

# Using ACT Results to Improve College and Career Readiness

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Why ACT Data  
Matters

2



Spotlighting  
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to Reality

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Looking  
Ahead

Section 1

# Why ACT Data Matters

*Setting the stage for data-informed leadership.*

# Academic readiness is the foundation for all pathways.

THE ACT MEASURES

# academic readiness.

Measures skills that support every  
pathway after high school.



**College**



**Career**



**Military**

# ACT scores change real outcomes for NC students



## UNC System eligibility

Students with weighted GPA of 2.50–2.79 need Composite 17 for eligibility for consideration. UNC accepts superscores.

*UNC Policy 700.11*



## UNC-Chapel Hill

Not participating in NC College Connect. Strong test scores remain a factor in admission review.

*WUNC, EdNC reporting Aug 2025*



## Course placement

Some NC community colleges use ACT scores to place students directly into college-level English and math.

*NC Community College System*



## Honors college admission

Honors college selection at NC institutions continues to consider ACT scores in admission decisions.

*Institutional honors policies*



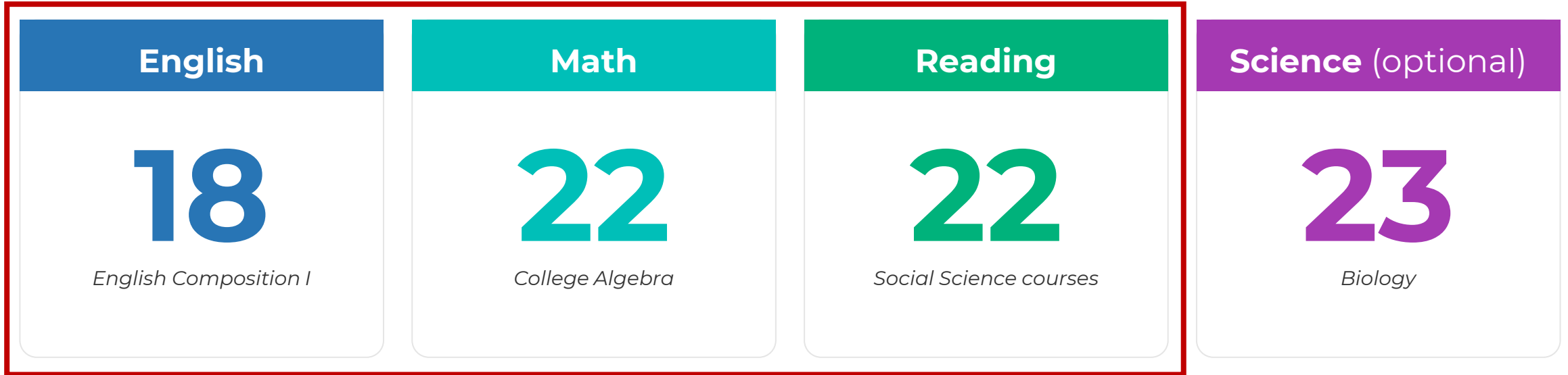
## NC HS Diploma Endorsements

ACT Reading 22 is the benchmark for the Career, College, and College/UNC diploma endorsements.

*NCDPI GRAD-007*

# ACT College and Career Readiness Benchmarks

ACT College Readiness Benchmarks predict 50% likelihood of a B or higher in first-year college coursework or about a 75-80% chance of obtaining a C or higher in corresponding credit-bearing courses.



Students who meet more ACT College Readiness Benchmarks are more likely to attend college and earn a degree within six years.

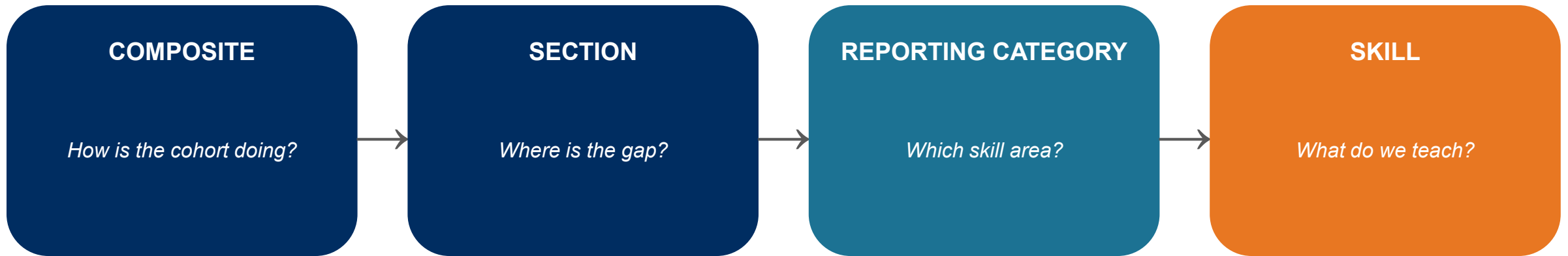
**ALSO REPORTED:**

**STEM Benchmark: 26** — *Calculus, Chemistry, Biology, Physics, Engineering*

**ELA Benchmark: 20** — *English Composition I, History, Psychology, Sociology, Political Science, Economics*

# From Scores to Instruction

*We move from scores to students to skills — so we know exactly what to teach.*



# A.C.T. on ACT Data

# A

**ANALYZE DATA**

*Identify readiness patterns*

*Diagnose skill gaps*

# C

**CONNECT DATA →  
STANDARDS & CURRICULUM**

*Connect reporting categories to standards*

*Locate gaps within curriculum and instruction*

# T

**TAKE ACTION**  
Implement targeted supports

*Plan instructional, student, and system responses*

*Implement targeted supports*

***This is how data becomes outcomes.***

## Section 2

# Spotlighting Student Needs

*Using ACT data to find the students who need you most, right now.*

# Priority students: it depends on your goal

**The method you choose changes who your priority students are.**

*Schools apply the Analyze step differently depending on the decision they need to make. Here are four common ways schools identify priority students.*

# Where Sample HS students sit on the readiness landscape

Spring 2026 Composite distribution, n=400 juniors. The shape of where students need attention.

## Frequency Distribution: The ACT State Contract, SAMPLE HIGH SCHOOL, 2025-2026

Showing students who are College Reportable

### ACT composite score

	ACT composite score	Frequency	Cum. Frequency	Percent	Cum. Percent	0	%	7	14
2025-2026 ( 1 - 36 )									
	11	10	10	2.5	2.5				
	12	35	45	8.8	11.3				
	13	35	80	8.8	20.0				
	14	35	115	8.8	28.7				
	15	35	150	8.8	37.5				
	16	30	180	7.5	45.0				
	17	30	210	7.5	52.5				
	18	30	240	7.5	60.0				
	19	20	260	5.0	65.0				
	20	25	285	6.3	71.3				
	21	20	305	5.0	76.3				
	22	15	320	3.8	80.0				
	23	15	335	3.8	83.8				
	24	15	350	3.8	87.5				
	25	10	360	2.5	90.0				

### THE PRIORITY POPULATION

~100

students in 14 – 16 Composite score range

### WHY THESE STUDENTS?

This distribution reveals the school's highest-leverage readiness intervention opportunity.

Where is the opportunity concentrated?

# Surface your priority population by name

## THE MOVE

Sort juniors by ACT Composite to surface students in the **14–16** Composite score range who need targeted support this fall.

## WHY THIS MATTERS

Distributions identify opportunity. Rosters identify students.

