



NATIONAL  
CAREER READINESS  
CERTIFICATE®

# CERTIFY

## YOUR WORKFORCE



™ PART OF THE  
**WORK**READY SYSTEM

**ACT**®

[ACT.ORG/WORKFORCE](https://ACT.ORG/WORKFORCE)

# CERTIFY YOUR WORKFORCE

The National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC™), issued by ACT, is a portable, evidence-based credential that certifies essential skills needed for workplace success.

This credential is used across all sectors of the economy and verifies the following cognitive skills:

- Problem solving
- Critical thinking
- Reading and using work-related text
- Applying information from workplace documents to solve problems
- Applying mathematical reasoning to work-related problems
- Setting up and performing work-related mathematical calculations
- Locating, synthesizing, and applying information that is presented graphically
- Comparing, summarizing, and analyzing information presented in multiple related graphics



INDIVIDUALS CAN EARN THE NCRC BY TAKING THREE WORKKEYS® ASSESSMENTS:

- **APPLIED MATHEMATICS** *WorkKeys assessments measure “real world” skills that employers believe are critical to job success. Test questions are based on situations in the everyday work world.*
- **LOCATING INFORMATION**
- **READING FOR INFORMATION**

CERTIFICATE LEVEL	LEVEL SCORE REQUIREMENTS	PERCENTAGE OF QUALIFIED JOBS IN WORKKEYS DATABASE*
<b>Platinum</b>	Minimum score of <b>6</b> on each of the three core areas	Examinee has necessary foundational skills for <b>99%</b> of the jobs in the WorkKeys database
<b>Gold</b>	Minimum score of <b>5</b> on each of the three core areas	Examinee has necessary foundational skills for <b>93%</b> of the jobs in the WorkKeys database
<b>Silver</b>	Minimum score of <b>4</b> on each of the three core areas	Examinee has necessary foundational skills for <b>67%</b> of the jobs in the WorkKeys database
<b>Bronze</b>	Minimum score of <b>3</b> on each of the three core areas	Examinee has necessary foundational skills for <b>16%</b> of the jobs in the WorkKeys database

\* The Certificate is only one of many selection criteria employers use when hiring and promoting. Earning the National Career Readiness Certificate is not a substitute for meeting other job requirements. Employers who require specific levels of WorkKeys scores are encouraged to perform a job analysis. Learn more at [act.org/workkeys/analysis](http://act.org/workkeys/analysis).

## NCRC PLUS

Foundational knowledge and skills related to job tasks are the most valid predictors of work performance. Combining measures of cognitive skills with measures of work-related behaviors—or soft skills—brings even greater accuracy to predictions about an individual’s success at work or in training. In addition to the cognitive skills listed previously, the NCRC Plus ranks individuals in the following soft skills categories:

- **Work Discipline**—Productivity and dependability
- **Teamwork**—Tolerance, communication, and attitude
- **Customer Service Orientation**—Interpersonal skills and perseverance
- **Managerial Potential**—Persuasion, enthusiasm, and problem solving



NCRC PLUS RANKING	SCORE REQUIREMENTS FOR EACH SOFT SKILL CATEGORY
★	≤ 25%
★★	26–50%
★★★	51–75%
★★★★	76–100%

Individuals can earn the NCRC Plus by taking the *WorkKeys Talent* assessment.

The *Talent* assessment is not required to qualify for a National Career Readiness Certificate.

The foundational skills certified by the NCRC and the NCRC Plus are recognized by thousands of employers as essential for workplace success and career advancement.

Visit [nationalcareerreadiness.org](http://nationalcareerreadiness.org) to learn more about the power of the NCRC and NCRC Plus to help:

- **Career Seekers**—Provide employers with verifiable evidence of their job skills
- **Employers**—Screen applicants and find the right workers for open jobs, as well as make sound decisions about training and advancement for current employees
- **Educators**—Ensure that their students are ready for meaningful careers
- **Economic Developers**—Inform businesses’ decisions about where to locate by demonstrating the skill level of regional labor sheds
- **Workforce Developers**—Supply employers with qualified workers possessing the necessary skills
- **Industry Associations**—Adopt the NCRC as the foundational credential of their skills certification systems

*“We have moved from a system that was unfair to most everyone to one that is objective and impartial to job seekers, employees, and employers. This certification process is one of the most significant advances in hiring I’ve ever seen.”*

LEON OSBORNE, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER,  
OSBORNE WOOD PRODUCTS

## COGNITIVE ASSESSMENTS

The National Career Readiness Certificate is composed of three WorkKeys® assessments that measure skills critical to on-the-job success:

**APPLIED MATHEMATICS** measures the skills people use when they apply mathematical reasoning, critical thinking, and problem-solving techniques to work-related problems. The test questions require the individual to set up and solve the types of problems and perform the types of calculations that actually occur in the workplace.

**LOCATING INFORMATION** measures the skills people use when they work with workplace graphics. Individuals are asked to find information in a graphic or insert information into a graphic. They also must compare, summarize, and analyze information found in related graphics.

**READING FOR INFORMATION** measures the skills people use when they read and use text in order to do a job. The texts include memos, letters, directions, signs, notices, bulletins, policies, and regulations. *Reading for Information* materials do not include information that is presented graphically, such as in charts, forms, or blueprints.

## WORKKEYS SKILL SCORES

Each of the WorkKeys foundational assessments generates Level Scores and Scale Scores. Both types of scores indicate an individual's ability to perform more complex skills as the scores increase.

**LEVEL SCORES** can be used by employers for selection, promotion, or other individual high-stakes purposes. The scores are designed to be used with the WorkKeys job profiling process for employee selection and promotion decisions. Level Scores consist of a range of four or five broad score bands across the performance range.

**SCALE SCORES** can be used to show growth over time, provide group comparisons in outcomes measurements, and show evidence of ability to benefit. Educators and trainers frequently assess the achievement of their students by administering a pre-test and a post-test in selected subject areas. The Scale Scores can be used to determine improvement, because they are finer-grained and sensitive to subtle score changes. Scale Scores are not used for hiring or promotion decisions. They are specifically provided for use by education and training organizations to measure growth over time.

