



# Understanding Your ACT Aspire<sup>®</sup> Results



© 2015 by ACT, Inc. All rights reserved. ACT National Career Readiness Certificate™ is a trademark, and ACT®, ACT Aspire®, and ACT NCRC® are registered trademarks of ACT, Inc.

ACT endorses the *Code of Fair Testing Practices in Education* and the *Code of Professional Responsibilities in Educational Measurement*, guides to the conduct of those involved in educational testing. ACT is committed to ensuring that each of its testing programs upholds the guidelines in each *Code*.

# Understanding Your ACT Aspire® Results in Three Quick Steps

Your ACT Aspire student score report contains a lot of information about your skills that can help answer three important questions about you and your future.

## **1. Where do I stand right now?**

ACT Aspire shows your strengths and weaknesses in up to five subject areas: English, math, reading, science, and writing. You can also see how you are doing in combined subject areas such as English language arts (ELA) and science and math (STEM). Your report also shows how you performed in specific skill areas within each subject. Finally, you can see how your scores compare to those of other students who have taken ACT Aspire.

## **2. How can I make goals for the future?**

The scores you achieved on the ACT Aspire test(s) can help you decide what to do next. Looking at particular areas of strength and weakness can help you determine where you need help and where you may need to be challenged. This information can help you plan coursework and set goals.

## **3. Am I on target for high school, college, and a career?**

For most students, reaching their goals includes getting a high school and college education. Preparing for college or workplace training means having access to quality instruction and putting forth your best effort. Your ACT Aspire score report references ACT Readiness Benchmarks, ACT Readiness Ranges, and, if you are in eighth grade or above, a Progress Toward Career Readiness indicator.

This guide will help you understand the information on your ACT Aspire student score report and how it can help you. Later, visit [www.discoveractaspire.org](http://www.discoveractaspire.org) for more information and to watch a video for students and parents.

# What Your Scores Mean

For each subject you took, you will see a three-digit score. Just like your teachers turn your quiz and test scores into grades, ACT Aspire takes the number of points you got right on each test and translates it into a number.

Your score for each subject will fall into one of four levels: *Exceeding*, *Ready*, *Close*, or *In Need of Support*. The level your score falls into indicates how you did in meeting certain standards or “benchmarks.” Table 1 shows the ACT Readiness Benchmarks for all grades and subjects. Students who score at and above these benchmarks are on target for college readiness when they take the ACT® test in the eleventh or twelfth grade.

Table 1. ACT Readiness Benchmarks

| Tested Grade | English | Reading | Mathematics | Science | Writing |
|--------------|---------|---------|-------------|---------|---------|
| 3            | 413     | 415     | 413         | 418     | 428     |
| 4            | 417     | 417     | 416         | 420     | 428     |
| 5            | 419     | 420     | 418         | 422     | 428     |
| 6            | 420     | 421     | 420         | 423     | 428     |
| 7            | 421     | 423     | 422         | 425     | 428     |
| 8            | 422     | 424     | 425         | 427     | 428     |
| 9            | 426     | 425     | 428         | 430     | 428     |
| 10           | 428     | 428     | 432         | 432     | 428     |

More specific information about how you performed in each subject is also available in the form of **skill scores**. Several skills (also called reporting categories) are measured for each tested subject. The score report includes the percent and number of points earned out of a total number of points possible in each skill. Student performance in each skill is also compared to an ACT Readiness Range, which indicates whether you appear to be on target or may need help.

