



## Student Guide

### *Computerized Placement Tests (CPTs)*

#### **The Purpose of the Tests**

The College Board™ developed the ACCUPLACER™ Computerized Placement Tests (CPTs), with the help of committees of college faculty, to provide information about your level of skill and accomplishment in reading, writing, English and mathematics. UTSA may use the scores you receive and other information that you provide to help determine the English, mathematics, and reading courses most appropriate for you at this time.

There are eight multiple choice computerized placement tests available in the ACCUPLACER program as well as two different writing tests for which you write an essay. UTSA will determine which of these tests you should take.

#### **Test Administration**

The Computerized Placement Tests are administered on a computer. You will read the instructions and questions on a computer monitor and will select your answers using the keyboard or the computer mouse.

#### **Score Reporting**

When you have completed the tests, you may see a report of your scores on the screen and you may receive a printed report of your scores. The type of reporting depends on how your college has set up the testing. When you have completed the testing, follow the instructions of the Test Administrator. Your scores can only be obtained through your college.

If you are given a copy of your Individual Score Report it will include your individual scaled score and state minimum passing scores for each section.

#### **Who Must Take the Test**

If you are not exempt from TASP and have not taken TASP or any of the approved alternates to TASP, you may take the ACCUPLACER.

### **When and Where ACCUPLACER are Given**

ACCUPLACER is given at the 1604 Campus Monday-Friday at 8:30 a.m. and at 12 noon. At our Downtown Campus the times are Monday-Thursday at 9 a.m. and Friday at 1 p.m. Contact the Testing Services Office for more information at 210-458-4125.

### **Fees for the Tests**

The fee for ACCUPLACER is \$25.00. Students may pay the fee at the Fiscal Services office (JPL 1.03.06) prior to testing or may bring a check or money order to the Testing Services office the day of the test.

### **Special arrangements for Students with Disabilities**

If you have a disability or temporarily disabling condition that will prevent you from taking the tests under standard conditions, inform the Test Administrator when scheduling the test. These requests should be made directly to the Test Administrator and Disability Services at your university so that Disability Services may share any necessary documentation. No additional charge should be made for these special arrangements. To contact Disability Services, please call 210-458-4157.

### **What to Take with You to the Test**

On the day of the test, you should be sure to take your student ID number and a photo ID such as your driver's license, student ID card or current passport. Additionally, remember to bring your receipt from Fiscal Services showing payment of test fee or a check or money order for \$25.00.

### **Testing Regulations**

Textbooks, notebooks, dictionaries, calculators, or other papers of any kind (except scratch paper provided by the Test Administrator for use with the mathematics test) are not allowed in the testing room. Further, anyone who gives or receives help during the test, or uses notes or books of any kind, will not be allowed to continue the test. Following the test period, no test materials or notes may be removed from the room. Your university may cancel any test score if there is reason to question its validity. Before canceling a score, the university may offer you the opportunity to take the test again.

### **Confidentiality**

Your test scores and the information you provide when taking the tests will only be provided to The College Board, UTSA, and to the state to meet state information requirements. The information may be used for counseling, advisement and placement purposes and may be used to document whether or not you have met state testing requirements. The College Board may also use it for research and training purposes. Your test information will not be disclosed for any other purpose without your permission. If you have any questions about confidentiality, please see your Test Administrator.

## **About the Tests**

### **Computer Delivered Testing**

You will take the tests using a computer. You will use either the keyboard or the mouse to enter your answers, write your essay, and supply other information. The test instructions are easy to understand. Entering information also is very easy. A Test Administrator will always be present should you have any questions or problems. The Test Administrator has the ability to resolve any difficulties that may occur.

### **Answering the Questions**

Because you take the ACCUPLACER tests on a computer, you don't have to answer as many questions as on traditional paper and pencil tests. The number of questions on the eight tests ranges from 12-25. The questions appear one at a time on the computer screen. Since most questions are multiple choice, all you will need to do is use the Enter key or mouse to select an answer. When you have completed the question and confirmed your answer, a new screen will appear with your next question.

### **Adaptive Testing**

Each test is adaptive. This means that the computer automatically determines which questions are presented to you based on your responses to prior questions. This technique selects just the right questions to ask without being too easy or too difficult. Each test is untimed (except the essay) so that you can give each question as much thought as you wish. However, once you have selected and confirmed your answer, you cannot return to that question.

After you answer each question, the computer calculates a score based on all of the answers you have given and uses this score to select the next question to display. Because the test works this way, you must answer every question when it is first given. You cannot omit any questions or come back later to change an answer.

If you do not know the answer to a question, try to eliminate one or more of the choices. Then pick one of the remaining choices.

