



NATIONAL
CAREER READINESS
CERTIFICATE®

ACT[®]
ISSUED BY ACT

TAKE A STAND

STAND UP FOR A SKILLED WORKFORCE

NATIONALCAREERREADINESS.ORG

STAND OUT FROM THE CROWD

CORE ASSESSMENTS FOR CERTIFICATION

NATIONAL CAREER READINESS CERTIFICATE



Now more than ever, America needs a strong, skilled workforce to overcome today's challenges. The National Career Readiness Certificate is *the* work-related skills credential. The Certificate provides fair and objective measurement of workplace skills that can be accepted nationwide. Take a stand. Stand up for a skilled workforce. Stand out from the crowd. The National Career Readiness Certificate—issued by ACT.

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 written text in order to do a job. The written texts include memos, letters, directions, signs, notices, bulletins, policies, and regulations. It is often the case that workplace communications are not necessarily well written or targeted to the appropriate audience. Reading for Information materials do not include information that is presented graphically, such as in charts, forms, or blueprints.

THE CERTIFICATE IS AWARDED AT FOUR LEVELS BASED ON YOUR PERFORMANCE ON THE ASSESSMENTS:



PLATINUM

skills for 99% of the jobs in ACT’s extensive database of occupational profiles—the largest of its kind.

GOLD

skills for 90% of the jobs in our database.

SILVER

skills for 65% of the jobs in our database.

BRONZE

skills for 35% of the jobs in our database.

CAREER SEEKERS prove they’re the most skilled for the job

EMPLOYERS get the most skilled employees by asking applicants for The Certificate

ECONOMIC DEVELOPERS use The Certificate to document workforce skills, benefiting local employers while helping to attract expanding and relocating businesses

EDUCATORS utilize The Certificate system’s benchmarks to ensure students are ready for the workplace

ACT

ACT is an independent, not-for-profit organization that provides a broad range of assessment, research, information, and program management services in the areas of education and workforce development.

LEARN MORE AT ACT.ORG

WORKKEYS

The WorkKeys system, developed by ACT, is the gold standard in workplace assessment used by thousands of companies throughout the world.

LEARN MORE AT WORKKEYS.COM

WORKKEYS SKILL SCORES

Each of the WorkKeys core 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 as they are finer-grained and sensitive to subtle score changes. Scale Scores are not to be 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 provided 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



APPLIED MATHEMATICS

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

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.

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.



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.

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.



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 |
| TOTAL NUMBER OF ITEMS | 6 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 30** |

* 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.

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 ± means “plus or minus.”



LOCATING INFORMATION

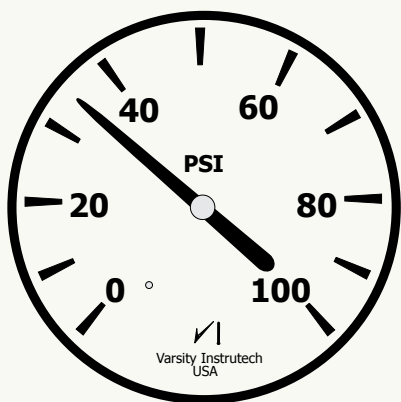
ITEMS AT THIS LEVEL:

- » 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

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.



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:*

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.

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 | | |
| Due | MON | TUE | WED | THUR | FRI | |
| | X | | | | | |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
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| | OVERCOAT | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | SWEATER | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | DRESS | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | BLOUSE | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
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| | JACKET | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
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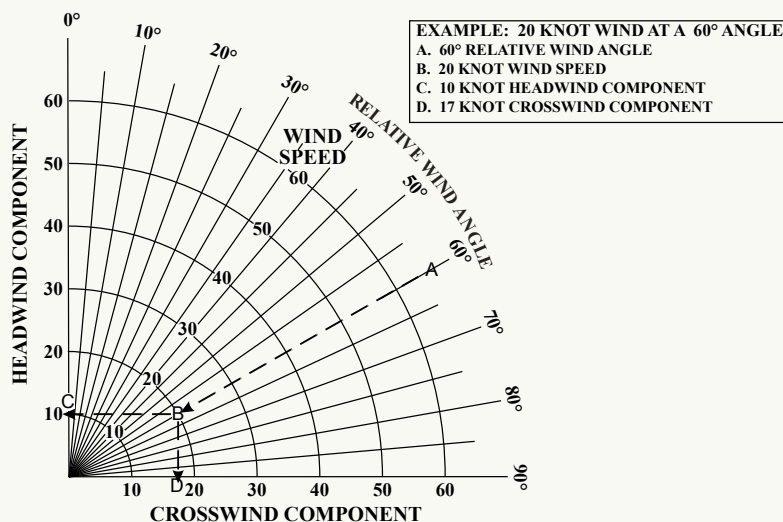
ITEMS AT THIS LEVEL:

- » 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

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.

