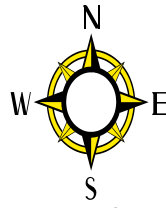


COMPASS TEST Student Guide



What is COMPASS?

Spoon River College uses a computer-adaptive placement testing system from American College Testing (ACT) called **COMPASS**. Students will be assessed in writing, reading and math. Although testing is done on a computer, no computer experience is required. Directions are clearly stated, and help is always available. The tests are adaptive which means that questions are selected based on your responses to previous questions. Since your test is highly individualized and tailored to your skill level, the tests are usually shorter and the scores more accurate than with traditional paper and pencil tests. There is no time limit so you should work carefully at your own pace.

Why do I need to take COMPASS?

Spoon River College students arrive on campus with varied skill levels and life experiences. Students come to us directly from high school, from other colleges, and from work-related backgrounds. In order to give students the best opportunity for academic success, students and advisors need to know current levels of achievement, and the COMPASS gives that needed information. The goal of the assessment is to place students in the correct courses according to their current academic achievement levels. SRC can also use current ACT results for placement. Students must score a 19 or higher in the reading, writing and math to automatically place in college level classes.

How are the COMPASS scores used?

Scores are available as soon as testing is completed. Test results help you and your academic advisor select classes and plan an appropriate course of study. The tests are not used to determine admission to the college and there is no charge for the test. However, a \$5.00 retest fee will apply if you were not happy with the first set of results.

How can I prepare for the COMPASS?

The best way to prepare for the COMPASS is to review sample questions at the following websites: www.act.org/compass and www.testpreview.com/compass_practice.htm. Students with special needs or students with special testing considerations should contact a disAbility Coordinator prior to testing. Canton/Havana students phone 309-649-6273 and Macomb/Rushville students call 309-833-6025 to talk about possible arrangements.

COMPASS Reading Test

The reading comprehension test consists of 3-5 short passages followed by a set of questions. Some answers are selected from a group of multiple-choice options, and some involve highlighting a portion of the text. You may refer to the passage when answering the questions and you may review and change answers at the end of a passage before moving on to the next passage. The test consists of referring, reasoning and prior knowledge questions. Scores on the reading placement exam are used to place students in reading classes and to indicate ability to be successful in college level courses.

COMPASS Writing Test

The writing skills test presents you with 2-4 essays to edit. You will identify errors in punctuation, grammar, sentence structure, organization and style and make corrections based on multiple-choice options. You may review and change answers on an essay until you move on to the next message. Scores from the writing skills exam are used to place students into composition classes and for other courses that require a particular writing skill level.

COMPASS Mathematics Test

The math placement test consists of problems in pre algebra, algebra, and college algebra. You will start in the algebra area and move to higher or lower level math problems depending on your current math skill level. Calculators are allowed and provided for you. Questions must be answered in the order they are presented. Items may not be skipped and answered later or reviewed at the end of the test. Scores from the math test are used for placement into math courses.

The following information will help you have a positive COMPASS test experience:

- Allow about 1 and ½ hours to take the test. *However, it is not a timed test.*
- Turn off all cell phones and pagers.
- No food or drinks allowed in the testing area.
- Please leave children at home and plan on a babysitter if needed.
- Bring photo id and know your social security number.
- Be rested and ready to concentrate.
- Answer each question carefully.
- Take a break between tests, if necessary.
- Ask the test administrator for help if you are unsure about directions.
- Don't be concerned if others finish before you. Remember, everyone has a highly individualized test, and people finish testing at different times.
- Plan to do your best the first time you test. If, however, you feel your placement does not reflect your true ability, you may retest one time before taking classes in the subject area. There will be a \$5.00 retest fee.
- You may bring your own calculator or you may use the one that the testing center provides for you.

WHEN AND WHERE CAN I TEST?

Testing is done on a walk-in basis from 8:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. in the Student Services Department at Spoon River College Canton and Macomb sites. Please call the Rushville or Havana sites to set up an appointment during their regular office hours (8:00 a.m-4:30 p.m.) at the numbers listed below.

CANTON 309-649-6400 **MACOMB** 309-833-6069 **RUSHVILLE** 217-322-6060 **HAVANA** 309-543-4413

Spoon River College course placement using COMPASS Scores

Writing Score	Course
0-37	ENG 090
38-51	ENG 091
52-69	ENG 091 or writing sample
70-100	ENG 101
ACT 19 or above	ENG 101
Reading Score	Course
0-59	SDRT/RDG 095
60-84	RDG 097
85-100	No reading course is needed
ACT 19 or above	No reading course is needed

Math score	Course
<i>Pre-Algebra</i>	
0-57	MATH 011/012
58-100	MATH 015/016
<i>Algebra</i>	
0-41	MATH 015/016
42-53	MATH 060/061
54-100	MATH 102 or higher
<i>College Algebra</i>	
0-54	MATH 102 or higher
55-100	Any college transfer math
ACT 19 or above	MATH 102 or higher