### Roster View: The ACT State Contract, Sample High School 2025-2026

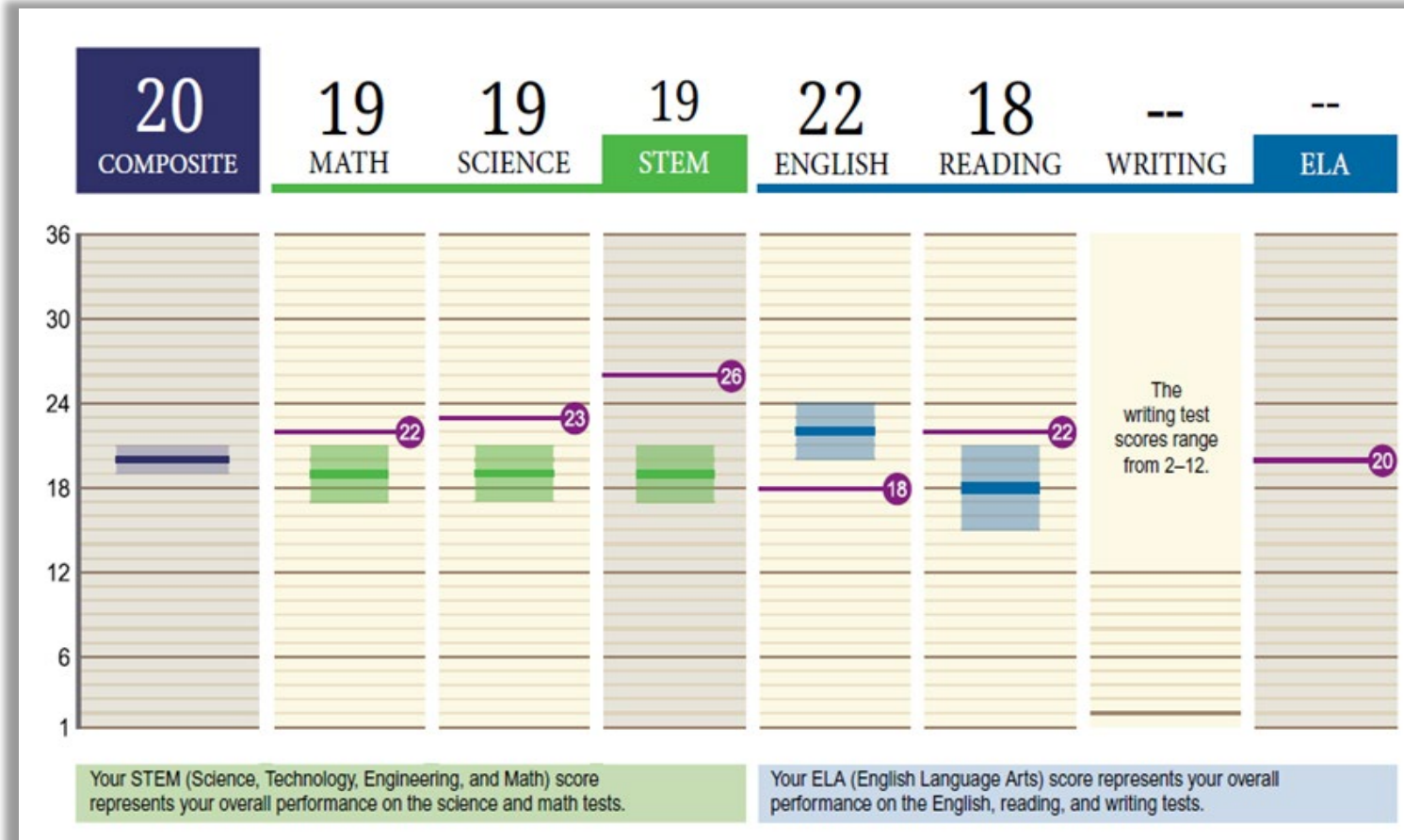
Showing students who are [College Reportable](#)

 Options
  Save
  Download
  Roster
  Student

ACT ID	Last Name	First Name	MI	Last Updated (CT)	Test Date	DOB	Composite	Math	Science	English	Reading
							Score	Score	Score	Score	Score
900112233	Anderson	Mason	J	May 4, 2026	March 10, 2026	07/14/2006	14	14	18	13	15
900223344	Bennett	Ava	L	May 4, 2026	March 10, 2026	11/03/2006	15	15	20	15	15
900334455	Carter	Ethan	M	May 4, 2026	March 10, 2026	02/28/2006	16	16	22	16	16
900445566	Davis	Isabella	R	May 4, 2026	March 10, 2026	09/19/2006	14	13	17	14	15
900556677	Edwards	Noah	T	May 4, 2026	March 10, 2026	06/07/2006	15	15	19	15	15
900667788	Franklin	Sophia	K	May 4, 2026	March 10, 2026	12/22/2006	16	16	21	17	15

Note: Composite score is the average of Math, English, and Reading scores.

# Using the ISR to understand student readiness



## WHAT EDUCATORS LOOK FOR

### Composite score

The Composite provides a high-level snapshot of overall college readiness.

### Benchmark status

Purple benchmark lines show ACT College & Career Readiness Benchmarks for each section.

### Above vs. below benchmark

This student meets the English benchmark but falls below the Reading benchmark.

### Section-level readiness

Students may demonstrate readiness in one subject while still needing targeted support in another.

# The roster already tells us how students gain points

## THE MOVE

Review **section-score patterns** across the priority roster to identify the most actionable path to readiness.

Students with similar readiness patterns can then be grouped for targeted support.

### Roster View: The ACT State Contract, Sample High School 2025-2026

Showing students who are [College Reportable](#)

22 18 22

ACT ID	Last Name	First Name	MI	Last Updated (CT)	Test Date	DOB	Composite	Math	Science	English	Reading
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900112233	Anderson	Mason	J	May 4, 2026	March 10, 2026	07/14/2006	14	14	18	13	15
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900667788	Franklin	Sophia	K	May 4, 2026	March 10, 2026	12/22/2006	16	16	21	17	15

Note: Composite score is the average of Math, English, and Reading scores.

## **Now the question becomes instructional:**

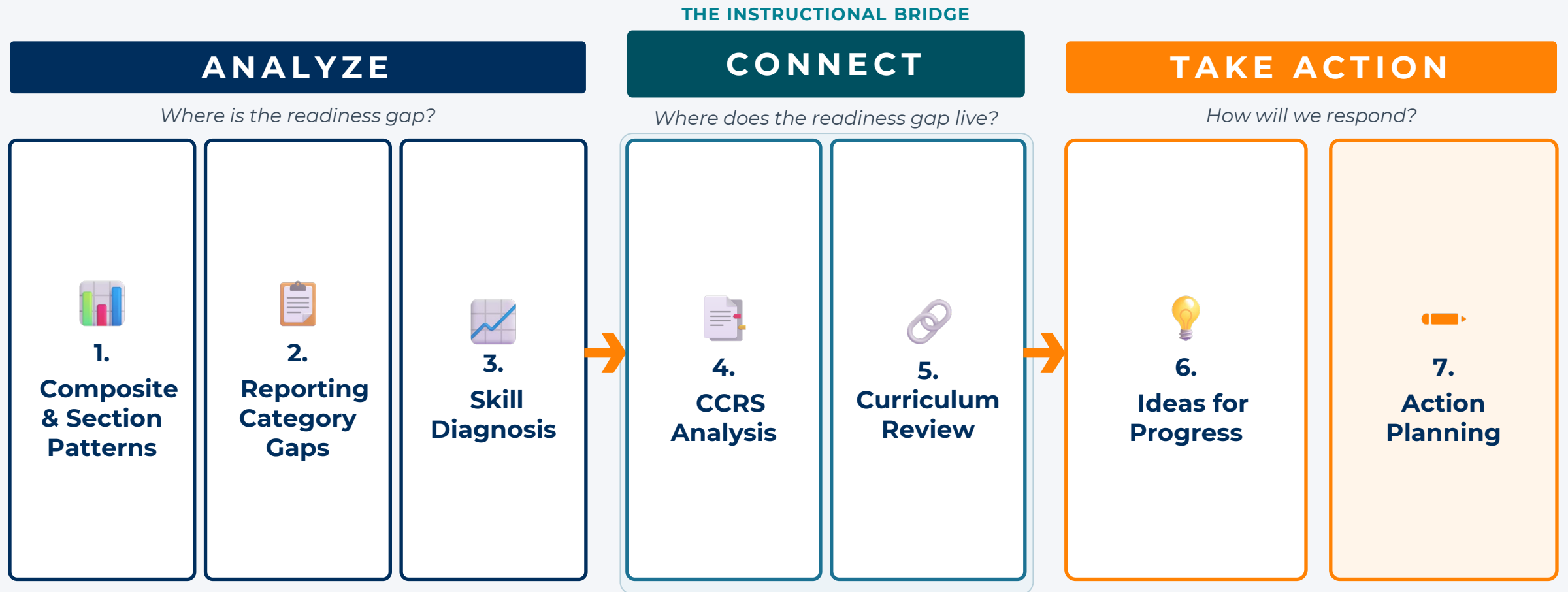
*What skill gaps are holding these priority students back from English readiness?*

Section 3

# The Instructional Bridge

*Connecting skills to curriculum and instruction.*

# The Instructional Diagnostic Process



This is the repeatable process schools use to move from ACT results to instructional, student-support, and system decisions.

