

**NEXT-GENERATION
ACCUPLACER**

Test Specifications, Release 1.0

The College Board

The College Board is a mission-driven not-for-profit organization that connects students to college success and opportunity. Founded in 1900, the College Board was created to expand access to higher education. Today, the membership association is made up of over 6,000 of the world's leading education institutions and is dedicated to promoting excellence and equity in education. Each year, the College Board helps more than seven million students prepare for a successful transition to college through programs and services in college readiness and college success — including the SAT® and the Advanced Placement Program®. The organization also serves the education community through research and advocacy on behalf of students, educators, and schools.

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This document describes the redesign of ACCUPLACER® being undertaken by the College Board. This initial release provides an overview of the rationale behind the redesign, its aims and nature, and information about key components of the new, next-generation ACCUPLACER. Subsequent releases will provide additional information for various audiences on specific topics related to the redesign.

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Executive Summary

For over 30 years, ACCUPLACER has been used successfully in combination with factors such as high school GPA to assess student preparedness for postsecondary education. Tests within the ACCUPLACER suite are delivered over the Internet¹ and are used extensively by high schools, community colleges, four-year colleges, and technical schools around the world. ACCUPLACER test scores are used to inform college placement decisions and to identify where students are likely to be positioned or likely to succeed within a postsecondary course framework. In 2015, 11 million ACCUPLACER tests were administered.

While research confirms that ACCUPLACER effectively identifies students' strengths and weaknesses in core subjects — reading, writing, and math — research has emerged in recent years showing that:

- ▶ there has been an increase in the number of students enrolling in college remediation courses
- ▶ remedial course enrollment and/or completion does not propel students toward college completion.

Recognizing the need for a comprehensive effort to help all students achieve both college readiness and college success, the College Board has committed to an agenda that focuses on propelling students toward attainment of these goals. A major component of this agenda is the redesign of ACCUPLACER, or the development of next-generation ACCUPLACER.

This document describes the redesign of ACCUPLACER. Section I discusses the rationale for the redesign and presents the alignment of the new ACCUPLACER tests to the redesigned SAT[®] Suite of Assessments. Section II provides a summary of the features ACCUPLACER will offer at launch in 2016. Section III offers detailed information about the individual components of the new tests. Section IV discusses the exacting process of the redesign.

1. COMPANION forms are available for students who need special accommodations or when technology is lacking for online testing. These fixed-length linear tests are equivalent to the online, computer-adaptive tests (CAT) in specifications. Test formats include Braille, regular and large-print test booklets and answer sheets, and audio CD.

SECTION I: Behind the Redesign

1.1 Rationale for the Redesign

ACCUPLACER®, an assessment for measuring student readiness for credit-bearing college courses, has been administered for over 30 years. During this time, the College Board has paid close attention to:

- ▶ evidence concerning essential prerequisites for college and career readiness and success
- ▶ changes in academic standards, curriculum, and instruction in the areas of reading, writing, and math
- ▶ feedback from ACCUPLACER users, including faculty, teachers, counselors, focus groups, advisory panels, and institutions
- ▶ feedback from high school and higher education stakeholders who use criteria other than ACCUPLACER scores to make course placement decisions

The next-generation ACCUPLACER tests, incorporating the above input and feedback, aim to:

- ▶ clearly and transparently focus on knowledge, skills, and understandings that research evidence shows are essential for college and career readiness and success
- ▶ assist high school and higher education institutions in selecting and implementing a course placement system that reduces, as much as possible, student testing time while increasing course placement accuracy and precision
- ▶ provide assessment scores that are used, along with information from other sources (e.g., high school transcripts, noncognitive data, degree program requirements, SAT® scores), by academic advisors to make course placement recommendations
- ▶ direct test-takers to specific, actionable, evidence-based interventions intended to accelerate their progress toward college and career readiness and success

1.2 Alignment to the Redesigned SAT® Suite of Assessments

Next-generation ACCUPLACER is deeply informed by evidence attesting to the essential requirements for college and career readiness and success. The new tests are constructed to validly and reliably measure students' attainment of those key requirements. The evidentiary base supporting the redesign encompasses the College Board's own research, including the results of its national curriculum surveys; state standards with a clear, evidence-based approach to fostering college and career readiness and success for all students; highly regarded scholarly research in relevant fields; focus-group feedback from educators, including ACCUPLACER users; and other sources. The new ACCUPLACER ELA/literacy and math designs are predicated on the same evidentiary base as that informing the redesigned SAT Suite of Assessments.

While the relationship between next-generation ACCUPLACER and the SAT Suite is clear and robust, the two testing programs retain important differences that derive largely from their overlapping yet distinct purposes. The SAT Suite, which includes the SAT, PSAT/NMSQT® and PSAT™ 10, and PSAT™ 8/9, offers a broad, longitudinal measure of students' attainment of essential college and career readiness outcomes. ACCUPLACER retains its core function as a tool to aid informed college placement decisions as well as its role in diagnosing students' academic strengths and weaknesses in reading, writing, and math.

Some of the key next-generation ACCUPLACER ELA/literacy features aligned with the evidentiary base of the redesigned SAT Suite of Assessments include:

- ▶ the use of a specified range of text complexity aligned to college and career readiness levels of reading
 - › *Text complexity is a measure of passages' inherent reading challenge irrespective of question complexity or difficulty. Next-generation ACCUPLACER passages range in text complexity from "somewhat challenging" to "highly complex," with "complex" reflecting the college and career readiness threshold. (See appendix for further details.)*
- ▶ a focus on relevant words in context and on word choice for rhetorical effect
 - › *The next-generation ACCUPLACER Reading placement test includes both set-based and discrete word and phrase meaning and word choice questions. The next-generation ACCUPLACER Writing placement test includes a category of questions on effective language use.*
- ▶ attention to a core set of important English language conventions and to effective written expression
 - › *As does the redesigned SAT, next-generation ACCUPLACER supports a thoughtful emphasis on language conventions and language use in several important ways. Effective language use and mastery of a core set of conventions linked with college and career readiness and success are two key elements of the next-generation ACCUPLACER Writing test, which assesses these language skills in the context of multiparagraph passages that test-takers must revise and edit.*
- ▶ the requirement that students work with texts across a wide range of disciplines
 - › *The range of content areas for texts included in next-generation ACCUPLACER supports recent research findings that students' literacy development should not be seen as merely the fostering of generic communication skills but instead should be grounded in making students familiar with the differing literacy demands of particular fields of study.*

Similarly, some of the key next-generation ACCUPLACER Math features aligned with the evidentiary base of the redesigned SAT Suite of Assessments include:

- ▶ an emphasis on mathematical reasoning questions over reasoning questions disconnected from the mathematics curriculum
 - › *The next-generation ACCUPLACER Math tests focus on applied reasoning skills that are both essential for college and career readiness and are taught in math classrooms. More questions will require reasoning and insight as they relate to important curricular and career skills.*
- ▶ a strong emphasis on both fluency and understanding
 - › *As students can't be ready for college and career without being mathematically proficient, the next-generation ACCUPLACER Math tests assess fluency with mathematical procedures and conceptual understanding with equal intensity.*
- ▶ richer applications emphasizing career- and college-appropriate contexts
 - › *Students will be asked to address problems in real-world contexts drawn from career and academic settings to demonstrate a capacity for sustained sequential reasoning.*
- ▶ a stronger connection to multiple mathematics pathways in college curricula
 - › *Because the mathematics prerequisites of college majors and career paths can be vastly different, the next-generation ACCUPLACER Math tests deliver a stronger connection to the wide variety of course sequences in both STEM and non-STEM fields of study.*

SECTION II: Overview of Next-Generation ACCUPLACER®

The ACCUPLACER redesign described in this document focuses on introducing a number of key elements into the national ACCUPLACER assessments in an effort to address longstanding requests from current and potential users of the program. The following are important changes to the ACCUPLACER national program:

- ▶ In **Reading** (formerly Reading Comprehension), the introduction of paired passages, literary passages, and vocabulary questions
- ▶ In **Writing** (formerly Sentence Skills), the movement from a discrete-question basis to a set basis as well as a greater emphasis on broader issues of development, organization, and effective language use at the multisentence, paragraph, and passage levels
- ▶ In the three **Math** tests, the alignment of test content to clear “pathways”:
 - › **Arithmetic**
 - › **Quantitative Reasoning, Algebra, and Statistics**
 - › **Advanced Algebra and Functions**

Table 1 presents the ACCUPLACER suite, with the five new tests highlighted. The redesign of the remaining tests is the subject of active research; meanwhile, they will continue to be offered alongside the new tests. The five tests being replaced² will also continue to be offered for a time so that current ACCUPLACER users can plan their transition to the new tests.

Table 1: ACCUPLACER Suite (2016 Launch)

<p>Placement Tests</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Reading ▶ Writing ▶ Arithmetic ▶ Quantitative Reasoning, Algebra, and Statistics ▶ Advanced Algebra and Functions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ WritePlacer (Essay) ▶ Computer Skills 	<p>Diagnostic Tests</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Reading Comprehension ▶ Sentence Skills ▶ Arithmetic ▶ Elementary Algebra <p>ESL Placement Tests</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Reading Skills ▶ Sentence Meaning ▶ Language Usage ▶ Listening ▶ WritePlacer ESL (Essay)
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2. Reading Comprehension, Sentence Skills, Arithmetic, Elementary Algebra, and College-Level Math

2.1 Computer-Adaptive Testing

All ACCUPLACER tests, with the exception of Computer Skills Placement, WritePlacer®, and WritePlacer ESL, are computer adaptive. Computer-adaptive testing is a test administration system in which a computer selects and delivers test questions to individual test-takers. An adaptive test draws on a pool of questions³ written to the specifications of the test and representing a range of difficulty. The questions themselves and the sequence in which they are presented vary from student to student. Each question administered to a test-taker is automatically chosen to yield the most information about the test-taker based on the skill level indicated by answers to all prior questions. The criteria for selecting the next question to be administered are complex; however, the primary goal is to align the difficulty of the question to the examinee's current estimated proficiency in order to assess and improve the accuracy of that estimate. Unlike many traditional tests, in which all examinees take a single form of an exam, computer-adaptive tests are tailored for each examinee.

In its tailoring, ACCUPLACER uses a question-selection algorithm based on a weighted deviations model. During testing, the first question presented is of moderate difficulty and is chosen randomly from several starter questions of the same level of difficulty. If a student answers the question incorrectly, the next question is selected from a group of easier questions. If the student answers the question correctly, the next question presented will be somewhat more difficult. The test delivery system repeats this process throughout the test, selecting each consecutive question on the basis of its potential to yield the most information about the examinee.

In the Math tests, the algorithm adapts at the discrete-question level. For a portion of the Reading placement test and for the entire Writing placement test, which contain set-based questions, the algorithm adapts at the set level; that is, it selects the next set or discrete question based on an examinee's responses to a group of questions clustered around a single passage.

To ensure that each test administration conforms to content specifications and that the kinds of questions presented do not differ greatly from one student to another except in difficulty, constraints are built into the program to guide the selection of questions. Although fewer questions are presented for each test than would be given in a comparable linear paper-and-pencil test, greater measurement precision can be achieved by providing challenging tests that correspond to each student's skill level. Because of the adaptive nature of the tests, the questions presented on successive administrations of the tests will vary, thereby greatly reducing the effects of repeated practice on the tests.

3. In this document, the term "question" is used broadly to refer to discrete (one question per stimulus) and set-based (multiple-question sequences linked to a common stimulus) questions. In the Math tests, all questions are discrete; the Reading test utilizes a combination of discrete and set-based questions; the Writing test utilizes only set-based questions. The difficulty of a set of questions is derived from the average difficulty of all the questions in the set.

SECTION III: Specifications of Next-Generation ACCUPLACER

3.1 Reading Placement Test

3.1.1 Test Description

The next-generation ACCUPLACER Reading placement test is a broad-spectrum computer-adaptive assessment of test-takers' developed ability to derive meaning from a range of prose texts and to determine the meaning of words and phrases in short and extended contexts. Passages on the test cover a range of content areas (including literature and literary nonfiction, careers/history/social studies, humanities, and science), writing modes (informative/explanatory, argument, and narrative), and complexities (relatively easy to very challenging). Both single and paired passages are included. The test pool includes both authentic texts (previously published passages excerpted or minimally adapted from their published form) and commissioned texts (written specifically for the test). Questions are multiple choice in format and are either discrete (stand alone) or part of sets built around a common passage or passages. Four broad knowledge and skill categories are assessed:

- ▶ Information and Ideas (reading closely, determining central ideas and themes, summarizing, understanding relationships)
- ▶ Rhetoric (analyzing word choice rhetorically, analyzing text structure, analyzing point of view, analyzing purpose, analyzing arguments)
- ▶ Synthesis (analyzing multiple texts)
- ▶ Vocabulary

3.1.2 Test Summary

The following tables provide a synopsis of key content dimensions of the Reading placement test.

Table 2: Reading Placement Test Content Specifications

Content Areas	Number of Questions	Percentage of Test*
Set-based questions		
1 literary set	4	20
1 informational paired set	4	20
Discrete questions		
Informational	12	60
Total	20	100
Question content distribution		
Information and Ideas	7–11	35–55
Rhetoric	7–11	35–55
Synthesis	2	10
Vocabulary	2–4	10–20

* Percentages do not necessarily add up to 100.