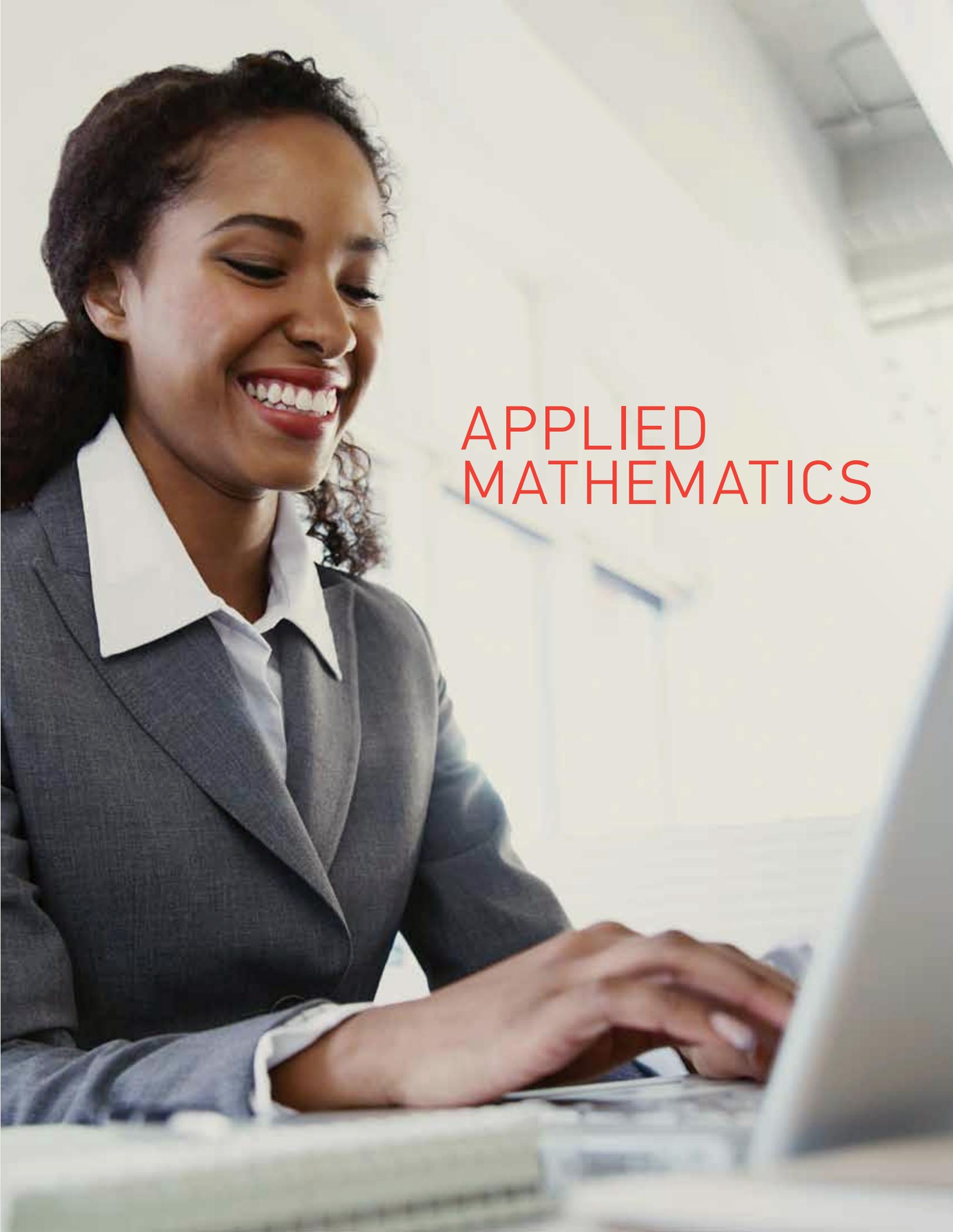
## USING THE CORE ASSESSMENTS BOOKLET

The tables in this booklet are designed to help individuals, employers, educators, and trainers understand the content of the three WorkKeys tests used in the National Career Readiness Certificate.

### THE TABLES INCLUDE:

- The skill levels for each test
- Competencies that individuals are expected to demonstrate at each level
- Characteristics of the questions asked at each level
- A sample test item for each skill level
- Item distribution guidelines that relate to each skill level
- Information about how skills are assessed in relation to specific applications

Answers to the sample questions can be found online at [nationalcareerreadiness.org](http://nationalcareerreadiness.org)

A young woman with dark, curly hair, wearing a grey blazer over a white collared shirt, is smiling broadly while sitting at a desk and typing on a laptop. The background is a bright, modern office with large windows and a white ceiling. The text 'APPLIED MATHEMATICS' is overlaid in red on the right side of the image.

# APPLIED MATHEMATICS

## Level Score **3**    Scale Score **71-74**

### ITEMS AT THIS LEVEL:

- Translate easily from a word problem to a math equation
- Present all needed information in logical order
- Give no extra information

### INDIVIDUALS WITH LEVEL 3 SKILLS CAN:

- Solve problems that require a single type of mathematics operation (addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division) using whole numbers
- Add or subtract negative numbers
- Change numbers from one form to another using whole numbers, fractions, decimals, or percentages
- Convert simple money and time units (e.g., hours to minutes)

### SAMPLE ITEM:\*

In your job as a cashier, a customer gives you a \$20 bill to pay for a can of coffee that costs \$3.84. How much change should you give back?

- A. \$15.26
- B. \$16.16
- C. \$16.26
- D. \$16.84
- E. \$17.16

## Level Score **4**    Scale Score **75-77**

### ITEMS AT THIS LEVEL:

- May present information out of order
- May include extra, unnecessary information
- May include a simple chart, diagram, or graph

### INDIVIDUALS WITH LEVEL 4 SKILLS CAN:

- Solve problems that require one or two operations
- Multiply negative numbers
- Calculate averages, simple ratios, simple proportions, or rates using whole numbers and decimals
- Add commonly known fractions, decimals, or percentages (e.g.,  $\frac{1}{2}$ , .75, 25%)
- Add up to three fractions that share a common denominator
- Multiply a mixed number by a whole number or decimal
- Put the information in the right order before performing calculations

### SAMPLE ITEM:\*

Over the last 5 days, you made the following number of sales calls: 8, 7, 9, 5, and 7. On the average, how many calls did you make each day?

- A. 5.8
- B. 7.0
- C. 7.2
- D. 9.0
- E. 36.0

\* The format of graphics of the sample item may differ from the practice items.

» Answers to the sample questions can be found online at [nationalcareerreadiness.org](http://nationalcareerreadiness.org)

# Level Score **5**    Scale Score **78-81**

## ITEMS AT THIS LEVEL:

- Require several steps of logic and calculation (e.g., problem may involve completing an order form by totaling the order and then computing tax)

## INDIVIDUALS WITH LEVEL 5 SKILLS CAN:

- Decide what information, calculations, or unit conversions to use to solve the problem
- Look up a formula and perform single-step conversions within or between systems of measurement
- Calculate using mixed units (e.g., 3.5 hours and 4 hours 30 minutes)
- Divide negative numbers
- Find the best deal using one- and two-step calculations and then comparing results
- Calculate perimeters and areas of basic shapes (rectangles and circles)
- Calculate percent discounts or markups

## SAMPLE ITEM:\*

Quik Call charges 18¢ per minute for long-distance calls. Econo Phone totals your phone usage each month and rounds the number of minutes up to the nearest 15 minutes. It then charges \$7.90 per hour of phone usage, dividing this into 15-minute segments if you use less than a full hour. If your office makes 5 hours 3 minutes worth of calls this month using the company with the lower price, how much will these calls cost?

