

## New Test Changes Coming to South Carolina

New laws passed by the South Carolina General Assembly have resulted in new tests that will be administered during the spring of 2015 throughout our state. The new tests are ACT Aspire™, ACT Workkeys® and The ACT®. All other tests, such as [SCPASS for science and social studies in grades 4-8](#), and [end-of-course exams in middle school and high school](#), remain the same for the spring of 2015.

These three new tests will help teachers understand where their students are succeeding and where extra help or academic focus is needed. By having a better understanding of a student's skills, abilities, and knowledge, parents and teachers can determine what students need to know to be successful in school in the future.

### ACT Aspire™

ACT Aspire™ will be administered to students in grades 3-8 for English, reading, writing and mathematics. ACT Aspire™ is a timed test and will be paper-based for the spring of 2015. At every grade level, there is a separate answer document and test booklet for each ACT Aspire™ subject.

What is ACT Aspire™? Learn what this test is [here](#).

The chart below shows the test dates, time allowed for each subject area of the test, and the number of test items:

Grades 3-8	Test Date	Number of Test Items	Time Limit
Writing	Tuesday, April 28	1	30 minutes - grades 3-8
English	Tuesday, April 28	32 (grades 3-5) 45 (grades 6-8)	30 minutes - grades 3-5 35 minutes - grades 6-8
Reading	Wednesday, April 29	31	60 minutes - grades 3-8
Mathematics	Thursday, April 30	31 (grades 3-5) 41 (grades 6-7) 45 (grade 8)	55 minutes - grades 3-5 60 minutes - grades 6 & 7 65 minutes - grade 8
Science	May 1	35 (grades 3-8)	55 minutes - grades 3-8
Make-up testing will take place through May 13.			

You can see the ACT Aspire™ score scale for grades 3-8 [here](#).

You can access the ACT Aspire™ website [here](#).

Special needs students will be provided with accommodations to take ACT Aspire™. To learn more about these accommodations, please review the Accessibility Users Guide [here](#).

## ACT Workkeys

ACT Workkeys® will be administered to all 11th grade students. There is no cost to students or families to take ACT Workkeys®. This assessment lasts approximately 3 ½ hours, with 45 minutes for each of the three sections of the test. These sections include reading, mathematics, and finding information. It tests real-world skills that employers seek in everyday situations.

ACT Workkeys® evaluates students for career readiness. Students who successfully complete the three parts of this assessment may earn an **ACT National Career Readiness Certificate™**. Based on performance, certification is provided at platinum, gold, silver, and bronze levels. Depending on the student's score, these levels and the certificate they earn indicate whether they have the foundational readiness to work in up to 99 percent of jobs in the Workkeys® database. Scores average from a low of three to a high of seven in each section.

Doing well on ACT Workkeys® and earning the highest level certificate possible can help high school students find summer and part-time jobs as well as internships. Throughout the country, companies and industries utilize WorkKeys® certificates in hiring, and more than 1,500 employers throughout the Palmetto State recognize the certificate.

**ACT Workkeys® will be administered on Wednesday, April 29 with a makeup date of Wednesday, May 13.**

The chart below shows the time allowed for each subject area of the test and the number of test items:

ACT Workkeys®	Number of Test Items	Time Limit
Reading for Information	33	45 minutes
Applied Mathematics	33	45 minutes
Locating Information	38	45 minutes

The testing window for students who are using testing accommodations is between April 29 and May 13.

Learn more about testing accommodations for special needs students for ACT Workkeys® [here](#).

## The ACT®

The ACT® will be administered to all 11th grade students in South Carolina. There is no cost to students or families to take The ACT®. This test evaluates the college readiness of students and enables teachers and parents to better understand how prepared their student is for higher education. ACT scores are valid for five years and are used by both two-year technical colleges and four-year colleges and universities throughout South Carolina. **The ACT will be administered on Tuesday, April 28 with a makeup date of Tuesday, May 12.**

To learn more about how The ACT® tests the college- and career-readiness levels of high school students, click [here](#).

The ACT® is a multiple choice test consisting of four subjects: English, mathematics, reading, and science and a writing test. There are 215 questions and the total time to take the test is approximately four hours, which includes the writing portion and a short break. Scores range from a low of one to a high of 36 in each subject and for the composite score, which is the average score in all four areas rounded to the nearest whole number. The writing portion is scored separately. All 11th grade students in South Carolina are eligible for FREE [online ACT® preparation courses](#).

The chart below shows the time allowed for each subject area of the test:

English	75 questions	45 minutes	Measures standard written English and rhetorical skills.
Mathematics	60 questions	60 minutes	Measures mathematical skills students have typically acquired in courses taken up to the beginning of grade 12.
Reading	40 questions	35 minutes	Measures reading comprehension.
Science	40 questions	35 minutes	Measures the interpretation, analysis, evaluation, reasoning, and problem-solving skills required in the natural sciences.
Writing	1 prompt	30 minutes	Measures writing skills emphasized in high school English classes and in entry-level college composition courses.

In order to measure the college readiness of high school students across the country, ACT, Inc. releases college readiness benchmarks based on how students score on The ACT® subject-area tests. These median values represent the level of achievement required for students to have a 50 percent chance of obtaining a B or higher or about a 75 percent chance of obtaining a C or higher in corresponding credit-bearing first-year college courses. To see the latest benchmark scores in English, mathematics, reading, and science, click [here](#).

To view The ACT® resources for families, click [here](#).

The South Carolina Department of Education issued a memorandum on January 26, 2015 explaining the basic differences between testing accommodations for special needs students approved locally, by the state, or ACT, Inc. for 11th grade students taking The ACT®. To see the memo, click [here](#).

To see lists of the specific state-allowed accommodations, click [here](#). Please note that if used, these allowable accommodations will result in scores that are valid for state and federal accountability purposes, but will not result in college reportable scores.

To learn which ACT, Inc. accommodations are approved for reporting scores to colleges, click [here](#). For comprehensive resources on testing accommodations for The ACT®, click [here](#).

**The ACT will be administered on Tuesday, April 28 with a makeup date of Tuesday, May 12.**

For those students who are tested using accommodations, The ACT® will be administered between April 28 and May 12.

For questions, please email us [info@ed.sc.gov](mailto:info@ed.sc.gov).