Table 3: Reading Placement Test Question Content

Content Dimension	Description
Information and Ideas	
These questions focus on the informational content of text.	
Reading closely	The student will identify information and ideas explicitly stated in text and will draw reasonable inferences and logical conclusions from text.
Determining central ideas and themes	The student will identify explicitly stated central ideas and themes in text and determine implicit central ideas and themes from text.
Summarizing	The student will identify a reasonable summary of a text.
Understanding relationships	The student will identify explicitly stated relationships or determine implicit relationships between and among individuals, events, or ideas (e.g., cause-effect, comparison-contrast, sequence).
Rhetoric	
These questions focus on the craft and structure of writing.	
Analyzing word choice rhetorically	The student will determine how the selection of specific words and phrases or the use of patterns of words and phrases shapes meaning and tone in text.
Analyzing text structure	The student will describe the overall structure of a text or analyze the relationship between a particular part of a text (e.g., a sentence) and the whole text.
Analyzing point of view	The student will determine the point of view or perspective from which a text is related or the influence this point of view or perspective has on content and style.
Analyzing purpose	The student will determine the main or most likely purpose of a text or of a particular part of a text (typically, one or more paragraphs).
Analyzing arguments	The student will analyze claims and counterclaims, assess an author's reasoning for soundness, and analyze how an author uses or fails to use evidence to support a claim or counterclaim.
Synthesis	
These questions focus on synthesizing multiple sources of information.	
Analyzing multiple texts	The student will synthesize information and ideas from multiple texts. (Note: All of the skills listed above may be tested with either single or paired passages.)
Vocabulary	
These questions focus on determining the meaning of words and phrases in the contexts in which they appear.	

3.1.3 Key Features

- ▶ Computer adaptive (with two COMPANION™ forms also available)
- ▶ Multiple-choice (four-option) fixed-length placement test
- ▶ 20 questions per CAT administration; 40 questions per COMPANION form
- ▶ Mix of set-based and discrete formats
- ▶ Single placement score

Reading Passages

Reading passages are either commissioned texts (i.e., texts written specifically for the test) or authentic in that they are excerpted or adapted from previously published texts. Passages are self-contained, requiring no topic-specific background knowledge.

Passage Type: Reading stimuli are either single or paired passages. Single passages are texts on a unified subject. Paired passages present different perspectives on the same topic or two closely related topics. Paired texts are closely related enough to serve as the basis of “bridging” (Synthesis) questions drawing meaningful connections between the two but distinct enough in purpose, perspective, informational content, or the like, that test-takers can readily separate the two texts in their minds.

Genre: Reading passages are one of two basic genres: literary or informational. Literary passages take the form of prose fiction or literary nonfiction (such as selections from memoirs and personal essays); poetry and drama are not represented. The informational genre includes texts spread across a defined range of content areas.

Content Area: Reading passages represent one of three content areas.

1. Careers/history/social studies: This category includes texts about career-related topics as well as texts in the academic social science disciplines.
2. Humanities: This category includes texts about arts and letters.
3. Science: This category includes texts in the academic natural science disciplines.

Text Type (Mode): Reading passages represent one of three writing modes.

1. Narrative: The passages use chronology or sequence as the organizing principle. They are chiefly literary in genre, although a small number of informational texts also rely on narrativistic techniques.
2. Informative/explanatory: These passages convey or describe new information and ideas. These texts are chiefly informational in genre.
3. Argument: These passages seek to move readers to action or to change belief through logical argumentation. Persuasive texts that rely on other types of appeals, such as to emotion, are also classified as arguments for the sake of this scheme. These texts are chiefly informational in genre.

Text Complexity: Passages in the pool for the next-generation ACCUPLACER Reading placement test represent a range of text complexities from early high school to first-year postsecondary, with a large proportion of the passages reflective of college and career readiness level. To ensure that texts are appropriately challenging, test development staff make use of quantitative and qualitative measures of text complexity as well as feedback from secondary and postsecondary subject-matter experts and test data on student performance. The computer-adaptive test design, to some extent, influences the distribution of text complexity encountered by any given test-taker.

The qualitative text complexity rubric can be found in the appendix to this document.

Diversity: The College Board is committed to presenting students with a test-taking experience that is reflective of the diversity of the United States and the world. To that end, the College Board works to ensure that Reading passage and question pools include substantial content that visibly reflects:

- ▶ U.S.-based racial and ethnic diversity, including African American/black, American Indian/Native American, Asian American, and Latino/a individuals, culture, and experiences
- ▶ international or global (non-U.S.) perspectives, cultures, or settings
- ▶ balanced representation of genders, including passages that focus on women and girls and their experiences

Length: Reading passages fall into one of four length levels, as determined by a standard word count formula in which a “word” is defined as six characters. Very short passages are 75 to 100 standard words; short passages are 150 to 200 standard words; medium-length passages are 250 to 300 standard words; and long passages are 350 to 400 standard words.

Reading Questions

Reading questions are classified into four content categories.

1. Information and Ideas questions focus on the informational content of passages. Subcategories include reading closely, determining central ideas and themes, summarizing, and understanding relationships.
2. Rhetoric questions focus on craft and structure and on authors’ techniques. Subcategories include analyzing word choice, text structure, point of view, purpose, and arguments.
3. Synthesis questions focus on the integration of information and ideas between related texts.
4. Vocabulary questions focus on the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in particular contexts.

3.2 Writing Placement Test

3.2.1 Test Description

The next-generation ACCUPLACER Writing placement test is a broad-spectrum computer-adaptive assessment of test-takers’ developed ability to revise and edit a range of prose texts for effective expression of ideas and for conformity to the conventions of Standard Written English sentence structure, usage, and punctuation. Passages on the test cover a range of content areas (including literary nonfiction, careers/history/social studies, humanities, and science), writing modes (informative/explanatory, argument, and narrative), and complexities (relatively easy to very challenging). All passages are commissioned — that is, written specifically for the test — so that “errors” (a collective term for a wide range of rhetorical and conventions-related problems) can more effectively be introduced into them. Questions are multiple choice in format and appear in sets built around a common, extended passage; no discrete (stand-alone) questions are included. In answering the questions, test-takers must determine the best revision or editing decision in a particular case (or that no change should be made to the passage as originally presented). Two broad knowledge and skill categories are assessed:

- ▶ Expression of Ideas (development, organization, effective language use)
- ▶ Standard English Conventions (sentence structure, usage, and punctuation)

3.2.2 Test Summary

The following tables provide a synopsis of key content dimensions of the Writing placement test.

