

# ACT Audio DVD Usage Guidelines 2010-2011

The Test Supervisor or Test Accommodations Coordinator AND technical support staff must read these guidelines immediately. They supplement, but do not replace the Verbal Instructions for Timing Code 3.

If you have not already chosen the computers and software program you will use to play the audio DVDs, contact your tech support staff BEFORE ordering test materials.

## CONDUCT A PRACTICE SESSION

1. Order the practice audio DVDs. (Order form at [www.act.org/aap/disab/opt3.html](http://www.act.org/aap/disab/opt3.html).)
2. Work with your tech support staff to set up the computer lab for the practice session and make sure the discs will play correctly on the computers and software you chose.
3. Navigate through each disc using the track listings provided so you may assist students with navigation questions.
4. Conduct a simulated test session with students using the practice DVDs. (Technical support staff should attend the practice session.)
5. If you encounter any problems during the practice session that your tech support staff cannot resolve, call ACT Special Testing (see contact info on page 3) BEFORE scheduling your actual administration.
6. Give each student a disc one at a time, just before you begin timing that test. Each test is on one disc. (For the actual administration, ACT assigns DVDs to each student by serial number.)

## PREPARE FOR TEST DAY

1. Inspect and play the DVDs for the actual administration as soon as they arrive even if the practice discs worked. Play the DVDs with tech support staff present (but NOT students).
2. Report any problems to ACT immediately. If you do not check the “live” discs before test day, ACT staff will have limited ability to assist you with test day problems.
3. If the “live” DVDs do not work the same as practice sets, have your tech support staff check the computers and software to determine if any changes were made after the practice session.
4. Review the track listings and ask your tech support staff to show you how the software works so you can assist students on test day.
5. Make sure to put the sets back in the individual packages for each student once you complete your inspection of the discs. Each set is assigned to a specific student by serial number.

## HOW THE AUDIO DVDS WORK: TRACKING

Each disc is divided into segments called “tracks” or “chapters” so students can repeat a question or set of response choices without listening to more text than necessary. Long passages are divided into tracks by paragraph to help students answer questions referring to that paragraph. Note the following:

- Chapters are grouped into “titles” (up to 99 chapters per title).
- The number of titles on a disc will vary depending on the length of the test.
- Each question is on one track and the response choices are on a separate track.
- If there is a transition between questions, it is on a separate track.
- Introductory information to a question is on the same track as the question.
- A passage introducing a set of related questions is on a separate track.
- Directions for a test are on the first track of that disc. Information that applies to ALL tests is on the first three tracks of Disc 1. The directions for Test 1 (English) are on the next track.
- **The Verbal Instructions in the Manual are NOT on the discs.**

## HOW THE AUDIO DVDS WORK: PLAYBACK

**Have your tech support staff explain how the software program works so you can efficiently instruct students on test day.**

- When a disc is inserted, it may or may not play automatically. If it does not, instruct students to press “Play” or use the menu to “Open” the disc.
- The discs **auto-advance**—once a track ends, the disc automatically goes to the next track. When a disc reaches the end of a “Title,” it normally proceeds to the first chapter in the next title.
- Instruct students to use the “Previous Track” and “Next Track” buttons to locate tracks they want to hear again. Students may need to press the button multiple times, or you can use the Track Listings to direct them to the specific part of the test they want to hear again.
- Students may also fast forward or rewind, if desired.
- If a student presses “Pause,” when playback resumes, it may be choppy or skip slightly.
- If a student presses “Stop,” what happens depends on the software program you use.

## FOR TECHNICAL SUPPORT STAFF: EQUIPMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

### Playback Device:

- **ACT recommends using computers with password-protected logins for each student.**
- **All computers must have a drive with “DVD” in the title or the discs will not play.**
- Desktops are preferred. Some schools have experienced problems using laptops.
- If you choose to have students bring portable DVD players, make sure the practice discs work in them BEFORE the practice session. Not all these devices will play our audio DVDs.
- ACT recommends that all computers be the same make and model, if feasible.
- If your computers are connected to a network, check the settings before the practice session.
- No other programs may be open and students may not have access to the internet during testing.

