

COMPASS Placement Test

Review Packet

**For preparing to take
the COMPASS Placement Test**



Portland Community College

Table of Content

The COMPASS Test	3
Test-taking Strategies	5
Additional Resources for the Compass Placement Test	6
Reading Review	7
I. Finding the Main Idea	8
II. Vocabulary: Word Meaning and Context	9
III. Supporting Details	11
IV. Inferences	12
V. Implied Main Ideas and Central Points	14
Online Reading Resources	18
Writing Review	19
I. Punctuation	20
II. Basic Grammar and Usage	25
III. Sentence Structure	38
IV. Rhetorical Skills	38
Online Grammar & Writing Resources	47
Math Review	48
I. General Overview	50
Topics Covered in PCC Math Classes	50
Are You Prepared?	57
II. Refreshing your Math	88
Additional Math Review Resources	107

The COMPASS Test



The COMPASS placement test is offered in Reading, Writing, and Math. The test helps to determine whether you have the knowledge to succeed in the classes you are planning to take or whether taking some preparatory classes will ensure your success. Taking the three tests separately is usually helpful to ensure best results in all three tests.

The COMPASS test is a self-adjusting, multiple choice test that is taken at the computer. The answer to your current question will determine the next question; it will stop once it has determined your level. Consequently the test is untimed and has a different number of questions for each student. It also means that you will see questions that you don't know, because the test will ask you more and more difficult questions until it has found something that you don't know. Just do your best you can for each question the test presents to you.

You will receive paper, pencil, and a calculator. Since you will work on the computer you will not be allowed to bring food or drink. Once you have completed a test you will receive a printout with your scores and a recommendation of classes to take. You should then make an appointment with an advisor to discuss your course work.

The COMPASS test can be taken on all three campuses (Cascade, Rock Creek, and Sylvania) and the Southeast Center. Following are the locations and phone numbers. Contact the testing center of your choice for opening hours. During those opening hours you can take the test at any time.

- Cascade: SSB 204, 503-978-5234
- Rock Creek: Bldg. 9, Rm. 118, 503-614-7300
- Southeast Center: Mt Tabor Hall, Room 107 & 109, 503-788-6277
- Sylvania: CC 216, 503-977-4533
- Testing Centers website: <http://www.pcc.edu/resources/testing/>

After you have taken the placement test in the three subjects of Reading, Writing, and Math, you should see an advisor to discuss your course work. Here are the advising centers for each campus:

- Cascade: SSB 150, 503-978-5271, opening hours:
 - Monday, Tuesday & Thursday: 8:30am - 6:00pm
 - Wednesday: 8:30am - 7:00pm
 - Friday: 8:30am - 4:00pm
- Rock Creek: Bldg. 9, Rm. 102, 503-614-7297, opening hours:
 - Monday to Thursday: 8:30am - 6pm
 - Friday: 8:30am - 4pm
- Southeast Center: Mt Tabor Hall, Room 152, 503-788-6240, opening hours:
 - Monday to Thursday: 9am - 6pm
 - Friday: 8am - 4pm
- Sylvania: CC 216, 503-977-4531 , opening hours:
 - Monday, Tuesday and Thursday: 8am - 6pm
 - Wednesday: 8am - 7pm
 - Friday: 8am - 5pm
- Academic Advising website: <http://www.pcc.edu/resources/advising/>

Test-taking Strategies

1. **Take the Placement Test Seriously**

Giving your best during the test can save you several terms of math, reading, and writing classes, and therefore a lot of time and money. What you don't know, you don't know. That's fine. But if you know something, make sure you show it on the test so that you are placed into the appropriate class for your skill level.

2. **Prepare For the Test**

It is important that you review your knowledge before you take the test, particularly if you have not been in school for many years. Go over the following parts in this review packet to refresh your memory about the things you once knew. This packet is not designed to help you learn material that you never knew. For that you should take a class.

It is equally important, however, that you are physically prepared for the test. Be sure to get enough sleep the night before, and eat something nutritious before arriving for the test. Don't consume anything with caffeine or a lot of sugar right before the test. Caffeine might make you feel more jittery and less patient, causing you to skip important steps. Too much sugar will give you a short energy boost followed by a sense of fatigue. Drink water or tea instead.

3. **Take Time**

The Compass Test is not timed which means that you can take as much time as you need. Make use of that! Read the questions carefully, think about them, do your work on paper, and then choose an answer. Your score does not depend on how long you take for each question. Your score *only* depends on whether you choose the right answer.

4. **Read the Questions Carefully**

Don't assume anything. Follow the instructions of the question exactly. Read all the details very carefully. A simple "not" can change everything around. It helps to copy the question onto paper and underline the important information or rewrite it in your own words.

5. **Work Math Problems out on Paper**

Since the COMPASS Test is a test that you take on the computer make sure to copy math problems onto paper and work them step by step. It's worth it!

Working a problem out carefully and minding all the details gets you the points to place you in the right class.

6. **Take a Break**

You can take a break whenever you like! Just go to the testing supervisor, and s/he will save your work. You can continue when you come back. You can even come back the next day.

This is very important because in order to do well on the test you need to concentrate. So if you need to use the restroom, go. If you are thirsty or hungry, go drink and eat. If you are tired, get up and take a walk or go home and come back the next day.

Additional Resources for the COMPASS placement test

- The testing centers website: <http://www.pcc.edu/resources/testing/>
- The testing centers website for the COMPASS placement test: <http://www.pcc.edu/resources/testing/college-placement.html>
- The COMPASS website: <http://www.act.org/compass/student/index.html>
- Sample test questions on the COMPASS website: <http://www.act.org/compass/sample/index.html>