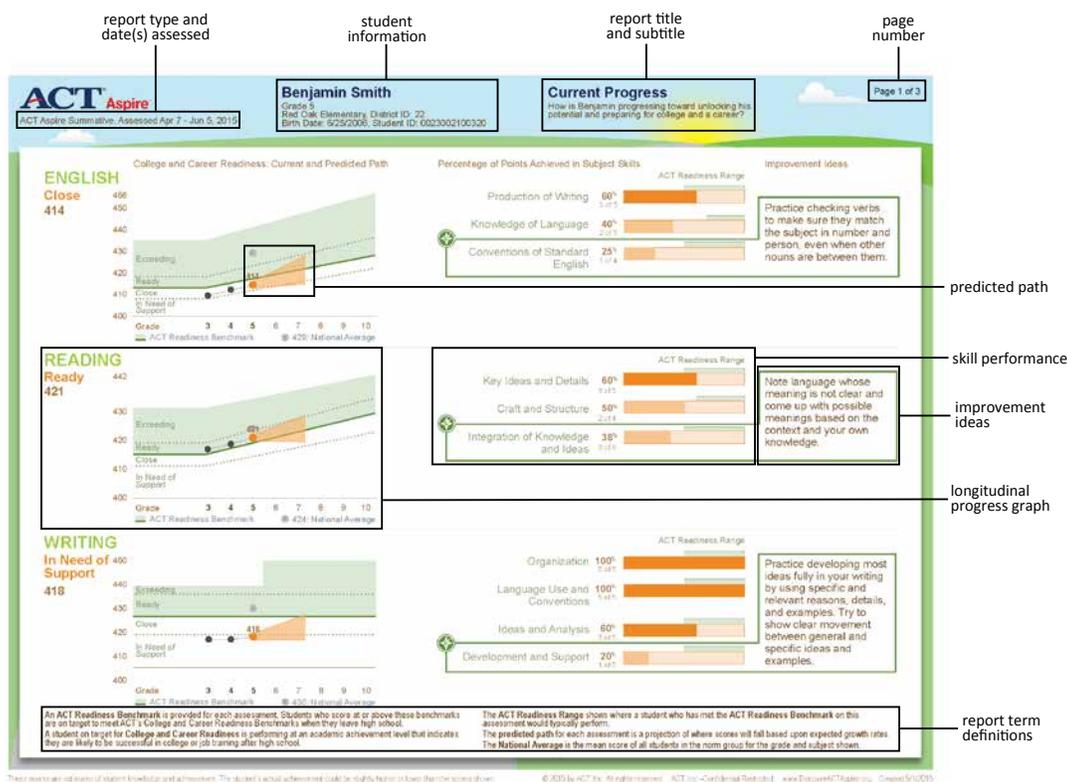


Figure 1. ACT Aspire Current Progress Report

Figure 1 presents the Current Progress Report, which shows information about individual subject scores and the Readiness Ranges and skill scores for each subject in the skill performance area.

## Supplemental Scores

There are several supplemental scores, in addition to subject and skill scores, that you receive based on the combination of subjects and/or the grade level at which you tested. The following supplemental scores are available for all grade levels:

- **ELA combined score**, which averages your English, Reading, and Writing test scores
- **STEM combined score**, which averages your Science and Mathematics test scores
- **Progress with Text Complexity indicator**, which identifies whether you are making sufficient progress toward reading the complex texts you will encounter as you further your education and work toward college and career

Figure 2 shows a Supplemental Scores Report that references ELA and STEM scores and the Progress with Text Complexity indicator.

If you are in the eighth grade or above, you may also receive additional score measures:

- **ACT Aspire Composite score**, which is simply an average of the English, Mathematics, Reading, and Science test scores (rounded to the nearest whole number) if you took all of those tests of the same grade level. In the same way your overall grade point average in school shows how well you are doing across all of your different classes, your ACT Aspire Composite score shows how well you did across the four subjects.

