

**AMERICAN RIVER COLLEGE  
ASSESSMENT CENTER**

**ABILITY-TO-BENEFIT (COMPASS: READING, WRITING, MATH)**

*The Ability-to-Benefit test is administered to students who do not have a high school diploma (or its equivalent) and are applying for financial aid. Eligible students must be at least 18 years old and must not be currently enrolled in high school. A referral from the Financial Aid Office must be presented for testing.*

- *Students who are native-English speakers and not enrolled in an ESL course will be given the ATB COMPASS test. All three sections of the ATB COMPASS must be taken in one sitting. This multiple-choice test is administered on the computer and is untimed. Allow 3 hours for testing.*
- *Students enrolled in an ESL course will be given the ATB COMPASS/ESL test.*

**ATB COMPASS READING  
SAMPLE TEST**

Read the sample passage:

Adapted from Alex Wilson and John Morrill, “Consumer Guide to Home Energy Savings”© 1993 by the American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy.

Regular tune-ups of your heating system will cut heating costs and will most likely increase the lifetime and safety of the system. When a service technician performs a tune-up, he or she should test the efficiency of your heating system.

The technician should measure the efficiency of your system both before and after servicing it and provide you with a copy of the results. Combustion efficiency is determined indirectly, based on some of the following tests: 1) temperature of the flue (or chimney); 2) percent carbon dioxide or percent oxygen in the atmosphere; 3) presence of carbon monoxide in the atmosphere; and 4) draft. Incomplete combustion of fuel is the main contributor to low efficiency. If the technician cannot raise the combustion efficiency up to at least 75% after tuning your heating system, you should consider installing a new system or at least modifying your present system to increase its efficiency.

1. The passage suggests that, if carbon monoxide is present in the atmosphere, it is likely that the:
  - A. heating system is losing efficiency due to incomplete combustion.
  - B. heating system only needs minor repairs and will most likely function for a number of years.
  - C. temperature of the flue will be lower than expected.
  - D. heating system cannot be repaired and must be replaced.
  - E. costs for running the heating system will decrease.
  
2. According to the passage, when performing a tune-up of a heating system, the service technician should:
  - A. ensure that the combustion efficiency is at least 25%.
  - B. modify the heating system before initially measuring efficiency.
  - C. measure combustion efficiency both before and after servicing the system.
  - D. provide his or her supervisor with a written report of the system’s efficiency.
  - E. ignore the age of the heating system.
  
3. Combustion can be best described as a process of:
  - A. fueling
  - B. charging
  - C. spinning
  - D. burning
  - E. cooling

Reading answers: 1. A 2. C 3. D

**ATB COMPASS WRITING  
SAMPLE TEST**

The essay below may contain errors in grammar, punctuation, usage, and writing style. Segments of the essay have been selected (**bold print**) for possible revision. The first option is always identical to the original wording in the text and represents a NO CHANGE option. Choose the best suggestion.

**An increasing number of lakes and rivers** in the northern United States invaded are being by a mussel no larger than a fingernail.

The zebra mussel probably steamed aboard a transatlantic ship sometime in the mid-1980s from the Caspian Sea into U.S. waters. Despite its growth was explosive, partly because the species **was preyed upon by very few native predators in its new environment**. As a consequence, the zebra mussel did find a plentiful food supply. They eat huge amounts of phytoplankton, which tiny free-floating sea organisms that dwell in water. **Scientists are concerned when the mussels** may compete aggressively with other species that depend on the same food supply.

Others concerned by the invading species are industry, public utilities, and boat owners. Zebra mussels cluster in huge colonies, being anchored themselves to any hard surface. These colonies can clog your water intake pipes of electric and water treatment plants. Fishery specialists are currently casting about and baiting their hooks to gun down control methods that will cause the lowest amount of damage to water supplies and other aquatic species. Two of the alternatives exploring are interrupting the species reproductive cycle and finding a bacterium harmful only to zebra mussels.

