

CAAP

Student User Guide

What is CAAP?

The Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency (CAAP) is a set of standardized tests developed to measure student's achievement levels in up to six areas: Writing Skills, Reading, Mathematics, Critical Thinking, Science, and Writing Essay. Your school has chosen to assess your skills in designated areas using CAAP tests.

The CAAP test helps your school evaluate the effectiveness of the education you and your classmates have received, and identify areas that may need to be strengthened. The CAAP test also helps you and your counselor evaluate your individual skill levels, and determine how best to help you achieve academic success.

Your scores will be kept confidential, but CAAP will provide information on your achievement in selected academic skills and you will be able to compare your achievement with that of other students at your school. Your test results may give you important insights about success potential in the workplace and in further determining your educational goals. If you score at or above the national mean on any one or more CAAP modules you will also receive a Certificate of Achievement which you can use for your resume, job interviews, or further education.

Description of the CAAP Tests

There are six CAAP tests in total. Five of the tests are multiple choice, and one is an essay. The number of tests you will take will be determined by your university. Each test can be completed in a 50 minute class period. The following is a brief description of each test:

• Reading Test

This 36-question test measures reading comprehension in terms of referring to what is explicitly stated; reasoning to determine implicit meanings; and drawing conclusions, comparisons,

and generalizations beyond the text. The Reading Test consists of four prose passages of about 900 words each that are representative of the level and kinds of writing commonly found in college courses. Passages are selected from published sources on topics from prose fiction, the humanities, the social sciences, and the natural sciences. Each passage is accompanied by a set of nine multiple-choice test items.

• Writing Skills Test

This 72-question test measures your understanding of standard written English in terms of punctuation, grammar, sentence structure, strategy, organization, and style. Spelling, vocabulary, and rote recall of rules of grammar are not tested. The test consists of six prose passages, each of which is accompanied by a set of twelve multiple-choice questions. A range of passage types is used to provide a variety of rhetorical situations.

• Mathematics Test

This 35-question test is designed to measure your mathematical reasoning ability in terms of solving mathematical problems encountered in many postsecondary courses. It emphasizes quantitative reasoning rather than the memorization of formulas. The content areas tested include pre-algebra; elementary, intermediate, and advanced algebra; coordinate geometry; and trigonometry. Two subscores, Basic Algebra and College Algebra, are reported along with your total score.

• Critical Thinking Test

This 32-question test measures your ability to clarify, analyze, evaluate, and extend arguments. An argument is defined as a sequence of statements which includes a claim that one of the statements, the conclusion, follows from the other statements. The test consists of four passages that are representative of the kinds of issues commonly encountered in postsecondary courses.

A passage typically presents a series of subarguments in support of a more general conclusion. Each passage presents one or more arguments and uses a variety of formats, including case studies, debates, dialogues, overlapping positions, statistical arguments, experimental results, and editorials.

- **Science Test**

This 45-question test measures your abilities and skills in science. Its contents are drawn from biology, chemistry, physics, and the physical sciences. The test emphasizes scientific knowledge and reasoning abilities rather than skill in mathematics or reading ability. It consists of eight test units, each of which contains scientific information and a set of multiple-choice questions. Three different formats are used in the test: Data Representation presents graphic and tabular material similar to that found in science journals and texts; Research Summaries provides descriptions of one or more related experiments;

and Conflicting Viewpoints is designed to measure the ability to understand, analyze, and compare alternative viewpoints or hypotheses.

- **Writing (Essay) Test**

This test consists of two parts and requires 20 minutes for each part. You must respond to both parts to receive an essay score. Because this is a test of your writing skills, your response to each section should be an essay of complete sentences and paragraphs, as well organized and clearly written as you can make it in the allotted time. Essays that are illegible cannot be scored. Each of the two 20-minute writing tasks is defined by a short prompt that identifies a specific hypothetical situation and audience. The situation involves an issue on which you must make a decision. You then take a position and explain why the position taken is the better (or best) alternative. The background knowledge and experience required to carry out the task are designed to be within the command of college sophomores.

Sample CAAP Questions

The following examples illustrate the kind of questions you might find on four of the CAAP tests. **Additional sample questions are available on the ACT website www.act.org/caap.**

Writing Skills

By the fourth day I had to face the truth: my body was slowly changing to becoming dough. So I tied on my running shoes and loped out to the main road in search of a five-mile route. Out of curiosity, I turned onto Lookout Road and soon discovered how the road had come by its name.

