****

**Freshman Year College Readiness Guidelines**

**School Year 2013-2014**

**For more updated and scholarship information visit**

[**http://ephscollege.weebly.com**](http://ephscollege.weebly.com)

[**http://elpaso.episd.org/welcome/index**](http://elpaso.episd.org/welcome/index)

**Table of Contents**

**Deadlines 4**

**College Readiness Senior Year Checklist 5**

**College Readiness Junior Year Checklist 7**

**College Readiness Sophomore Year Checklist 9**

**College Readiness Freshman Year Checklist 10**

**What Is AP Classes? 11**

**What Is PLAN? 13**

**What Is PSAT? 14**

**What Is FAFSA? 16**

**What is the SAT? 20**

**What is the ACT? 22**

**Apply for Texas 24**

**ACCUPLACER 26**

**The Letter of Recommendation 28**

**Deadlines**

University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP) November 1, 2013

University of Texas at Austin (UT Austin) Preferred October 15, 2013

December 1, 2013

El Paso Community College January 9, 2014

## Federal FAFSA Deadlines June 30, 2014

**ACT Deadlines**

**Test Date Registration Deadline (Late Fee Required)**

September 21, 2013 August 23, 2014 August 24–Septmeber 6, 2014

October 26, 2014 September 27, 2014 September 28 – October 11, 2014

December 14, 2014 November 8, 2014 November 9 – 22, 2014

February 8, 2014 January 10, 2014 January 11 – 24, 2014

April 12, 2014 March 7, 2014 March 8 – 21, 2014

June 14, 2014 May 9, 2014 May 10 – 23, 2014

**SAT Deadlines**

**Test Date Registration Deadline (Late Fee Required)**

October 5, 2013 September 6, 2013 September 20, 2013

November 2, 2013 October 3, 2013 October 18, 2013

December 7, 2013 November 8, 2013 November 22, 2013

January 25, 2014 December 27, 2013 January 10, 2014

March 8, 2014 February 7, 2014 February 21, 2014

May 3, 2014 April 4, 2014 April 18, 2014

June 7, 2014 May 9, 2014 May 23, 2014

**College Readiness Senior Year Checklist**

**General Information**

* Visit the College Answer Guy (www.collegeanswerguy.com) and CollegePrep 101 (www.collegeprep101.com) and read the chapters on "Application Process" and "Choosing a College", among others.
* Continue to challenge yourself and take solid elective courses (don’t take a blow-off schedule, fight senioritis).
* Attend college fairs in your area.
* Visit college campuses, visit many, and visit often. Attend events at the colleges you are interested in.
* Talk to people whose opinions you respect about the schools you are considering
* Go stay with friends who are in college. Find out what they like and dislike.
* Explore careers and job opportunities in those careers. Talk to your parents and your friends’ parents about what they do.
* Make sure your high school counselor knows what you’re looking for in a college so he/she can help you choose the best one for you.
* Talk to your friends about what they plan to do after high school.

**Early Fall**

* Read the College Answer Guy’s “Making the Most of your Relationship with your High School Counselor”.
* Gather applications to the schools you are considering (note deadlines for admission, scholarships, housing, etc.).
* Sit down with everyone who has a stake in your college decision and solicit their input. Listen to what everyone has to say.
* Line up people to write letters of recommendation (choose people who actually know you, not just those with a cool title). Give them plenty of time to write the letter(s).
* Borrow scholarship information (contact names, addresses, applications, etc.) from someone a year ahead of you who received several scholarships and/or had the same major as you, or someone with comparable involvements and activities.
* Get to know the admission criteria for your top schools. Know where you stand in relation to those requirements and work toward changing what you can (if you fall short). If you do fall short of the requirements, early application could be your ticket “in”.
* Take the ACT/SAT in September/October (repeat as necessary or desired).
* Apply for admission (if seeking early admission).

**Mid-Fall**

* Talk to your high school counselor about local scholarships and get the applications.
* Keep checking back periodically throughout the year for information on the latest scholarships, but don't drive them nuts!
* Apply for admission (unless you already have).
* Apply for scholarships before Christmas break if application deadline isn’t earlier. (verify the arrival of your application, transcripts, etc.).

