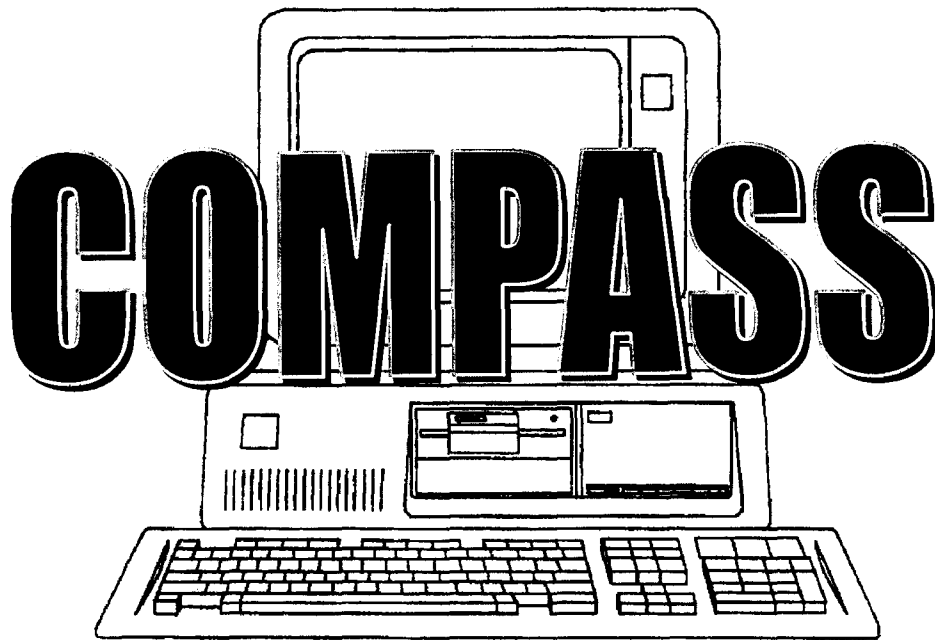


# Chattanooga State

YOUR COLLEGE ON THE RIVER

## Adult Services Center



## Student Information Bulletin For Computerized COMPASS Testing

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**ACT**  
American College Testing

## Who must take the COMPASS?

The Tennessee Board of Regents (TBR) requires all universities, community colleges, and technical institutes in its system to follow certain requirements for admitting and placing students. Applicants 21 years of age or older must take COMPASS assessment test in reading, writing, and math or submit valid (within three years of the first semester of attendance) ACT or SAT scores.

A student's placement may be adjusted based upon further holistic assessment. Re-testing for assessment may be available for an additional fee. See Director of Transitional Studies for options and approval to retest.

Transfer students who have not earned credits in college-level English composition or college-level algebra-based math will be assessed in writing and math based on a valid ACT score or other appropriate assessment test. Chattanooga State accepts assessment and placement, as well as equivalent Transitional Studies courses, from all TBR schools. Assessment and placement from other non-TBR institutions, as well as Transitional Studies course credits, may be approved by Chattanooga State's Transitional Studies director. Testing is not required for students who have any of the following from a regionally accredited college:

- Successful completion of 60 hours of college level courses
- Associates degree
- Baccalaureate degree

## COMPASS SAMPLE ITEMS

These sample items are designed to illustrate the form of the items in the COMPASS battery. They have not been pretested and have not been subjected to the content and fairness reviews required for all operational items.

### Numerical Skills/Prealgebra Placement

#### (Computing an Arithmetic Average)

1. What is the average (arithmetic mean) of 8, 7, 7, 5, 3, 2, and 2?
- A.  $3\frac{4}{7}$
- B.  $4\frac{5}{6}$
- C.  $4\frac{6}{7}$
- D. 5
- E.  $6\frac{4}{5}$

#### (Basic Operations with Decimals)

2. Ben is making wooden toys for the next arts and crafts sale. Each toy costs Ben \$1.80 to make. If he sells the toys for \$3.00 each, how many will he have to sell to make a profit of exactly \$36.00?
- A. 12
- B. 20
- C. 30
- D. 6
- E. 108

#### (Basic Operations with Fractions)

3. How many yards of material from a 24-yard length of cloth remain after 3 pieces, each  $3\frac{1}{2}$  yards long, and 5 pieces, each  $2\frac{1}{4}$  yards long, are removed?
- A.  $2\frac{1}{4}$
- B.  $4\frac{1}{4}$
- C.  $4\frac{5}{6}$
- D.  $10\frac{1}{4}$
- E.  $10\frac{5}{6}$

#### (Percentages)

4. Phillip charged \$400 worth of goods on his credit card. On his first bill, he was not charged any interest, and he made a payment of \$20. He then charged another \$18 worth of goods. On his second bill a month later, he was charged 2% interest on his entire unpaid balance. How much interest was Phillip charged on his second bill?
- A. \$8.76
- B. \$7.96
- C. \$7.60
- D. \$7.24
- E. \$6.63

