



Understanding Your ACT Engage[®] Results

ACT[®] Engage[®]
Grades 6–9



Contact Information

For assistance, call ACT Engage Customer Service at 319.337.1893, 8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., central time, Monday through Friday, or email engage@act.org.

Resources

To access User Guides, Resources for Students and Parents, Research, and Case Studies, visit www.act.org/engage/6-9_materials.html and www.act.org/engage/downloads.html.

What is ACT Engage® Grades 6–9?

ACT Engage Grades 6–9 is a survey from ACT that will help you identify your strengths and needs for several skills that are related to earning good grades and graduating from high school. ACT Engage looks at how you see yourself, your family’s commitment to education, your opinions about school, and your behaviors. It is designed for students in grades 6 through 9.

How do I take ACT Engage?

ACT Engage can be taken online through a link distributed by your school or with a paper and pencil form. Your school will provide you the materials you need to complete ACT Engage.

ACT Engage Grades 6–9 asks you to “self report” your own behaviors, opinions, feelings, and other characteristics. Because you are answering based on your own thoughts and opinions, there are no “right” or “wrong” answers. There are 106 questions, and it will take you about 30 minutes to complete.

How do I get my results?

You will receive a Student Report from your teacher or counselor at school. Your school will also get a copy of your report so that your teacher or counselor can go over your results with you. Please see the next section for information about understanding your report.

Although you may benefit from reading your results on your own, ACT Engage usually works best when you are able to talk about your results with an adult at your school or a family member who can help you decide what to focus on first. There may be many things you want to do to make your strengths stronger and improve skills where you are not as strong.

What do your scores mean?

ACT Engage looks at 10 different areas that are important to your academic success. Information about each area is provided later in this guide, along with sample items and some suggestions of things you and your parents or teachers can do to use your results.

This guide also includes a sample of a Student Report (page 5) like the one you will receive after taking ACT Engage. The report lists your personal information (your name, school name, grade, ID number, etc.) at the top. Below that information is a short explanation of ACT Engage and a graph that shows your scores on each scale.

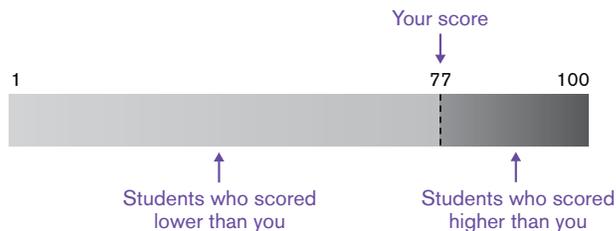
There are two different scores that you receive for each ACT Engage scale. The “scale scores” can be any number between 10 and 60. Just like your teachers turn your quiz or test answers into scores, ACT Engage takes your responses to questions on the survey and translates them into numbers. The scale scores help us figure out your “percentile scores,” which show how you are doing relative to other students in your grade across the United States who have taken ACT Engage. The percentile scores can be anywhere between 1 (the lowest score you can receive) and 99 (the highest score you can receive).

The percentile scores are the easiest numbers to help you understand your strengths and needs. The bars on the graph represent your percentile scores, sorted from high to low. The highest percentile scores (your biggest strengths) are shown at the top of the graph, the middle scores (areas where you are doing ok but may want to develop) in the middle, and lower scores (areas you should especially focus on strengthening) are shown at the bottom of the graph.

To better understand what is meant by the word “percentile,” take a look at the sample student report on the following page. The student scored in the 77th percentile on *Optimism*, meaning that he or she scored the same as or higher than 77% of all of the students in the US who have taken ACT Engage. Your percentile score helps you understand how you are doing in relation to other students. Take a look at the illustration below. The line in the middle of the right side of the bar graph shows that you scored a 77% on Optimism.

The light-colored section of the bar represents students who scored lower than you, and the dark-colored section represents those who scored higher than you did.

Optimism Scale



In general, any percentiles higher than 75 indicate areas where a student is already strong. This student will probably want to spend less time working on strengthening *Optimism* since he or she is already doing well in this area.

This student scored in the 14th percentile on *Thinking before acting*, meaning that he or she scored the same as or higher than 14% of students in the US who have taken ACT Engage. Usually, any percentiles at or below 25 indicate areas where a student may be having a tough time and that he or she should develop further. This student may want to work on *Thinking before acting* before other skills, since he or she is not as strong on this scale as most other students.