Table 4: Writing Placement Test Content Specifications

Content Areas	Number of Questions	Percentage of Test*
Set-based questions		
1 literary set	5	20
4 informational sets	20	80
Total	25	100
Question content distribution		
Expression of Ideas	14–16	56–64
▶ Development		
▶ Organization		
▶ Effective Language Use		
Standard English Conventions	9–11	36–44
▶ Sentence Structure		
▶ Conventions of Usage		
▶ Conventions of Punctuation		

* Percentages do not necessarily add up to 100.

Table 5: Writing Placement Test Question Content

Content Dimension	Description
Development	
These questions focus on revising text in relation to rhetorical purpose. (Prior knowledge of the topic is not assessed, though consistency of the material within a passage may be.)	
Proposition	The student will add, revise, or retain central ideas, main claims, topic sentences, and the like to structure texts and to convey arguments, information, and ideas clearly and effectively.
Support	The student will add, revise, or retain information and ideas (e.g., details, facts, statistics) intended to support claims or points in text.
Focus	The student will add, revise, retain, or delete information and ideas in text for the sake of relevance to topic and purpose.
Organization	
These questions focus on revision of text to improve the logic and cohesion of text at the sentence, paragraph, and whole-text level.	
Logical sequence	The student will revise text as needed to ensure that information and ideas are presented in the most logical order.
Introductions, conclusions, and transitions	The student will revise text as needed to improve the beginning or ending of a text or paragraph or to ensure that transition words, phrases, or sentences are used effectively to connect information and ideas.
Effective Language Use	
These questions focus on revision of text to improve the use of language to accomplish particular rhetorical purposes.	
Precision	The student will revise text as needed to improve the exactness or content appropriateness of word choice.
Concision	The student will revise text as needed to improve the economy of word choice (i.e., to eliminate wordiness and redundancy).
Style and tone	The student will revise text as needed to ensure the consistency of style and tone within a text or to improve the match of style and tone to purpose.
Syntax	The student will use various sentence structures to accomplish needed rhetorical purposes.
Sentence Structure	
Sentence boundaries	The student will recognize and correct grammatically incomplete sentences (e.g., rhetorically inappropriate fragments and run-ons).
Subordination and coordination	The student will recognize and correct problems in coordination and subordination in sentences.
Parallel structure	The student will recognize and correct problems in parallel structure in sentences.
Modifier placement	The student will recognize and correct problems in modifier placement (e.g., misplaced or dangling modifiers).
Inappropriate shifts in verb tense	The student will recognize and correct inappropriate shifts in verb tense within and between sentences.
Inappropriate shifts in verb voice and mood	The student will recognize and correct inappropriate shifts in verb voice and mood within and between sentences.
Inappropriate shifts in pronoun person and number	The student will recognize and correct inappropriate shifts in pronoun person and number within and between sentences.

Table 5: Writing Placement Test Question Content (Continued)

Content Dimension	Description
Conventions of Usage	
Possessive determiners	The student will recognize and correct cases in which possessive determiners (<i>its, your, their</i>), contractions (<i>it's, you're, they're</i>), and adverbs (<i>there</i>) are confused with each other.
Noun agreement	The student will recognize and correct lack of agreement between nouns.
Pronoun clarity	The student will recognize and correct pronouns with unclear or ambiguous antecedents.
Pronoun-antecedent agreement	The student will recognize and correct lack of agreement between pronoun and antecedent.
Subject-verb agreement	The student will recognize and correct lack of agreement between subject and verb.
Frequently confused words	The student will recognize and correct instances in which a word or phrase is confused with another (e.g., <i>accept/except, allusion/illusion</i>).
Logical comparison	The student will recognize and correct cases in which unlike terms are compared.
Conventional expression	The student will recognize and correct cases in which a given expression is inconsistent with Standard Written English.
Conventions of Punctuation	
End-of-sentence punctuation	The student will recognize and correct inappropriate uses of ending punctuation in cases in which the context makes the intent clear.
Within-sentence punctuation	The student will correctly use, recognize, and correct inappropriate uses of colons, semicolons, and dashes to indicate sharp breaks in thought within sentences; ellipses to indicate a pause or omission; and colons to introduce lists or quotations.
Possessive nouns and pronouns	The student will recognize and correct inappropriate uses of possessive nouns and pronouns as well as differentiate between possessive and plural forms.
Items in a series	The student will correctly use, recognize, and correct inappropriate uses of punctuation (commas and sometimes semicolons) to separate items in a series.
Nonrestrictive and parenthetical elements	The student will correctly use punctuation (commas, parentheses, dashes) to set off nonrestrictive and parenthetical sentence elements as well as recognize and correct cases in which restrictive or essential sentence elements are inappropriately set off with punctuation.
Hyphenation conventions	The student will recognize and correct violations of hyphenation conventions.
Unnecessary punctuation	The student will recognize and correct cases in which unnecessary punctuation appears in a sentence.

3.2.3 Key Features

- ▶ Computer adaptive (with two COMPANION forms also available)
- ▶ Multiple-choice (four-option) fixed-length placement test
- ▶ 25 questions per CAT administration; 40 questions per COMPANION form
- ▶ Set-based format
- ▶ Single placement score

Writing Passages

Writing passages are commissioned texts (i.e., texts written specifically for the test). These passages, which are self-contained and require no topic-specific background knowledge, serve as the basis for the revising and editing task test-takers perform in the questions.

Genre: Writing passages are one of two basic genres: literary or informational. The literary genre takes the form of literary nonfiction (such as brief reflective and personal essays); prose fiction, poetry, and drama are not represented. The informational genre includes texts spread across a defined range of content areas.

Content Area: Writing passages represent one of three content areas.

1. Careers/history/social studies: This category includes texts about career-related topics as well as texts in the academic social science disciplines.
2. Humanities: This category includes texts about arts and letters.
3. Science: This category includes texts in the academic natural science disciplines.

Text Type (Mode): Writing passages represent one of three writing modes.

1. Narrative: These passages use chronology or sequence as the organizing principle. They are chiefly literary in genre, although a small number of informational texts also rely on narrativistic techniques.
2. Informative/explanatory: These passages convey or describe new information and ideas. These texts are chiefly informational in genre.
3. Argument: These passages seek to move readers to action or to change belief through logical argumentation. Persuasive texts that rely on other types of appeals, such as to emotion, are also classified as arguments for the sake of this scheme. These texts are chiefly informational in genre.

Text Complexity: Passages in the pool for the next-generation ACCUPLACER Writing placement test represent a range of text complexities from early high school to first-year postsecondary, with a large proportion of the passages reflective of college and career readiness level. To ensure that texts are appropriately challenging, test development staff use quantitative and qualitative measures of text complexity as well as feedback from secondary and postsecondary subject-matter experts and test data on student performance. The computer-adaptive test design, to some extent, influences the distribution of text complexity encountered by any given test-taker.