- A. \$39.50
- B. \$41.48
- C. \$41.87
- D. \$54.00
- E. \$54.54

\*The format of graphics of the sample item may differ from the practice items.



# Level Score 6 Scale Score 82-86

## ITEMS AT THIS LEVEL:

- May require considerable translation from verbal form to mathematical expression
- Require considerable setup and involve multiple-step calculations

## INDIVIDUALS WITH LEVEL 6 SKILLS CAN:

- Use fractions, negative numbers, ratios, percentages, or mixed numbers
- Rearrange a formula before solving a problem
- Use two formulas to change from one unit to another within the same system of measurement
- Use two formulas to change from one unit in one system of measurement to a unit in another system of measurement
- Find mistakes in questions that belong at Levels 3, 4, and 5
- Find the best deal and use the result for another calculation
- Find areas of basic shapes when it may be necessary to rearrange the formula, convert units of measurement in the calculations, or use the result in further calculations
- Find the volume of rectangular solids
- Calculate multiple rates

## SAMPLE ITEM:\*

You are preparing to tile the floor of a rectangular room that is  $15\frac{1}{2}$  feet by  $18\frac{1}{2}$  feet in size. The tiles you plan to use are square, measuring 12 inches on each side, and are sold in boxes that contain enough tile to cover 25 square feet. How many boxes of tiles must you order to complete the job?

- A. 11
- B. 12
- C. 34
- D. 59
- E. 287

*\* The format of graphics of the sample item may differ from the practice items.*

» Answers to the sample questions can be found online at [nationalcareerreadiness.org](http://nationalcareerreadiness.org)

# Level Score **7** Scale Score **87-90**

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## ITEMS AT THIS LEVEL:

- May contain unusual content or format
- Include information that may be incomplete or implicit
- Involve multiple steps of logic and calculation

## INDIVIDUALS WITH LEVEL 7 SKILLS CAN:

- Solve problems that include nonlinear functions and/or that involve more than one unknown
- Find mistakes in Level 6 questions
- Convert between systems of measurement that involve fractions, mixed numbers, decimals, and/or percentages
- Calculate multiple areas and volumes of spheres, cylinders, or cones
- Set up and manipulate complex ratios or proportions
- Find the best deal when there are several choices
- Apply basic statistical concepts

## SAMPLE ITEM:\*

The farm where you just started working has a vertical cylindrical oil tank that is 2.5 feet across on the inside. The depth of the oil in the tank is 2 feet. If 1 cubic foot of space holds 7.48 gallons, about how many gallons of oil are left in the tank?

- A. 37
- B. 59
- C. 73
- D. 230
- E. 294

\* The format of graphics of the sample item may differ from the practice items.

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*“During the employee hiring and placement process, the National Career Readiness Certificate is an effective measure of foundational skills that are often ignored until the employee is on the job. It will assist both the employer and the employee in assessing an individual’s growth potential and matching the skill sets required by the job.”*

MICHAEL WAPP, DIRECTOR OF BUSINESS/IT SOLUTIONS, AEGON

## APPLIED MATHEMATICS ITEM DISTRIBUTION GUIDELINES

Applied Mathematics test items are designed to assess the following skills. The number of items per level also are provided.

SKILL	NUMBER OF ITEMS PER LEVEL					TOTAL
	LEVEL 3 ±* ONE ITEM	LEVEL 4 ± ONE ITEM	LEVEL 5 ± ONE ITEM	LEVEL 6 ± ONE ITEM	LEVEL 7 ± ONE ITEM	
Add, subtract, multiply, and divide positive and negative numbers	5	0	0	0	0	5
Understand and work with fractions	0	1	1	0	0	2
Calculate and convert to percentages	0	1	1	1	1	4
Understand and work with ratios and proportions	0	1	1	1	1	4
Convert from one unit of measurement to another	0	0	0	1	1	2
Calculate time intervals and changes as well as production rates	1	1	1	1	1	5
Use formulas, including those involving perimeter, area, and volume	0	1	1	1	1	4
Solve assorted word problems	0	1	1	1	1	4
<b>TOTAL NUMBER OF ITEMS</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>30**</b>

\* The symbol  $\pm$  means "plus or minus."

\*\* A small number of additional items are included for developmental purposes.

Answers to these developmental questions do not count toward the examinee's score.

## APPLIED MATHEMATICS ITEM APPLICATION

Applied Mathematics skills are assessed in problems that involve:

APPLICATION	NUMBER OF ITEMS PER FORM
Quantities of items	4 ±* 1
Money	7 ± 1
Time	3 ± 1
Various types of measurement	6 ± 1
Proportions	4 ± 1
Percentages	3 ± 1
Averaging numbers	2 ± 1
The order or placement of numbers in a sequence	1 ± 1

\* The symbol  $\pm$  means "plus or minus."

A man wearing a white hard hat and a grey work jacket over a light blue shirt is looking upwards and to the right. He is holding a clipboard with a silver clip and a pen. The background is a blurred warehouse or industrial setting with white shelving units and orange pipes.

# LOCATING INFORMATION

# Level Score **3**    Scale Score **72-74**

## ITEMS AT THIS LEVEL:

- Use elementary workplace graphics such as simple order forms, bar graphs, tables, flowcharts, maps, instrument gauges, and floor plans
- Use one graphic at a time

## INDIVIDUALS WITH LEVEL 3 SKILLS CAN:

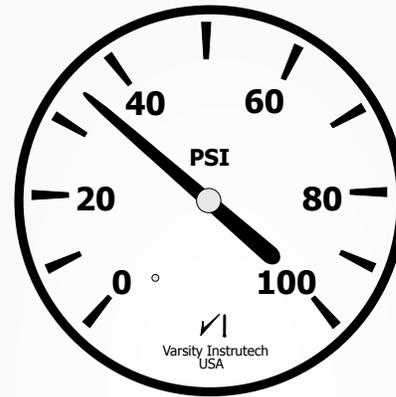
- Find one or two pieces of information in these types of elementary graphics
- Fill in one or two pieces of information that are missing from a graphic

10

*“At a time when millions of Americans face unemployment, manufacturing jobs with excellent salaries—and across all skill levels and sectors—are unfilled because of the lack of qualified applicants. These tough economic times call for clear pathways to skills in demand to help new and transitioning workers prepare for good jobs. The National Career Readiness Certificate is an ideal tool for ensuring that individuals have the essential skills they need for the workplace today.”*

JOHN ENGLER, PAST PRESIDENT, NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF MANUFACTURERS (NAM)

## SAMPLE ITEM:\*



You regularly check the pressure gauge on a large tank. According to the gauge shown, what is the current pressure (in PSI)?

