

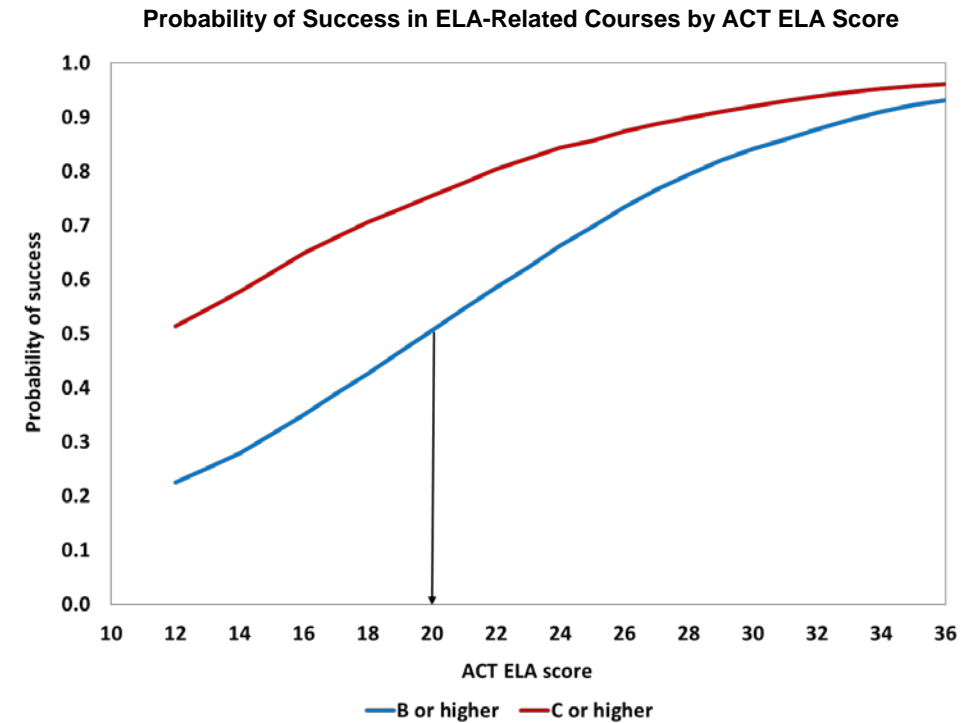
## Development and Validation of a Preliminary ELA Readiness Benchmark Based on the ACT ELA Score

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ACT introduced the ACT English Language Arts (ELA) score in fall 2015 for ACT-tested students who take the optional ACT writing test. The ACT ELA score is a combination of the ACT English, reading, and writing scores and ranges between 1 and 36.

Given the importance of integrated literacy skills for academic and workplace success, states and school districts are now requesting information about the ACT ELA scores that are associated with a reasonable chance of graduating from high school with the literacy skills that are needed to be successful in college.

A recent ACT study derived a preliminary empirically-based ELA Readiness Benchmark by identifying the ACT ELA score associated with a 50% probability of earning a grade of B or higher in seven ELA-related courses commonly taken by first-year college students. These courses included English Composition I, American History, Other History, Psychology, Sociology, Political Science, and Economics.



The typical ACT ELA score associated with at least a 50% chance of earning a B grade or higher in ELA-related courses was determined to be 20. Moreover, this cutoff score was also associated with an approximate 75% chance of earning a C grade or higher.

Providing prospective students with an indicator of their ELA readiness based on their English, reading, and writing skills may help facilitate the transition to college by raising student awareness of the literacy

skills that are required to meet the demands of the array of ELA-related courses they will face in college. Such feedback can send a signal to students as to the level of readiness that is needed to avoid having to take remedial coursework.

The ultimate goal is that the ACT College Readiness Benchmarks will be used to identify at-risk students and provide academic interventions in order to support all students in achieving educational and workplace success. ■

For more information on ACT Benchmarks, see:

- Radunzel, J., Westrick, P., Bassiri, D., & Li, D. (2017). [Development and validation of a preliminary ELA Readiness Benchmark based on the ACT ELA score](#). Iowa City, IA: ACT.
- Allen, J. (2013). [Updating the ACT College Readiness Benchmarks](#). Iowa City, IA: ACT
- Radunzel, J., Mattern, K., Crouse, J., & Westrick, P. (2015). [Development and validation of a STEM Benchmark based on the ACT STEM score](#). Iowa City, IA: ACT.