## Algebra Placement Test

### (Elementary Algebra: Linear Equations in One Variable)

1. A student has earned scores of 87, 81, and 88 on the first 3 of 4 tests. If the student wants an average (arithmetic mean) of exactly 87, what score must she earn on the fourth test?
- A. 85  
B. 86  
C. 87  
D. 92  
E. 03

### (Elementary Algebra: Basic Operations with Polynomials)

2. Which of the following expressions represents the product of 3 less than twice  $x$  and 2 more than the quantity 3 times  $x$  ?
- A.  $-6x^2 + 25x + 6$   
B.  $6x^2 + 5x + 6$   
C.  $6x^2 - 5x + 6$   
D.  $6x^2 - 5x - 6$   
E.  $6x^2 - 13x - 6$

### (Elementary Algebra: Substituting Values in Algebraic Expressions)

3. If  $x = -1$  and  $y = 2$ , what is the value of the expression  $2x^3 - 3xy$  ?
- A. 8  
B. 4  
C. -1  
D. -4  
E. -8

### (Intermediate Algebra: Rational Expressions)

4. For all  $r \neq \pm 2$ ,  $\frac{r^2 - 5r + 6}{r^2 - 4} =$
- A.  $\frac{r-3}{r+2}$   
B.  $\frac{r-2}{r+2}$   
C.  $\frac{r-2}{r+3}$   
D.  $\frac{r+3}{r-2}$   
E.  $\frac{r+3}{r+2}$

### (Coordinate Geometry: Linear Equations in 2 Variables)

5. What is the equation of the line that contains the points with  $(x,y)$  coordinates  $(-3,7)$  and  $(5,-1)$ ?
- A.  $y = 3x - 2$   
B.  $y = x + 10$   
C.  $y = -\frac{1}{3}x + 8$   
D.  $y = -\frac{3}{4}x + \frac{11}{4}$   
E.  $y = -x + 4$

## Reading Placement Test

### Sample Passage 1: Humanities

When I'm in New York but feeling lonely for Wyoming I look for the Western movie ads in the subway. But the men I see in those posters with their stern, humorless looks remind me of no one I know in the East. In our earnestness to romanticize the cowboy we've ironically disesteemed his true character. If he's "strong and silent" it's because there's probably no one to talk to. If he "rides away into the sunset" it's because he's been on horseback since four in the morning moving cattle and he's trying, fifteen hours later, to get home to his family. If he's "a rugged individualist" he's also part of a team: ranch work is teamwork and even the glorified open-range cowboys of the 1880s rode up and down the Chisholm Trail in the company of twenty or thirty other riders. It's not toughness but "toughing it out" that counts. In other words, this macho, cultural artifact the cowboy has become is simply a man who possesses resilience, patience, and an instinct for survival. "Cowboys are just like a pile of rocks--everything happens to them. They get climbed on, kicked, rained and snowed on, scuffed up by the wind. Their job is 'just to take it'," one old-timer told me.

Adapted from Gretel Ehrlich, *The Solace of Open Spaces*. © 1985 by Gretel Ehrlich.

**(Referring)**

1. According to the passage, cowboys are probably “strong and silent” because:
  - A. their work leaves them no time for conversation.
  - B. they have been cautioned not to complain.
  - C. they are stern and humorless.
  - D. there is no one nearby to listen to them.
  - E. Their work makes them too tired to talk.

**(Reasoning)**

2. For which of the following statements does the passage give apparently contradictory evidence?
  - A. The cowboy’s work takes endurance.
  - B. Cowboys work alone.
  - C. Cowboys are adequately paid.
  - D. The cowboy’s image has become romanticized in American culture.
  - E. Cowboys think of themselves as humorless.

**(Prior Knowledge)**

3. A subway can best be described as:
  - A. a bus route through town.
  - B. an underground train.
  - C. a pedestrian right-of-way.
  - D. an exit ramp.
  - E. a bicycle path.

**Sample Passage 2: Practical Reading**

Regular tune-ups of your heating system will cut heating costs and will most likely increase the lifetime and safety of the system. When a service technician performs a tune-up, he or she should test the efficiency of your heating system.

The technician should measure the efficiency of your system both before and after servicing it and provide you with a copy of the results. Combustion efficiency is determined indirectly, based on some of the following tests: 1) temperature of the flue (or chimney); 2) percent carbon dioxide or percent oxygen in the atmosphere; 3) presence of carbon monoxide in the atmosphere; and 4) draft. Incomplete combustion of fuel is the main contributor to low efficiency. If the technician cannot raise the combustion efficiency up to at least 75% after tuning your heating system, you should consider installing a new system or at least modifying your present system to increase its efficiency.

Adapted from Alex Wilson and John Morrill, *Consumer Guide to Home Energy Savings*. © 1993 by the American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy.

**(Reasoning)**

1. The passage suggests that, if carbon monoxide is present in the atmosphere, it is likely that the:
  - A. heating system is losing efficiency due to incomplete combustion.
  - B. heating system only needs minor repairs and will most likely function for a number of years.
  - B. temperature of the flue will be lower than expected.
  - D. heating system cannot be repaired and must be replaced.
  - E. costs for running the heating system will decrease.