# Reporting Categories at a glance

## English

**Production of Writing** — **38–43%** (15–17q)

**Knowledge of Language** — **18–23%** (7–9q)

**Conventions of Standard English** — **38–43%** (15–17q)

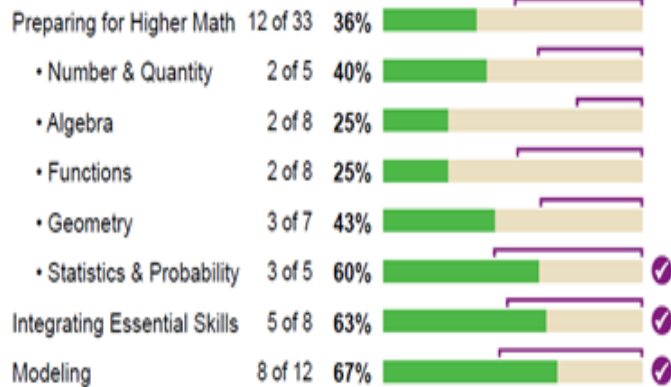


# The ISR: Detailed Results

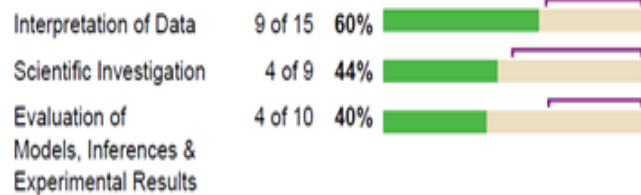
The ISR moves from **scores to skills**.

## Detailed Results

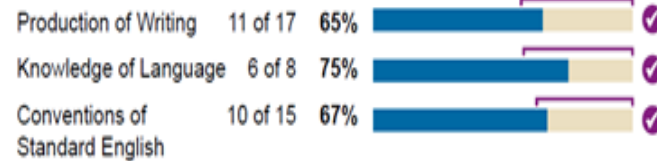
### MATH 19



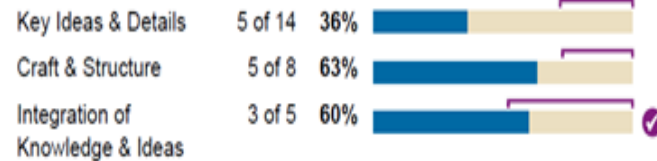
### SCIENCE 19



### ENGLISH 22



### READING 18



## WHAT EDUCATORS LOOK FOR

### Reporting categories

Show performance across tested skill areas within each subject.

### ACT Readiness Range

Purple markers indicate where students who meet the ACT College Readiness Benchmark typically score.

### Percent correct

Shows the percentage of questions answered correctly within each reporting category.

### Category patterns

Helps educators identify relative strengths and weaknesses across reporting categories.

# English Readiness Roster: Identifying Reporting Category Patterns

ACT Online Reporting by Data Interaction

Roster View: The ACT State Contract, Sample High School, 2025-2026, Spring  
Showing students who are College Reportable  
Search: ACT composite score at least 14, and ACT composite score at most 16

38-43%      18-23%      38-43%

English

ACT ID	Last Name	First Name	Production of Writing		Knowledge of Language		Conventions of Standard English	
			Percent Correct	Readiness	Percent Correct	Readiness	Percent Correct	Readiness
99954737	Doe	John090	43	Not Ready	50	Not Ready	28	Not Ready
99960217	Doe	John141	70	Ready	50	Not Ready	33	Not Ready
99966047	Doe	John383	13	Not Ready	50	Not Ready	35	Not Ready
99990006	Doe	John699	22	Not Ready	25	Not Ready	15	Not Ready
99958434	Doe	John556	61	Ready	83	Ready	48	Not Ready
99925038	Kay	Mary091	43	Not Ready	33	Not Ready	30	Not Ready
99930913	Kay	Mary251	52	Not Ready	42	Not Ready	30	Not Ready
99914860	Kay	Mary354	30	Not Ready	50	Not Ready	38	Not Ready
99971439	Kay	Mary697	26	Not Ready	42	Not Ready	38	Not Ready
99977545	Kay	Mary748	43	Not Ready	25	Not Ready	35	Not Ready
99943411	Kay	Mary905	17	Not Ready	33	Not Ready	50	Ready
99946947	Kay	Mary935	17	Not Ready	58	Not Ready	30	Not Ready
99976542	Kay	Mary997	48	Not Ready	33	Not Ready	30	Not Ready

