Answers to your questions about

PLACEMENT TESTING:

Who must test?
What subjects are covered?
How long do the tests take?
Do the results matter?

and many more

Muskegon Community College
Do I have to take the tests?
Almost everyone does. You must test if:
- you’re a new student enrolling for six or more credits, or
- you’re planning to enroll in an English or math class, or
- you’re a transfer or current student with less than 1.5 credits earned, or
- you’re a current student with a GPA less than 2.0

Why is testing required?
To help you understand your abilities and choose courses wisely. Test results will help put you in classes where you are ready to succeed.

What is the cost for testing?
It’s free. In fact, you can save money if you do well on the tests because you won’t have to pay for refresher courses.

What tests are required?
There are three tests; reading, writing (English), and math. In the following pages you will find detailed explanations of the tests and sample questions.

Do the test results matter?
Yes! Depending on how you do on the tests, you may be required to take refresher courses before enrolling in regular college classes. Save time and money by doing your very best on each exam.

If I need any refresher courses, when should I take them?
You must take them during the first semester that you enroll. You might want to get them out of the way by enrolling for Spring Term (May and June) or Summer Term (late June to middle of August).

When should I test?
As soon as you decide you’re going to attend Muskegon Community College (if you’re in high school, take the tests during the last half of your senior year). You may call 777-0394 for an appointment.

What if I have a learning disability?
If you know or suspect that you have a disability that affects your test-taking abilities, let us know. Call 777-0309.
What should I do before I take the tests?
Fill out an application for admission so you can get a student number. Having a number makes everything go easier. You may wish to review some of the math concepts (see examples in this booklet) before testing. It’s almost impossible to study for the reading and writing test.

When will I get my test results?
They will be mailed to you a week to ten days after you test (if you have a student number).

What should I do after I test?
Make an appointment with a counselor to do career planning and course selection. Call 777-0362 for an appointment.

What are the test questions like?
See the following pages for details on each test.

THE READING TEST
The Nelson-Denny reading test measures your vocabulary, your comprehension, and your reading rate (words per minute).

The vocabulary section is a 15-minute test of 100 items.

Sample vocabulary question:
To edit is to:  a. destroy  b. prepare  c. draw out  d. consume

The comprehension section is a 20-minute test of 36 questions.

Sample comprehension questions:
In the year 59 A.D., Pliny the Elder reported on the unusual behavior of King Mithridates who was obsessed with antidotes for poison. The Mithridates mixture supposedly contained 54 ingredients needed to be consumed daily in ever-increasing amounts in order to safeguard the king from all possible deadly concoctions. Although most ingredients of his formula remain secret, we can guess that walnuts, figs, the leaves of the rue plant, and the blood of ducks were all included, since they appear among his notes.

1. Who was the author of the story about King Mithridates?
   A. Pliny
   B. Mithridates
   C. Homer
   D. Does not say.
2. King Mithridates and Pliny were
   A. enemies
   B. friends
   C. brothers
   D. does not say

3. This paragraph focuses on
   A. the king’s enemies
   B. Pliny’s obsession with being poisoned
   C. Mithridates’ concern about assassination
   D. various poisonous concoctions

   (Answers: Vocabulary: B Comprehension: A, D, C)

**Placement results:**
Your reading scores and your writing sample (see writing test section of this booklet) are used together to determine which English classes you must complete. You may be required to take a refresher reading class.

In addition, many classes require that you have at least a 10th grade reading level in both vocabulary and comprehension (as measured by the test) before you may enroll.

All new students should seriously consider enrolling in English 234C Study Skills.