**Spring**

* Attend a financial aid workshop with your parents.
* Apply for financial aid (as soon after Jan. 1 as possible) )
* Go back for a second or third visit to campuses you really like.
* It’s time to make a decision!

**As Soon as You Choose a School**

* Apply for housing
* Get familiar with your college and what you will need when you get there. Learn about:
* Housing options (on-campus, off-campus, Greek, etc.)
* Course selection/scheduling
* Faculty/Programs in your major
* Do you need a car?
* Where will you park?
* Do you need a bike?
* Should you have your own computer? Desktop or laptop?

**Summer before college**

* Enroll as early as you possibly can.
* Attend a summer orientation program. Also be sure to enroll in a freshman orientation class, even if it isn't required.
* Make a list of what you will need to take to college (coordinate with your roommate so you won't have two of everything). Carpet? Refrigerator? Microwave? Stereo? Computer? Etc.
* Work with your parents on a financial plan or budget. Where will your money come from? Who pays for what? How/When to ask for more? What constitutes an emergency? Consider a credit card - really, just for emergencies.
* Make a list of personal care items you use and go price shopping. You won't believe how much a toothbrush costs!
* Start planning for how you’ll communicate with your parents and friends while you’re at college – e-mail, cell phone, IM, etc. Consider cost, availability and ease of communication. Ensure clear and easy communication with your folks and see if they’ll pay for part or all of that. You should probably pay for the rest.
* Make sure to take a tour of YOUR classes before school starts so you won't get lost or look foolish on the first day of class.

**College Readiness Junior Year Checklist**

* This year's academic record will go a long way toward either helping or hurting your chances of gaining admission to your schools of choice. You can make up ground if you've been slacking and you can keep up the hard work you've already exhibited.
* Volunteer to help someone a year older than you locate scholarship information with the understanding that you’ll get all their information when they’re through.
* Take the PSAT in October (this one is to qualify for National Merit Scholarship Competition). It can be very important
* Attend an ACT/SAT preparation workshop (if you can't, you should purchase practice books, software, etc. to help you prepare)
* Take the ACT and/or SAT during the spring semester. That way you'll have at least one score going into your senior year. This also puts you on schools’ mailing lists and gives significant information to the schools you are considering.
* Research possible colleges and request or download information from them
* Visit college campuses (campus tour, visit with advisors/faculty, pick up admission packet)
* Take solid elective courses (extra math, science, foreign language, social sciences, computers, etc.)
* Talk to friends and family to gather ideas on colleges
* Run for leadership positions in the organizations you are involved in
* Ask your high school counselor for suggestions as to colleges you should consider but might not have thought of on your own (based on major, scholarships, location, etc.)
* Get to know the admission criteria for your top schools. Know where you stand in relation to those requirements and work toward changing what you can (if you fall short).
* Get involved in extracurricular activities
* Volunteer in your community
* Explore careers and job opportunities in those careers
* Study hard and do well in school – Remember, your grades will count toward college and will show up on your permanent record
* Start to attend events on college campuses (plays, concerts, sporting events, activities related to your major, etc.)
* Get to know your high school counselor (the College or Senior Counselor) and let them get to know you and your goals, career aspirations, schools you are considering, etc. Your parents may want to go along too.
* Talk to your friends about what they plan to do after college. Talk to your parents and your friends’ parents about what they do.

**College Readiness Sophomore Year Checklist**

* Take the PLAN Test
* Take the PSAT Test (Fall) as a practice for when it really counts, next year
* Use the Internet and start looking at colleges through their web sites, sign up for their Podcast, etc.
* Start attending college fairs in your area (where the colleges come in and give away information about their schools).
* Get a job (EVEN if your last name is Gates or Trump and you don't have to)
* Start a college savings account and regularly deposit into it (in addition to what your parents have for you).
* "Job shadow" someone who does what you think you'd like to do (that means to follow them around for a day)
* Get involved in extracurricular activities
* Volunteer in your community
* Explore careers and job opportunities in those careers
* Study hard and do well in school – Remember, your grades will count toward college and will show up on your permanent record
* Start to attend events on college campuses (plays, concerts, sporting events, activities related to your major, etc.)
* Get to know your high school counselor (the College or Senior Counselor) and let them get to know you and your goals, career aspirations, schools you are considering, etc. Your parents may want to go along too.
* Talk to your friends about what they plan to do after college. Talk to your parents and your friends’ parents about what they do.