- A. 30
- B. 35
- C. 40
- D. 45
- E. 100

\*The format of graphics of the sample item may differ from the practice items.

» Answers to the sample questions can be found online at [nationalcareerreadiness.org](http://nationalcareerreadiness.org)

# Level Score 4    Scale Score 75-79

## ITEMS AT THIS LEVEL:

- Use straightforward workplace graphics, such as basic order forms, diagrams, line graphs, tables, flowcharts, instrument gauges, or maps
- Use one or two graphics at a time

## INDIVIDUALS WITH LEVEL 4 SKILLS CAN:

- Find several pieces of information in one or two graphics
- Understand how graphics are related to each other
- Summarize information from one or two straightforward graphics
- Identify trends shown in one or two straightforward graphics
- Compare information and trends shown in one or two straightforward graphics

### SAMPLE ITEM:\*

75053

**FRESH 'N' CLEAN**      555-6301      4:16 PM 8/26  
 1200 14TH ST  
 MAPLETON, OH 45768

PHONE 555-2261      DATE 8-29      CLERK'S INITIALS SW

PRINT NAME EDNA THOMPSON

ADDRESS

Fold	On Hangers	Starch	NO	LT	MED	HVY
	X	X	X	X		
Due	MON	TUE	WED	THUR	FRI	
	X					

X	TROUSER	TROUSER
	SHIRT	SUIT
	DRESS	SHIRT
	BLOUSE	OVERCOAT
	SKIRT	SWEATER
	JACKET	DRESS
		BLOUSE
		SKIRT
		JACKET
		TIE

You must sort clothes in a dry cleaning establishment according to the customer's instructions. According to the form shown, how should this customer's shirt be treated?

- A. Dryclean it, add light starch, and fold it.
- B. Dryclean it, add light starch, and place it on a hanger.
- C. Launder it with no starch and place it on a hanger.
- D. Launder it with light starch and place it on a hanger.
- E. Launder it with medium starch and fold it.

\* The format of graphics of the sample item may differ from the practice items.

# Level Score 5    Scale Score 80-86

## ITEMS AT THIS LEVEL:

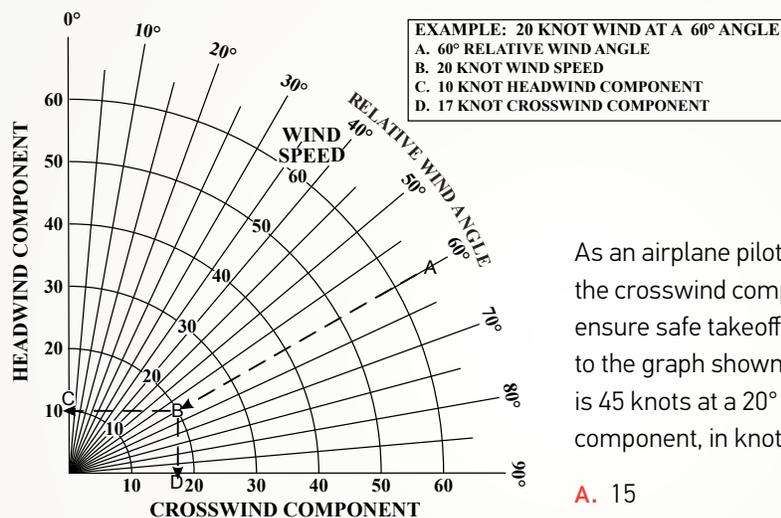
- Use complicated workplace graphics, such as detailed forms, tables, graphs, diagrams, maps, or instrument gauges
- Have graphics with less common formats
- Use one or more graphics at a time

## INDIVIDUALS WITH LEVEL 5 SKILLS CAN:

- Sort through distracting information
- Summarize information from one or more detailed graphics
- Identify trends shown in one or more detailed or complicated graphics
- Compare information and trends from one or more complicated graphics

12

### SAMPLE ITEM:\*



As an airplane pilot, you need to determine the crosswind component of the wind speed to ensure safe takeoffs and landings. According to the graph shown, if the reported wind speed is 45 knots at a 20° angle, what is the crosswind component, in knots?

- A. 15
- B. 25
- C. 43
- D. 45
- E. 65

\* The format of graphics of the sample item may differ from the practice items.

# Level Score 6 Scale Score 87-90

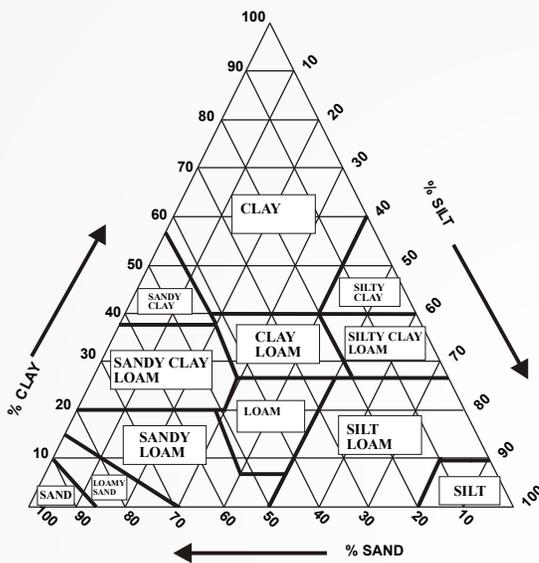
## ITEMS AT THIS LEVEL:

- Use very complicated and detailed graphs, charts, tables, forms, maps, and diagrams
- Contain graphics with large amounts of information and challenging formats
- Use one or more graphics at a time
- Make subtle connections between graphics

## INDIVIDUALS WITH LEVEL 6 SKILLS CAN:

- Draw conclusions based on one complicated graphic or several related graphics
- Apply information from one or more complicated graphics to specific situations
- Use the information to make decisions

### SAMPLE ITEM:\*



You are a road contractor and you have analyzed a soil that you want to use for road fill. Your analysis shows that the soil contains 15% sand, 65% silt, and 20% clay. You need to know what the shrink-swell potential is for the soil because it will affect the durability of the road. Based on the diagram and table shown, what is the shrink-swell potential at a 30-inch depth for this soil?

- A. Low
- B. Low to moderate
- C. Moderate
- D. Moderate to high
- E. High

Soil name	Texture class	Depth (inches)	Shrink-swell potential
Sarpy	sandy loam	0-7 7-60	low low to moderate
Kennebec	silt loam	0-38 38-60	moderate low to moderate
Colo	silty clay loam	0-31 31-60	high high
Blend	silty clay	0-17 17-29 29-60	high moderate to high high
Nevin	clay loam	0-28 28-48 48-60	moderate to high moderate moderate
Kenmoor	loamy sand	0-24 24-60	low high

\* The format of graphics of the sample item may differ from the practice items.