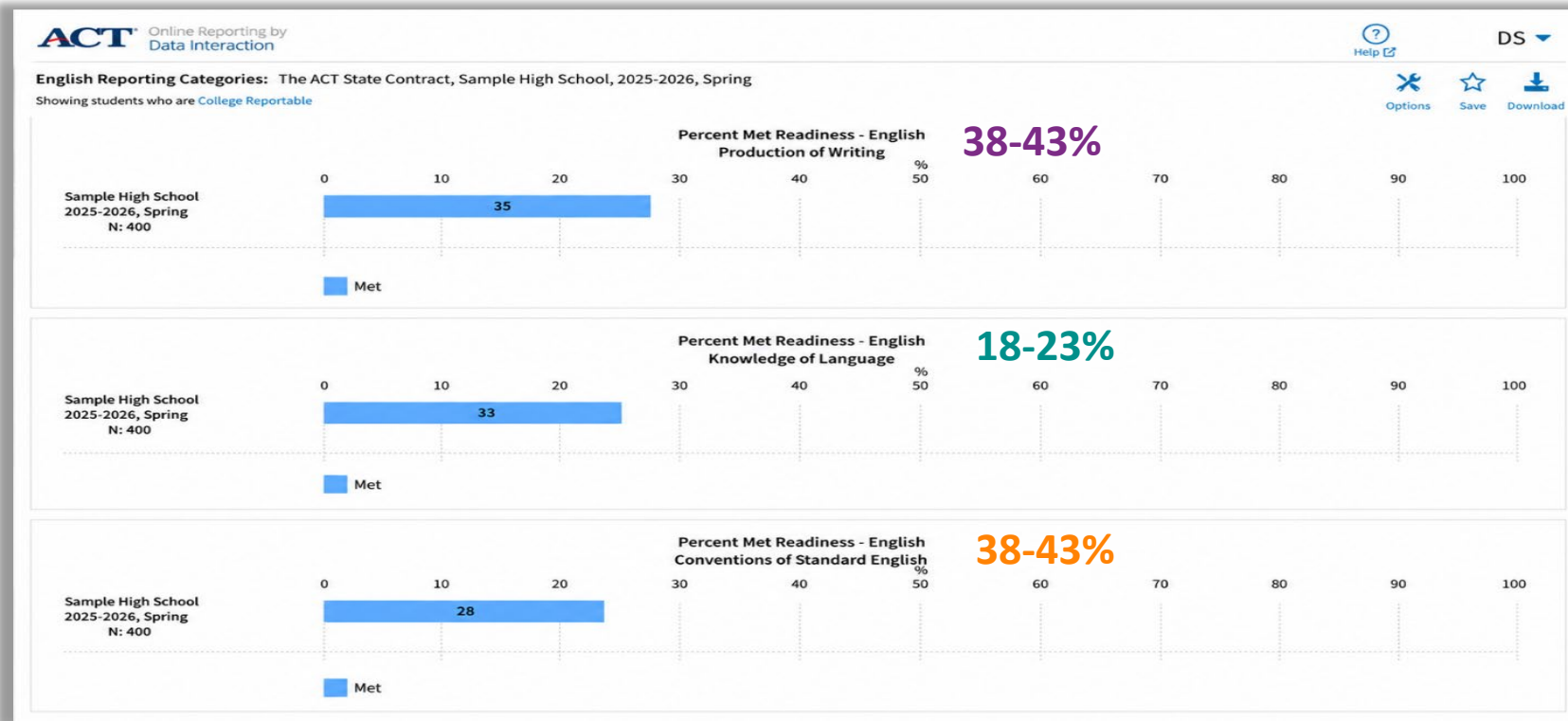
## WHAT EDUCATORS LOOK FOR

- Repeated “Not Ready” patterns across the priority group
- Which heavily weighted categories may require deeper instructional analysis
- Categories that may require deeper standards analysis
- Signals that different students may need different instructional supports

Readiness patterns help narrow the instructional focus. CCRS score bands help schools differentiate support within the group.

# Identifying the Schoolwide Instructional Priority

Sample HS junior cohort, Spring 2026. Compare reporting-category weighting against schoolwide readiness patterns.



## WHAT EDUCATORS LOOK FOR

- Repeated readiness patterns across reporting categories
- Categories with substantial influence on overall readiness
- Schoolwide instructional signals that may require deeper analysis
- Readiness gaps that persist beyond one student group

### CONNECT = Moving from readiness patterns to instructional priorities

*Production of Writing and Conventions of Standard English both carry substantial weight on the English test. At Sample HS, Conventions showed the lowest schoolwide readiness pattern making it a strong starting point for deeper instructional analysis and planning.*

# ACT Three-year trend + PreACT 10 cross-check

*Conventions of Standard English readiness at Sample HS — is this a blip or is it systemic?*

## Question 1

**Has Conventions of Standard English been the lowest English reporting category across multiple junior cohorts?**

(Three-year ACT trend)

## Question 2

**When this cohort tested as sophomores, was Conventions already the lowest English reporting category?**

(PreACT 10 cross-check)

**If the answer to both questions is yes, we're likely looking at a curriculum and instructional issue rather than a one-year cohort issue.**

# Conventions Reporting Category and Skill Areas

## REPORTING CATEGORY

### Conventions of Standard English

Reporting Category



Skills



## SKILLS WITHIN CONVENTIONS OF STANDARD ENGLISH

1

### Sentence Structure and Formation

Apply understanding of sentence structure and formation in a text and make revisions to improve the writing.

2

### Punctuation

Recognize common problems with standard English punctuation and make revisions to improve the writing.

3

### Usage

Recognize common problems with standard English usage in a text and make revisions to improve the writing.

*These questions require students to apply an understanding of the conventions of standard English grammar, usage, and mechanics to revise and edit text.*

# ACT CCRS Progression Across Score Ranges

## English College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS)

### Conventions of Standard English

	Score Range 13–15	Score Range 16–19	Score Range 20–23
<b>Sentence Structure and Formation (SST)</b>	<p><b>SST 201.</b> Determine the need for punctuation or conjunctions to join simple clauses</p> <p><b>SST 202.</b> Recognize and correct inappropriate shifts in verb tense between simple clauses in a sentence or between simple adjoining sentences</p>	<p><b>SST 301.</b> Determine the need for punctuation or conjunctions to correct awkward-sounding sentences and fragments</p> <p><b>SST 302.</b> Recognize and correct inappropriate shifts in verb tense and voice when the meaning of the entire sentence must be considered</p>	<p><b>SST 401.</b> Recognize and correct marked disturbances in sentence structure (e.g., faulty placement of adjectives, participial phrase fragments, missing or incorrect relative pronouns, dangling or misplaced modifiers, lack of parallelism within a simple series of verbs)</p>

#### WHAT TO NOTICE

Sentence Structure expectations increase in sophistication across CCRS score ranges: 201 > 301 > 401.

Many priority students are clustered in the 13–15 and 16–19 ranges.

CCRS score ranges provide educators with a common language for discussing student readiness and instructional expectations.

ACT CCRS connect score data to the skills students are ready to develop next.

# Using Curriculum Review Worksheets to Audit the Curriculum

## ACT ENGLISH CURRICULUM REVIEW WORKSHEET

English Curriculum Review Worksheets

Table 1. ACT English College and Career Readiness Standards for **Score Range 13-15**

English College and Career Readiness Standards			For each skill, knowledge, or process:		
			Is it <b>included</b> in your English curriculum?	At what grade level (or in which course) are students <b>first introduced</b> to it?	At what grade level (or in which course) are students <b>expected to demonstrate proficiency</b> ?
TOD	201	Delete material because it is obviously irrelevant in terms of the topic of the essay			
ORG	201	Determine the need for transition words or phrases to establish time relationships in simple narrative essays (e.g., <i>then, this time</i> )			
KLA	201	Revise vague, clumsy, and confusing writing that creates obvious logic problems			
SST	201	Determine the need for punctuation or conjunctions to join simple clauses			
SST	202	Recognize and correct inappropriate shifts in verb tense between simple clauses in a sentence or between simple adjoining sentences			
USG	201	Form the past tense and past participle of irregular but commonly used verbs			
USG	202	Form comparative and superlative adjectives			
PUN	201	Delete commas that create basic sense problems (e.g., between verb and direct object)			

### QUESTIONS FOR TEAMS

- Are these skills reinforced consistently across grade levels?
- Do classroom tasks reflect the level of sophistication described in the CCRS progression?
- Where do students have opportunities to revise, edit, and apply these skills in authentic writing contexts?
- Which skills may need stronger vertical alignment across courses or grade bands?

Curriculum review helps schools determine whether curriculum aligns to the progression of skills reflected in ACT CCRS score ranges.

# Using *Ideas for Progress* to Support Instructional Planning

Score Range 16 to 19		
Production of Writing	Topic Development in Terms of Purpose and Focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>read first and final drafts of student essays and discuss what was added or deleted to improve the focus</li> <li>determine the purpose of a word or phrase in model essays</li> <li>read drafts with a partner and discuss how changing specific words or phrases would change each draft's purpose</li> </ul>
	Organization, Unity, and Cohesion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>recognize and experiment with sophisticated organizational structures (e.g., comparison-contrast, cause-effect)</li> <li>revise drafts to replace illogical conjunctive adverbs with more logical ones</li> <li>discuss the most logical place to add specific information in drafts</li> <li>discuss the purpose and the importance of the opening paragraph for directing the rest of the essay</li> <li>practice writing varied conclusions</li> </ul>
Knowledge of Language	Knowledge of Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>revise drafts to make writing more concise and precise</li> <li>read model essays closely, and then discuss and imitate how they create different tones and styles</li> <li>learn how to link clauses by writing brief skits in which a conjunctive adverb is a character (e.g., how might <i>however</i> enter the room?)</li> </ul>
Conventions of Standard English Grammar, Usage, and Punctuation	Sentence Structure and Formation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>work with peers to develop guidelines for younger students that show them how to recognize fused sentences or run-ons and how to separate them into two simpler, clearer sentences</li> </ul>
	Usage Conventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>create an activity to teach younger students about the correct contextual uses of comparative and superlative adjectives or adverbs</li> <li>check drafts by circling the prepositions to ensure they are the ones intended</li> </ul>
	Punctuation Conventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>find examples of commas used to set off parenthetical phrases in advertising copy or published authors' work</li> <li>check drafts to see if nouns ending in <i>s</i> are possessives and add apostrophes if necessary</li> <li>write a punctuation handbook for younger students' use; use examples from own drafts</li> </ul>

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## WHAT TO NOTICE

- Organized by CCRS score range
- Reporting categories and skills appear again within instructional activities
- Activity suggestions support classroom implementation of ACT-aligned skills
- Helps teams move from instructional analysis to classroom application
- Supports instructional planning

*Ideas for Progress translates CCRS score ranges and reporting categories into classroom instructional activities.*

# Two populations, two diagnostics

Same protocol, applied to two different populations. Section 3 walked through it schoolwide. The priority group gets the same diagnostic — on their data — when you apply it in your school's planning.