**College Readiness Freshman Year Checklist**

* Enroll in a college preparatory curriculum
* When possible, write papers, do projects, etc. about college
* Enter essay, speech contests, science fairs/contests for scholarships and awards
* Get involved in extracurricular activities
* Volunteer in your community
* Explore careers and job opportunities in those careers
* Study hard and do well in school - From now on your grades will count toward college and will show up on your permanent record
* Start to attend events on college campuses (plays, concerts, sporting events, activities related to your major, etc.)
* Get to know your high school counselor (the College or Senior Counselor) and let them get to know you and your goals, career aspirations, schools you are considering, etc. Your parents may want to go along too.
* Talk to your friends about what they plan to do after college. Talk to your parents and your friends’ parents about what they do.

**AP Courses**

**How Advanced Placement courses can help benefit you in your college career**



Advanced Placement courses (AP) can save you both time and money. They can also give you a lead in the application pool in some of today’s highly selective colleges and universities.

The national AP program is administered by The College Board. AP classes are taught at more advanced levels than normal high school classes. When taught well, they are as challenging as many freshmen-level college classes.

At the end of an AP class you can choose to take the AP Exam which is administered across the country in May. The exam is difficult, but if your AP class has been taught well and you have earned an A or B in the class, you should be fairly well prepared to take the exam. The AP exam also gives you a chance to earn college credit.

The AP Exams are scored on a scale from one to five, with a score of five being the highest. Each college or university determines if they will accept AP credit and, if so, what score you will need.

Once you’ve decided to take an AP class, it’s easy to enroll. You can schedule a meeting with an AP teacher or the AP coordinator at your school about the course you are interested in taking. At this meeting be sure to discuss the workload and any preparation you might need to take before the course begins.

AP courses allow you to explore the world from a variety of perspectives and to study subjects in greater depth and detail. Not only will you improve upon your academic skills, but you will develop the study habits necessary for tackling demanding coursework.

**College Credit**

Depending on which university students attend, most AP classes will earn them a full college course of credit if they score decently on the corresponding AP test. Some AP classes count as two college courses. As long as students pass the test, they will most likely earn at least elective credit. This could translate into taking less of a work load in college, graduating a semester / quarter early, or if one takes enough AP classes, graduating a year early from college! That could save someone a ton of money [among other ways to earn college credit](http://karindthompson.hubpages.com/hub/Making_out_your_high_school_students_schedule_Think_about_Dual_Enrollment)!

**Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT) & SAT Subject Test Preparation**

Taking AP classes can improve a student's score on the [SAT](http://www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/sat/about/SATI.html), especially if students focus on AP classes for mathematics and English subjects. If a college requires the [SAT Subject Test](http://www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/sat/about/SATII.html), then taking an AP class that matches the material for that specific test (for example: taking AP Spanish to prepare for the SAT Spanish test) will enhance a student's chance of doing better on that particular test. This same logic can apply to other standardized tests as well.

**Extra College Points**

Like community service, participating in sports and clubs, or playing in band - submitting AP courses on a [college application](http://lgfine.hubpages.com/hub/Applying_to_colleges) will usually earn a Advanced Placement students further consideration by admission reviewers and help push their chances that much closer to the bar

**College Placement Exemption**

Many colleges require students to take course level placement tests from mathematics and English. Earning a passing score on an AP Calculus or AP English test can exempt students from taking placement tests.

**What is the PLAN**

The **PLAN®** program helps 10th graders build a solid foundation for future academic and career success and provides information needed to address school districts' high-priority issues. It is a comprehensive guidance resource that helps students measure their current academic development, explore career/training options, and make plans for the remaining years of high school and post-graduation years.

**PLAN** can help all students—those who are college-bound as well as those who are likely to enter the workforce directly after high school.

**PLAN** serves as the midpoint measure of academic progress in ACT's [College and Career Readiness System](http://www.act.org/readiness/index.html)

**About PSAT/NMSQT**

The Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT) is a program cosponsored by the College Board and [National Merit Scholarship Corporation (NMSC)](http://www.nationalmerit.org/). It's a standardized test that provides firsthand practice for the SAT®. It also gives you a chance to enter NMSC scholarship programs and gain access to college and career planning tools.