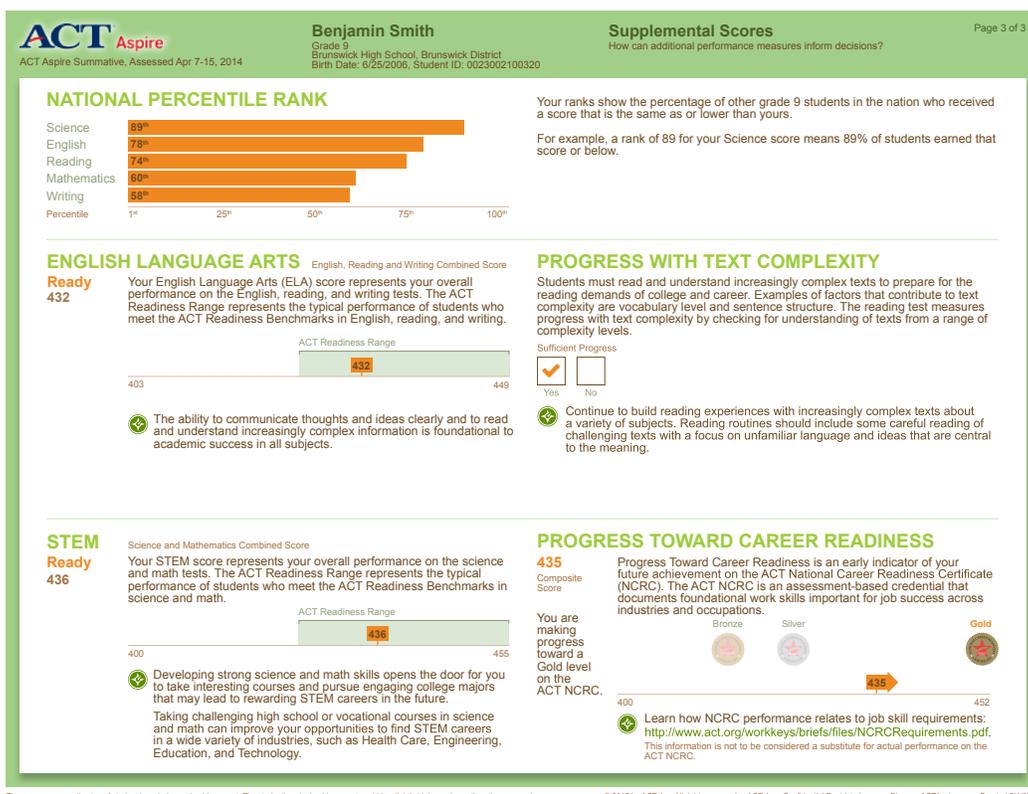


Figure 2. ACT Aspire Supplemental Scores Report

- **Progress toward Career Readiness indicator**, which uses your ACT Aspire Composite score to project a future ACT National Career Readiness Certificate™ (ACT NCRC®) achievement level.

Finally, if you are in ninth or tenth grade, your score results also include:

- Predicted subject score ranges on the ACT English, mathematics, reading, and science tests. If you took all four corresponding ACT Aspire subject tests, you will also receive a predicted ACT Composite score range.

Figure 3 shows where these additional measures can be found on a student score report.

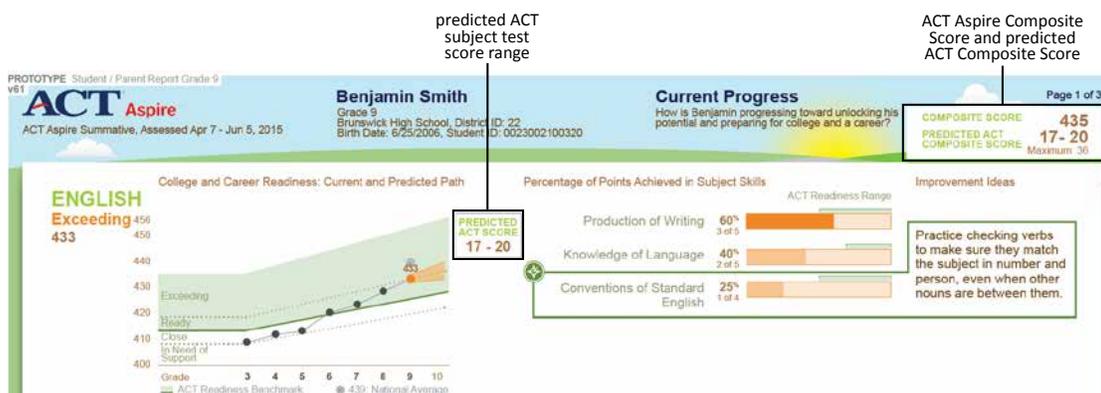


Figure 3. Additional measures on the student score report

If you are a ninth- or tenth-grade student, ACT Aspire subject tests offer a bridge to the ACT test. ACT Aspire and the ACT cover the same subjects, including the writing test, which is optional for the ACT. The predicted ACT score ranges that are included in your student score report can guide college preparation or workplace training efforts. You can use the predicted ACT scores to see if you are on target to achieve the ACT scores you want by the time you take the ACT. Are there subject areas where taking additional courses or gaining additional skills might improve your preparation for high school or for workplace training?

Improving your study habits and taking more challenging courses can lead to higher ACT scores. Keep in mind that the predicted ACT score ranges are only estimates, not guarantees. You need to keep learning.

## How Your Scores Compare

Next to your scores and represented on the graphic for each subject, you'll find the national average score (norm score) for students who took ACT Aspire. These show how you did on different subjects compared with students across the country.

Your score for each subject is also associated with a National Percentile Rank that shows how your score compares to other students who tested in 2013 and 2014–15. In figure 4, the score report shows “78th” next to the sample student’s English score. This means that the sample student scored as high as or higher than 78% of students in the national comparison group. The bar graph helps you see which of your scores are strongest and weakest relative to other students.

### NATIONAL PERCENTILE RANK

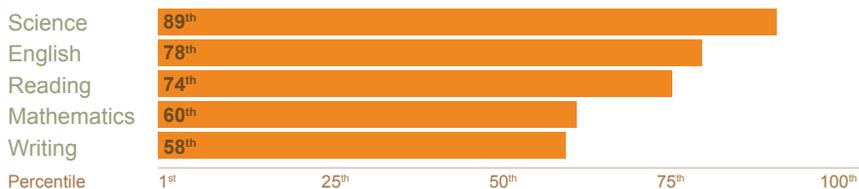


Figure 4. National Percentile Rank

# Your Plans for High School and Beyond

## Compare Your Scores to ACT Readiness Benchmarks

Your ACT Aspire results can be compared to ACT Readiness Benchmarks for grades 3–10 to give you an early indication of whether you are ready for high school and college-level coursework or for participation in workplace training.