## ALL 400 JUNIORS · schoolwide cohort

### THE DIAGNOSTIC

Run the protocol on the schoolwide cohort. Find the lowest reporting category in the focus section. Cross-check with PreACT 10 and 3-year trend to determine if it's a curriculum/instruction issue.

#### DRIVES

### INSTRUCTIONAL ALIGNMENT

Schoolwide curriculum and instruction decisions that benefit every student in the building, not just the priority group.

**RECAP · SECTION 3** walked through this

## PRIORITY GROUP · 100 students, Composite 14–16

### THE DIAGNOSTIC

Run the same protocol on the priority subset. Their lowest reporting category may differ from the schoolwide one — that's the data their retake prep should actually target.

#### DRIVES

### TARGETED RETAKE PREP

Specific reporting-category prep for these 100 students between now and their senior retake — calibrated to their data, not the schoolwide aggregate.

**BACK AT YOUR SCHOOL · Apply the same protocol**

**Same protocol. Different populations. Different actions.**

Section 4

# From Results to Reality

*Turning ACT results into immediate student actions.*

# Action happens at 3 levels

## STUDENT ACTION

*Immediate, student-centered support*

- Identify priority students
- Retake pathways
- Superscore opportunities
- Student conferences
- Goal-setting
- Prep access

## INSTRUCTIONAL ACTION

*The instructional bridge from Section 3*

- Reporting-category support
- CCRS-aligned support
- Small-group reteaching
- Bell ringers & skill spirals
- Classroom supports

## SYSTEM ACTION

*Organizational and leadership-oriented*

- Summer planning
- Counselor coordination
- Scheduling
- Family communication
- PLC planning
- Ownership & monitoring

Student → **Instruction** → System · All three levels must work together. Section 5 carries this into next-year planning.

# The Senior Retake Strategy: Your Immediate Lever

*Why high schools actively support senior retesting.*

**56%**

*of retesters improve their  
ACT Composite score*

**+1.1 pts**

*average Composite score  
increase after retesting  
(one administration to the next)*

**SUPERSCORE**

*Combines a student's highest  
section scores across multiple  
ACT test dates*

**COLLEGE  
ADMISSIONS**

*Many colleges, including  
institutions within the UNC  
System, accept ACT  
Superscores*

*Retesting provides another opportunity to demonstrate growth, improve readiness, and potentially expand postsecondary opportunities.*

# Senior Retake: Two pathways for next year

*Schools support retakes through both student access and organized systems of support.*

## PATHWAY 1

### Student / Family Pathway

#### **National testing dates**

*September, October, December — aligned with college applications. Some national dates include ACT My Answer Key for purchase.*

#### **Fee waivers available**

*Eligible students receive free testing, ACT test prep, ACT My Answer Key, and score reports.*

#### **Student / family registration**

*Decision lives with student and family. Saturday testing, self-directed access.*

#### **Schools coordinate — families follow through**

*Requires adult follow-through without school-day structure.*

## PATHWAY 2

### School / System Pathway

#### **ACT District testing — school-day administration**

*Removes weekend, transportation, and registration barriers.*

#### **School-supported preparation**

*Reporting-category focused review tied to each student's data.*

#### **Priority student cohorts**

*Students in Composite 14–17 range. Organized intentionally.*

#### **Schools coordinate implementation**

*Requires summer planning. High equity dividend when implemented.*

***Schools should not assume students will access Pathway 1 without adult support.***

# Two ways schools support readiness

Schools use both free-access tools and structured support systems to organize readiness support.

FREE-ACCESS SUPPORT

## ACT Free Practice Resources

### FREE ACT PRACTICE RESOURCES

PREPARING FOR THE ACT? WE'VE GOT YOU COVERED!

Check out these free practice tests, videos, and study guides to help you feel confident on test day. Click the links below to access each resource instantly!

PRACTICE TESTS, GUIDES, AND VIDEO RESOURCES:

Full-length online practice test that incorporates the upcoming enhancements	Preparing for the ACT Test Guide   2024-2025 (pdf)	Preparación para el examen ACT   2024-2025 (pdf)
Preparing for the ACT Test Guide   2020-2021 Practice Test (pdf)	PreACT Secure Practice Test Booklet and Answer Document (pdf)	ACT English Free ACT Prep Sample Class (video)
ACT Math Free ACT Prep Sample Class (video)	ACT Reading Free ACT Prep Sample Class (video)	ACT Science Free ACT Prep Sample Class (video)
Student Advice on Taking the ACT (video)	Student Advice on Test Anxiety (video)	Student Views on ACT Test Prep (video)

**Immediate student access**  
*Free, no account required for most resources*


**Practice tests + videos**  
*Full-length prep aligned to the ACT*

**Flexible self-paced support**  
*Flexible student/family access*




STRUCTURED INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT

## ACT Online Prep (AOP)



Just one point on a student's ACT Composite score can boost college admission and scholarship awards. While students' coursework lays the foundation, ACT Online Prep (AOP), Powered by MasteryPrep elevates scores and builds confidence by providing engaging personalized practice tailored for each student's needs. With in-classroom access to the official ACT test questions and learning tools, AOP helps students feel prepared, comfortable, and ready to succeed on test day — even as the ACT evolves.








**Reporting-category aligned support**  
*Targets the specific gaps in each student's data*

**Bell ringers + personalized paths**  
*Structured daily practice within existing schedules*

**Progress monitoring + dashboards**

**Structured intervention support**

New Platform, Additional Benefits

 Alignment to ACT College and Career Readiness Standards	 Practice Testing and Analysis Offer Skill Metrics, Performance Insights, and Personalized Recommendations	 40 Hours of Online Course Material with Interactive Microvideos and Contextual Learning Paths	 Daily Bell Ringers With Five-Minute Warmup Exercises to Reinforce Essential Skills	 Enhanced Reporting Tools Make it Easier to Track Student Progress
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*The key question is not which resource schools use — it's whether support is organized intentionally.*

# Three moves for priority students

1

## ANALYZE

### **Pull Composite 14–16 students by name.**

*Identify every student in the 14–16 range for summer planning.*

2

## CONNECT

### **Run reporting-category analysis on the priority group.**

*Find each student's lowest reporting category. This is the instructional bridge — data becomes targeted support.*

3

## TAKE ACTION

### **Assign retake pathway, support structure, and owner.**

*Every student needs a named pathway, a named prep focus, and a named adult who owns follow-through.*