The PSAT/NMSQT measures:

* Critical reading skills
* Math problem-solving skills
* Writing skills

You have developed these skills over many years, both in and out of school. This test doesn't require you to recall specific facts from your classes.

The most common reasons for taking the PSAT/NMSQT are to:

* Receive feedback on your strengths and weaknesses on skills necessary for college study. You can then focus your preparation on those areas that could most benefit from additional study or practice.
* See how your performance on an admissions test might compare with that of others applying to college.
* Enter the competition for scholarships from NMSC (grade 11).
* Help prepare for the SAT. You can become familiar with the kinds of questions and the exact directions you will see on the SAT.
* Receive information from colleges when you check "yes" to Student Search Service.

**What Is the PSAT Test?**

The PSAT Test is a standardized pencil-and-paper test, just like the fifty you’ve taken throughout your elementary, middle and high school career. It gives students, usually juniors, an idea of how they’ll score on the SAT

**When Do I Take the PSAT Test?**

* Your junior year
* In October (usually toward the middle of the month)
* PSAT Registration Dates

**Why Should I Take It?**

* **National Merit:** The PSAT is also called the NMSQT, or the National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test. Scoring well on the PSAT can get you a National Merit Scholarship (a.k.a. – CASH), boost that college application, and impress your mom.
* **Scholarships:** Speaking of cash, you can still get some from other organizations, even if you don’t qualify for the National Merit Scholarship.
* **MyRoad:** This online college and career planning guide, offered for free to students who take the PSAT, gives you all sorts of tools like a personality profiler so you know which career suits you best. Use it in conjunction with My College QuickStart, another planning guide from College Board.
* **STAT Prep** Once you’ve taken the PSAT, you’ll have a better idea of what’s coming on the SAT. Think of it as a movie trailer for the big box office hit.
* **College Info:** If you check yes to the Student Search Service on the PSAT, you’ll receive information from different colleges who are interested in having you apply.

**What’s on the PSAT Test?**

The PSAT has the following three sections:

1. [**Critical Reading:**](http://testprep.about.com/od/psat/a/PSAT_CR.htm)
Tests vocabulary, main idea, fact vs. opinion, and more
Split into two 25-minute sections
Contains 48 questions total
2. [**Mathematics:**](http://testprep.about.com/od/psat/a/PSAT_Math.htm)
Tests basic arithmetic, algebra and geometry
Split into two 25-minute sections
Contains 39 questions total
3. [**Writing:**](http://testprep.about.com/od/psat/a/PSAT_Writing.htm)
Tests grammar, mechanics, and word choice
Has one 30-minute section
Contains 39 questions total

**How is it Different from the SAT?**

* **Structure:** SAT has 10 sections; PSAT has 5 sections
* **Length:** SAT is 3 hrs. 45 mins.; PSAT is 2 hrs. 10 mins.
* **Purpose:** SAT is used for college admissions and scholarships; PSAT is used for National Merit Recognition and scholarships.
* **Scoring:** SAT has a possible score of 2400; PSAT has a possible score of 240. Obviously the scores correlate, so the PSAT helps you figure out what you’ll score on the SAT.

**What Is FAFSA?**

All students are expected to contribute towards the cost of their college education. How much you and your family will be expected to contribute depends on your financial situation—and is what is referred to as your Expected Family Contribution or EFC.

The **Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)** is the form used by the U.S. Department of Education to determine your Expected Family Contribution (EFC) by conducting a “need analysis” based on financial information, such as income, assets and other household information, which you (and your parents if you are a [*dependent student*](http://www.fafsa.com/understanding-fafsa/fafsa-dependency)) will be asked to provide. The form is submitted to, and processed by, a federal processor contracted by the U.S. Department of Education (ED), and the results are electronically transmitted to the financial aid offices of the schools that you list on your application.

FAFSA is the application used by nearly all colleges and universities to determine eligibility for federal, state, and college-sponsored financial aid, including grants, educational loans, and work-study programs.