### Software:

**CAUTION:** ACT cannot review every software program. Our recommendations CANNOT replace the expertise of your tech support staff nor are they ACT requirements. They are intended to assist you in finding a program that works for your school. ACT does not make purchase recommendations or reimburse schools for purchases made. **The specific program notes are valid as of 7/30/10. Keep in mind that software programs and versions change frequently.**

**See [www.actstudent.org](http://www.actstudent.org) under “Services for Students with Disabilities” for a detailed chart of programs that we have tested recently.**

### Notes by Program:

**ACT highly recommends [www.filehippo.com](http://www.filehippo.com)** as a resource. This site has many media player programs available for download as freeware, shareware, or “demo” versions. We will post a detailed chart on [www.actstudent.org](http://www.actstudent.org) and update it periodically.

**AVS:** Do NOT use. It is not compatible with our audio DVDs.

**Quick Time:** Not recommended. It is designed as a movie player and is more compatible with Macs than PCs. We have received feedback that it works only on Apple stand-alone DVD players.

**VLC Media Player:** Numerous versions exist. All can be downloaded for **free** at [www.videolan.org/vlc](http://www.videolan.org/vlc) or [www.filehippo.com](http://www.filehippo.com).

- Versions **later than 0.8.6i** have “bugs” such that they do not work on all computers.
- Version 0.8.6i will play the discs on computers that cannot use newer versions.
- When opening the disc, you **MUST** use the “DVD” radio button (**not** DVD Menu) or check the box that says “No DVD Menus.” The discs **WILL NOT PLAY** otherwise.

- When a disc is on the first or last chapter of a title, “next track” or “previous track” will not work; use your track listings to assist students.

**WinDVD:** Most versions have an on-screen console that lets students go to a particular track. We have received feedback that WinDVD does not always work on laptops, but has worked for many schools.

**PowerDVD (aka Cyberlink):** This is pre-installed on some Dell computers. Older versions have controls that “disappear” from the screen. Later versions have controls that stay on-screen and are easy to identify. It has worked well in live administrations.

**PowerDVD is normally set up as the default media player. If you plan to use another program, your tech support staff will need to reset the default media player on each computer.**

As each disc starts or the student hits “previous track” or “next track,” the chapter name appears on-screen in green text. PowerDVD sometimes has audio glitches that cause choppy playback.

**Windows Media Player:** This program will ONLY play audio DVDs if you have another program called a “plug-in.” Your tech support staff will know if the plug-in is installed. If it is not, you will need to purchase one, such as Sonic made by Roxio.

## TECHNICAL PROBLEMS ON TEST DAY

- If the discs do not play automatically, double-click the program icon. Select “File” on the toolbar, then “Open” and choose the drive that contains the disc. **If the computer’s operating system asks you if you want to make that program the default, choose “YES.”**
- Check for error messages and alert tech support immediately, describing the message in full. **Example:** “Your input cannot be opened” means that program will not work.
- Reboot the computer and/or reinsert the discs.
- See if the discs never start playing, appear to be playing but have no audio, or the drive sounds as if it is trying to “read” the disc but cannot.
- **Have tech support staff check volume, software, and network settings.**
- If you think the discs skipped over tracks or part of a track, replay the affected track(s).
- When you hit “next track” or “previous track” while a track is playing, or if you hit “pause,” playback can be choppy when it resumes. Replay the affected track(s).
- If the disc stops before it reaches the end, note the track or elapsed time and try playing another disc with the **same test** to see if the problem reoccurs. **Alert tech support staff immediately.**

## INTERRUPTED OR DELAYED TESTING DUE TO TECHNICAL ISSUES

- **If the discs will not play after you have exhausted all possibilities and alternate programs AND tech support has checked everything, call ACT Special Testing immediately.**
- **Provide specific information about the problem, the steps taken to resolve it, what test students are on (if testing has started) and at what point the problem occurred.**
- If we cannot find a solution in time for you to follow your testing schedule, we will advise you of your options and tell you how to proceed.
- **You are not permitted to read the tests to a group of students or play the discs from one playback device to a group. If you do, scores will be cancelled.**
- Do not dismiss students or take any other steps until you have received instructions from ACT.
- **DO NOT allow students to read the tests from the printed booklets without the audio DVDs unless they CHOOSE to test without their approved accommodations.**
- **If students have already begun work, you must call ACT for instructions.**
- You must complete all tests within your designated two-week testing window.

**When calling ACT, BOTH the test administrator and tech support staff should be on the call.**

ACT’s normal office hours are 8:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m., M-F, central time. Refer to your Supervisor’s Manual for hours staff are available on test day. **ACT Special Testing: 800/553-6244, X 1332.**

If you have a technical problem on test day, record ALL information about the problem on this page, including what ACT staff told you to do, to help you complete your Irregularity Report.