In the main graphic area of your score report for each subject, the plotting of your score shows whether you scored above, at, or below benchmark scores (see figure 5). In the example, the sample fifth grade student scored 430 on the Science test, which is above the ACT Readiness Benchmark of 422, and earned an Exceeding readiness level. Students that score at or above the ACT Readiness Benchmark on the ACT Aspire English, Mathematics, Reading, Science, and Writing tests are likely to be on target to do well in these subjects, assuming students will experience typical growth moving forward.

The ACT Readiness Benchmarks shown on your score report depend on the grade level your test was designed for, which may not be the same as your current grade level. The ACT Readiness Benchmarks help you determine if you are on target for college readiness as determined by your future test score on the ACT. Your percentile ranks help you compare your scores to those of students across the country who also took ACT Aspire.

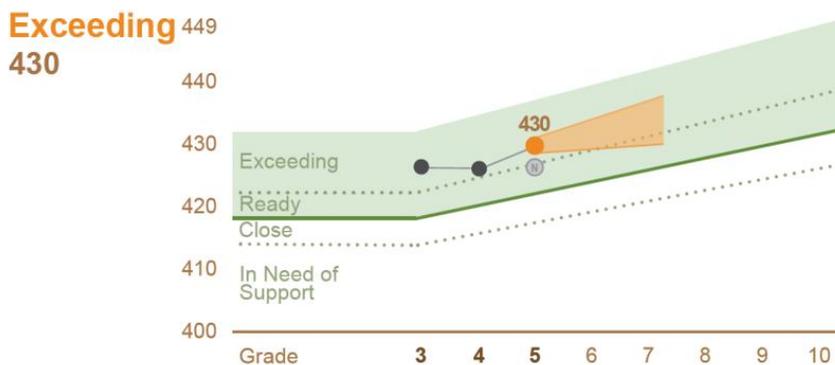


Figure 5. ACT Readiness Benchmarks

## Your Readiness Action Plan

Look at how your scores for each subject compare to the ACT Readiness Benchmark scores on your score report. Then compare your skill scores in each subject to the ACT Readiness Ranges listed.

**Are your scores at or above the ACT Readiness Benchmark Scores or within the ACT Readiness Ranges?** If so, you are doing well, but keep working hard. There is still a lot to learn. Pay attention to the improvement ideas given for your lowest-performing skill in each subject (see figure 6).

**Are your scores below the ACT Readiness Benchmark Scores or ACT Readiness Ranges?** You should pay attention to the improvement ideas, too. Review the suggestions for improving your skills listed on each page of your report, especially for your lowest-scoring skills.

You will definitely want to discuss any improvement ideas with your counselors, teachers, and parents so that you can work together to get the most from your courses and reach the goals of being ready for high school, college, and workplace training. It's important to start taking action now.

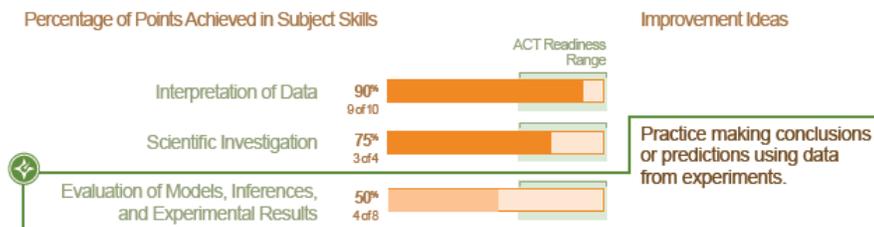


Figure 6. ACT Aspire improvement ideas

# A Message to Parents of Students in Grades 8–10

Education has many benefits. High school and college graduates have more opportunities available to them, including more job options and higher earning potential than students who don't graduate.

Being prepared for postsecondary education means first taking the right courses in high school. All students need to take at least the minimum high school core curriculum—four years of English and at least three years each of math, social studies, and science. Encourage your son or daughter to take challenging courses and to put in the work needed to do well in those courses.

Compare your son's or daughter's scores to those of other students and to the ACT Readiness Benchmark scores. This can give you an early indication of his or her likely readiness for the future, providing time to address areas where improvement is needed. But it's important to use that time well. Be sure to review all of your child's ACT Aspire student score report, particularly the suggestions for improving his or her skills.

Getting the best education possible is an important key to your child's future. ACT Aspire organizes the important information you need to consider in helping your child develop educational plans to meet his or her goals.

**ACT**<sup>®</sup> **Aspire**<sup>®</sup>