**FAFSA Eligibility**

Nearly every student is eligible for some form of financial aid, including low-interest Federal Stafford and/or parent PLUS loans, regardless of income or circumstances, provided that you:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Bullet | are a U.S. citizen, a U.S. national or an eligible non-citizen;  |
| Bullet | have a valid Social Security Number;  |
| Bullet | have a high school diploma or GED;  |
| Bullet | are registered with the U.S. Selective Service (if you are a male aged 18-25);  |
| Bullet | complete a FAFSA promising to use any federal aid for educational purposes;  |
| Bullet | do not owe refunds on any federal student grants;  |
| Bullet | are not in default on any student loans; and  |
| Bullet | have not been found guilty of the sale or possession of illegal drugs during a period in which federal aid was being received.  |

**Applying for Aid...FAFSA is step #1**

To be considered for federal financial aid, you must complete and submit a FAFSA. Additionally, most states, colleges and universities use the FAFSA to award other types of institutional financial aid, including state- and college-sponsored financial aid, such as grants, educational loans, and work-study programs.

*(Note: In addition to the FAFSA, some states/colleges require additional forms or applications for aid. Check with your school’s financial aid office for any state- and/or school-specific requirements.)*

**FAFSA Deadlines**

Many states, colleges and universities have filing deadlines that are much earlier—some occurring as early as the first few weeks in January. Additionally, applicants have to pay particular attention to deadline specifics, as some refer to the date by which individual FAFSAs must be *submitted* (Transaction Receipt Date), while others refer to the date by which individual FAFSAs must be *fully* *processed* (completed by the federal processor and made available to the school financial aid office).

**IMPORTANT: We *strongly* encourage *all* students to check with their school’s financial aid office to determine their exact FAFSA deadline requirements, and to file their FAFSA as soon as possible after January 1st.**

Steps to create a FAFSA PIN

1. Go to pin.ed.gov online and look at the toolbar on the left side. Find the link entitled "Apply for a Pin" and click it, which takes you to an overview page with general information about the application process.
2. Select Next
3. Enter your personal information. This includes Social Security number, first and last name, middle initial, and birth date, address, and email information.
4. Select a challenge question from the drop-down menu and provide an answer. Make sure you provide an answer you can remember, as you may need to use this information to log in at a later date.
5. Create your own four-digit PIN number if you wish. If not, skip this step and submit your PIN application. Select the display pin now option so that they will show you the PIN you created or were assigned. Please print out that page!
6. Click Next
7. Click on I agree
8. Click on Submit My Pin Application
9. Write Down Your Pin Reference Number

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. Retrieve your PIN after the government sends it to the email address you provided. (This is only because they verify your information before your PIN becomes official!) This could take a day or two. Keep the number in a safe place, as it will stay with you throughout your college career.
2. If you plan on applying for financial aid for the school of your choice through the FAFSA, you must also create a PIN for one of your parents using their information (name/social security/address/etc.). If you or your parent are not comfortable giving out their personal information, you may still submit your FAFSA, but through the “mail-in” method. If you choose this option, you must print out a signature page and have your parent sign it, then mail it in to the address listed on the sheet.

Information needed to complete the FAFSA

You will need records of income earned in the year prior to when you will start school. **You may also need records of your parents' income information if you are a dependent student**.

For the 2012-2013 school year you will need financial information from 2011. You may need to refer to:

* Your Social Security card. It is important that you enter your Social Security Number correctly!
* Your driver's license (if any)
* Your 2011 W-2 forms and other records of money earned
* Your (and if married, your spouse's) 2011 Federal Income Tax Return.
	+ IRS 1040, 1040A, 1040 EZ
	+ Foreign Tax Return, or
	+ Tax Return for Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa, the U.S. Virgin Islands, the Marshall Islands, the Federal States of Micronesia, or Palau
* Your Parents' 2011 Federal Income Tax Return (if you are a dependent student)
* Your 2011 untaxed income records
* Your current bank statements
* Your current business and investment mortgage information, business and farm records, stock, bond and other investment records
* Your alien registration or permanent resident card (if you are not a U.S. citizen)

To organize your information, you can print and complete a *FAFSA on the Web* Worksheet before you begin entering your information online. However, you are not required to do so. *FAFSA on the Web* will guide you through the questions that you must answer, and you can save your application and return to it later if you don't have the information you need to answer any of the questions.