## LOCATING INFORMATION ITEM DISTRIBUTION GUIDELINES

Locating Information test items are designed to assess the following skills. The percent of items for each skill also are provided.

SKILL	NUMBER OF ITEMS PER LEVEL				TOTAL
	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 4 ±* ONE ITEM	LEVEL 5 ± ONE ITEM	LEVEL 6 ± ONE ITEM	
Finding one, two, or several pieces of information in one or more graphics	8	3	2	0	13
Summarizing and/or comparing information in one or more graphics	0	3	3	2	8
Drawing conclusions from the information presented	0	1	1	2	4
Applying information from the graphic(s) to specific situations	0	1	1	2	4
Making decisions and/or predictions based on the information presented	0	0	1	2	3
<b>TOTAL NUMBER OF ITEMS</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>32**</b>

\* The symbol ± means "plus or minus."

\*\* A small number of additional items are included for developmental purposes.

Answers to these developmental questions do not count toward the examinee's score.

## LOCATING INFORMATION ITEM APPLICATION

Items in each test form use workplace graphics such as the following. At the more complex levels, more graphics are used and they are more complicated.

APPLICATION	NUMBER OF ITEMS PER FORM
Tables	10 ±* 2
Graphs (line graphs, bar graphs, pie charts)	7 ± 2
Forms	5 ± 2
Charts (flowcharts, Gantt charts, schedules, timelines)	2 ± 1
Diagrams	6 ± 2
Maps and blueprints	2 ± 1

\* The symbol ± means "plus or minus."



# READING FOR INFORMATION

# Level Score **3** Scale Score **73-74**

16

## MATERIALS AT THIS LEVEL:

- Include basic reading materials (company policies, procedures, and announcements)
- Are short and simple, with no extra information
- Tell readers what they should do
- Are stated clearly and directly

## ITEMS AT THIS LEVEL:

- Focus on the main points of the passages
- Use wording that is similar or identical to the wording used in the reading materials

## INDIVIDUALS WITH LEVEL 3 SKILLS CAN:

- Identify main ideas and clearly stated details
- Choose the correct meaning of a word that is clearly defined in the reading
- Choose the correct meaning of common, everyday workplace words
- Choose when to perform each step in a short series of steps
- Apply instructions to a situation that is the same as the one in the reading materials

## SAMPLE ITEM:\*

### ATTENTION CASHIERS:

All store employees will now get 20% off the price of clothes they buy here. Please follow the new directions listed below.

#### Selling clothes to employees

- Ask to see the employee's store identification card.
- Enter the employee's department code number into the cash register.
- Use the cash register to take 20% off the price. Then push the sales tax button.
- Write your initials on the sales receipt.
- Sell clothes to employees during store hours only.

#### Accepting clothing returns from employees

- Employees receive a store credit certificate for clothes they return to the store.
- Store credit certificates are next to the gift certificates.
- Employees may not get a cash refund for clothes they return to the store.

You are a cashier. According to the notice shown, what should you write on a store employee's receipt?

- A.** The employee's identification number
- B.** The employee's department number
- C.** The amount of sales tax
- D.** The 20% discount price
- E.** Your initials

\* The format of graphics of the sample item may differ from the practice items.

*"Employers work to make things predictable, uniform, and certain. Predictability, uniformity, and certainty are universal goals of executives. The National Career Readiness Certificate does this for the hiring process."*

MAC MACILROY, PAST PRESIDENT,  
MICHIGAN MANUFACTURERS ASSOCIATION

» Answers to the sample questions can be found online at [nationalcareerreadiness.org](http://nationalcareerreadiness.org)

# Level Score 4 Scale Score 75-78

## MATERIALS AT THIS LEVEL:

- Include company policies, procedures, and notices
- Are straightforward, but have longer sentences and contain a number of details
- Use common words, but do have some harder words, too
- Describe procedures that include several steps

## ITEMS AT THIS LEVEL:

- Require individuals to think about changing conditions that affect what they should do when following procedures
- Paraphrase text from the document

## INDIVIDUALS WITH LEVEL 4 SKILLS CAN:

- Identify important details that may not be clearly stated
- Use the reading material to figure out the meaning of words that are not defined
- Apply instructions with several steps to a situation that is the same as the situation in the reading materials
- Choose what to do when changing conditions call for a different action (follow directions that include “if-then” statements)

## SAMPLE ITEM:\*

### INSTRUCTIONS TO SORTING DEPARTMENT: SPECIAL PROJECT TO FIX ORDER #888

Five long, blue plastic bins have been placed over by the overhead door. Piled on the other side of this room, near the time clock, are several thousand steel rods of varying lengths. All of those rods must be sorted by length and placed in the bins.

Bin “1” is for rods that are four to five meters long.

Bin “2” is for rods that have a length of over five meters, up to six meters.

Bin “3” is for rods that have a length of over six meters, up to eight meters.

Bin “4” is for rods that have a length of over eight meters, up to ten meters.

Bin “5” is for warped or unsmoothed rods. These will not be accepted.

If these rods are not all sorted correctly, the customer will reject the order. We cannot afford to let that happen again. Work as quickly as you can because Friday is the deadline for delivery of the order.

According to the instructions shown, what is a condition for project success other than delivery on time?

- A. All rods must be sorted by both length and diameter.
- B. Rods eleven meters long must be leaned against the overhead door.
- C. The customer does not want rods that are warped.
- D. The five-meter-long rods must go in Bin 2.
- E. The ten-meter-long rods must arrive at the customer in Bin 4.

\* The format of graphics of the sample item may differ from the practice items.

# Level Score 5 Scale Score 79-81

### MATERIALS AT THIS LEVEL:

- Include policies, procedures, and announcements
- Include all of the information needed to finish a task
- Are stated clearly and directly, but the materials have many details
- Include jargon, technical terms, acronyms, or words that have several meanings

### ITEMS AT THIS LEVEL:

- Require application of information given in the passage to a situation that is not specifically described in the passage
- Require several considerations to be taken into account in order to choose the correct actions

### INDIVIDUALS WITH LEVEL 5 SKILLS CAN:

- Figure out the correct meaning of a word based on how the word is used
- Identify the correct meaning of an acronym that is defined in the document
- Identify the paraphrased definition of a technical term or jargon that is defined in the document
- Apply technical terms and jargon and relate them to stated situations
- Apply straightforward instructions to a new situation that is similar to the one described in the material
- Apply complex instructions that include conditionals to situations described in the materials

### SAMPLE ITEM:\*

Goldberg's Auto Parts is served by more than fifty different accounts, each with its own sales representative, company name, corporate address, and shipping address. As a shipping and receiving clerk at Goldberg's, you are required to return defective merchandise to the manufacturer.