The qualitative text complexity rubric can be found in the appendix to this document.

Diversity: The College Board is committed to presenting students with a test-taking experience that is reflective of the diversity of the United States and the world. To that end, the College Board works to ensure that Writing passage and question pools include substantial content that visibly reflects:

- ▶ U.S.-based racial and ethnic diversity, including African American/black, American Indian/Native American, Asian American, and Latino/a individuals, culture, and experiences
- ▶ international or global (non-U.S.) perspectives, cultures, or settings
- ▶ balanced representation of genders, including passages that focus on women and girls and their experiences

Length and Sentence Count: Writing passages are between 300 and 350 standard (six-character) words and typically contain 12 to 16 sentences.

Writing Questions

Writing questions are classified into two clusters, each of which includes three content categories.

The following content categories compose the Expression of Ideas cluster:

1. Development questions address revision of text to improve structure, support, and focus.
2. Organization questions address revision of text to improve logical sequencing as well as achieving effective introductions, conclusions, and transitions.
3. Effective Language Use questions address revision of text to improve the precision and concision of expression, to maintain style and tone or to meet particular rhetorical goals, and to use syntax to achieve specified rhetorical purposes.

The following content categories compose the Standard English Conventions cluster:

1. Sentence Structure questions address editing of text to improve sentence formation and consistency in construction (i.e., correcting inappropriate shifts in verb tense, voice, and mood, and in pronoun person and number).
2. Conventions of Usage questions address editing of text to make it conform to Standard Written English usage conventions.
3. Conventions of Punctuation questions address editing of text to make it conform to Standard Written English punctuation conventions.

3.3 Math: Arithmetic Placement Test

3.3.1 Test Description

The next-generation ACCUPLACER Arithmetic placement test is a computer-adaptive assessment of test-takers' developed ability for selected mathematics content. Questions will focus on computation, order of operations, estimation and rounding, comparing and ordering values in different formats, and recognizing equivalent values across formats. In addition, questions may assess a student's math ability via fluency with mathematical procedures and conceptual understanding, but may also present a real-world context that requires students to demonstrate the ability to analyze a situation, determine the essential elements required to solve the problem, represent the problem mathematically, and carry out a solution. All questions are multiple choice in format and appear discretely across the assessment. The following knowledge and skill categories are assessed:

1. Whole number operations
2. Fraction operations
3. Decimal operations
4. Percent
5. Number comparisons and equivalents

3.3.2 Test Summary

The following tables provide a synopsis of key content dimensions of the Arithmetic placement test.

Table 6: Arithmetic Placement Test Content Specifications

Content Areas	Number of Questions*	Percentage of Test
Whole number operations	3–5	20
Fraction operations	3–5	20
Decimal operations	3–5	20
Percent	3–5	20
Number comparisons and equivalents	3–5	20
Total	20	100

* Values not final. The number of questions will vary based on results of research simulations not yet completed.

Table 7: Arithmetic Placement Test Question Content

Content Dimensions and Descriptions
Whole number operations Addition, subtraction, multiplication and division of whole numbers, including order of operations, estimation and rounding, and applying operations to real-life contexts
Fraction operations Addition, subtraction, multiplication and division of fractions and mixed numbers, including order of operations, estimation and rounding, and applying operations to real-life contexts
Decimal operations Addition, subtraction, multiplication and division of decimal numbers, including order of operations, estimation and rounding, and applying operations to real-life contexts
Percent Calculation with percent with or without a context, including percent increase, percent decrease, determining the percent of a number, and applying percent to real-life contexts
Number comparisons and equivalents Comparisons of differently formatted values by ordering, using the number line, and using equality/inequality symbol notation; and evaluation of equivalent number statements (to assess mental math strategies)

3.3.3 Key Features

- ▶ Computer adaptive (two COMPANION forms available for pre- and posttesting)
- ▶ Multiple-choice fixed-length placement test
- ▶ 20 questions per CAT administration; 40 questions per COMPANION form
- ▶ Discrete question format
- ▶ Single placement score

3.4 Math: Quantitative Reasoning, Algebra, and Statistics Placement Test

3.4.1 Test Description

The next-generation ACCUPLACER Quantitative Reasoning, Algebra, and Statistics placement test is a broad-spectrum computer-adaptive assessment of test-takers' developed ability for selected mathematics content suited for students entering many non-STEM fields of study or for students who are undecided on a major. Questions focus on a range of topics including computing with rational numbers, applying ratios and proportional reasoning, creating linear expressions and equations, graphing and applying linear equations, understanding probability and sets, and interpreting graphical displays. In addition, questions may assess a student's math ability via fluency with mathematical procedures and conceptual understanding, but may also present a real-world context that requires students to demonstrate the ability to analyze a situation, determine the essential elements required to solve the problem, represent the problem mathematically, and implement a solution. All questions are multiple choice in format and appear discretely across the assessment. The following knowledge and skill categories are assessed:

1. Rational numbers
2. Ratio and proportional relationships
3. Exponents
4. Algebraic expressions
5. Linear equations
6. Linear applications and graphs
7. Probability and sets
8. Descriptive statistics
9. Geometry concepts for Pre-Algebra
10. Geometry concepts for Algebra 1

3.4.2 Test Summary

The following tables provide a synopsis of key content dimensions of the Quantitative Reasoning, Algebra, and Statistics placement test.

Table 8: Quantitative Reasoning, Algebra, and Statistics Placement Test Content Specifications

Content Areas	Number of Questions*	Percentage of Test**
Rational numbers	1–3	5–15
Ratio and proportional relationships	3–4	15–20
Exponents	2–3	10–15
Algebraic expressions	2–3	10–15
Linear equations	2–4	10–20
Linear applications and graphs	2–4	10–20
Probability and sets	1–3	5–15
Descriptive statistics	1–3	5–15
Geometry concepts for Pre-Algebra	1–2	5–10
Geometry concepts for Algebra 1	1–2	5–10
Total	20	

* Values not final. The number of questions will vary based on results of research simulations not yet completed.