**Keep these records! You may need them again. Do not mail your records to Federal Student Aid.**

**What are good SAT scores?**

SAT scores are just one of many criteria used by colleges to make admissions decisions. Nevertheless, their importance shouldn’t be underestimated. As much as admissions officers say they take an open-minded and holistic approach to their decisions, SAT scores can make or break an application. And let’s face it -- it’s easier to compare numerical data than it is to decide whether a semester in France should be ranked higher than a state soccer championship.

Also, schools usually make their SAT data public, and they know that their reputations depend upon high numbers. A college won’t be considered “highly selective” or “elite” if its students have an average SAT math score of 470.

So what is a good SAT score? The exam consists of three parts: Critical Reading, Mathematics and Writing. The scores from each section can range from 200 to 800, so the best possible total score is 2400. The average score for each section is roughly 500, so the average total score is about 1500. For the 1.65 million test-takers in the class of 2011, the mean scores were 497 critical reading, 514 math, and 489 reading.

Very few students get a perfect SAT score, even those at the country’s top colleges. The list below shows the middle range of SAT scores for different schools. The middle 50% of admitted students fell within these numbers. Keep in mind that 25% of students who were admitted scored *below* the lower numbers listed here.

Finally, you'll see that some of the school profiles include the critical reading and math scores, but not the writing scores. This is because the writing part of the exam is still new, and many schools do not yet use it in their admissions decisions. We're likely to see that change in the next couple years as colleges figure out the relationship between the writing score and academic success.

[**Auburn (Main Campus)**](http://collegeapps.about.com/od/collegeprofiles/p/Auburn_Profile.htm)

* Critical Reading: 500 - 600
* Mathematics: 520 - 620
* Writing: 490 - 590

[**Duke**](http://collegeapps.about.com/od/collegeprofiles/p/Duke_profile.htm)

* Critical Reading: 660 - 750
* Mathematics: 690 - 780
* Writing: 670 - 770

[**Harvard**](http://collegeapps.about.com/od/collegeprofiles/p/harvard_profile.htm)

* Critical Reading: 690 - 790
* Mathematics: 700 - 800
* Writing: 690 - 790

[**MIT, Massachusetts Institute of Technology**](http://collegeapps.about.com/od/collegeprofiles/p/MIT_Profile.htm)

* Critical Reading: 670 - 770
* Mathematics: 740 - 800
* Writing: 680 - 770

[**Stanford**](http://collegeapps.about.com/od/collegeprofiles/p/Stanford_profil.htm)

* Critical Reading: 670 - 770
* Mathematics: 690 - 780
* Writing: 680 - 780

[**UCLA**](http://collegeapps.about.com/od/collegeprofiles/p/UCLA_Profile.htm)

* Critical Reading: 570 - 680
* Mathematics: 610 - 740
* Writing: 580 - 710

[**UTEP**](http://collegeapps.about.com/od/collegeprofiles/p/university-of-texas-el-paso.htm)

* Critical Reading: 390 / 510
* Math: 420 / 520
* Writing: - / -

[**New Mexico State**](http://collegeapps.about.com/od/collegeprofiles/p/new-mexico-state-university.htm)

* SAT Critical Reading: 410 / 530
* SAT Math: 430 / 540
* Writing: 390 / 520

[**University of Texas at Austin**](http://collegeapps.about.com/od/collegeprofiles/p/UT_Austin.htm)

* Critical Reading: 540 / 670
* Math: 580 / 710
* Writing: 540 / 680

**What are good ACT scores?**

The importance of ACT scores should not be underestimated. Colleges certainly take many factors into consideration when they make an admissions decision, but scores on the ACT or SAT give them the easiest tool with which to compare students. Put yourself in the shoes of an admissions officer for a moment. Which should you value more: Applicant A's semester in France or Applicant B's solo performance in the all-state symphony? It's a hard call. But a 34 on the ACT is undeniably more impressive than a 28.

Also, realize that most schools make their ACT data public, and they know that their reputations depend upon high numbers. A college won’t be considered "highly selective" or "elite" if its students have an average composite ACT score of 19.