Answers to the sample questions can be found online at

NATIONALCAREERREADINESS.ORG

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:

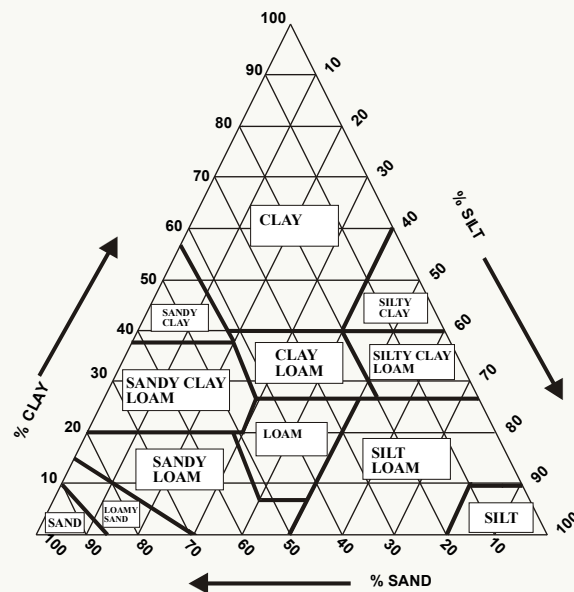
- » Draw conclusions based on one complicated graphic or several related graphics
- » Apply information from one or more complicated graphics to specific situations
- » Use the information to make decisions

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

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



| 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 |

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 |
| TOTAL NUMBER OF ITEMS | 8 | 8 | 8 | 8 | 32** |

* 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

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.



Answers to the sample questions can be found online at

NATIONALCAREERREADINESS.ORG

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.

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.

Answers to the sample questions can be found online at

NATIONALCAREERREADINESS.ORG


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

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 a lot of 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:*

March 17

We will begin use of the new guidelines on Capital Management this October with the onset of the new fiscal year (with the exception of the Alpha-Beta Division and our European subsidiaries as noted below). A Standing Committee on Capital Management has been formed to administer the policy. Research & Development will pilot the policy starting in May. Feedback from R & D will be considered by the Standing Committee.

As you know, the primary intention of the Capital Management Policy is to gain some control and discipline over what has been a somewhat arbitrary process of funding projects and new enterprises. Whereas in the past, any project could potentially go forward to the Executive Committee for consideration regardless of merit, we will now have a process of screening and rating based on funding category, amount, need, return, and volume.

Categories for funding requests will include Savings, Repair & Replacement, New Enterprises, Acquisitions, and Budget Appropriations. Due to the improved controls, and to streamline the process, authorization levels have been raised, providing that the funding request is aligned with the new policy. General managers will now have authority to approve appropriations up to \$50,000; division managers, \$50,000 to \$100,000. The Capital Management Committee may approve appropriations up to \$500,000 and the Executive Committee will continue to provide approval for appropriations above that level.

Financial criteria will be the major consideration for Savings, New Enterprise, and Acquisition requests. Minimum projected rate of return will be 20%. New Enterprise and Acquisition requests must be projected to build company volume by at least 20,000 units or 10% of that division's current sales volume. In addition, to achieve funding, New Enterprise projects will be required to meet established Consumer Research targets for marketplace acceptance and reflect the most recent federal product safety guidelines. All criteria must be met regardless of amount and approval level. There may be rare circumstances where it is justified to deviate from these criteria, such as competitive threat, but any exception must be approved by the Board of Directors.

R & R and Budget Appropriations will be judged on need. A set of detailed scoring criteria has been created to rank projects on this basis. These criteria will be used for funding anything more than \$5 million that does not specifically generate a return, such as equipment replacement or construction of new office space.

Because Alpha-Beta is a recent acquisition, it will maintain its funding processes until its accounting systems have transitioned to the corporate system. Due to differences in the European business, a separate task force has been chartered to develop procedures for the European subsidiaries.

You are a manager in the New Enterprise Division preparing a budget request for \$1.5 million for a new project. Based on the notice shown, you must demonstrate in your request all of the following EXCEPT:

- A.** a competitive threat to the company.
- B.** acquiescence to governmental rules.
- C.** a potential for an increase in companywide sales.
- D.** data that shows that the product will sell well.
- E.** the profitability to the company.

* 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 |
| TOTAL NUMBER OF ITEMS | 6 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 30** |

* 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 DOCUMENT TYPES

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.”

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“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)

“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

“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

“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

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