**THE MATH TEST**
The mathematics placement test has two sections:
   Basic Math
   Algebra/Trigonometry

The basic math section consists of six parts:

**Fractions**
   **Sample Question:** Divide $2\frac{1}{4}$ by $1\frac{1}{2}$.
      (A) 3 $\frac{3}{8}$  (B) 1 $\frac{1}{2}$  (C) 2 $\frac{1}{8}$

**Decimals**
   **Sample Question:** Find 3.2 - 1.86
      (A) 1.34  (B) 2.66  (C) 1.44

**Percents and Percentages**
   **Sample Question:** 12 is what percent of 80?
      (A) 66 $\frac{2}{3}$%  (B) 7.6%  (C) 15%
Units of Measurement

**Sample Question:** What is the area of a circle with a radius of 2 feet?

(A) 12.56 sq. ft.  (B) 6.26 sq. ft.  (C) 3.14 sq. ft.

Metric System

**Sample Question:** 4.4 lb. = ____________ kg.

(A) 2 kg.  (B) 2.2 kg.  (C) 9.68 kg.

Ratio and Proportions

**Sample Question:** Solve for the letter in $\frac{5}{8} = \frac{9}{x}$

(A) 14.2  (B) 45  (C) 14.4


**Placement results:**

If a refresher course is needed in any of these areas, you will be directed to enroll in a course called Math 035. Math 035 is taught in the College Success Center. It is individualized and you work at your own pace. Each module listed below is worth 1/2 credit:

- Module B - Fractions
- Module C - Decimals
- Module D - Percents and Percentages
- Module E - Units of Measurement
- Module F - Metric System
- Module G - Ratio and Proportion and Averages

If you need a more thorough math review, you will be directed to enroll in Math 036A, a three-credit course covering all the different modules.

The **basic math section** consists of six parts:

**NOTE:** If you have never had an algebra course, you should enroll in Math 035 Module A, a 1/2 credit course in pre-algebra concepts.

The **beginning algebra section** tests on material covered in an introductory course. Some topics included are operations with polynomials, algebraic fractions, solving equations, and factoring. If you need to learn or relearn these subjects, you will be directed to enroll in Math 040.

The **intermediate algebra section** covers topics in a second course in beginning algebra. Those topics would include: fractional exponents, radicals, quadratic formula, systems of equations with 2 and 3 unknowns, inequalities and function notation. If work is needed in these areas, you will be directed to Math 050.
The advanced algebra section of the placement test consists of pre-calculus algebra and analytic geometry. Topics included are linear, quadratic, exponential and logarithmic functions, systems of equations, matrix solutions and absolute value inequalities. You may be directed to enroll in Math 110 or 111.

The trigonometric section consists of pre-calculus trigonometry and analytical geometry. Topics include trigonometric functions, identities and equations, inverse relations and inverse functions, and polar coordinates. If additional work is needed in this area, a placement of Math 112 will be given.

Placement results: You will be recommended to enroll in a level of math appropriate for your skills. If you believe you have been wrongly placed, discuss the matter with your math instructor on the first day of class.

THE WRITING (ENGLISH) TEST
You will be directed to write an essay based on a question about a real-life situation. You will have one hour to complete your test.

Sample essay question:
Because you are a resident of Western Michigan, you have been asked by the local Tourism Council for your views about how to attract more tourists to this part of the state (if you live outside of Western Michigan, you may write about your area).

Write a well-organized letter to the Council members telling them your ideas for attracting more tourists. Be sure to include facts and details to illustrate and support your ideas.

Your essay should be approximately 300 words long (a typical page of handwriting is 150 words).

Be sure your essay is mechanically correct, so leave time to proofread carefully.

Do all of your preliminary thinking (brainstorming, outlining, etc.) on a separate sheet of paper.

Remember, this writing sample counts as 50% of your English placement score (the reading results are the other 50%).
Placement results:
Based on your reading scores and your writing sample, you will be required to do one of the following:

A. enroll in English 101, regular college comprehension
B. enroll in English 101, and 114A (a refresher course)
C. enroll in English 100 or 114B (both are refresher courses)
D. enroll in English 100 or 114B and English 104A or 104B (a reading course)
E. enroll in English 114B and English 104B

NOTE: If you receive a C, D, or E recommendation, you must enroll in the required courses during your first semester of attendance.

If you still have questions, call these numbers:

- Counseling 777-0262
- Admissions 777-0365
- Testing 777-0394
- Special Needs 777-0309
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