So what is a good ACT score? The exam consists of four parts: English Language, Reading, Mathematics and Science. Each category receives a score between 1 (lowest) and 36 (highest). Those four scores are then averaged to generate the composite score used by most colleges. The average composite score is roughly a 21. That is, about 50% of test-takers score below a 21.

For students who took the ACT with writing, the writing section is scored on a 12-point scale. The average score is between 7 and 8.

Very few students get a perfect ACT score, even those who get into the country's top colleges. In fact, anyone scoring a 34, 35 or 36 is among the top 1% of test-takers in the country. The list below shows the middle 50% range of ACT scores for different schools. The middle 50% of admitted students fell within these numbers. Keep in mind that 25% of students who were admitted scored *below* the lower numbers listed here.

To view the complete profile for a college, click on the school's name below.

For ACT score information for hundreds of other colleges, explore the [A to Z list of admission profiles](http://collegeapps.about.com/od/choosingacollege/a/CollegeProfiles.htm).

[**Auburn (Main Campus)**](http://collegeapps.about.com/od/collegeprofiles/p/Auburn_Profile.htm)

* ACT Composite: 24 / 30
* ACT English: 24 / 32
* ACT Math: 23 / 28
* ACT Writing: 7 / 8

[**Duke**](http://collegeapps.about.com/od/collegeprofiles/p/Duke_profile.htm)

* ACT Composite: 30 / 34
* ACT English: 30 / 35
* ACT Math: 29 / 35
* ACT Writing: 8 / 10

[**Harvard**](http://collegeapps.about.com/od/collegeprofiles/p/harvard_profile.htm)

* ACT Composite: 31 / 35
* ACT English: 32 / 35
* ACT Math: 31 / 35
* ACT Writing: 8 / 10

[**Stanford**](http://collegeapps.about.com/od/collegeprofiles/p/Stanford_profil.htm)

* ACT Composite: 30 / 34
* ACT English: 30 / 35
* ACT Math: 30 / 35

[**UCLA**](http://collegeapps.about.com/od/collegeprofiles/p/UCLA_Profile.htm)

* ACT Composite: 25 / 31
* ACT English: 25 / 32
* ACT Math: 26 / 33

[**UTEP**](http://collegeapps.about.com/od/collegeprofiles/p/university-of-texas-el-paso.htm)

* ACT Composite: 16 / 22
* ACT English: 14 / 21
* ACT Math: 16 / 23

[**New Mexico State**](http://collegeapps.about.com/od/collegeprofiles/p/new-mexico-state-university.htm)

* ACT Composite: 18 / 24
* ACT English: 17 / 24
* ACT Math: 17 / 24

[**University of Texas at Austin**](http://collegeapps.about.com/od/collegeprofiles/p/UT_Austin.htm)

* ACT Composite: 25 / 31
* ACT English: 24 / 32
* ACT Math: 26 / 32
* ACT Writing: 7 / 9

**How to complete the Apply for Texas for a 4 Year University**

1. Go to website: [www.applytexas.org](http://www.applytexas.org)
2. Click: Create your account now
3. Type in the Information for My Profile
4. SAVE your profile and write down your username and password
5. Click: My Application
6. Click: Start New Application
7. Click: 4 Year Application
8. Select: Target College from an alphabetical list (Example: UTEP, UT Austin, Texas AM)
9. Select: Entry Semester
10. Click: “Continue”
11. Select: Your Major
12. Click: “Continue
13. Continue to “My Application
14. Select: Make information available to counselor
15. Answer all applicable questions, SAVE changes and continue (Repeat)
16. Certification of Information and SAVE
17. Submit application
18. Write down your Application ID displayed in the yellow box (for future reference)

 User Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Password: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Application ID: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Confirmation #: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**How to complete the Apply for Texas for a 2 Year Junior College**

1. Go to website: [www.applytexas.org](http://www.applytexas.org)
2. Click: Create your account now
3. Type in the Information for My Profile
4. SAVE your profile and write down your username and password
5. Click: My Application
6. Click: Start New Application
7. Click: 2 Year Application
8. Select: Target College from an alphabetical list (Example: El Paso Community College)
9. Select: Entry Semester
10. Click: “Continue”
11. Select: Your Major
12. Click: “Continue
13. Continue to “My Application
14. Select: Make information available to counselor
15. Answer all applicable questions, SAVE changes and continue (Repeat)
16. Certification of Information and SAVE
17. Submit application
18. Write down your Application ID displayed in the yellow box (for future reference)