1. *Alternate suggestions:*

- A. An increasing number of lakes and rivers
- B. An increasingly number of lakes and rivers
- C. A number increasing of lakes and rivers
- D. A number increasingly of lakes and rivers
- E. An increasing of lakes and rivers

2. *Alternate suggestions:*

- A. was preyed upon by very few native predators in its new environment.
- B. found very few predators in its new environment.
- C. found very few native predators and was seldom eaten in its new environment.
- D. was preyed on by very few native predators species in its new environment.
- E. was seldom eaten or preyed on by native predator species in its new environment.

3. *Alternate suggestions:*

- A. Scientists are concerned when the mussels
- B. Scientists are concerned that if the mussels
- C. Scientists are concerned wherein the mussels
- D. Scientists are concerned that the mussels
- E. Scientists are concerned as if the mussels

Select the most effective sentence that will serve as a transition between paragraphs 1 and 2 and will establish the main focus of the essay.

4. *Alternate suggestions:*

- A. The zebra mussel will provide a difficult challenge for the public utility managers.
- B. The zebra mussel is only the latest in a series of newly introduced species to thrive in the U.S.
- C. No one knows how far south and west the zebra mussel is likely to spread, but scientists think they may be on the trail of important clues.
- D. Although small in size, the zebra mussel may become a huge problem for pleasure boat owned in North American waterways.
- E. Despite its size, however, the zebra mussel may have a dramatic effect on North American waterways.

**ATB COMPASS MATH  
SAMPLE TEST**

Content areas:

Basic operations with integers, fractions, decimals, exponents, ratios, proportions, percentages, and averages.

1. What does  $10-1-2$  equal?
  - A. 0
  - B. 1
  - C. 3
  - D. 6
  - E. 7
  
2.  $64 \div 4 = ?$ 
  - A. 4
  - B. 8
  - C. 16
  - D. 32
  - E. not given
  
3. Ben is making wooden toys for the next arts and crafts sale. Each toy costs Ben \$ 1.80 to make. If he sells the toys for \$ 3.00 each, how many will he have to sell to make a profit of exactly \$ 36.00?
  - A. 12
  - B. 20
  - C. 30
  - D. 60
  - E. 108
  
4. What is the average (arithmetic mean) of 8, 7, 7, 5, 3, 2, and 2?
  - A.  $3 \frac{4}{7}$
  - B.  $4 \frac{5}{6}$
  - C.  $4 \frac{6}{7}$
  - D. 5
  - E.  $6 \frac{4}{5}$
  
5. How many yards of material from a 24-yard length of cloth remain after 3 pieces, each  $3 \frac{1}{2}$  yards long, and 5 pieces, each  $2 \frac{1}{4}$  yards long, are removed?
  - A.  $2 \frac{1}{4}$
  - B.  $4 \frac{1}{4}$
  - C.  $4 \frac{5}{6}$
  - D.  $10 \frac{1}{4}$
  - E.  $10 \frac{5}{6}$

Math answers: 1. E 2. C 3. C 4. C 5. A

## ABILITY-TO-BENEFIT TEST

### *Suggested Websites to Review*



#### Reading Comprehension

- [www.smic.be/smic5022/exercisesreadingcomp.htm](http://www.smic.be/smic5022/exercisesreadingcomp.htm)
- <http://depts.gallaudet.edu/englishworks/exercises/main/reading.html>
- <http://www.criticalreading.com/index.html>
- <http://www.marin.cc.ca.us/~don/Study/7read.html>



#### Writing

(grammar, punctuation, usage, style)

- <http://www.york.cuny.edu/testing/atb-exam/writing.pdf>
- <http://chompchomp.com/exercises.htm>
- <http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/>
- <http://www.wisc.edu/writing/Handbook/index.html>
- <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/>



#### Mathematics

(operations with integers, fractions, decimals, exponents, ratios, proportions, percentages, averages)

- <http://math.com/>
- <http://www.mathleague.com/help/help.htm>
- <http://www.aaamath.com/>



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[www.arc.losrios.edu/assess](http://www.arc.losrios.edu/assess)

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