was actually only a tiny, tiny fraction of your conversation. Just the same, answer choice B is far too general. Wrong Answer 3 (C): Reversed Relationship C: How the environment shaped human evolution This wrong answer choice can be tricky because it mentions all the right words. But of course the relationship between those words needs to be correct as well. Here, the relationship is flipped. The passage is about how humans affected the environment—not the reverse. Students who read too quickly make careless mistakes much like these because all the words sound right at a glance! Wrong Answer 4 (D): Unrelated Concept D: The plausibility of evolution Finally, this kind of wrong answer preys on the tendency of students to overthink the question. If you're passionate about arguing about evolution in your personal life, this might be a trigger answer since any discussion of evolution becomes a chance to argue about its plausibility. Of course, although this concept appears nowhere in the passage, some students just won't be able to resist choosing answer choice D. Do you see the point? On the surface, each of the answer choices sounds possibly correct. But possibly isn't good enough. The right answer needs to be 100%, totally right. Wrong answers might be off by even one word—and you need to eliminate those. Carry this thought into every ACT Reading passage question you do. Next strategy: find your weak links and fix them. Strategy 3: Find Your Reading Skill Weaknesses and Drill Them ACT Reading passage questions might look similar, but they actually test very different skills. At PrepScholar, we've categorized the major passage skills as follows: That's a good number of skills! More than is obvious when you're reading a passage on the test. Each of these question types uses different skills in regard to how you read and analyze the passage. They each require a different method of prep and focused practice. If you're like most students, you're better at some areas in Reading than you are at others. You might be better at getting the big picture of a passage compared to an inference. Or you might be really strong at understanding the author's tone but not so strong at figuring out the meaning of a phrase in context. If you're like most students, you also don't have an unlimited amount of time to study. You have a lot of homework, you have extracurriculars (for example, maybe you're an athlete or a member in your school band), and you have friends to hang out with. This means that for every hour you study for the ACT, it needs to be the most effective hour possible. In concrete terms, you need to find your greatest areas of improvement and work on those. Too many students study the "dumb" way. They just buy a book and read it cover to cover. When they don't improve, they're shocked. I'm not. Studying effectively for the ACT isn't like painting a house. You're not trying to cover all your bases with a very thin layer of understanding. What these students did wrong was this: they wasted their time on subjects they already knew and didn't spend enough time on their weaknesses. Studying effectively for the ACT is like plugging up holes in a leaky boat. You need to find the biggest hole and fill it. You then need to find the next biggest hole and fix that, too. Soon you'll see that your boat isn't sinking at all. How does this relate to ACT Reading? You need to find the sub-skills you're weakest in and then drill those until you're no longer weak in them. Fixing up the biggest holes. With ACT Reading, you need to figure out whether you have patterns in your mistakes. Are you consistently running out of time on reading passages? Having trouble with Inference questions? Really struggling with interpreting details? For every question you miss, you must identify what type of question it is. Once you notice patterns in the questions you miss, you need to practice this sub-skill extra hard. Say you miss a lot of inference questions (this is typically the hardest type of question for students to get). Your goal is to find a way to get focused practice questions for this skill so you can drill your mistakes and improve. Bonus: If all of this is making sense to you, you'd love our ACT prep program, PrepScholar. We designed our program around the concepts in this article, because they actually work. When you start with PrepScholar, you'll take a diagnostic that will determine your weaknesses in over forty ACT skills - in Reading, English, Math, and Science. PrepScholar then creates a study program specifically customized for you. To improve each skill, you'll take focused lessons dedicated to each skill, with over 20 practice questions per skill. This will train you for your specific area weaknesses, so your time is always spent most effectively to raise your score. There's no other prep system out there that does it this way, which is why we get better score results than any other program on the market. Check it out today with a 5-day free trial. Strategy 4: Only Use High-Quality ACT Reading Sources ACT Reading passages are very specific in how they work. ACT Reading questions, too, are very specifically phrased and constructed to have bait answers. If you want to improve your Reading score, you have to use realistic ACT Reading sources. If you don't, you'll develop bad habits and end up training the wrong skills. Think about it like this: let's say you're trying out for a baseball team. Instead of practicing with real baseballs, you decide to practice with Wiffle balls instead. It's a lot cheaper and easier, and hitting the ball makes you feel good. So you train and train and train with a Wiffle ball. You understand how the Wiffle ball curves when it's thrown, how to hit it, and how to throw it. Finally, you try out for the baseball team. A pitch comes, but it's way faster than you've ever practiced with before. It doesn't curve like a Wiffle ball does. Swing, and a miss. You've trained with the wrong thing, and now you're totally unprepared for baseball. This is not real baseball. ACT Reading works in the exact same way. Train on badly written tests, and you'll develop poor habits and unhelpful strategies. The very best sources for ACT Reading passages are official ACT practice tests. This is why we include official practice tests in our ACT prep program—we can gauge your progress and train you on the real thing. Unfortunately, there's a limited number of official practice tests: five free PDFs online, and five in the old third edition of the official ACT prep guide (the newest edition includes three practice tests, but these overlap significantly with the free ones online). Thus, to have enough questions to practice on, you'll need to find other sources of questions. The first suggestion is to use prep resources customized for the ACT. Be careful, though—most companies release poor quality passages and questions (most books you see on ACT Reading are pretty terrible, frankly). This is especially harmful for ACT Reading because the style of passages and what questions ask are complex, as opposed to ACT Math which is more straightforward. To write realistic questions for the test and to understand the test inside and out. That's why at PrepScholar, we've created what I believe are the highest quality Reading questions available anywhere. This is what we've done: We've deconstructed every available official ACT practice test, question by question, answer choice by answer choice. We've statistically studied every question type on the test, and we understand exactly how questions are phrased and how wrong answer choices are constructed. As head of product, I'm responsible for content quality. I hire only the most qualified content writers to craft our test content. This means people who got perfect scores on the ACT, who have hundreds of hours of ACT teaching experience, and who graduated from Ivy League schools. This results in the most realistic, highest quality ACT Reading questions. Even if you don't use PrepScholar, you should be confident that whatever resource you do use undergoes the same scrutiny as we use. If you're not sure, or you see reviews saying otherwise, it's best to avoid it. For more tips on what ACT resources to use, learn what my favorite ACT Reading books are. Strategy 5: Don't Focus On Vocab Vocab gets way too much attention from students. It feels good to study vocab flashcards because it seems like you're making progress. "I studied 1,000 vocab words—this must mean I improved my score!" This is why other test prep programs love teaching you vocab—you feel as though you're learning something and it's worth your money. But the truth is, learning vocab doesn't really help you. Fortunately, vocab doesn't play more than a minor role in your ACT Reading score. This has always been less of a problem for the ACT than the SAT, which used to feature vocab-heavy Sentence Completion questions. Thankfully, the SAT removed these questions in 2016. But still, a lot of students look for ACT vocab lists to study with, and it's just not a good use of time. The only real questions you'll need to use vocab skills for are the Vocab in Context questions. Here's an example of one from an official ACT practice test: As it is used in line 13, the word popular most nearly means:A) well likedB) commonly knownC) scientifically acceptedD) most admired

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