 User Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Password: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Application ID: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Confirmation #: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**ACCUPLACER**

The purpose of ACCUPLACER tests is to provide you with useful information about your academic skills in math, English, and reading. The results of the assessment, in conjunction with your academic background, goals, and interests, are used by academic advisors and counselors to determine your course selection.

You cannot "pass" or "fail" the placement tests, but it is very important that you do your very best on these tests so that you will have an accurate measure of your academic skills.

**How It Works**

### Computer Adaptive Testing

ACCUPLACER is an adaptive test. This means that the questions are chosen for you on the basis of your answers to previous questions. This technique selects just the right questions for your ability level. Because the test works this way, you must answer every question when it is first given. Each test is untimed so that you can give each question as much thought as you wish. 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.

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.

### Testing Time

The multiple choice tests are untimed. The essay test may be timed or untimed.

### What to Take with You to the Tests

On the day of the test, you should be sure to take photo identification and any other special materials your college may ask you to bring.

### Testing Regulations

Check with your school to see about specific site regulations regarding calculators, textbooks, protractors, notebooks, dictionaries or other papers of any kind. Additionally, anyone who gives or receives help during the test, or uses notes, books, or calculators of any kind may not be allowed to continue the test. Your college will disregard a test score if there is reason to question its validity.

### At the End of the Test

Once you have completed a test, a score report will be created. Your college will provide you the report.

### Making an Appointment for Testing

To schedule your ACCUPLACER appointment, please contact or stop by your Advising and Counseling Office.

### Students with Disabilities

If you require test accommodations due to a documented disability, please contact the testing center for information concerning your needs.

**The Letter of Recommendation**

**GPA and test scores are the two most important factors in college admissions, but that doesn't mean you should neglect the other parts of your application.**

Competitive colleges use the letter of recommendation to assess your passions, goals and character. They want more than just a statistic.

Solid recommendations tell a college whether you're the type of candidate they seek. Most schools ask for two recommendations, generally from teachers at your high school. Some allow you to submit additional recommendations from employers, counselors or coaches.

To snag strong recommendations, consider the following advice.

**Build Relationships Early**

Get to know your teachers well before you ask them for recommendations. You don't need to sip tea in the teacher's lounge or invite them to a matinee. Just take advantage of opportunities to speak with them, especially the ones you like (or the ones whose classes you excel in). Seek help or advice when you have a tough paper or a difficult test. When you really get to know a teacher, he or she will be able to speak to your true character and your strengths, not just your score on the last exam. Many colleges also expect a recommendation from your guidance or college counselor, so don't neglect that relationship!

Cultivating relationships like this is often called "networking". Networking isn't sleazy or opportunistic. In fact, personal relationships are the best way to find great opportunities. Networking with professors in college will get you great grad school recommendations. Networking with colleagues post-college will help you score great jobs. Start practicing now!

**Pick Wisely**

Don't feel compelled to get a letter of recommendation from a teacher just because he or she gave you an A+. You're looking for a well-written, compelling letter from a faculty member who knows you well or who teaches a subject you're interested in. Sometimes, you can get a very strong recommendation from a teacher who has seen you struggle or overcome difficulties

Don't be afraid to ask potential recommenders whether they feel comfortable writing for you. Some will say no (they're overworked or don't feel they know you well enough), and that's okay. You want recommenders who are enthusiastic about the task.

**Treat Your Recommenders Well**

Give your recommenders plenty of advance notice that you want them to write for you. Once they agree, make their job as easy as possible. Give them everything they need to complete the task, including a stamped envelope, the recommendation form (with your information already filled out), and a clear list of deadlines and addresses.

We also recommend that you provide a list of your achievements, activities, goals and any other topic you think is important. Keep it brief.

Deliver all this material to your recommender in person and ask if there is anything else they need from you. And don't forget to write a thank-you note. This person is doing you a big favor!