

ACT READING TEST

ACT DATE:
APRIL 8

FORMAT

35 minutes

4 reading passages with 10 questions each

TYPES OF QUESTIONS

- Vocabulary (word or phrase)
- Make an inference (draw a conclusion)
- Reading comprehension
- Go back and locate information (quickly)
- “According to the passage” or “As stated in the passage”
- Testing ability to skim and scan
- Prose section only: apply a literary term (metaphor, simile, etc.)

ORDER OF PASSAGES

Prose Fiction (infer)

ACT likes multicultural literature and memoirs, in which an adult looks back on a part of his or her life

Social Studies (locate information/infer)

Anything the social studies department teaches: Am. history, world history, sociology, psychology, anthropology, business, economics, political science, etc.

Humanities (locate information)

Anything related to the arts: music, art, dance, architecture, foreign language studies, creative writing, essays, etc.

Science (locate information)

Could include: biology, chemistry, physics, botany, zoology, fire science, astronomy, etc.

TEST TAKING STRATEGIES

- NEVER leave blank answers on the ACT
- Read the passages in order of your most preferred to least preferred subject
- ALWAYS read the background/introduction information as sometimes answers are hidden there
- As you are reading: Number your paragraphs, circle names & dates & numbers & unfamiliar words
- Write in the margins the topic of each section of the passage

★ If you have been scoring an 18 or lower on the Reading test, try this:

Pick your top 3 passages and spend 11 minutes on each of those 3 passages; “throw away” your least favorite passage. Pick the same answer and in the last two minutes, fill in that response to every question in that section.

☑ If you have been scoring a 19-20 on the Reading test, try this:

- Leave Science or Social Studies passage to last (fact based)
- Spend 10 minutes each on first 3 passages
- Spend 5 minutes on the last passage (fact-based) looking up the answers
- Do not read the passage first
- Start directly in the questions

**Strategy is everything.
Be prepared. Have a
plan! Think Win-Win! 😊**



Bring your photo ID, test ticket, a snack, water, and pencils. BE EARLY. Parking can be challenging.

ACT PRACTICE

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Passage II

SOCIAL SCIENCE: This passage is adapted from *Great Waters: An Atlantic Passage* by Deborah Cramer (©2001 by Deborah Cramer).

The Sargasso Sea is a part of the northern Atlantic Ocean.

As the *Cramer* idles through the Sargasso Sea, waiting for the wind to rise, the sea is flat and empty. Nothing demarcates or divides the smooth expanse of water dissolving into the horizon. This vast, unrough-
5 ened surface, this breadth of uniform sea, deceives. But for a few lonely oceanic islands, the unperturbed surface offers no hint of the grand and sweeping energies hidden below.

Only one thousand miles offshore, the *Cramer* has
10 already sailed through some of Atlantic's deepest waters. Contrary to what one might guess, Atlantic's deepest waters, like those in other oceans, are along her edges. As we continue east, toward the middle of the sea, the bottom rises. The unmarked plains of the abyss,
15 here flattened by layers of sediment, give way to rising foothills and then to mountains. The first maps of Atlantic seafloor noted, albeit crudely, this rise. Early efforts to plumb Atlantic's depths proved outrageously inaccurate: one naval officer paid out eight miles (thir-
20 teen kilometers) of hemp rope from a drifting ship and concluded the sea had no bottom. Eventually, sailors more or less successfully calculated depth by heaving overboard cannonballs tied to bailing twine. When they hit bottom, the sailors measured and snipped the twine
25 and then moved on, leaving a trail of lead strung out across the seafloor. These crude soundings, forming the basis of the first map of Atlantic's basin, published in 1854, identified a prominent rise halfway between Europe and America.

For many years no one could explain why the basin of Atlantic, unlike a bowl, deepened at its edges and shoaled in its center. People assumed that this "Middle Ground," "Telegraph Plateau," or "Dolphin Rise," as it was variously called, was an ancient and
35 drowned land bridge, or a lost continent, but sailors repairing transatlantic telegraph cable unknowingly produced evidence to prove otherwise. Wrestling with the broken cable, they accidentally twisted off a piece of the "plateau" and dredged up a twenty-one-pound
40 (ten-kilogram) chunk of dense black volcanic rock. It was some of the youngest, freshest rock on earth, and it was torn not from a piece of continent sunk beneath the waves, but from the very foundation of the sea.