1. A. NO CHANGE
 B. become
 C. being
 * D. OMIT the underlined portion

2. * A. NO CHANGE
 B. Out of curiosity, Lookout road was turned onto
 C. Having become curious, Lookout Road was the route I turned onto
 D. Curious, a turning into Lookout Road was what I did

Writing Essay

(Two 20-minute writing tasks will be given. The following is an example task.)

Your college administration is considering whether or not there should be a physical education requirement for undergraduates. The administration has asked students for their views on the issue and has announced that its final decision will be based on how such a requirement would affect the overall educational mission of the college. Write a letter to the administration arguing whether or not there should be a physical education requirement for undergraduates at your college.

Taking CAAP Tests

Bring the following to the test administration:

1. At least **3** sharpened soft-lead (No. 2) pencils with erasers and a black-ink pen if taking the Writing Essay module.

2. A calculator for the Mathematics test if you would like to use one. However, all problems on the test can be solved without using calculators. Most four-function, scientific, and graphing calculators may be used (see the ACT CAAP website for a list of eligible calculators).

3. A wristwatch to pace yourself during the test. Do **NOT** bring a watch that has a calculator or alarm function.

The use of scratch paper, notes, or dictionaries is **NOT** permitted. Scratch work is to be done in the test booklet.

Mathematics

Pre-Algebra (Application)

Mark bought 3 shirts at a clothing store. If he paid a total of \$15.00 for 2 shirts and the average (arithmetic mean) cost of the 3 shirts was \$8.00, how much did Mark pay for the third shirt?

- A. \$ 7.00
- B. \$ 7.67
- C. \$ 8.50
- * D. \$ 9.00
- E. \$11.50

Coordinate Geometry (Basic Skills)

A straight line in the coordinate plane passes through with (x,y) coordinates $(-1,1)$ and $(2,3)$. What are the (x,y) coordinates of the point at which the line passes through the y -axis?

- A. $(0,2/3)$
- * B. $(0,5/3)$
- C. $(0,2)$
- D. $(0,5/2)$
- E. $(-2,0)$

Intermediate Algebra (Application)

Astonville currently has a property tax of 2% of the market value of each house. Senator Smith has proposed a change in the property tax. Under this Smith proposal, there would be no tax on a house unless the market value of the house was above \$20,000. The tax on a house whose market value was over \$20,000 would be 2.5% of the difference between the house's market value and \$20,000.

Sue Miller would pay the same tax on her house under the Smith proposal as under the current plan. What is the market value of her house?

- A. \$ 10,000
- B. \$ 40,000
- * C. \$100,000
- D. \$120,000
- E. \$400,000

The following test-taking strategies are recommended:

Pace yourself to allow time for each question

Read the directions for each test carefully

Read each question carefully

Answer the easier questions first

Use logic in more difficult questions

Review your work

Answer every question, because there is no penalty for guessing

Be precise in marking your answer sheet—stay within the circles

Erase all unintended marks completely

Sample text to inform students about CAAP prior to testing may be reproduced or adapted without additional permission from ACT.

Science

Sample Passage: Physics, Conflicting Viewpoints Format

Aristotle developed a system of physics based on what he thought occurred in nature. For example, he thought that if a stone is released from rest, it instantaneously reaches a speed that remains constant as the stone falls. He also believed that the speed attained by a stone falling in air varies directly with the weight of the stone. A 5-pound stone, for example, falls with a constant speed 5 times as great as that of a 1-pound stone. Aristotle also noted that stones dropped into water continue to fall, but at a slower rate than stones falling through air. To account for this, he explained that the resistance of the medium through which an object falls also affects the speed. Therefore, he said, the speed of a falling object also varies inversely with the resistance of the medium, and this resistance is the same for all objects.

Galileo disagreed with Aristotle's explanation. He generated the following arguments to refute Aristotle.

Consider a stake partially driven into the ground and a heavy stone falling from various heights onto the stake. If the stone falls from a height of 4 cubits, the stake will be driven into the ground, say, 4 fingerbreadths. But if the stone falls from a height of 1 cubit, the stake will be driven in a much smaller amount. Certainly, Galileo argued, if the stone is raised above the stake by only the thickness of a leaf, then the effect of the stone's falling on the stake will be altogether unnoticeable.

On the basis of a careful set of experiments, Galileo argued that the speed of an object released from rest varies directly with the time of fall. Also, the distance the object falls varies directly with the square of the time of fall if the effect of air resistance on the object is negligible. Thus, according to Galileo, objects actually fall with constant acceleration, and if air resistance is negligible, all objects have exactly the same acceleration.