Standard procedure for returning an item begins with your written request to the company for authorization. Always send the request to the corporate address, not to the shipping address. Unless the company file folder contains a form for this procedure, write a business letter to the manufacturer supplying the item's stock number, cost, and invoice number; the date it was received; and the reason for its return. The manufacturer's reply will include an authorization number from the sales representative, a sticker for you to place on the outside of the box to identify it as an authorized return, and a closing date for the company's acceptance of the returned item. If you do not attach the provided sticker, your returned box will be refused by the manufacturer as unauthorized, and you will need to obtain a new letter, authorization, sticker, and closing date. Always send a returned box to the shipping address, not to the company's corporate address.

According to the policy shown, what should you do if you lose the authorization sticker?

- A. Send a request for a return authorization along with the rejected part directly to the manufacturer's shipping address.
- B. Send a request for return authorization along with the rejected part directly to the manufacturer's corporate address.
- C. Repeat the standard procedure to obtain a new letter, authorization, sticker, and closing date.
- D. Use a sticker from another company's folder.
- E. Send the rejected part to your sales representative.

\* The format of graphics of the sample item may differ from the practice items.

# Level Score **6** Scale Score **82-84**

## MATERIALS AT THIS LEVEL:

- Include elaborate procedures, complicated information, and legal regulations found in all kinds of workplace documents
- Have complicated sentences with difficult words, jargon, and technical terms
- Do not clearly state most of the information needed to answer the item

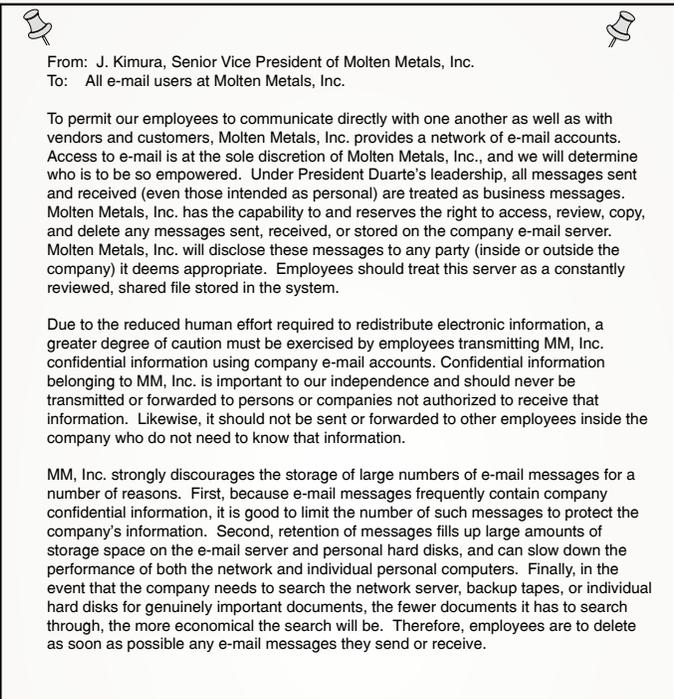
## INDIVIDUALS WITH LEVEL 6 SKILLS CAN:

- Identify implied details
- Use technical terms and jargon in new situations
- Figure out the less common meaning of a word based on the context
- Apply complicated instructions to new situations
- Figure out the principles behind policies, rules, and procedures
- Apply general principles from the materials to similar and new situations
- Explain the rationale behind a procedure, policy, or communication

*“This program allows us not only to identify whether potential employees are available and affordable, but also to determine if they are capable of performing the work. It is an innovative response to the workforce issue.”*

RONALD R. REED, PRESIDENT & CEO,  
MERCY HOSPITAL IOWA CITY

## SAMPLE ITEM:\*



From: J. Kimura, Senior Vice President of Molten Metals, Inc.  
To: All e-mail users at Molten Metals, Inc.

To permit our employees to communicate directly with one another as well as with vendors and customers, Molten Metals, Inc. provides a network of e-mail accounts. Access to e-mail is at the sole discretion of Molten Metals, Inc., and we will determine who is to be so empowered. Under President Duarte's leadership, all messages sent and received (even those intended as personal) are treated as business messages. Molten Metals, Inc. has the capability to and reserves the right to access, review, copy, and delete any messages sent, received, or stored on the company e-mail server. Molten Metals, Inc. will disclose these messages to any party (inside or outside the company) it deems appropriate. Employees should treat this server as a constantly reviewed, shared file stored in the system.

Due to the reduced human effort required to redistribute electronic information, a greater degree of caution must be exercised by employees transmitting MM, Inc. confidential information using company e-mail accounts. Confidential information belonging to MM, Inc. is important to our independence and should never be transmitted or forwarded to persons or companies not authorized to receive that information. Likewise, it should not be sent or forwarded to other employees inside the company who do not need to know that information.

MM, Inc. strongly discourages the storage of large numbers of e-mail messages for a number of reasons. First, because e-mail messages frequently contain company confidential information, it is good to limit the number of such messages to protect the company's information. Second, retention of messages fills up large amounts of storage space on the e-mail server and personal hard disks, and can slow down the performance of both the network and individual personal computers. Finally, in the event that the company needs to search the network server, backup tapes, or individual hard disks for genuinely important documents, the fewer documents it has to search through, the more economical the search will be. Therefore, employees are to delete as soon as possible any e-mail messages they send or receive.

Based on the memo shown, personal messages transmitted or received using Molten Metals, Inc., e-mail accounts will be:

- A. automatically deleted upon detection.
- B. avoided by server staff to save company time.
- C. forwarded to private, personal accounts.
- D. grounds for personnel action.
- E. treated no differently from other messages.

\*The format of graphics of the sample item may differ from the practice items.

**MATERIALS AT THIS LEVEL:**

- Include very complex reading materials
- Include many details
- Include complicated concepts
- Use difficult vocabulary
- Contain unusual jargon and technical terms that are not defined
- Include writing that lacks clarity and direction

**ITEMS AT THIS LEVEL:**

- Require readers to draw conclusions from some parts of the reading and apply them to other parts

**INDIVIDUALS WITH LEVEL 7**

**SKILLS CAN:**

- Figure out the definitions of difficult, uncommon words based on how they are used
- Figure out the meaning of jargon or technical terms based on how they are used
- Figure out the general principles behind policies and apply them to situations that are quite different from any described in the materials

**SAMPLE ITEM:\***

**Confidentiality**

Client and Consultant agree to maintain the confidentiality of each other's trade secrets and any confidential business information disclosed during the term of this agreement, except as authorized by the party that disclosed the information. When the consulting services have been completed, the parties will return all confidential materials and equipment provided during the term of this agreement, unless keeping the materials is authorized by the party that provided them. Each party is responsible for identifying all trade secrets, confidential business information, and confidential materials.