** Percentages do not necessarily add up to 100.

Table 9: Quantitative Reasoning, Algebra, and Statistics Placement Test Question Content

Content Dimensions and Descriptions
Rational numbers Calculating and applying rational numbers (with or without a context), including usage of absolute value
Ratio and proportional relationships Calculating with rates, ratios, and proportions (with or without a context), and using unit conversions
Exponents Calculating with exponents, radicals, fractional exponents, and applying scientific notation
Algebraic expressions Creating and evaluating expressions to represent situations, and using properties of operations to combine like terms and identify equivalent expressions
Linear equations Creating linear equations in one or two variables, solving linear equations, simplifying linear equations and inequalities, and solving systems of two linear equations
Linear applications and graphs Applying linear equations to real-life contexts, using elementary linear functions to describe relationships, and graphing linear equations in two variables, linear inequalities, parallel and perpendicular lines, and systems of equations
Probability and sets Calculating probability (simple, compound, and conditional), and defining sample spaces and events using set notation

Table 9: Quantitative Reasoning, Algebra, and Statistics Placement Test Question Content (Continued)

Content Dimensions and Descriptions
Descriptive statistics
Interpreting graphical displays of data (histograms, box plots, and scatterplots), describing shape and spread of a sample set, and calculating measures of center
Geometry concepts for Pre-Algebra
Determining area and perimeter, circle area and circumference, and volume of prisms
Geometry concepts for Algebra 1
Creating expressions for area, perimeter, and volume, using distance formula and Pythagorean theorem, and evaluating basic geometric transformations

3.4.3 Key Features

- ▶ Computer adaptive (two COMPANION forms available for pre- and posttesting)
- ▶ Multiple-choice fixed-length placement test
- ▶ 20 questions per CAT administration; 40 questions per COMPANION form
- ▶ Discrete question format
- ▶ Single placement score

3.5 Math: Advanced Algebra and Functions Placement Test

3.5.1 Test Description

The next-generation ACCUPLACER Advanced Algebra and Functions placement test is a broad-spectrum computer-adaptive assessment of test-takers' developed ability for selected mathematics content suited for students entering STEM fields of study, as well as students entering non-STEM fields of study that require some advanced math (e.g., medicine, economics, accounting). Questions will focus on a range of topics including a variety of equations and functions, including linear, quadratic, rational, radical, polynomial, and exponential. Questions will also delve into some geometry and trigonometry concepts. In addition, questions may assess a student's math ability via fluency with mathematical procedures and conceptual understanding, but may also present a real-world context that requires students to demonstrate the ability to analyze a situation, determine the essential elements required to solve the problem, represent the problem mathematically, and implement a solution. All questions are multiple choice in format and appear discretely across the assessment. The following knowledge and skill categories are assessed:

1. Linear equations
2. Linear applications and graphs
3. Factoring
4. Quadratics
5. Functions

6. Radical and rational equations
7. Polynomial equations
8. Exponential and logarithmic equations
9. Geometry concepts for Algebra 1
10. Geometry concepts for Algebra 2
11. Trigonometry

3.5.2 Test Summary

The following tables provide a synopsis of key content dimensions of the Advanced Algebra and Functions placement test.

Table 10: Advanced Algebra and Functions Placement Test Content Specifications

Content Areas	Number of Questions*	Percentage of Test**
Linear equations	2–3	10–15
Linear applications and graphs	2–3	10–15
Factoring	1–2	5–10
Quadratics	2–3	10–15
Functions	2–4	10–20
Radical and rational equations	1–3	5–15
Polynomial equations	1–3	5–15
Exponential and logarithmic equations	1–3	5–15
Geometry concepts for Algebra 1	1–2	5–10
Geometry concepts for Algebra 2	1–2	5–10
Trigonometry	1–3	5–15
Total	20	

* Values not final. The number of questions will vary based on results of research simulations not yet completed.

** Percentages do not necessarily add up to 100.

Table 11: Advanced Algebra and Functions Placement Test Question Content

Content Dimensions and Descriptions
<p>Linear equations</p> <p>Creating linear equations in one or two variables, solving linear equations, simplifying linear equations and inequalities, and solving systems of two linear equations</p>
<p>Linear applications and graphs</p> <p>Applying linear equations to real-life contexts, using elementary linear functions to describe relationships, and graphing linear equations in two variables, linear inequalities, parallel and perpendicular lines, and systems of equations</p>
<p>Factoring</p> <p>Factoring methods applied to quadratics, cubics, and polynomials</p>
<p>Quadratics</p> <p>Creating quadratic equations in one or two variables, solving quadratic equations (via factoring or using the quadratic equation), simplifying quadratic equations and inequalities, and solving systems that involve a quadratic equation</p>

Table 11: Advanced Algebra and Functions Placement Test Question Content
(Continued)

Content Dimensions and Descriptions
Functions
Creating functions using function notation, evaluating linear and quadratic functions, graphing functions, and interpreting functions within a context
Radical and rational equations
Creating radical and rational equations and functions in one variable, determining domain and range for radical and rational functions, graphing radical and rational functions, and simplifying radical and rational expressions and equations
Polynomial equations
Creating polynomial equations in one and two variables, solving polynomial equations, and graphing polynomial functions
Exponential and logarithmic equations
Creating exponential and logarithmic equations in one and two variables, solving exponential and logarithmic equations, graphing exponential and logarithmic functions, and interpreting exponential and logarithmic functions
Geometry concepts for Algebra 1
Creating expressions for area, perimeter, and volume, using distance formula and Pythagorean theorem, and evaluating dilations, rotations, translations, and reflections
Geometry concepts for Algebra 2
Determining volume of nonprism objects, using intersecting line theorems, using triangle similarity and congruency theorems, and using circle equations in the coordinate plane
Trigonometry
Solving trigonometric equations, using right triangle trigonometry including special triangles, evaluating equivalent trigonometric functions, graphing trigonometric relationships, determining arc length and radian measures, and using the law of sines and the law of cosines

3.5.3 Key Features

- ▶ Computer adaptive (two COMPANION forms available for pre- and posttesting)
- ▶ Multiple-choice fixed-length placement test
- ▶ 20 questions per CAT administration; 40 questions per COMPANION form
- ▶ Discrete question format
- ▶ Single placement score

SECTION IV: Developing Next-Generation ACCUPLACER

The College Board works with various committees and consultants throughout the test design and development process to produce the highest-quality assessments possible, assessments that serve students well as they work to become college and career ready. Our independent external committees and consultant pools, which include secondary and postsecondary classroom teachers, advise us throughout the design and development process, from designing the test to helping develop specifications to reviewing every question before it is used operationally. Our reviewers help us to ensure that ACCUPLACER questions are measuring important knowledge, skills, and understandings, that the questions align well with the test specifications in terms of content and rigor, that the questions are fair to all students, and that the questions are written in a way that models and reflects good instruction for the teacher and productive practice for the student.

