Understanding ACT ELA Scores

Did you know?

- To get an ACT® English Language Arts (ELA) score, students must take the ACT writing test – in addition to the English and reading tests.

- The ACT ELA score is calculated by taking the average of the English, reading, and writing scale scores. See the diagram for more details on how the score is derived.

- The ACT College Readiness Benchmark for ELA is 20. Students who meet the Benchmark are likely to do well in first-year English and social science courses.

- ACT ELA scores tend to be lower than ACT English and reading scores. Among students who had an ELA score and completed high school in 2020, the average scores were higher in English (19.7) and reading (21.2) than in ELA (19.1).

ACT Writing Domain Scores
- Ideas and Analysis (2-12)
- Development and Support (2-12)
- Organization (2-12)
- Language Use and Conventions (2-12)

ACT Writing Score Sum (8-48)
= Sum of 4 domain scores

ACT Writing Scale Score (1-36)

Scores that appear on student score reports are shown in green boxes.

ACT ELA Score (1-36)
= Average of the Writing, English, & Reading Scale Scores

To adjust for slight differences in the difficulty of writing prompts across test forms, the ACT Writing Score Sum is converted to the ACT Writing Scale Score. A procedure known as equipercentile equating is used to determine how the scores are converted to ensure comparability of ELA scores across years.