Section 5

# Looking Ahead

Aligning ACT and PreACT for next-year planning

# Readiness signals start before Grade 11

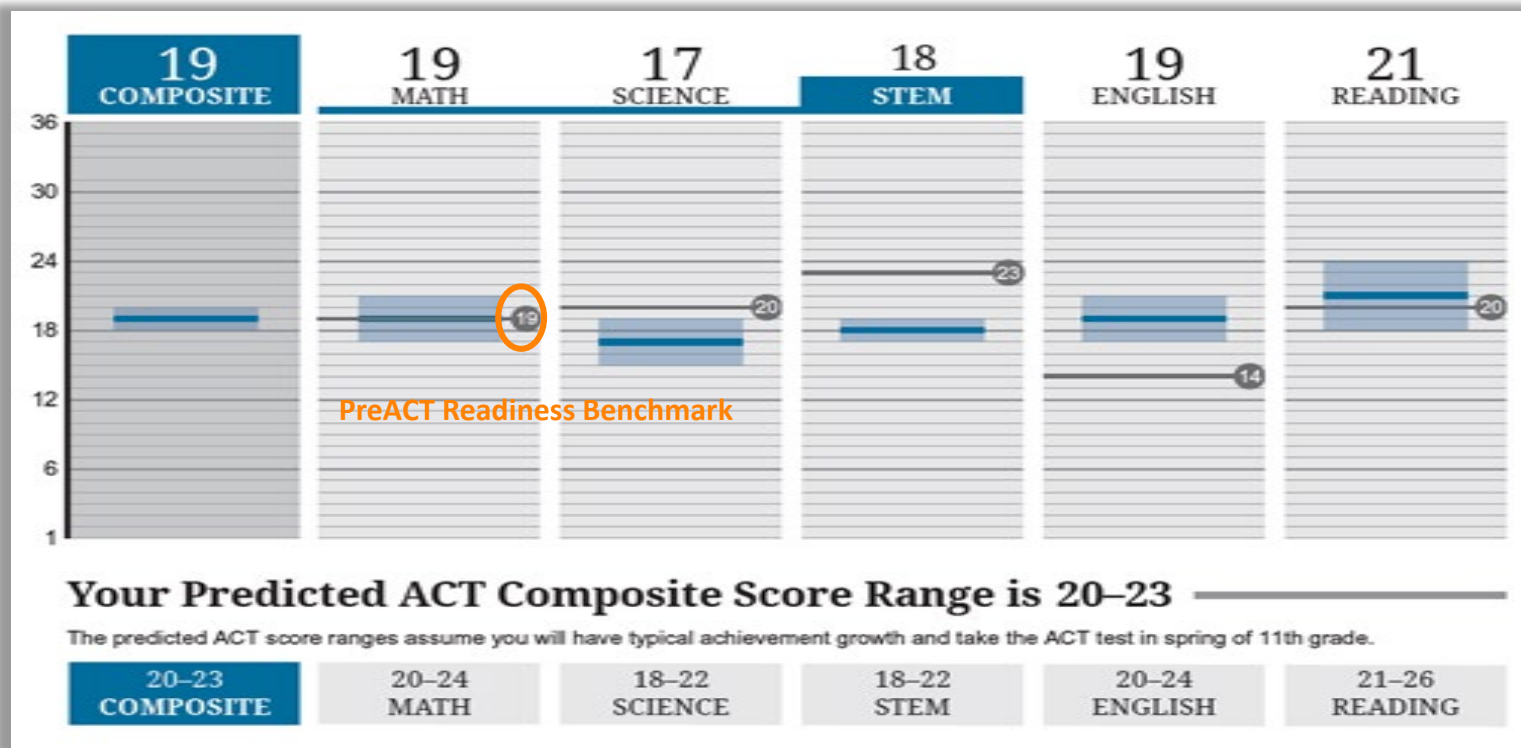
## PreACT Readiness Benchmarks

Subject	Grade 8 Fall	Grade 9 Fall	Grade 10 Fall <i>NC administration</i>	Grade 11 Fall	ACT Benchmark
English	10	12	14	16	18

A Grade 10 score below the Fall benchmark becomes an **early warning signal** — a full year before students sit for the ACT.

# PreACT helps schools monitor readiness trajectories

Projected score ranges help schools identify students who may need earlier support before Grade 11 testing.



## What schools look for

- Students projected below PreACT Readiness Benchmarks
- Subject areas showing the largest readiness gaps
- Students whose projected trajectory may require earlier intervention
- Opportunities to strengthen readiness before Grade 11

*Predictive data is most valuable when it changes instruction before the ACT.*

# PreACT identifies readiness groups

PreACT reporting helps schools identify which students are already on track — and which students may require earlier intervention.

ACT Online Reporting by Data Interaction

Summary View: PreACT, Sample High School

Options Save Download Table Chart Transpose

Group	Year	Mean Score	English				
			14		14-35	11-13	1-10
			Benchmark		On Target	Close to Target	In Need of Intervention
			% Met	% Not Met	%	%	%
Sample High School	2025-2026	17.5	32	68	18	14	68
Spring	2025-2026	17.5	32	68	18	14	68

## PREACT READINESS LEVELS

Probability of meeting ACT benchmark by Grade 11–12:

**ON TARGET ≥ 50%**

Likely on track for benchmark attainment

**CLOSE TO TARGET ~25–49%**

May require targeted support.

**IN NEED OF INTERVENTION < 25%**

Requires earlier intervention.

A Grade 10 score below the fall benchmark becomes an **early warning signal** — a full year before students sit for the ACT.

# Using Item Response Data in PLC Conversations

From response patterns → skill gaps → instructional decisions

ACT Online Reporting by Data Interaction

Item Report: PreACT, Silverpine High School, 2022-2023

Search: Item Grade is one of 10th

Subject	Grade	Reporting Category	District Name	School Name	Total Students	Item Information		Response Analysis					
						Item	Key	A/F	B/G	C/H	D/J	E/K	Omit
English	10th	Conventions of Standard English	Westfall District	Silverpine High School	181	2	B/G	7	*71	9	13	0	1
English	10th	Conventions of Standard English	Westfall District	Silverpine High School	181	5	B/G	20	*67	5	8	0	0
English	10th	Conventions of Standard English	Westfall District	Silverpine High School	181	6	C/H	10	10	*65	14	0	0
English	10th	Conventions of Standard English	Westfall District	Silverpine High School	181	7	D/J	4	25	13	*57	0	1
English	10th	Conventions of Standard English	Westfall District	Silverpine High School	181	9	D/J	3	7	49	*41	0	0
English	10th	Conventions of Standard English	Westfall District	Silverpine High School	181	10	C/H	6	7	*77	10	0	0
English	10th	Conventions of Standard English	Westfall District	Silverpine High School	181	11	A/F	*35	35	22	9	0	0

## WHAT PLC TEAMS DISCUSS

- Common distractor patterns
- Repeated skill breakdowns
- Persistent misconceptions
- Instructional or pacing adjustments

## THE INSTRUCTIONAL MOVE

Teachers use the **Item Response Summary**, the **reporting category**, and the **actual PreACT questions** to diagnose skill gaps and plan next-year instruction.

# The same A.C.T. process starts earlier

*The same instructional process used with ACT juniors can begin earlier using PreACT reporting and readiness data.*

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## ANALYZE DATA

- Identify priority students
- Review projected readiness
- Organize readiness groups



## CONNECT DATA TO STANDARDS & CURRICULUM

- Review reporting categories
- Use Item Response Summary Report
- Use CCRS + Curriculum Review Worksheets



## TAKE ACTION

- Adjust instruction
- Plan grade 11 supports
- Organize PLC response
- Prepare intervention plans for August

### NC ALIGNMENT GUIDE

Includes PreACT & ACT crosswalks for vertical instructional alignment.

# Progress Toward the ACT National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC)

## Career readiness signals start before students earn an NCRC.

- Predicts the NCRC level a student is likely to earn based on the Composite score.
- The Progress Toward the NCRC indicator appears on students' score reports and is available to educators in ACT Online Reporting.

	PreACT 8/9		PreACT		ACT
NCRC Level:	Grade 8 Fall	Grade 9 Fall	Grade 10 Fall	Grade 11 Fall	Grades 11/12
Needs Improvement	1–8	1–9	1–9	1–9	1–12
Bronze	9–13	10–13	10–14	10–14	13–15
Silver	14–17	14–18	15–18	15–19	16–20
Gold	18–21	19–22	19–23	20–24	21–26
Platinum	22–30	23–30	24–35	25–35	27–36

Students do not have to wait until Grade 12 to receive career readiness signals. PreACT and ACT provide earlier indicators that support planning and intervention.

# Vertical Readiness Planning Framework

A planning framework for aligning ACT and PreACT insights to support readiness improvement across grade levels.