### **The Essay Tests**

ACCUPLACER includes two writing tests, one for native English speakers and the other for non-native English speakers. The test for native English speakers is called WritePlacer™ *Plus* (or WritePlacer Texas in the state of Texas). The other writing test is for non-native English speakers and is called WritePlacer™ ESL. **UTSA uses only the native English speakers test.**

When you take a WritePlacer test, you will be given a topic and asked to write an essay about it in 90 minutes. The test has been designed so that you will probably not be rushed and will have enough time to plan, write, review, and revise your essay. It will be scored on the overall quality of your writing.

## **The Order of the Tests**

The Computerized Placement Test at UTSA includes Elementary Algebra, Sentence Skills, Reading Comprehension, and WritePlacer essay. The Test Administrator determines the order in which the tests are given prior to testing.

## **Taking the Test**

The first screen you will see on the computer will ask you to enter some background information such as Student ID number, name and address.

After filling in the background information questions, click Continue. You will then see the first page of the first test you are taking. Click Continue, and you will see a sample question. After you have read the directions and reviewed the sample questions, select the "Continue" button and take the actual test.

ACCUPLACER presents one question at a time. Each page presents the question and several possible answer choices. The page may also include additional information that is needed to answer the question such as a reading passage, picture or table of information.

## **Choosing An Answer**

To select an answer, use the mouse to move the arrow pointer to the circle button next to the answer you wish to choose and click on the button. The circle will then be filled indicating that this is the answer you have chosen. Click on the next button to move on. A box will come up on the screen asking you to confirm your answer or giving you the opportunity to cancel and go back and choose a different answer. If you wish to confirm, simply click on OK, if you want to cancel and go back and choose a different answer click on cancel and select a new answer.

You can also use the keyboard to select an answer. Using the Tab button, highlight the answer you wish to select and press the Enter key. A box will come up on the screen asking you to confirm your answer or giving you the opportunity to cancel and go back to choose a different answer. If you wish to confirm, simply press enter, if you want to cancel and go back and choose another answer press the tab button once then press Enter.

## **Guessing**

ACCUPLACER is an adaptive test. This means that the questions are chosen for you on the basis of your answers to previous questions. Because the test works this way, you must answer every question when it is first given. You can change your answer to a particular question before moving on to the next question, but you cannot leave a question out or come back to it later to change your answer. Once you go on to the next question, you cannot return to the question.

If you do not know the answer to a question, try to eliminate one or more of the choices. Then pick from the remaining choices.

# **Descriptions of the Tests and Sample Questions**

# Sample Questions for Reading Comprehension

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This test is designed to measure how well you understand what you read. It contains 20 questions. Some ask you to decide how two sentences are related. Other questions ask you about reading passages of various lengths. You will be asked to interpret and draw conclusions from what you have read.

## NARRATIVE QUESTION:

*Read the statement or passage and then choose the best answer to the question. Answer the question on the basis of what is stated or implied in the statement or passage.*

1. There are two types of pottery that I do. There is production pottery-- mugs, tableware, the kinds of things that sell easily. These pay for my time to do the work, which is more creative and satisfies my needs as an artist.

The author of this passage implies that:

- artists have a tendency to waste valuable time
- creativity and mass-production are incompatible
- most people do not appreciate good art
- pottery is not produced by creative artists

## SENTENCE RELATIONSHIPS QUESTION:

*Two underlined sentences are followed by a question or statement about them. Read each pair of sentences and then choose the best answer to the question or the best completion of the statement.*

2. The Midwest is experiencing its worst drought in fifteen years.

Corn and soybean prices are expected to be very high this year.

What does the second sentence do?

- It restates the idea found in the first.
- It states an effect.
- It gives an example.
- It analyzes the statement made in the first.

**[Answers on Page 13]**

## Sample Questions for Sentence Skills

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Two kinds of questions are given in this test. You will be asked to correct a sentence by choosing a word or phrase to substitute for an underlined portion of a sentence. In the other type of question, you will be asked to rewrite a sentence in a specific way without changing the meaning. You will be presented a total of 20 questions.

### SENTENCE CORRECTION QUESTION:

*Select the best version of the underlined part of the sentence. The first choice is the same as the original sentence. If you think the original sentence is best, choose the first answer.*

1. Ms. Rose planning to teach a course in biology next summer.
- planning
  - are planning
  - with a plan
  - plans

### CONSTRUCTION SHIFT QUESTION:

*Rewrite the sentence in your head, following the directions given below. Keep in mind that your new sentence should be well written and should have essentially the same meaning as the sentence given to you.*

2. Being a female jockey, she was often interviewed.

Rewrite, beginning with She was often interviewed...

The next words will be

- on account of she was
- by her being
- because she was
- being as she was

**[Answers on Page 13]**

# Overview of the Elementary Algebra Test

12 Questions

214 Test Items in Pool

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In the Elementary Algebra test, 12 questions drawn from three broad categories, each of which is further divided into more specific topics. The first category, **operations with integers and rationals**, includes

- computing with integers,
- computing with negative rationals,
- ordering, and
- absolute values.

This category provides questions appropriate for those with very minimal skills, and accounts for three to four questions for those who are moderately competent in elementary algebra.

