

COMPASS TEST INSTRUCTIONS

What is the COMPASS test? The COMPASS test is used to evaluate your skill level in writing, reading, and math. The scores are then used to help identify your best starting point at Kalamazoo Valley.

Who should take the COMPASS test? Students attending college for the first time must have ACT or COMPASS scores on file with Kalamazoo Valley. Transfer students who have not already successfully completed a college level English and/or math course with a grade of 2.0/C or better must also have their scores on file.

Why should I take the COMPASS test? The COMPASS test is used to help place students into entry level courses. Kalamazoo Valley enforces a minimum skill level requirement for most classes which is evaluated based on placement test scores or course completion. It is also used to verify minimal skill levels for specific programs, such as dental hygiene. COMPASS test scores range from 00-99. The minimum score required as a prerequisite for a class is listed with a course description in the printed schedule or online at www.kvcc.edu/schedule.

What does the COMPASS test include? The COMPASS is a computer-adaptive test. This means that your next question will be determined by the accuracy of your answer to the previous question. The COMPASS will assess for English grammar, Reading, Pre-Algebra, Algebra, or College Algebra. The computer applications require use of a computer mouse and some keyboarding skills.

Writing

For the writing portion you will edit and revise an essay that will be provided for you. Questions focus on grammar usage, style, and sentence structure. Because of the adaptive nature of the test, you will see anywhere from one to three passages. The number of passages doesn't necessarily mean "good" or "bad" scores, but will greatly affect the amount of time needed to complete this portion of the test.

Reading

For the reading test you will read a variety of fiction and/or non-fiction passages. Some of the passages also include graphs and charts. Questions focus on comprehension, drawing conclusions, vocabulary, and reading of graphic materials.

Math

For the math test you will solve number problems that involve Pre-Algebra, Algebra, or College Algebra. You can choose the level at which you would like to start. (We recommend you start where you think you'll be placed). You will notice the adaptive nature of the test in the math section. The computer will analyze the accuracy of your answers to select the level of difficulty for the next problems. If you continue to answer correctly, the level will become more difficult. If you are answering incorrectly, the test will revert to more basic forms of math. If you start at the level close to where you're placed, you will only see between five and eight questions in the math section due to the adaptive process.

If you are taking all three parts of the COMPASS test (writing, reading, and math), you can choose to start either in the math or writing. The average time to complete all three sections of the test is two hours.

How are the COMPASS scores used? The COMPASS test scores will be used to determine which English and math classes you should begin with at Kalamazoo Valley. College level classes will require minimum scores in writing and reading.

When should I take the COMPASS test? You should take the COMPASS test on a day when you are well rested, have had a chance to prepare for the test, and when you have time to complete the test without rushing. You should plan to take the COMPASS test well before classes start for the semester so you will have time to discuss your results with a counselor. Scores are added to your records within one business day of testing.

Can I retake the COMPASS? If you feel your scores do not represent your skill level, you can meet with a counselor who may recommend that you retest after refreshing your skills through independent study. Students may only re-test once per semester, with a retest referral slip obtained from an academic counselor. Each time you retake the test, you will be presented with different questions, so you will not be able to improve your score by repeatedly taking the test to become familiar with the questions.

What should I do to prepare? Before the test day you may want to familiarize yourself with the format of the test and the types of test questions. This information is available at www.act.org/compass. You can also Google "practice COMPASS" on the web for additional sample websites, questions, and review. You should try to do your review on the computer as this is how you will be testing.

Where should I take the COMPASS test? You can take the COMPASS test on a walk-in basis at our Texas Township Campus (Room 2210, call 269.488.4235 for hours) and by appointment at the Arcadia Commons Campus (Room 123, call 269.373.7815 for an appointment). The COMPASS test must be started at least two hours prior to closing.

What should I bring with me on test day?

- Your Valley ID number (the v-number assigned to you after you complete the college's application).
- A picture ID (driver's license, school ID, or passport). If you do not have a valid picture ID, please call the Testing Center to discuss your situation at [269.488.4460](tel:269.488.4460).
- You can bring your own non-programmable calculator.

Who do I ask if I have questions about the test? The Testing Center staff will be happy to assist you with any questions you may have about the test itself:

Texas Township Campus: [269.488.4460](tel:269.488.4460)
Arcadia Commons Campus: [269.373.7815](tel:269.373.7815)

Who do I ask if I have questions about the scores?

You should attend an orientation, once you have completed the COMPASS test. During this orientation, the counselors will interpret your scores and assist you in selecting classes. Transferring students should schedule a counseling appointment for help. After testing, please call [269.488.4100](tel:269.488.4100) to schedule.