In the sample report, you will also notice that, just below the graph, your percentile scores will be listed alongside a definition for each scale and some interpretive information about what your score on that scale means. The next section of this guide gives you more information about each scale, some samples of the questions that are part of each scale, and some suggestions for what you might do to strengthen your skills.

ACT Engage is a tool that is designed to help you do better in school. It is important to understand that your scores on these scales were created based on your own responses to questions about yourself. Low scores on any of these scales indicate that YOU see yourself in a certain way. They do not necessarily mean that your teachers, parents, or anyone else sees you the same way, so do not feel bad if results are lower than you expect! It is important to discuss your results with an adult who knows you well in order to decide if your scores reflect who you really are, and to create a plan for what you can do to make your strengths stronger and improve skills where you are not doing as well.

Figure 1 Sample Student Report, front

Name and identifying information

Sample Student

Tested on MM/DD/YY
6th Grade · ID 926096433



SAMPLE MIDDLE SCHOOL Class/section: 009

ACT Engage Grades 6-9 measures personal, behavioral, and academic skills critical to middle and high school success. Low scores on ACT Engage represent areas that, when improved, may increase your grades and make it easier to focus on completing middle school and high school. This report is designed to help you identify your strengths and weaknesses in order to ensure that you are successful in your academic career.

Percentile scores

Scale scores

SCALE	SCORE	PERCENTILES
Commitment to school	58	99
Family attitude toward education	56	99
Optimism	49	77
Orderly conduct	49	57
School safety climate	37	42
Relationships with school personnel	27	35
Family involvement	21	33
Academic discipline	19	23
Managing feelings	18	20
Thinking before acting	12	14

20 40 60 80 100
Norms for grade 6

UNDERSTANDING YOUR SCORES

Your scores are reported in terms of percentiles. Your percentiles tell you the approximate percentages of students in schools like yours who took ACT Engage and scored at or below your score.

Scales highlighted in red are areas that you may want to focus on developing as you continue your education.

STUDENT SELF REPORT

Days absent (Past month) 5-6 days
Homework not done Sometimes
Prior grades Mostly C's

Capitalize on your strengths

99 Commitment to school

Commitment to stay in school and obtain a high school diploma — Your responses suggest that you are confident in your reasons for attending high school and getting an education (such as career and life goals). You see yourself as determined to invest the necessary time and effort required to obtain a high school diploma regardless of obstacles.

99 Family attitude toward education

Positive family attitude regarding the value of education — Your responses suggest that you perceive that your family members are frequently interested in education-related topics and that they think it is important for you to get an education. Continue using your family as a source of support as you pursue your educational goals and aspirations.

77 Optimism

A hopeful outlook about the future in spite of difficulties or challenges — Your responses suggest that you often focus on the positive aspects of situations and that you try hard when you encounter challenges in your academic or personal life in order to overcome them. You rarely let disappointments get in the way of reaching your goals. This ability to focus on the positive will continue to be helpful to you and could also be helpful to others who have a less optimistic view.

Continue to develop your skills

57 Orderly conduct

Tendency to behave appropriately in class and avoid disciplinary action — Your responses indicate that you usually behave appropriately at school and follow school rules and regulations. Students with similar scores occasionally get into trouble for misbehaving, but not to the point that their behavior leads to academic problems. Continue to do your best to behave appropriately in school, as this will help to support your academic progress.

Definitions and Interpretive information

What Does Each Scale Area Mean?

Academic Discipline

Definition — The degree to which you work hard in school and are committed to doing a good job, shown by the amount of effort invested in completing schoolwork.

Interpretation — This is very important for academic success. Students with high Academic Discipline place great value on schoolwork and will make academic tasks, projects, and assignments a high priority. Low scoring students may avoid schoolwork, cut classes, and view other aspects of their lives as more important than the completion of school-related tasks and assignments.

Things you can do — Consider seeking assistance from your parents or adults at your school with setting goals, prioritizing, managing your time, and organizing tasks. You may want to ask yourself the following questions: What would help you to do better in school? Do you need to spend more time studying? What is the most effective way for you to study? Do you need help in learning certain subjects? How important is it to you to earn good grades? Answers to these questions may help you to have more discipline in completing your schoolwork.

Examples:

- I turn in my assignments on time.
- I'm usually prepared for class.