Nothing in this or in any other agreement will prevent any party from using or disclosing confidential information to the extent necessary to carry out the responsibilities in this agreement; or will restrict any party's use or disclosure of information that is or becomes publicly known through lawful means, that was rightfully in that party's possession or part of that party's general knowledge prior to the term of this agreement, or that is disclosed to that party without confidential or proprietary restrictions by a person who rightfully possesses the information; or will prevent any party from responding to a lawful subpoena or court order.

Client agrees that Consultant will neither use nor disclose the trade secrets, confidential information, or confidential materials of third parties, and Client will neither ask nor require Consultant to do so.

**Miscellaneous Provisions**

All agreements and understandings between the parties concerning the subject matter of this agreement are embodied in this agreement and any proposal to which the parties agreed. It is understood and agreed by both parties that there are no oral or other agreements or understanding between the parties affecting this agreement.

This agreement shall supersede all prior and contemporaneous agreements and understandings between the parties, with respect to any subject covered by this agreement, except as otherwise provided in this agreement.

This agreement may not be amended except in writing by an instrument, signed by each of the parties. No failure or delay in exercising any right under this agreement shall operate as a waiver thereof.

Neither party shall assign or otherwise transfer any rights or obligations under this agreement without the written consent of the other party. Subject to the foregoing agreement, this agreement shall be binding upon and shall inure to the benefit of the parties' respective heirs, successors, attorneys, and permitted assignees.

If any provision of this agreement, or its application to any person, place, or circumstance, is held by an arbitrator or a court of competent jurisdiction to be invalid, unenforceable, or void, such provision shall be enforced to the greatest extent permitted by law, and the remainder of this agreement and such provision as applied to other persons, places, and circumstances shall remain in full force and effect.

This agreement shall not become binding on either party until both parties execute it.

You have hired a consultant to work with your firm. Based on the agreement shown, what will happen if the consultant's business is taken over by a major competitor?

- A.** The agreement will confidentially go into arbitration.
- B.** The agreement will not be enforceable and is void.
- C.** The consultant is bound by the agreement.
- D.** The obligations will pass to the new owner.
- E.** You must renegotiate the agreement with the new owner.

\* The format of graphics of the sample item may differ from the practice items.

## READING FOR INFORMATION ITEM DISTRIBUTION GUIDELINES

Reading for Information test items are designed to assess the following skills. The number of items per level also are provided.

SKILL	NUMBER OF ITEMS PER LEVEL					TOTAL
	LEVEL 3 ±* ONE ITEM	LEVEL 4 ± ONE ITEM	LEVEL 5 ± ONE ITEM	LEVEL 6 ± ONE ITEM	LEVEL 7 ± ONE ITEM	
Identifying the main idea or details, both obvious and implied	3	2	2	1	1	9
Understanding word and acronym meanings using context, ranging from explicit to implied definitions	1	1	1	1	1	5
Applying instructions by sequencing steps, knowing when to use conditions and cause and effect	2	2	1	1	0	6
Applying information to described and new situations	0	1	2	1	1	5
Analyzing and synthesizing information to identify rationale and principles and apply them to new situations	0	0	0	2	3	5
<b>TOTAL NUMBER OF ITEMS</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>30**</b>

\* The symbol ± means "plus or minus."

\*\* A small number of additional items are included for developmental purposes.

Answers to these developmental questions do not count toward the examinee's score.

## READING FOR INFORMATION ITEM APPLICATION

Items are based on the following types of workplace documents:

APPLICATION	NUMBER OF ITEMS PER FORM
Contract	2 ±* 1
Policy	7 ± 2
Instructions	13 ± 2
Legal Document	2 ± 1
Information	6 ± 2

\* The symbol ± means "plus or minus."

# TALENT



## SOFT SKILLS ASSESSMENT

The NCRC Plus adds a soft skills component derived from the WorkKeys *Talent* assessment, which measures 12 personal characteristics. Every characteristic applies to an aspect of work performance, and certain combinations of them are particularly important to specific job roles.

The assessment includes 165 items presented as a survey asking examinees the extent to which they agree or disagree with statements relating to everyday activities and habits. An algorithm evaluates the responses and produces a score for each attribute that ranks examinees within a normative sample of the population. Higher ratings represent a stronger inclination for behaviors associated with an attribute, so an 85 means that an examinee is more inclined than 84 percent of the population.

Compound scales developed for the *Talent* assessment summarize the characteristics that project an individual's potential to succeed in four areas that are common to most work environments: Work Discipline, Teamwork, Customer Service Orientation, and Managerial Potential.

Results are reported in terms of four levels, depicted by stars printed on each NCRC Plus certificate. Higher numbers of stars reflect personal characteristics that indicate greater prospects for success. Completing the *Talent* assessment is not a requirement for achieving the NCRC.

WorkKeys *Talent* is a highly reliable inventory of personality that reports the behaviors an individual is inclined to practice on the job and in life. However, most people can and do choose to alter their behavior for a variety of reasons. This is confirmed by the billions of training dollars American business spends to improve skills in such areas as service, teamwork, and supervision.

The rewards of job success represent a powerful motivation for adopting different behaviors. ACT has defined work-related behaviors that would

demonstrate high performance in each area documented by the NCRC Plus. This will help people understand how changing their work behavior can lead to career success while generating discussion about the behaviors, methods, and tools that individuals learn, adopt, and apply to work.

## WORK DISCIPLINE

Demonstrating dependability and maintaining a disciplined and positive attitude toward job tasks, rules and regulations, and the work environment.

**HIGHER RANKINGS** are achieved by people who are more likely to perform with high levels of dependability and productivity. They are inclined to maintain a disciplined attitude about their jobs and typically meet deadlines, turn in accurate work, follow rules and procedures, and project a positive attitude about their work and organization.

**LOWER RANKINGS** are obtained by people who may not be as dependable or productive, leading them to miss deadlines, disregard rules, and produce work that is inaccurate or incomplete. They need to put forth commitment and extra effort in order to overcome obstacles, organize their work, and avoid dwelling on the negative aspects of life and work.