Grade Level	Data Source	Readiness Signal	Instructional Focus	Support	Ownership
<b>Grades 8–9</b>	<i>PreACT 8/9</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Early indicators of readiness</li> <li>• Emerging skill gaps</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build foundational skills</li> <li>• Strengthen academic habits</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers</li> <li>• Counselors</li> <li>• Families</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Middle grades leadership</li> <li>• Departments</li> </ul>
<b>Grade 10</b>	<i>PreACT</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Growth toward readiness</li> <li>• Emerging readiness concerns</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deepen core skills</li> <li>• Target high-leverage standards</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers</li> <li>• Interventionists</li> <li>• Families</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School leadership</li> <li>• Academic teams</li> </ul>
<b>Grade 11</b>	<i>ACT</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• College readiness level</li> <li>• Reporting category and skill gaps</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Close priority gaps</li> <li>• Apply skills to more complex tasks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers</li> <li>• Counselors</li> <li>• Targeted interventions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School leadership</li> <li>• Departments</li> <li>• Grade-level teams</li> </ul>
<b>Grade 12</b>	<i>Senior Retake / WorkKeys</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Readiness confirmation</li> <li>• Postsecondary planning signals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refine remaining gaps</li> <li>• Postsecondary planning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Counselors</li> <li>• Career specialists</li> <li>• Families</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School leadership</li> <li>• Counselors</li> <li>• College &amp; Career teams</li> </ul>

## Cross-Grade Planning Questions

- Which readiness patterns appear earlier across grades?
- Which skills persist across grade levels?
- Which supports should begin before Grade 11?
- Which teams or departments share ownership?

## North Carolina PreACT/ACT Alignment Guide

- Aligns NC standards to PreACT and ACT reporting categories and skill areas
- Supports vertical readiness planning across grade levels
- Includes alignment crosswalks for ELA, math, and science
- Includes Educator Tips for district leaders, school leaders, and classroom teachers

**Readiness improvement becomes sustainable when schools monitor, align, and intervene across grades—not just during Grade 11.**

# This becomes a readiness system — not a testing event

A readiness system is the ACT framework — **Analyze** → **Connect** → **Take Action** — applied continuously across grades and across the year.

## OLD MODEL

- Wait for spring ACT
- Review scores once
- Focus only on juniors
- Respond after problems appear

## READINESS SYSTEM

- ✓ Monitor readiness across grades
- ✓ Diagnose reporting categories early
- ✓ Align instruction continuously
- ✓ Check progress during the year
- ✓ Intervene before Grade 11

***The goal is not to react to ACT results. The goal is to change the trajectory before students ever take the ACT.***

# SUPPORT

# North Carolina ACT Data Office Hours · May 18 – June 12, 2026

## SUPPORT IS AVAILABLE

### 30-minute individualized support sessions

- Accessing ACT reports
- Understanding score data
- Locating reporting tools
- Interpreting results for school use

Reserve your session: <https://tinyurl.com/kcspkk3j>

### Dr. Bryan Williams

Former Director of Assessment · ACT Professional Development Presenter

[bryan.williams@act.org](mailto:bryan.williams@act.org)



# North Carolina ACT Contacts

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K-12 CONTACT

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WORKKEYS K-12 CONTACT

Bill Stone

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COUNSELOR OUTREACH SUPPORT

Samantha

Whether you need ACT resources, outreach support, or guidance for helping students navigate college and career readiness planning, the Counselor Outreach Team is available to assist.

[Schedule a Meeting with Samantha](#)

Email: [counselor@act.org](mailto:counselor@act.org)

For registration, MyACT, or general testing support, contact [ACT Customer Care](#).

*Questions after today's workshop? Contact us!*

# Continue the Conversation: ACT Professional Learning Events

JULY 13-15, 2026 · NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE

## [2026 ACT National Summit](#)

Readiness strategy, instructional leadership, assessment insights, and practitioner collaboration. Connect with educators from across the country.

AUGUST 4-6, 2026 · RECOMMENDED FOR TODAY'S PARTICIPANTS

## [Strengthening ACT Readiness: From Predictive Data to Aligned Instruction – North Carolina](#)

Morning (9:00–12:00): **ACT & PreACT Data: Stronger Together** · Afternoon (1:00–4:00): **Anchoring Your Curriculum**

*Participants may attend one or both half-day workshops.*

OCTOBER 2026

## [2026 College & Career Readiness Workshops — North Carolina](#)

Regional educator workshops focused on readiness planning, instructional alignment, and student support strategies.

JANUARY 13, 2027 · KNOXVILLE, TENNESSEE

## [2027 ACT Regional Summit](#)

Regional networking and professional learning for ACT educators and district leaders.

# Thank You!

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 **Please complete the survey.**

*We appreciate your partnership and commitment to improving college and career readiness outcomes.*



**Scan to complete the survey or  
click the link in the Resources widget.**

# RESOURCES

# Workshop Tools & Resources

**ACT College & Career Readiness Standards Page** · *One webpage. Three connected instructional tools.*

[act.org/standards](https://act.org/standards)

TOOL 1

**ACT College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS)**

TOOL 2

**Curriculum Review Worksheets**

TOOL 3

**Standards Interactive Dashboard**  
(left side of webpage under “Contents”)

[Ideas for Progress](#) · *Instructional Strategies*

[ACT Online Reporting User Guide](#)

*Use these resources to move from ACT results → skill analysis → instructional action.*

# How schools operationalize readiness improvement

Examples of how schools use readiness data, intervention planning, and instructional supports to improve student outcomes over time.

## Earlier identification

*Schools use early readiness signals to identify support needs before Grade 11.*

- Early warning indicators
- Readiness trajectory monitoring
- Vertical planning across grade levels

See also:

[PreACT Success Stories](#)

## Measuring college readiness

*Schools use ACT data to identify priority students, monitor readiness benchmarks, and support intervention planning.*

- Schoolwide readiness measurement
- Priority student identification
- Senior readiness planning

See also:

[ACT District Testing Success Stories](#)

## Readiness preparation and intervention

*Schools use targeted supports and readiness interventions to strengthen student outcomes before testing.*

- Targeted readiness support
- Senior retake preparation
- Reporting category intervention

See also:

[ACT Online Prep Success Stories](#)

*Schools improve readiness outcomes when data, curriculum, and intervention planning work together.*

# ACT Practice & Retake Resources

## PRACTICE & PREP RESOURCES

### [Free ACT Practice Resources](#)

Free practice tests, videos, prep tools, and study resources — available immediately to students and families.

### [ACT Online Prep \(AOP\)](#)

Structured intervention with reporting-category-aligned practice and personalized learning paths.

*Powered by MasteryPrep*

## NATIONAL TESTING & RETAKE PLANNING

### [ACT National Test Dates](#)

September, October, and December dates supporting senior retake planning and college application timelines.

### [ACT My Answer Key](#)

Post-test review resource available on select national test dates. Supports targeted reporting-category improvement.

### [ACT Superscore Calculator](#)

Combines a student's highest section scores across multiple test dates. Supports retake strategy and college planning.

### [ACT Fee Waiver Program](#)

Supports equity and access planning for students participating in national ACT retake opportunities.

*Small score gains can create major opportunity shifts for students.*

# Building Capacity & Long-Term Readiness

Resources supporting readiness systems, instructional alignment, and educator development.

## CAPACITY BUILDING

### [ACT Professional Services Catalog](#)

ACT workshops focused on:

- Instructional alignment • Assessment literacy
- Data interpretation: ACT, PreACT, and WorkKeys
- Teaching strategies

#### Available as:

- Live webinars • Onsite workshops

*Supports school and district teams seeking support beyond today's workshop.*

## READINESS & RETAKE STRATEGIES

GRADES 8-9

### [PreACT 8/9](#)

Earlier-grade diagnostic assessment supporting future-proof readiness planning across grade levels.