4.1 Guiding Principles of the College Board's Test Development Process

To achieve the vision outlined above, each and every test question for next-generation ACCUPLACER is developed with care and expertise at every stage of the process. To that end, we follow a rigorous test development process that ensures that ACCUPLACER questions:

- ▶ are evidence based, focused on the core set of knowledge, skills, and understandings that are most important to preparing students for the rigors of college and career
- ▶ measure student knowledge, skills, and understandings as directly and authentically as possible by employing a range of question types relevant to instruction and life
- ▶ are crafted from rich, engaging passages and contexts, reflective of best instructional practices, and reward the academic excellence that any student can attain through deliberate practice
- ▶ are motivating and interesting, and are as engaging and relevant to students as possible
- ▶ are written with the help of classroom teachers at the high school and postsecondary levels
- ▶ are reviewed by independent experts active in the field of education for content and fairness issues prior to being administered to students
- ▶ are accessible and fair to all students in that they are content relevant, accurate, authentic and respectful in representation, and consistent with universal design principles

4.2 The Test Development Process

The primary purposes of next-generation ACCUPLACER are to determine whether placement into college-entry, credit-bearing course work is appropriate for a given student and, if not, whether remedial work is needed. ACCUPLACER tests are also frequently used as postintervention assessments to monitor a student's course progress and to suggest whether continued remediation or a change in course assignment or both are warranted. All test content aligns with these uses. Each next-generation ACCUPLACER question is designed to collect evidence from student performance for the purposes of assessing a student's readiness for college-entry, credit-bearing courses and need for remediation.

4.2.1 Defining the Test Domains

The content of next-generation ACCUPLACER has as its foundation the knowledge, skills, and understandings essential for college and workforce training readiness and success. Scholarly research and empirical data derived from studies conducted by the College Board and other organizations play an important role in informing the foundational content. This evidence base, which also undergirds the redesign of the SAT, PSAT/NMSQT and PSAT 10, and PSAT 8/9, was used to define the domains of the various next-generation ACCUPLACER tests, which were in turn reviewed and discussed with consultants and focus groups, including expert educators at both the secondary and postsecondary (two- and four-year) levels, counselors, and administrators in testing and enrollment.

4.2.2 Test and Question/Task Specifications

Given the defined test domains, College Board measurement and content staff also work with education experts to prepare test and question/task specifications that represent the depth and breadth of the defined domains and help ensure the consistent development of assessments of the highest quality. The specifications define the question/task types and formats required to measure most directly and authentically the domains of knowledge, skills, and understandings relevant to ACCUPLACER's primary purposes.

4.2.3 Stimuli and Question Development

Next-generation ACCUPLACER measures durably powerful knowledge, skills, and understandings needed in postsecondary education, work, and life. All content area tests are developed to elicit meaningful engagement from students through questions that resemble the best classroom practices. To these ends, the College Board works with K–12 teachers and instructors of college-entry, credit-bearing postsecondary courses across the United States.

In order to consistently develop tests with engaging, authentic stimulus materials and contexts that lend themselves to high-quality questions, the College Board has developed and continues to maintain a range of test-support materials intended to help make sure that all questions are evidence based, valid, and accessible to all students — in short, that they meet the highest possible standards. These materials include question writer guidelines, prototypes, and templates; fairness guidelines; and accessibility guidelines. The College Board contracts with classroom teachers at both the high school and postsecondary levels and with other independent content and instructional experts to develop and/or review all questions. In this way, those most familiar with the student population of interest and knowledgeable in instructional best practices in the field make the most significant contribution to assessment content. This helps ensure that the test materials included in the assessment are engaging, instructionally appropriate, and fair to all students.

Reading

In the next-generation ACCUPLACER Reading placement test, students engage with worthwhile texts that warrant careful consideration. Some texts are commissioned (i.e., written specifically for the test), but many (an increasing proportion) are excerpted or adapted from previously published, authentic writing that represents the best of the genres represented on the test.

The essential first step of question development is a close and careful reading of the text. Test questions resemble those that might emerge naturally in a thoughtful classroom conversation, and they return students to the text to examine closely the information and ideas within it. Moreover, they develop out of a sensitive engagement with the passage rather than an attempt to cover in a mechanical way every possible testing point in the domain. Such superficial coverage weakens the overall quality of the assessment, favoring rigid adherence to specifications over a more organic development process that respects the unique nature of rich, authentic texts in a variety of content areas.

Writing

The next-generation ACCUPLACER Writing placement test comprises passages that are engaging and challenging and questions that focus clearly on a core of writing and language skills empirically linked to college and career readiness requirements. These commissioned passages (passages written for the test rather than excerpted or adapted from preexisting sources) are designed to provide meaningful contexts for the knowledge, skills, and understandings being addressed. Passages are held to the highest standards of accuracy and writing quality and exemplify the qualities of effective arguments, informative/explanatory texts, and nonfiction narratives. Test questions assess writing and language knowledge, skills, and understandings in extended prose contexts rather than in isolation and require students to revise and edit rather than simply identify errors.

Math

The next-generation ACCUPLACER Math placement tests are focused on the mathematics that matter most for college and career readiness and success. Students are asked to demonstrate their command of the math topics most provably useful in a range of college courses and career environments. Students gain wide-ranging readiness from knowing these focused topics well, rather than trying to master broad knowledge across a wider range of mathematical topics. The next-generation ACCUPLACER Math tests provide the opportunity for richer applications of the most essential math to address real-world situations and problems and include multipart applications of this core of useful math.

Test questions are thoroughly examined by teachers who possess deep knowledge of the target mathematical content and practices. The problems on each test explore the full dynamic range of each content area through precisely crafted questions that emphasize the use of math in unlocking insights and solving problems. The test design allows the core of math to be examined with the range of rigor required (as defined through evidence) for college and career readiness, addressing at the same time procedure, understanding, and application.

4.2.4 Content and Fairness Reviews Prior to Pretesting

Prior to pretesting, all questions are reviewed by external, independent reviewers who are asked to evaluate each question according to a set of criteria for content soundness and fairness. These reviewers are typically active classroom teachers drawn from both secondary and postsecondary levels across the nation and are deeply familiar with the student population of interest and the nature and purpose of the test under review.

Content reviewers are focused on ensuring the soundness of each question and stimulus and evaluating its relationship to the construct being measured (e.g., reading), its relevance and appropriateness to the work students do in high school, and its value in terms of measuring students' degree of college and career readiness. Fairness reviewers are charged with helping ensure that test questions and stimuli are broadly accessible to the wide-ranging student population that takes the exam, that the questions are clearly stated and unambiguous in their intent, and that the questions do not offer unfair advantages to some students.

4.2.5 Pretesting

All questions are then pretested on a motivated sample of students that resembles the test-taking population and is sufficient in size to allow the College Board to evaluate the materials statistically in terms of difficulty, to discern whether the questions can differentiate between lower- and higher-achieving students, and to ensure that students from different gender and racial/ethnic groups do not differentially respond to the questions. The questions are embedded into operational test administrations and administered to students. The data from 1,000 to 3,000 students responding to each question are used to evaluate question performance.

Once questions and tasks have been pretested and statistics associated with them have been computed, the materials are reviewed by measurement and content specialists (including active classroom teachers at both the secondary and postsecondary levels) for content accuracy, fairness, statistical discrimination, difficulty, and differential performance among groups of tested students.