The second category, **operations with algebraic expressions**, includes several topics appropriate only for the least skilled including

- evaluating simple formulas and expressions,
- adding and subtracting monomials and polynomials.

Other topics are administered to students across all levels of performance. These include

- multiplying and dividing monomials and polynomials,
- evaluating positive rational roots and exponents,
- factoring, and
- sampling algebraic fractions.

Students scoring near the low end of the scale receive six or seven questions drawn from these topics, while those near the top of the scale receive five.

The third category, **solution of equations**, inequalities, and word problems, includes

- solving linear equations,
- solving quadratic equations by factoring,
- translating written phrases into algebraic expressions,
- solving verbal problems in an algebraic context including geometric reasoning, and
- graphing.

Most such problems are too difficult to yield useful information for examinees with minimal skills; hence, such students receive only one or two of them. These problems provide the most discriminating questions for examinees that are more competent in elementary algebra.

## Sample Questions for Elementary Algebra

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1. If a number is divided by 4, and then 3 is subtracted, the result is 0.  
What is the number?
- 12
  - 4
  - 3
  - 2
2.  $16X - 8 =$
- $8x$
  - $8(2x-x)$
  - $8(2x-1)$
  - $8(2x-8)$
3. If  $X^2 - X - 6 = 0$  then X is:
- 1 or 3
  - 1 or 6
  - 1 or -6
  - 2 or -3

**[Answers on Page 13]**

# College-Level Mathematics Test (CLM)

20 Questions

300 Test Items in Pool

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CLM assesses proficiency in intermediate algebra through pre-calculus. This test enables placement into intermediate algebra, pre-calculus, and introductory calculus courses.

Questions administered in the test are from six general areas:

**Algebraic Operations** including

- simplification of rational algebraic expressions,
- factoring and expanding polynomials, and
- manipulating roots and exponents.

**Solution of Equations and Inequalities** including

- solutions of linear and quadratic equations and inequalities
- systems of equations, and
- other algebraic equations.

**Coordinate Geometry** including

- plane geometry,
- the coordinate plane,
- straight lines,
- conics,
- sets of points in the plane, and
- graphs of algebraic functions.

**Applications** and other **Algebra Topics** including

- complex numbers,
- series and sequences,
- determinants,
- permutations and combinations,
- factorials, and
- worked problems.

**Functions** including question involving

- polynomial,
- algebraic,
- exponential, and
- logarithmic functions.
- Trigonometry including trigonometric functions

## Sample Questions for College-Level Mathematics

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1. If  $f(x) = x^4 - x + 2$ , then  $f(-x) =$

- $x^4 - x$
- $x^4 + x$
- $x^4 - x + 2$
- $x^4 + x + 2$

2. The equation  $x^2 + 2ix - 4 = 0$  has as its roots

- $-1, -1$
- $-i, +1$
- $-i, +1$
- $-i, -1$
- $-1, -1$

[Answers on Page 13]

# The WritePlacer Essay Test

90-minutes

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The essay test you take asks for the type of academic writing you are likely to experience as part of your college coursework.

## *Instructions for the Essay:*

Prepare a multiple-paragraph writing sample of about 300-600 words on the topic below. You should use the time available to plan, write, review, and edit what you have written. Read the assignment carefully before you begin to write.

Your writing sample will be scored on the basis of how effectively it communicates a whole message to the readers for the stated purpose. Your score will be based on your ability to express, organize, and support your opinions and ideas, not the position you take on the essay topic. The following five characteristics of writing will be considered:

**Focus** ~ The clarity with which you maintain your main idea or point of view.

**Organization** ~ The clarity with which you structure your response and present a logical sequence of ideas.

**Development and Support** ~ The extent to which you elaborate on your ideas and the extent to which you present supporting details.

**Sentence Structure** ~ The effectiveness of your sentence structure.

**Mechanical Conventions** ~ The extent to which your writing is free of errors in usage and mechanics.

Be sure to write about the topic indicated below and use multiple paragraphs. You may not use any books or papers or other reference materials during the test. Remember to review your writing and make any changes you think will improve what you have written.

*Note: To leave a blank line between paragraphs, press the Enter key. Do not use the Tab key.*

## **Sample Essay Topic**

Some schools require each student to participate in an organized school sport chosen by the student. People at these schools argue that athletics is an important part of the educational experience and that there should be a rule requiring participation. Others argue that students should be free to decide whether or not they wish to participate in organized school sports.

Write an essay for a classroom instructor in which you take a position on whether or participation in organized school athletics should be required. Be sure to defend your position with logical arguments and appropriate examples.

# Answers to the Sample Questions

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## Reading Comprehension

- 1. B
- 2. B

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## Sentence Skills

- 1.D
- 2.C

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## Elementary Algebra

- 1.A
- 2.C
- 3.A

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## College-Level mathematics

- 1.D
  - 2.E
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