**(Referring)**

2. According to the passage, when performing a tune-up of a heating system, the service technician should:
  - A. ensure that the combustion efficiency is at least 25%.
  - B. modify the heating system before initially measuring efficiency.
  - C. measure combustion efficiency both before and after servicing the system.
  - D. provide his or her supervisor with a written report of the system’s efficiency.
  - E. ignore the age of the heating system.

**(Prior Knowledge)**

3. Combustion can best be described as a process of:
  - A. fueling.
  - B. charging.
  - C. spinning.
  - D. burning.
  - E. cooling.

# Writing Skills Placement Test

## Sample Writing Skills Placement Test Essay

Examinees are presented with an essay similar to the one below and are asked to look for errors in grammar, punctuation, usage, and style. When examinees find what they believe to be errors, they move the cursor to the appropriate part of the text and hit the enter key. An item window appears offering five options for revising that area of text. Note that the first option is always identical to the original wording in the text, and thus represents a NO CHANGE option. Examinees can choose to revise any section of the essay. After revising the essay, examinees are routed to two items focusing on rhetorical strategies. The essay below contains the same number and types of errors that an operational unit would contain; however, for demonstration purposes, only a handful of these segments have been selected for revision.

-----Start of Essay-----

**An increasing number of lakes and rivers** in the northern United States are being invaded by a mussel no larger than a fingernail. The zebra mussel probably steamed aboard a transatlantic ship sometime in the mid-1980s from the Caspian Sea into U.S. water. Despite its growth was explosive, partly because the species **was preyed upon by very few native predators in its new environment**. As a consequence, the zebra mussels did find a plentiful food supply. They eat huge amounts of phytoplankton, which tiny free-floating sea organisms that dwell in water. **Scientists are concerned when the mussels** may compete aggressively with other species that depend on the same food supply.

Others concerned by the invading species are industry, public utilities, and boat owners. Zebra mussels cluster in huge colonies, being anchored themselves to any hard plants. These colonies can clog your water intake pipes of electric and water treatment plants. Fishery specialists are currently casting about and baiting their hooks to fun down control methods that will cause the lowest amount of damage to water supplies and other aquatic species. Two of the alternatives exploring are interrupting the species reproductive cycle and finding a bacterium harmful only to zebra mussels.

-----End of Essay-----

Press 'F'  
when Finished

Use the arrow keys (→,←,) to move the pointer to the part of the essay you want to change. Then press <Enter>.

Press 'H'  
for Help

### Segment 1: Basic Grammar and Usage: Ensuring Grammatical Agreement

- A. An increasing number of lakes and rivers.
- B. An increasingly number of lakes and rivers.
- C. A number increasing of lakes and rivers.
- D. A number increasingly of lakes and rivers.
- E. An increasing of lakes and rivers.

### Segment 2: Style: Avoiding Redundancy

- A. was preyed upon by very few native predators in its new environment.
- B. found very few predators in its new environment.
- C. found very few native predators and was seldom eaten in its new environment.
- D. was preyed on by very few native predator species in its new environment.
- E. was seldom eaten or preyed on by native predator species in its new environment.

### Segment 3: Sentence Structure: Relating Clauses

- A. Scientists are concerned when the mussels
- B. Scientists are concerned that if the mussels
- C. Scientists are concerned wherein the mussels
- D. Scientists are concerned that the mussels
- E. Scientists are concerned as if the mussels

### Item 4 (end of passage): Strategy: Making Decisions about Cohesive Devices

The writer wishes to add a sentence at the end of Paragraph 1 that will serve as a transition between Paragraphs 1 and 2 and will establish the main focus of the essay. Which of the following sentences most effectively fulfills that purpose?

- A. The zebra mussel will provide a difficult challenge for public utility managers.
- B. The zebra mussel is only the latest in a series of newly introduced species to thrive in the U.S.
- C. No one knows how far south and west the zebra mussel is likely to spread, but scientists think they may be on the trail of important clues.
- D. Although small in size, the zebra mussel may become a huge problem for pleasure boat owners in North American waterways.
- E. Despite its size, however, the zebra mussel may have a dramatic effect on North American waterways.

## **ANSWERS TO COMPASS SAMPLE ITEMS**

### **Numerical Skills/Prealgebra Placement Test**

1. C    2. C    3. A    4. B

### **Algebra Placement Test**

1. D    2. D    3. B    4. E

### **Reading Placement Test: Sample Passage 1--Humanities**

1. D    2. B    3. B

### **Reading Placement Test: Sample Passage 2--Practical Reading**

1. A    2. C    3. D

### **Writing Skills Placement Test**

1. A    2. B    3. D    4. E

## **Sites to Prepare for COMPASS**

<http://www.act.org/compass/sample/index.html>

<http://www.compass-test-practice.com/>

[http://www.testprepreview.com/compass\\_practice.htm](http://www.testprepreview.com/compass_practice.htm)

## **Site to Prepare for ACT (older students take if score >525 on GED in last 16 months)**

<http://www.actstudent.org/sampletest/index.html>