

CURIE SCIENCE DEPARTMENT ACT Prep Plan

Teachers will emphasize critical thinking as usual in the science classes. To develop ACT confidence and competence, teachers will incorporate some of the following activities during each week as we approach ACT. Teachers will have copies of Kaplan science guides as well as other resources for these activities.

The following list is a starting point. Add your own activities to make ACT Prep an opportunity to focus even more on critical thinking.

RECOMMENDED ACTIVITIES

Time the questions that are used as bell-ringers. For example, week 1 give students five minutes to respond to a question, week 2 give them 4 minutes, week 3 give them 3 minutes.

Have student analyze questions. In addition to solving the problem, you want students to do some of the following activities with the problem:

- Rank the answers—number them from best possible (1) to least possible (4)
- Classify the question—is it a “locate information” question, a “compare” question, a “make a prediction” question. See the ACT Thinking Chart for the kinds of categories your students should know are part of ACT—and thinking scientifically.
- Select more challenging questions—for example, if the question you choose is locate information, then add a question that asks students to identify patterns or another higher order thinking skill.

Organize a test simulation—set up a group of questions using Kaplan or another source and have students take a 20-minute test without any assistance or discussion. Then the next day debrief the simulation with questions such as:

Which questions were difficult—and why?

What strategies did you use to solve problems?

What vocabulary did you find difficult? (Those become part of your class Word Wall.)

Have students make their own test-prep guide—students could do this in pairs/groups and then share with other students. They should base their guide on their experience with the simulation—what worked and what didn't work when they took the test.

Devote additional time during the two weeks before the test to activities you know are effective ways to help students succeed on ACT—what works for you?