4.2.6 Postoperational Administration Statistical Review

Questions that pass the pretest evaluations are included in the calibration process, where item response theory parameters are estimated and evaluated to ensure that the tests reliably measure the intended knowledge and skills of the test-takers. After successfully passing the calibration process, the questions are considered part of the operational pool. Throughout the life of the pool, statistical analyses of individual questions are conducted after operational administrations to ensure that all questions are functioning as expected.

By taking all of these steps and engaging educators at key points in the process, the College Board strives to ensure that ACCUPLACER consistently reflects the guiding principles of its design and the best of rigorous classroom instruction.

4.3 COMPANION™ Forms

ACCUPLACER COMPANION tests are alternative formats available to students with documented disabilities or those who may need an alternate version of the corresponding computer-adaptive test for other reasons. COMPANION tests are available in paper-and-pencil format, on compact discs, in Braille, and in large print. Each ACCUPLACER CAT placement test has two corresponding COMPANION forms, one of them typically used for retest purposes.

Test questions on these accommodated forms are developed following the same procedures as those for CAT questions and are pretested in the operational CAT-administered tests to determine question parameters. Initial operational test forms are constructed according to the test specifications of the corresponding CAT, with content coverage of primary concern and statistical requirements secondary. All assembled forms are evaluated to ensure that they meet specifications and are parallel in terms of both content and statistics.

4.3.1 COMPANION Form Content and Fairness Review

Once test forms are initially constructed, they undergo internal and external content and fairness reviews prior to finalization and preparation for publication. External reviewers are typically active classroom teachers drawn from both secondary and postsecondary levels across the nation.

SECTION V: Conclusion

The College Board continues its work to make sure ACCUPLACER accurately measures students' readiness for and likelihood of success in college and career training programs. The organization will continue to be guided by evidence as next-generation ACCUPLACER is developed. The College Board remains steadfast in its commitment to equity and opportunity. To that end, the organization continues to forge a powerful and dynamic connection between assessment and instruction so that the assessment components reflect rigorous instructional tasks and, in turn, inform rigorous instruction; help propel students into the opportunities they have earned both in high school and in college; identify those students who have fallen behind so that timely interventions can help them catch up; and continue to focus on the knowledge, skills, and understandings that the best available research tells us are most essential for college and career readiness and success.

APPENDIX Text Complexity (Qualitative): Reading and Writing

Dimension	COMPLEXITY BAND		
	4–5	6–8	9–10
	11–PE (postsecondary entry; entry level)	Lower-division undergraduate	Highly complex
Purpose <i>Chiefly informational</i>	Basic Single Clear and direct	Somewhat challenging Single Generally clear and direct	Moderately challenging Single Relatively straightforward
Level(s) of Meaning <i>Chiefly literary</i>	One or multiple; if multiple, text can be understood/enjoyed on a literal level	One or multiple; if multiple, text can be understood/enjoyed on a literal level	Multiple and important to a full understanding of the text
Central Idea(s) and Theme(s)	Explicit Straightforward	Explicit or implicit; if implicit, easy to infer Relatively straightforward	Explicit or implicit; if implicit, relatively challenging to infer Relatively subtle or complex
Information, Ideas, and Relationships	Straightforward; connections are explicit and clear	Somewhat challenging; connections may be implicit but easy to infer	Challenging; connections are often implicit and relatively challenging to infer
Accessibility of Experiences and Ideas	Common or easily relatable Concrete	Sometimes unfamiliar Generally concrete	Often unfamiliar Often abstract or theoretical
Abstraction	Low to moderately low Slow to fairly slow	Moderately low Fairly slow	High to very high Rapid to very rapid
Density and Pace	Basic; easy to predict	Straightforward; generally easy to predict	Relatively intricate or complex
Text Structure	Mostly simple sentences	Mostly simple and compound sentences	Many complex sentences
Syntax	Mostly simple sentences	Simple, compound, and complex sentences	Mostly complex sentences

APPENDIX Text Complexity (Qualitative): Reading and Writing (Continued)

Dimension	COMPLEXITY BAND				
	4–5	6–8	9–10	11–PE (postsecondary entry; entry level)	
				Lower-division undergraduate	
Diction	<p>Basic</p> <p>Similar to everyday language; may be conversational in style and tone</p>	<p>Somewhat challenging</p> <p>Generally similar to everyday language; may be conversational in style and tone</p>	<p>Moderately challenging</p> <p>Somewhat elevated and somewhat distinct from everyday language</p>	<p>Complex</p> <p>Elevated and distinct from everyday language; ironic, ambiguous, or intentionally misleading language possible</p>	<p>Highly complex</p> <p>Elevated and sharply distinct from everyday language; ironic, ambiguous, or intentionally misleading language possible</p>
Vocabulary	<p>Familiar</p> <p>Moderately low tier 2 and/or tier 3 demands; tier 3 words/phrases routinely glossed and foregrounded</p> <p>Archaic, foreign, and otherwise uncommon words/phrases generally absent</p>	<p>Generally familiar</p> <p>Moderate tier 2 and/or tier 3 demands; tier 3 words/phrases routinely glossed and foregrounded</p> <p>Archaic, foreign, and otherwise uncommon words/phrases generally absent, discernible from context, or not central to meaning</p>	<p>Moderate</p> <p>High tier 2 and/or tier 3 demands; tier 3 words/phrases less explicitly foregrounded</p> <p>Archaic, foreign, and otherwise uncommon words/phrases more likely to appear and to be relevant to a full understanding of the text</p>	<p>Moderately high</p> <p>Very high tier 2 and/or tier 3 demands; relatively little scaffolding for tier 3 words/phrases</p> <p>Archaic, foreign, and otherwise uncommon words/phrases highly likely to appear and to be central to a full understanding of the text</p>	<p>High</p> <p>Major tier 2 and/or tier 3 demands; little scaffolding for tier 3 words/phrases</p> <p>Archaic, foreign, and otherwise uncommon words/phrases highly likely to appear and to be central to a full understanding of the text</p>
Knowledge Demands (World/Cultural, Subject matter)	Moderately low	Moderate	Moderate to moderately high	Moderately high to high	High to very high
Intertextuality	Absent, low, or incidental to full understanding of the text	Absent, low, or incidental to full understanding of the text	Absent, low, or incidental to full understanding of the text	Low to moderate; may be important to full understanding of the text	Moderate to high; may be central to full understanding of the text
Subject Matter Sensitivity	Little maturity specifically expected	Certain degree of maturity sometimes expected; recognition that one's viewpoint may differ from that in the text is required	Some degree of maturity and ability to distance oneself from text expected	Maturity and ability to distance oneself from text often expected	Maturity and ability to distance oneself from text routinely expected