

# COMPASS Assessment



The COMPASS assessment is given to students to help meet prerequisites so they may register for classes. The assessment has three sections: reading, writing and mathematics. Though the COMPASS is not a pass/fail assessment, the results are used to place the student in appropriate classes. It is important that the student come prepared and ready to do their best on the assessment. We strongly advise the student to review the content on the recommended websites before arriving to take the COMPASS assessment. Spending the time to study is both cost and time effective. Students who review the subject matter before assessing are more likely to test at a college ready proficiency. Low COMPASS scores place students into mandatory preparatory courses that substantially increase the time and expense required to earn a degree.

**Please note: All first time attending, degree seeking students MUST attend orientation and see an advisor before registering for classes.**

## Studying for the COMPASS

**Mathematics:** Multiple-choice items in each of the five mathematics placement areas test the following:

- basic skills—performing a sequence of basic operations
- application—applying sequences of basic operations to novel settings or in complex ways
- analysis—demonstrating conceptual understanding of principles and relationships in mathematical operations

Testers are advised to review the following areas: fractions, percentages, decimals, exponents, factoring, graphing, averages, ratios, proportions, polynomials and linear equations. Testers are permitted to use calculators when completing the COMPASS mathematics placement tests.

**Math websites:** [www.interactmath.com](http://www.interactmath.com); Recommended Books →Tobey, and [www.aaamath.com](http://www.aaamath.com) and [www.mathpower.com](http://www.mathpower.com) and <http://www.act.org/compass/sample/index.html> and <http://www.enablemathcollege.com/enablemath/college-readinessprogram.jsp>

**Reading:** Five types of reading comprehension passages are included: practical reading, social sciences, prose fiction, natural sciences and humanities.

Items have multiple-choice response options. The tester may read the passage as many times as needed and take as long as necessary before moving on to the next reading passage. The reading diagnostic section includes reading comprehension, vocabulary, and reader profile components.

**Reading websites:** <https://web.gsc.edu/fs/mhorton/LSenglish/> and [www.cerritos.edu/reading/tutorials.htm](http://www.cerritos.edu/reading/tutorials.htm), and <http://www.act.org/compass/sample/index.html>

**Writing:** In the writing portion, examinees are presented with an essay and are asked to look for errors in grammar, punctuation, usage, and style. When examinees find what they believe to be errors, they move the mouse pointer to the appropriate part of the text and click the mouse. On the right side of the screen five options appear for revising that area of text. Note that the first option is always identical to the original wording in the text, and thus represents a NO CHANGE option. Examinees can choose to revise any section of the essay. After revising the essay, examinees are routed to two items focusing on rhetorical strategies. Examinees are advised to read EVERY sentence or phrase in the essay and determine the best answer for each.

**Writing websites:** <https://web.gsc.edu/fs/mhorton/LSenglish/> and [www.chompchomp.com](http://www.chompchomp.com), and <http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/>

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