Commitment to School

Definition — Your commitment to stay in school and obtain a high school diploma.

Interpretation — Students with high scores are determined to complete high school regardless of things that stand in the way, and they appreciate the value of an education. Low-scoring students may not understand how school can benefit them, may not be sure about trying to earn a high school diploma, and may be more likely to drop out when facing difficulties.

Things you can do — Did you know that having more education will help you to earn more money over your lifetime? You may want to ask yourself the following questions: Which occupations are you considering? What skills do you need to enter these occupations? What kind of education or training is needed for these occupations? Which classes are important to your future? Answers to these questions may help to make school seem more relevant to your future.

Examples:

- I am committed to graduating from high school.
- A high school diploma is important for getting ahead in life.

Family Attitude toward Education

Definition — Your perception of your family’s attitude regarding education.

Interpretation — Students who score higher on this scale tend to have family members who talk positively about the value of education and who emphasize this at home. Students who score low on this scale may have family members who overlook the importance of or even have negative views about education.

Things you can do — Talk to your family about their feelings about education. You may want to ask yourself the following questions: Does your family value education? Why do they want you to get an education? How do they feel it will benefit you? Do they support your dreams, plans, and goals? How do they show their support for your education? Do you have a quiet place to do homework? Do your parents remind you of deadlines and help you when you get stuck? Talking with your family about their hopes for you and the types of support you may need from them makes a difference.

Examples:

- My family supports my efforts in school.
- Education is important to my family.

Family Involvement

Definition — The degree to which your family is involved in your school life and activities.

Interpretation — Students who score high on this scale have family members who are more likely to be involved in their school life, whether in academic or extracurricular activities. Students who score low in this scale have family members who may have other things going on (work, family obligations, etc.) that prevent them from being more involved.

Things you can do — Talk with your family about ways they can be involved in school. Ask them to check your homework, or invite them to a school event. Start a conversation about what is going on at school, and how your family can be a part of it.

Examples:

- My family tries hard to be involved in my school life.
- I talk to my family about school accomplishments.

Managing Feelings

Definition — How you experience negative feelings (for example, anger, sadness, embarrassment), and understanding acceptable ways to show these feelings.

Interpretation — Students with high scores are more likely to manage negative emotions well and keep these emotions from causing problems with other activities. Students with low scores on this scale may be easily frustrated and experience difficulty managing emotions.

Things you can do — You may want to ask yourself the following questions: How do you deal with intense feelings? Do you ever get frustrated, angry, or discouraged? What helps you to feel better? Do you share your feelings with others? Do you work out your feeling in some other way? We all get upset at times. It is important to know what to do with those strong feelings. It may help to share feelings with friends, family, or adults at your school (such as a counselor) who can help you to manage those feelings effectively.

Examples:

- I would walk away if someone wanted to fight me.
- I fight back when someone makes me mad.

Optimism

Definition — Having a hopeful outlook about the future in spite of difficulties or challenges.

Interpretation — Those scoring high on this scale are more likely to focus on the good parts of a situation instead of the bad ones and are more likely to keep trying when something challenging comes up. Students who score low are more likely to focus on the bad parts of a situation, become overwhelmed by challenges, and/or give up when things are hard.

Things you can do — When you are coping with difficult situations, do you get discouraged and feel hopeless? Does it seem like bad things happen to you a lot? Getting through bad situations requires confidence that things will get better. Do you have confidence in yourself and in the future? If not, you may want to talk with adults at your school or your family. Let them know that you feel like things are going badly and you need their help to look at the positive side of things.

Examples:

- I am confident that everything will turn out all right.
- I look for the bright side of things.

Orderly Conduct

Definition — Behaving appropriately at school.

Interpretation — Scoring high on this scale means you are more likely to behave well in class, follow school rules, and avoid getting into trouble. If you score low on this scale, your responses suggest that you are more likely to misbehave in class, break rules, or get into trouble.

Things you can do — You may want to ask yourself the following questions: Do you often find yourself in trouble? Do you enjoy breaking rules? Do you feel like there are too many rules and the rules are unfair? Learning environments need order and calm and for students to respect one another. School rules are designed to keep everyone focused on schoolwork. Think before you act, and consider the possible consequences (punishment, losing privileges, hurting others' feelings) before you do things.

Examples:

- I joke around or make fun of others during class.
- I have been sent to the principal's office for misbehaving.

