



# IVY TUTOR

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## Joe Samplebeck ACT Score Report

Oct 13, 2022

Dear Parent,

We're pleased to present to you Joe's score report. You will find a holistic assessment of who Joe is a test-taker. There are many different reasons why a student might achieve a score. The benefit of this personalized assessment is that it allows the reader to understand why the student is performing at their current level and the steps that can be taken to improve from that level. This report goes beyond broad weaknesses (e.g., "geometry" or "writing conventions") by taking into account a variety of factors, such as

- a) Student's current coursework and grades
- b) Testing anxiety
- c) Time mismanagement
- d) Pencilwork
- e) Personality factors

To gain this valuable context, we administered a questionnaire. The proctor may have even asked for your student's feedback to learn of any extenuating factors that may have affected his or her performance.

When you read this, keep in mind that we are still working with limited information. Without meeting with students and observing their test-taking approach, it is possible that we are missing valuable insights. We also cannot write this report while neglecting to mention that expert tutoring is the only effective approach to test prep. Self-study, test prep courses and even high school teacher 1-on-1 instruction have no observable effect on improvement test scores (Moore et al., 2018). This conclusion draws on real-world data provided by ACT, inc and we believe these conclusions can be generalized to the SAT.

We hope you find this useful and invite you to schedule a consultation to discuss how Ivy Tutor can help brighten your student's future.

Best,

The Ivy Tutor Team

## Results

### COMPOSITE SCORE: 23

English	Math	Reading	Science	Average
22	23	22	26	23.25

**Note:** If there were blank bubbles, the scores above were adjusted to reflect what the student would have likely scored had he or she filled those bubbles. By test day, students know not to leave bubbles blank.

## Interpretation

The practice test predicts how Joe would perform had Joe taken the ACT today. The test he took was a real test that was administered December 2019. On this test, Joe scored comfortably above the national average of 20. Despite scoring well in relation to the overall population, a composite score of 23 is not considered competitive among selective colleges and universities, but it is a promising baseline. Schools that regularly accept students with scores of 23 include High Point University and the University of Maine.

But there is something important to note: Joe's average of 23.25 reflects some bad luck. 23.25 rounds down to a 23. Any additional point on any section would have boosted Joe to 24. He just missed that threshold.

## Context

This is Joe's first simulated test. He reported self-studying, but self-studying is unlikely to have an impact (Moore et al., 2018), so we regard this score as a true baseline. Further, Joe indicated that he returned home late the night before and did not get his usual amount of rest. I will take these observations into account when considering Joe's score projections.

## Global Analysis

I elicited Joe's feedback following his exam and administered a quick survey. He reports favoring math over other subjects, including science. He further reports that testing anxiety affects him more than most. Otherwise, his remarks were fairly typically of a first time ACT test taker. He noted some timing issues and some section-specific frustration that accurately tracked with his scores.

## English Section Analysis

Joe scored 22 on the English. The headline number is misleading though. When surveying the specific questions Joe missed, I noticed that many reflected learnable punctuation mistakes. There were further several predictable answers that will trip up students who lack effective test

prep. The reason, however, that I am most optimistic is the wrong answer distribution. There was heavy wrong-answer clustering toward the end of the section, reflecting either time mismanagement or first-timers fatigue. With practice tests alone, Joe will likely add 3 points. His missed question pattern, however, shows potential for a 30.

## **Math Section Analysis**

Joe reported feeling good about the Math, but his scores do not corroborate his subjective assessment. Joe reports being in honors pre-calculus. Even an average or below average student in precalculus will tend to score more than 23 points, and that is a good thing. An examination of his answers reveal why. Some answers he missed covered concepts that do not appear in his recent Math coursework. Other wrong answers were found on questions that are unusual but not difficult. These are “classic” ACT questions. The ACT features a fairly consistent rotation of these “classic” questions. Professional test prep tutors typically have their own memorable ways of teaching these questions to students. Joe did not fare well on the hardest questions. It is unclear whether he ran out of time or was completely unfamiliar with the content.

## **Reading Section Analysis**

Reading is the hardest section for first-time test-takers, so I would not be too concerned with this early uninspired result. Joe mismanaged the timing. However, we can glean some information from the parts of the section in which Joe was not pressed for time. On passages in which he took extra time, he averaged 3 wrong answers. Because Joe did not finish the exam, we can't compare his performance across the various passage types. Optimistically, if Joe were able to move at a brisk pace without losing accuracy, he would have scored 25. There are additional ACT-specific reading strategies that can further improve accuracy.

## **Science Section Analysis**

Science was Joe's strongest score. As a general remark, Although Science purports to test students' science knowledge, it actually attempts to assess students' memory and thinking through the use of science content. Because it is not truly testing one's science knowledge, Science has the least room for improvement. That this is now Joe's strongest score projects well for us as a stronger science sometimes tells us that a student is underperforming elsewhere. With practice, students tend to familiarize themselves with the patterns and develop their own strategies for improvement. Tutoring intervention is used only if the student's Science progress stagnates or lags behind the rest of the scores.

## Conclusions

The ACT punishes first-time test takers –unlike the SAT which is fairly friendly to newcomers. In this way, Joe’s performance is typical for many students who tend to make considerable improvements. Additional practice tests will have a “coaching effect” for Joe. They will teach him to manage his timing and anxiety. Additional improvement will come through expert test prep tutoring. The secret sauce isn’t the practice tests, though they help. It’s using the practice test to form mental associations between answer question types and the steps and steps needed to solve them.

## Projections for Joe with Tutoring

### PROJECTED COMPOSITE SCORE: 28

English-Proj	Math-Proj	Reading-Proj	Science-Proj	Average-Proj
30	27	27	28	28

**Note:** Projections are best guesses that provide an unbiased picture of what we think a student is capable of with sufficient preparation. They assume the student is fairly typical and does not experience learning or intellectual difficulties.

Joe follows some typical patterns I have noticed in first-time test takers. Nothing struck me as worrisome. Were I to work with Joe, I would want to personally assess his reading ability before placing confidence in his Reading score projection. If you’d like to chat, I will ask you a few questions that will help inform a more confident projection.

We also supplied you with a copy of Joe’s answer key, so you can see for yourself which questions he missed.

Moore, R., Sanchez, E., & San Pedro, M. O. (2018). Investigating Test Prep Impact on Score Gains Using Quasi-Experimental Propensity Score Matching. ACT Working Paper 2018-6. In ACT, Inc. ACT, Inc. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED593130>