



Overview of the CUNY Placement Exam



Almost all colleges have placement exams that are used to help determine admission and placement into college-credit courses. In January you will take the CUNY Placement Exams which are intended to measure your readiness for college success.

1) Why bother learning about and preparing for the CUNY Placement Exams?

- It can save you **time**: You can get started right away on your college courses instead of taking zero-credit developmental courses first.
- It can save you **money**: College classes are expensive, and each class can cost between \$720 and \$1,240. Why pay for zero-credit developmental courses if you don't have to?
- It can play a factor in where you ultimately go to college: If you are accepted into a senior college and you have not met the college-readiness benchmarks on the math Regents (80 or higher) or SAT (510 or higher), or the English Regents (75 or higher) or SAT (480 or higher), you will most likely need to pass the COMPASS exam before you will be allowed to enroll.

2) What are the CUNY Placement Exams?

Every student needs to take the math exam for placement purposes, and students who scored below 75 on the ELA Regents or below 480 on the critical reading component of the SAT must take a reading exam and a writing exam as well.

Math: The math exam is an un-timed exam that is given on the computer. You will only be able to use the computer calculator. The test is organized into the following sections: numerical skills/pre-algebra, algebra, college algebra, geometry, and trigonometry. You need to pass the first two sections in order to be placed into a college-level math course. Take as much time as you need with this exam.

Reading: The reading exam is an un-timed, multiple-choice, computer-based test of reading. Questions will involve identifying facts from the reading, identifying author's tone and purpose, and making inferences. Take as much time as you need with this exam.

Writing: The writing exam is a 90-minute written essay test in which you will be asked to write a response to a short passage. You should take the complete 90 minutes to read and annotate the passage, brainstorm or outline, write your essay, and revise.

3) How do I prepare for the CUNY Placement Exams?

If you are taking an At Home in College English or math class, your class will help you prepare. If you are not taking a class, or if you would like to learn more about the exams:

Reading Exam

1. An overview of the exam can be found at:

<http://www1.cuny.edu/readingtutorial/launch.html>

2. Additional practice exercises can be found at:

http://jjc.ijay.cuny.edu/erc/act/reading/exmenu_reading.php

Writing Exam

1. An overview of the exam can be found at: <http://cuny.edu/academics/testing/cuny-assessment-tests/resources/CATWInformationforStudentsandpracticeweb.pdf>

Math Exam

1. Overviews and sample items relating to the math exam can be found at:

http://www.cuny.edu/academics/testing/cuny-assessment-tests/resources/Mathematics_Test_samples1.pdf

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

<http://www.bmcc.cuny.edu/math/page.jsp?pid=1044&n=Compass%20Math%20Study%20Guide%20Links>

2. A great site for online diagnostic and practice exams can be found at:

<http://www.hostos.cuny.edu/oaa/compass/>

4) What do I need to bring for the exam?

In order to take the exam, you need to have applied to CUNY and you need to know your social security number or CUNY ID. On the day of the exam, you will need:

- 1) photo ID (either high school or driver's license), and
- 2) pen and pencil.