Relationships with School Personnel

Definition — The extent to which you relate to teachers and other adults at your school.

Interpretation — Students with high scores on this scale usually have a stronger connection to school and have good relationships with adults at school. Students with low scores on this scale tend to be less attached to school and are less likely to have bonds with school personnel.

Things you can do — Try to get to know your teachers and other adults at school. If they approach you during new student orientation or at school events, be open to talking with them. Adults at your school are people who have lots of experiences they can share with you and can be helpful to you in many ways. Be open to having a friendly relationship with adults at your school and/or working with them in school activities or projects. You might find you have more in common with them than you think.

Examples:

- Adults at my school understand my point of view.
- If I was in trouble, adults at my school would be there to help.

School Safety Climate

Definition — Your perceptions of safety at your school.

Interpretation — Students with high scores in this scale are more likely to believe that their school provides a safe learning environment, which makes academic success much easier. Those who score low in this scale are more likely to be concerned about safety in school (for example, bullying, violence) and may find it hard to concentrate on their schoolwork.

Things you can do — Report all unsafe behaviors or bullying to an appropriate adult. Practice safety drills and make sure you are aware of safety procedures and who can help in an emergency. Talk to adults at your school about concerns that you have regarding safety for yourself and others. School staff want you to be safe and will work with you to help you stay safe at school. You are not tattling when you ask for help in staying safe.

Examples:

- I feel safe at school.
- Students at my school don't get in trouble with the law.

Thinking Before Acting

Definition — Whether or not you think about the consequences of doing something before you do it.

Interpretation — Students who have high scores in this scale are more likely to think through the consequences of their behavior (whether good or bad) before doing things. In contrast, students who score low on this scale tend to behave more impulsively and are less likely to consider the consequences of their actions.

Things you can do — Work on developing your decision-making skills, consider “what-ifs” when thinking about consequences of decisions, and make sure you take sufficient time to make healthy decisions instead of acting “in the heat of the moment.” Think before you act, and consider the possible consequences (punishment, losing privileges, hurting others’ feelings) before you do things.

Examples:

- I think about what might happen before I act.
- I think about what I say before I say it.

A Message to Parents

Education has many benefits. High school and college graduates have more opportunities available to them, including more job options, higher earning potential, and better job security. Getting good grades throughout school and earning a high school diploma are critical in order to set students on the right path for future success.

Comparing your student’s behaviors to those of other students, by using the ACT Engage percentile scores as shown on the Student Report, can give you an early indication of whether or not your student has the behavioral skills needed to achieve academic success. The table below lists some questions you should ask when considering ACT Engage results:

ACADEMIC BEHAVIORS	DOES MY STUDENT . . .
Academic Discipline	complete assignments on time and stay focused when doing homework?
Commitment to School	feel committed to getting good grades in school and continuing on to college after high school?
Family Attitude Toward Education	feel that our family values education and cares about his or her accomplishments in school?
Family Involvement	share with us what is happening in school and feel supported when he or she is having problems in school?
Managing Feelings	handle intense feelings well and behave appropriately even when upset?
Optimism	have a hopeful outlook about the future?
Orderly Conduct	behave appropriately at school?
Relationships with School Personnel	have positive relationships with adults at school?
School Safety Climate	feel safe while attending school?
Thinking Before Acting	think about the consequences of his or her actions prior to doing something?

Below are some activities you can do with your student to help him or her develop academic behaviors. Strengthening these academic behaviors will help your student be more successful academically and will increase his or her chances of earning a high school diploma and making a successful transition to college.

Building Academic Behaviors

Help your student:

- learn to prioritize schoolwork over other activities
- develop goal setting, time management, and organization skills
- by supervising the completion of homework and checking to make sure it gets turned in

Show family support and involvement in education by:

- emphasizing the value of education to facilitate a better life, in both tangible (earning potential) and intangible ways (quality of life)
- encouraging your student to talk about his or her school day
- supporting your student’s interests and aspirations, both inside and outside of the classroom
- attending both academic and nonacademic school events

Discuss the connections between:

- schoolwork, college majors and careers
- schoolwork and real-life applications
- schoolwork, understanding how the world works, and how to effectively communicate with others
- increased education and the opportunity to become stable financially via higher salaries, lower unemployment rates, and more employment possibilities

ACT[®]