

Notes

The ACT® Test, one component of ACT's College Readiness System that also includes **EXPLORE®** and **PLAN®**, measures students' academic readiness to make successful transitions to college and work after high school. Like EXPLORE (typically taken in 8th and 9th grades) and PLAN (typically taken in 10th grade), the ACT is first and foremost an achievement test. It is a measure whose tasks correspond to recognized high school learning experiences, measuring what students are able to do with what they have learned in school. The ACT is the most widely accepted and used test by postsecondary institutions across the United States for college admission and course placement.

ACT National Curriculum Survey®. Every three to four years, ACT conducts a National Curriculum Survey, in which we ask more than 20,000 educators nationwide across grades 7–14 to identify the knowledge and skills that are important for students to know to be ready for college-level work. We also examine the standards for instruction in grades 7–12 for all states. We then analyze the information to refine the scope and sequence for each section of the ACT. In this way, rather than imposing a test construct without empirical support, the ACT is able to represent a consensus among educators and curriculum experts about what is important for students to know and be able to do. ACT also uses this data to identify and define for educators and policymakers the content and skill alignment gaps that currently exist in the important transition from high school to college. For example, the most recent ACT National Curriculum Survey

revealed that what postsecondary instructors expect entering college students to know is far more targeted and specific than what high school teachers view as important.

ACT's College Readiness Benchmarks. Benchmarks are scores on the ACT subject-area tests that represent the level of achievement required for students to have a 50% chance of obtaining a B or higher or about a 75% chance of obtaining a C or higher in corresponding credit-bearing first-year college courses. These college courses include English Composition, College Algebra, an introductory social science course, and Biology. Based on a nationally representative sample of 98 institutions and more than 90,000 students, the Benchmarks are median course placement values for these institutions and as such represent a *typical* set of expectations. The ACT College Readiness Benchmarks are:

College Course	ACT Subject-Area Test	EXPLORE Benchmark	PLAN Benchmark	ACT Benchmark
English Composition	English	13	15	18
Social Sciences	Reading	15	17	21
College Algebra	Mathematics	17	19	22
Biology	Science	20	21	24

Notes

ACT's College Readiness Standards™ are precise descriptions of the essential skills and knowledge that students need to become ready for college and career, beginning in grade 8 and continuing through grade 12. Informed by the National Curriculum Survey, the College Readiness Standards are validated by actual student academic performance data through their alignment with the College Readiness Benchmarks. With the Benchmarks, the College Readiness Standards represent a single academic expectation for all students, regardless of whether they go on to college or career after high school.

Career Fields and Projected Job Openings. Data on the 2006–2016 projected job openings come from the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. The following are example occupations for the 5 highest growth career fields, nationally:

Education—secondary school teachers, secondary school administrators

Computer/Information Specialties—computer programmers, database administrators

Community Services—social workers, school counselors

Management—hotel/restaurant managers, convention planners

Marketing/Sales—insurance agents, buyers

For more information on interpreting data in this report, or to learn how ACT can help your students increase their readiness for college and the workplace, go to

www.act.org.