Today, highly sophisticated sound waves bring the
45 hazy images of those early soundings into sharp focus, revealing that one of the largest and most salient geographic features on the planet lies on the floor of the ocean. Hidden beneath the waves is an immense submerged mountain range, the backbone of the sea. More
50 extensive, rugged, and imposing than the Andes, Rockies, or Himalayas, it covers almost as much of earth's surface as the dry land of continents. Winding like the seam of a baseball, it circles the planet in a long, sinu-

ous path, running the entire length of Atlantic, slashing
55 the basin neatly in two. Its mountains are stark and black, as black as the sea itself, lit only at their peaks by a thin, patchy covering of white, the skeletal remains of tiny microscopic animals that once lived at the surface. Peaks as high as Mount St. Helens sit in a watery
60 world of blackness, more than a mile below the surface, beyond the reach of light, beyond the sight of sailors.

A great valley, eclipsing any comparable feature on dry land, runs through these mountains. Arizona's Grand Canyon, one of earth's most spectacular places,
65 extends for about 280 miles (450 kilometers). A lesser-known canyon of similar depth but considerably greater length lies hidden in the mountains of the ridge. Although offset in many places by breaks in the mountains, the rift valley, as the canyon is called, extends the
70 length of Atlantic for 11,000 miles (17,700 kilometers). Here in this bleak and forbidding place, where the water is almost freezing, subterranean fires have lifted mounds of fresh lava onto the seafloor. Scientists visit-
75 ing the rift valley for the first time named the volcanic hills in this otherworldly setting after distant, lifeless planets.

Yet, what had seemed so foreign to scientists is an integral part of earth's very being, for at the ridge our own planet gives birth. The floor of the rift valley is
80 torn; from the gashes has sprung the seafloor underlying all of Atlantic. Here the youngest, newest pieces are made. Earth is still cooling from her tumultuous birth four and a half billion years ago. Heat, leaking from the molten core and from radioactive decay deep inside the
85 planet, rises toward earth's surface, powering the volcanoes that deliver the ridge to the sea.

11. The author's attitude toward the main subject of the passage can best be described as:
- A. awe and fascination.
 - B. disbelief and cynicism.
 - C. amusement and nostalgia.
 - D. boredom and indifference.
12. The passage makes clear that "Middle Ground," "Telegraph Plateau," and "Dolphin Rise" were names that people gave to what was actually:
- F. an island in Atlantic.
 - G. a transatlantic telegraph cable.
 - H. an ancient and drowned land bridge.
 - J. the immense mountain range in Atlantic's basin.

13. In the first paragraph, the author describes the stillness of the Sargasso Sea as the *Cramer* passes through it primarily to emphasize that the stillness:
- A. won't last long, for the sea will become rough when the wind rises.
 - B. makes it easy for a passenger on the *Cramer* to spot oceanic islands that break the water's surface.
 - C. is in dramatic contrast to the power of what exists on and under the seafloor far below.
 - D. makes it seem as if the *Cramer's* wake is dividing the unbroken expanse of water into two.
14. The passage states that compared to Arizona's Grand Canyon, the canyon that lies within the mountains in Atlantic's basin is considerably:
- F. deeper.
 - G. older.
 - H. wider.
 - J. longer.
15. The main purpose of the information in lines 71–76 is to:
- A. describe in detail scientists' expectations for their first trip to the rift valley.
 - B. characterize the rift valley as an alien, seemingly barren place.
 - C. provide statistics about several geographic properties of the rift valley.
 - D. list the names that scientists gave to the volcanic hills in the rift valley.
16. One of the main purposes of the last paragraph is to state that the:
- F. gashes in the rift valley continue to increase in width.
 - G. seafloor of Atlantic has cooled.
 - H. entire Atlantic seafloor has issued from the gashes in the rift valley.
 - J. volcanoes on Earth's dry land have created the newest, youngest pieces of Atlantic seafloor.
17. The author most strongly implies that people commonly assume the deepest waters of an ocean are:
- A. about one thousand miles offshore.
 - B. at the middle of the ocean.
 - C. dotted with islands.
 - D. located in trenches.
18. As it is used in line 19, the phrase *paid out* most nearly means:
- F. dispensed.
 - G. ascertained.
 - H. suggested.
 - J. compensated.
19. According to the passage, the mountain range in Atlantic's basin covers nearly the same amount of Earth's surface as does:
- A. Mount St. Helens.
 - B. the Himalayas.
 - C. the Pacific Ocean.
 - D. the dry land of continents.
20. According to the passage, the white cover on the peaks of the mountains in Atlantic's basin is:
- F. skeletal remains of microscopic animals.
 - G. thin layers of sedimentary volcanic ash.
 - H. patches of ice.
 - J. salt deposits.

F 20.
D 19.
F 18.
B 17.
H 16.
B 15.
J 14.
C 13.
J 12.
A 11.