RETAKE PATHWAY: SCHOOL-DAY TESTING

### [ACT District Testing](#)

Supports school or district-led school-day senior retake implementation and broader readiness planning efforts.

# APPENDIX

# The ACT Test Structure

Test	Questions (scored)	Time
<b>English</b>	50 (40 scored)	35 min
<b>Mathematics</b>	45 (41 scored)	50 min
<b>Reading</b>	36 (27 scored)	40 min
<b>Science</b> <i>(optional)</i>	40 (34 scored)	40 min
<b>Writing</b> <i>(optional)</i>	1 essay	40 min

# The lookup: Composite → Sum range

Use this when you need an exact answer for a specific student. *Composite 17 highlighted — the UNC eligibility floor.*

Composite	Sum Range	Composite	Sum Range	Composite	Sum Range
1	3–4	13	38–40	25	74–76
2	5–7	14	41–43	26	77–79
3	8–10	15	44–46	27	80–82
4	11–13	16	<del>47–49</del>	28	83–85
5	14–16	17	50–52	29	86–88
6	17–19	18	53–55	30	89–91
7	20–22	19	56–58	31	92–94
8	23–25	20	59–61	32	95–97
9	26–28	21	62–64	33	98–100
10	29–31	22	65–67	34	101–103
11	32–34	23	68–70	35	104–106
12	35–37	24	71–73	36	107–108

## How to use it

- 1 Find current sum**  
Add the student's E + M + R from the score report.
- 2 Find goal Composite**  
Look up the goal Composite; note the bottom of its sum range.
- 3 Subtract**  
Goal sum (bottom) – current sum = sum points needed.

**Example: Goal:** Composite **17** → sum range **50–52**

**Current:** Composite **16** · E 17 + M 15 + R 15 = **47**

**Points needed:** 50 – 47 = **+3 sum points**

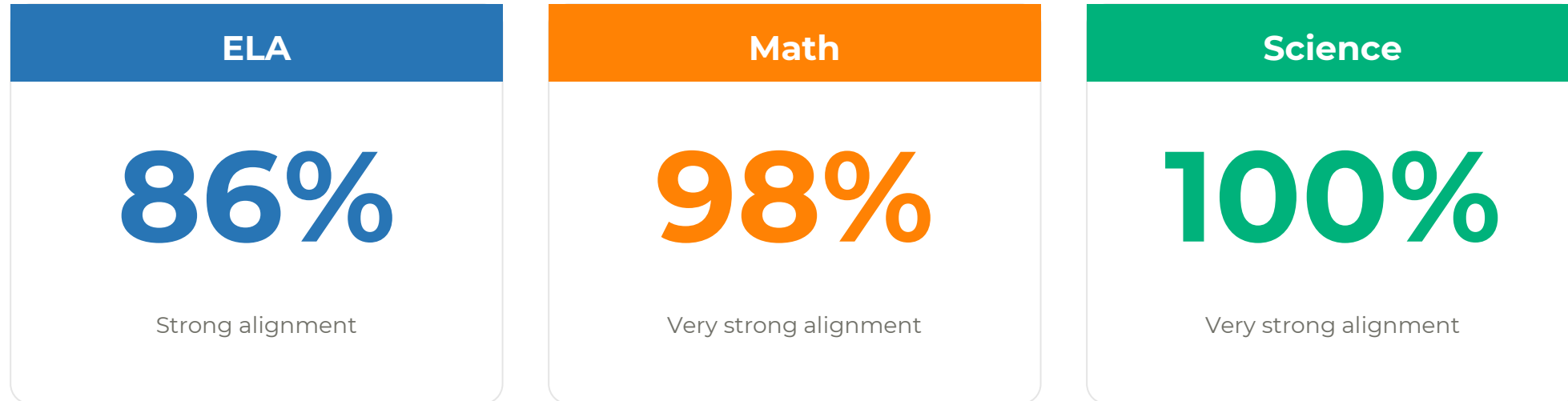
# Priority student support plan

*Turning ACT data into organized student support decisions*

STUDENT	CURRENT COMPOSITE	GOAL COMPOSITE	SUM PTS NEEDED	LOWEST SECTION	LOWEST REPORTING CATEGORY	RETAKE PATHWAY	OWNER	NEXT STEP
<b>Maria R.</b>	16	<b>17</b>	<b>+4</b>	English	Conventions of Std. English	District	Ms. Torres	School enrollment + Conventions prep
<b>DeShawn M.</b>	15	<b>17</b>	<b>+6</b>	Math	Integrating Essential Skills	National	Mr. Okafor	Fee waiver + October registration
<b>Aaliyah T.</b>	16	<b>17</b>	<b>+3</b>	Reading	Key Ideas & Details	District	Ms. Chen	District enrollment + Reading support

# Connecting ACT Reporting Category Skills to NC Standards

North Carolina's PreACT/ACT Alignment Guide



## WHY THIS MATTERS

The Alignment Guide helps educators connect ACT reporting categories to North Carolina standards in ways that support instructional planning, curriculum alignment, professional learning, and data-informed improvement efforts.

# Using the North Carolina Alignment Crosswalks to Connect Standards and ACT Skills

## NORTH CAROLINA ALIGNMENT CROSSWALK

North Carolina Standards Categories and Numbers	Standard	The ACT English Reporting Categories and Skill Areas	The ACT Reading Reporting Categories and Skill Areas
L.11-12.3	Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.	<b>Knowledge of Language:</b> Expressing Ideas Clearly Style  <b>Production of Writing:</b> Topic Development—Purpose and Focus  <b>Conventions of Standard English:</b> Sentence Structure and Formation	<b>Craft and Structure:</b> Word Meanings and Word Choice Text Structure
a.	Vary syntax for effect, consulting references for guidance as needed; apply an understanding of syntax to the study of complex texts when reading.	<b>Conventions of Standard English:</b> Sentence Structure and Formation  <b>Knowledge of Language:</b> Style	<b>Craft and Structure:</b> Word Meanings and Word Choice Text Structure
<b>Vocabulary Acquisition and Use</b>			
L.11-12.4	Determine and/or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grades 11–12 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies: context clues, word parts, word relationships, and reference materials.	<b>Production of Writing:</b> Topic Development—Purpose and Focus  <b>Knowledge of Language:</b> Expressing Ideas Clearly  <b>Conventions of Standard English:</b> Usage Conventions	<b>Craft and Structure:</b> Word Meanings and Word Choice Text Structure

### WHAT THE CROSSWALK HELPS TEAMS DO

- Connect North Carolina standards to ACT reporting
- Examine how ACT-aligned skills appear within classroom instruction
- Support curriculum planning and professional learning conversations
- Inform classroom assessment and instructional design
- Use reporting category data to identify instructional focus areas

*The alignment crosswalk helps educators connect North Carolina standards, ACT reporting categories, and classroom instruction.*

## Worked Example: SST 301 (English CCRS 16-19) Across Curriculum and Instruction

<b>WHERE</b>	<p><b>Where does this skill appear in our curriculum and scope and sequence?</b></p> <p><b>AT SAMPLE HS:</b> <i>9th grade English I, Unit 2. Limited evidence of revisiting across later courses.</i></p>
<b>WHO</b>	<p><b>Who is responsible for reinforcing this skill across courses and grade levels?</b></p> <p><b>AT SAMPLE HS:</b> <i>Primarily the 9th grade ELA team. No formal vertical handoff into 10th or 11th grade instruction.</i></p>
<b>HOW OFTEN</b>	<p><b>How often do students practice and apply this skill in authentic writing contexts?</b></p> <p><b>AT SAMPLE HS:</b> <i>Students encounter the skill in isolated assignments and assessment tasks, with limited opportunities for sustained revision practice across grade levels.</i></p>
<b>WHAT RIGOR</b>	<p><b>Do classroom tasks reflect the level of rigor and revision thinking measured on ACT?</b></p> <p><b>AT SAMPLE HS:</b> <i>Students are primarily identifying errors, while ACT requires revision decisions tied to clarity, meaning, and intent.</i></p>