THESE ARE SOME OF THE PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO THE WORK DISCIPLINE INDEX:

- **Carefulness**—Thinking and planning carefully before acting or speaking
- **Discipline**—Acting in a responsible, dependable manner, and following through with tasks without becoming distracted or bored
- **Order**—The tendency to be neat and well-organized
- **Stability**—Maintaining composure and rationality in situations of actual or perceived stress

POSITIVE WORK DISCIPLINE BEHAVIORS:

- Be punctual, set goals, and follow through on tasks
- Master new skills by investing personal time and effort
- Adopt systems that help manage time and resources

- Maintain an organized work environment
- Search for information in a systematic manner
- Adjust behavior in different situations and among different people
- Recognize problems and focus on solutions
- Reduce stress by balancing work with healthy activities
- Avoid emotional responses by thinking before speaking and acting

## TEAMWORK

Demonstrating compromise, cooperation, and interpersonal understanding when working with others.

**HIGHER RANKINGS** are achieved by people who are more likely to work well with others. They tend to be pleasant, helpful, respectful of other perspectives, willing to compromise, and supportive of coworkers. People with high rankings usually possess excellent communication skills that enable them to express themselves in a professional, positive manner.

**LOWER RANKINGS** are obtained by individuals who may have difficulties working with others or as part of a team. They might reflect the absence of interpersonal skills that enable people to be helpful, respectful, and more interested in compromise. People with lower rankings need to improve communication skills and focus on maintaining a positive attitude about work, coworkers, and their organization.

THESE ARE SOME OF THE PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO THE TEAMWORK INDEX:

- **Carefulness**—Thinking and planning carefully before acting or speaking
- **Cooperation**—Tendency to be likable and friendly in interpersonal situations
- **Goodwill**—Tendency to be forgiving and to believe that others are well-intentioned
- **Optimism**—Maintaining a positive outlook and confidence in successful outcomes
- **Stability**—Maintaining composure and rationality in situations of actual or perceived stress

POSITIVE TEAMWORK BEHAVIORS:

- Control personal feelings when communicating
- Maintain composure in stressful situations
- Complete tasks with confidence and celebrate success
- Look for positive aspects of seemingly negative events
- Accept and respond to constructive criticism
- Take responsibility and use setbacks as opportunities to improve
- Listen carefully and speak frankly and honestly at the appropriate time
- Gain coworkers' support through compromise and negotiated solutions
- Direct negative comments at tasks and processes, not at people
- Recognize how actions and words can affect others on multiple levels

## CUSTOMER SERVICE ORIENTATION

The potential to demonstrate high levels of attentiveness and courtesy and to provide helpful service to customers.

**HIGHER RANKINGS** are achieved by people who are more likely to perform at high levels and succeed in customer service roles. People with high rankings exhibit a positive attitude and are inclined to build relationships through attentiveness, courtesy, and empathy. They are more likely to think flexibly about customer concerns and to follow through until service issues are resolved.

**LOWER RANKINGS** are obtained by individuals who may have difficulties building positive relationships and meeting the demands of service roles. People with lower rankings might lack persistence, interpersonal skills, or problem-solving skills. They need to concentrate in order to identify problems, propose creative solutions, and practice courtesy and empathy.

THESE ARE SOME OF THE PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO THE CUSTOMER SERVICE ORIENTATION INDEX:

- **Cooperation**—Tendency to be likable and friendly in interpersonal situations

- **Creativity**—Tendency to be imaginative and to think “outside the box”
- **Optimism**—Maintaining a positive outlook and confidence in successful outcomes
- **Stability**—Maintaining composure and rationality in situations of actual or perceived stress
- **Striving**—Aspiring to high levels of success and working hard to achieve goals

#### POSITIVE CUSTOMER SERVICE ORIENTATION BEHAVIORS:

- Gather information and feedback from diverse sources
- Understand background information before developing solutions
- Seek suggestions on improving performance or solving a problem
- Set realistic personal goals and remain accountable for them
- Take responsibility for mistakes and respond to criticism
- Work without direct supervision and adjust pace to workload
- Rely on systems for managing multiple tasks or assignments
- Identify and search out resources needed to complete tasks
- Focus on solving problems and resist complaining about them
- Respond to stress by communicating clearly and calmly
- Encourage others to share ideas and engage in solutions

### MANAGERIAL POTENTIAL

The potential to demonstrate a high level of work performance in supervisory and managerial roles.

**HIGHER RANKINGS** are achieved by people who are more likely to perform successfully in management and supervision. People with higher rankings are more likely to be charismatic and persuasive leaders who practice strong communication skills and project enthusiasm about the work and the organization. They are willing to put forth extra effort and usually excel at problem solving.

**LOWER RANKINGS** are obtained by individuals who may not perform successfully in management and supervision. People with lower rankings are less likely to communicate in a professional tone, project a positive attitude, and invest the energy needed to manage people and resources. They might find it difficult to act assertively and persuasively within their personal relationships.

#### THESE ARE SOME OF THE PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO THE MANAGERIAL POTENTIAL INDEX:

- **Cooperation**—Tendency to be likable and friendly in interpersonal situations
- **Discipline**—Acting in a responsible, dependable manner, and following through with tasks without becoming distracted or bored
- **Influence**—Tendency to affect and dominate social situations by speaking without hesitation and accepting leadership responsibilities
- **Optimism**—Maintaining a positive outlook and confidence in successful outcomes
- **Savvy**—Reading other people’s motives, understanding office politics, and anticipating the needs and intentions of others

#### POSITIVE MANAGERIAL POTENTIAL BEHAVIORS:

- Demonstrate sensitivity to the needs and feelings of diverse individuals and groups
- Listen effectively, maintain appropriate eye contact, and ask questions
- Interpret body language and other nonverbal communication
- Project confidence when interacting with individuals and large groups of people
- Persuade and influence others by using data, facts, and logic
- Resolve conflict through negotiation and compromise
- Deliver feedback with a constructive, respectful approach
- Avoid negative thinking and keep personal feelings in check
- Accept responsibility and respond to constructive criticism
- View setbacks and challenges as opportunities to improve
- Commit to achieving clear, specific, challenging, and achievable goals



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## WorkKeys®

**ASSESS** YOUR WORKFORCE. WorkKeys assessments measure workplace skills critical to job success. These skills are valuable for any occupation—skilled or professional—at any level of education, and in any industry. More than 10 million WorkKeys assessments have been administered. [workkeys.com](http://workkeys.com)

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**CERTIFY** YOUR WORKFORCE. The National Career Readiness Certificate, issued by ACT, is an industry-recognized, portable, evidence-based credential that certifies essential skills needed for workplace success.

[nationalcareerreadiness.org](http://nationalcareerreadiness.org)



**DEVELOP** YOUR WORKFORCE. KeyTrain® is the complete interactive learning tool for career readiness skills. At its foundation is a curriculum designed to help people master the applied workplace skills measured by the WorkKeys® assessments. This core curriculum is complemented by diagnostic tools, soft skills training, and powerful reporting capabilities to form a robust career readiness learning system. [workkeys.com](http://workkeys.com)

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## Scholarship and Recognition Services

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