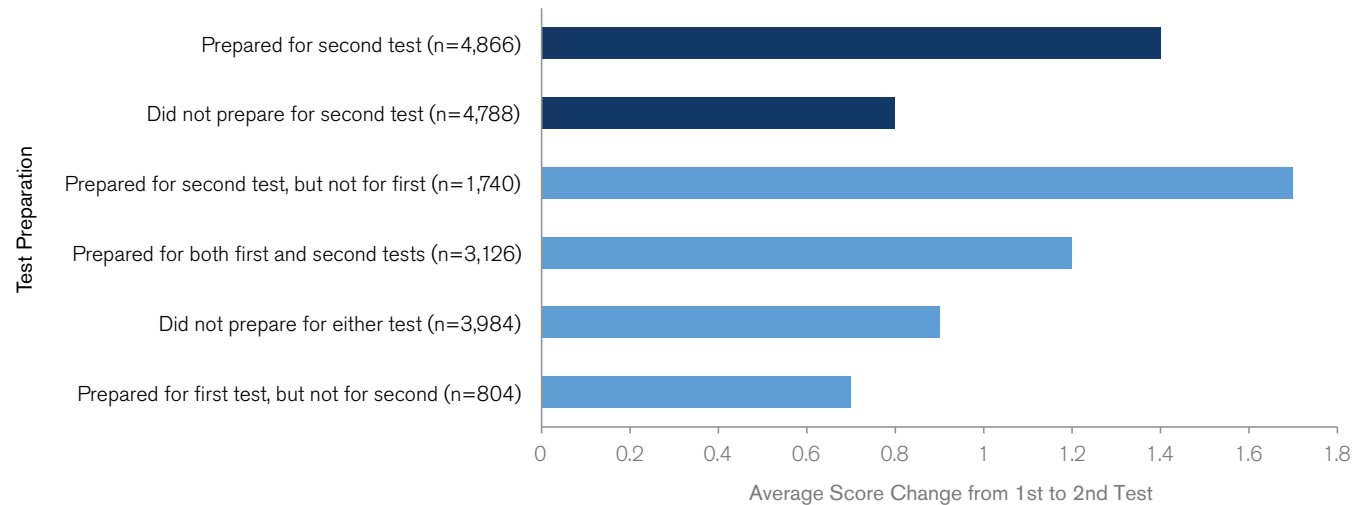


Among students who took the ACT twice, those who reported preparing for the second test earned on average ACT Composite scores about 1.4 points higher than their scores on the first test. These scores were about one-half point higher than the scores of students who reported not preparing.

How ACT Scores Change with Test Preparation

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Composite Score Changes of Students Who Took the ACT on Two Occasions



Note: These findings are based on data from 9,654 students who took the ACT twice, either for the first time in spring 2012 and the second in fall 2012, or for the first time in fall 2012 and the second in spring 2013. The students also completed a survey of their test preparation activities.

To investigate whether test preparation is related to changes in Composite scores on the ACT® college readiness assessment, we asked students who took the ACT twice whether they had participated in any test-preparation activities or used any test-preparation materials (outside of normal classroom participation) prior to testing.¹ Then we compared the students' ACT Composite scores from both testing occasions.

For most students, score changes were positive but relatively small. On average, students who reported preparing for the second test earned Composite scores on that test that were about 1.4 points higher than their scores on the first test. The Composite scores of these students were about 0.6 points higher than the scores of those

who reported not preparing (average change of 1.4 versus 0.8 score points, respectively).

A closer look at preparation patterns reveals that students who reported preparing only for the second test earned Composite scores that were 0.5 to 0.8 points higher on average than those of students who reported preparing for both tests or for neither test. Noticeably smaller average score differences were observed for students who reported preparing for the first test but not for the second. ■

¹ When asking this particular question, we did not refer to specific types of preparation activity, such as web-based preparation programs, commercial preparation programs, or preparation workbooks. We simply asked, "Did you participate in any specific test preparation activity(ies) or use any test preparation materials, outside of normal classroom participation, prior to taking the ACT on each of the specified dates?"