1. A book dropped from a height of 1 meter falls to the floor in t seconds. To be consistent with Aristotle's views, from what height, in meters, should a book 3 times as heavy be dropped so that it will fall to the floor in the same amount of time?
 - A. $1/9$
 - B. $1/3$
 - C. 1
 - D. 3
2. Suppose a heavy object falls to the ground in 5 seconds when dropped from shoulder height. According to Galileo, if air resistance were negligible, how many seconds would it take an object half as heavy to fall to the ground from the same height?
 - A. $0.5 t$
 - B. $1.0 t$
 - C. $1.5 t$
 - D. $2.0 t$

Understanding Your CAAP Results

After you complete the CAAP tests, your answer sheets will be scored, and you will receive a Student Score Report. The Student Score Report lists your identification information, self-reported background characteristics, and your scores and (if applicable) subtest scores for each test module that you took. Additionally, your Student Score Report will indicate the percentage of students that scored at or below your level on both a local and national basis. If your scores are at or above the national mean, you will also receive a CAAP Certificate of Achievement.

CAAP Multiple-choice Test Scores

Scores for the objective tests (Writing Skills, Mathematics, Reading, Critical Thinking, and Science) are reported on a scale that ranges from 40 (low) to 80 (high) for the total test score and 5 (low) to 25 (high) for the subtest scores.

To facilitate comparison of your performance with that of other examinees, two types of normative information are provided. One type is based on the CAAP scores of students at your institution (see column labeled “% of local students at or below score”). The other type is based on the CAAP scores of sophomores from institutions nationwide (see column labeled “% of students nationally at or below score”). The normative information is reported as the percentage of examinees scoring at or below each of your scores. Both types of information (local and national) may be interpreted in the same manner. For example, if you earned a score of 64 on the Writing Skills test and this score corresponds to 59% at or below (reported in the column titled “% of students nationally at or below score”), then this means that 59% of the sophomores nationwide who took the Writing Skills test received a score of 64 or lower.

CAAP Writing (Essay) Test Scores

Scores for the Writing (Essay) Test are reported on a scale that ranges from 1 (low) to 6 (high). The Composite score is reported on the same score scale (1 to 6) as the two individual essays. Because the Composite score represents your average performance on the two individual essays,

it is not directly linked to the descriptive guidelines below.

UPPER-RANGE PAPERS—These papers clearly engage the issue identified in the prompt and demonstrate superior skill in organizing, developing, and conveying in standard written English the writer’s ideas about the topic.

6 Exceptional—These papers take a position on the issue defined in the prompt and support that position with extensive elaboration. Organization is unified and coherent. While there may be a few errors in mechanics, usage, or sentence structure, outstanding command of the language is apparent.

5 Superior—These papers take a position on the issue defined in the prompt and support that position with moderate elaboration. Organization is unified and coherent. While there may be a few errors in mechanics, usage, or sentence structure, command of the language is apparent.

MID-RANGE PAPERS—Papers in the middle range demonstrate engagement with the issue identified in the prompt, but do not demonstrate the evidence of writing skill that would mark them as outstanding.

4 Competent—These papers take a position on the issue defined in the prompt and support that position with some elaboration or explanation. Organization is generally clear. A competency with language is apparent, even though there may be some errors in mechanics, usage, or sentence structure.

3 Adequate—These papers take a position on the issue defined in the prompt and support that position, but with only a little elaboration or explanation. Organization is clear enough to follow without difficulty. A control of the language is apparent, even though there may be numerous errors in mechanics, usage, or sentence structure.

LOWER-RANGE PAPERS—Papers in the lower range fail in some way to demonstrate proficiency in language use, clarity of organization, or engagement of the issue identified in the prompt.

2 Weak—While these papers take a position on the issue defined in the prompt, they may show significant problems in one or more of several areas, making the writer's ideas often difficult to follow: support may be extremely minimal; organization may lack clear movement or connectedness; or there may be a pattern of errors in mechanics, usage, or sentence structure that significantly interferes with understanding the writer's ideas.

1 Inadequate—These papers show a failed attempt to engage the issue defined in the prompt,

lack support, or the problems with organization or language are so severe as to make the writer's ideas very difficult to follow.

UNRATABLE PAPERS—0 Not Ratable. Essay papers are unratable for one of the following reasons: the writing shows a refusal to engage the issue identified in the prompt, the writing is illegible, there is no response, or the paper is not written in English. If one of the two individual essays is unratable and reported as 0, the Composite essay will be reported as 0.