

Table 138.—American College Testing (ACT) score averages, by sex: 1970 to 2001

Type of test	1970	1975	1980	1985	1990 ¹	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Participants:²																
Total (in thousands)	714	822	836	739	817	796	832	876	892	945	924	959	995	1,019	1,065	1,070
	Test scores ³															
Composite, total	18.6	18.5	18.5	18.6	20.6	20.6	20.6	20.7	20.8	20.8	20.9	21.0 (4.7)	21.0 (4.7)	21.0 (4.7)	21.0 (4.7)	21.0 (4.7)
Male	19.5	19.3	19.3	19.4	21.0	20.9	20.9	21.0	20.9	21.0	21.0	21.1 (4.9)	21.2 (4.9)	21.1 (4.9)	21.2 (4.9)	21.1 (4.9)
Female	17.8	17.9	17.8	17.9	20.3	20.4	20.5	20.5	20.7	20.7	20.8	20.8 (4.6)	20.9 (4.6)	20.9 (4.6)	20.9 (4.6)	20.9 (4.6)
English, total	17.7	17.9	17.8	18.1	20.5	20.3	20.2	20.3	20.3	20.2	20.3	20.3 (5.4)	20.4 (5.4)	20.5 (5.5)	20.5 (5.5)	20.5 (5.6)
Male	17.1	17.3	17.3	17.6	20.1	19.8	19.8	19.8	19.8	19.8	19.8	19.9 (5.4)	19.9 (5.4)	20.0 (5.5)	20.0 (5.6)	20.0 (5.6)
Female	18.3	18.3	18.2	18.6	20.9	20.7	20.6	20.6	20.7	20.6	20.7	20.7 (5.4)	20.8 (5.4)	20.9 (5.5)	20.9 (5.5)	20.8 (5.6)
Math, total	17.6	17.4	17.3	17.2	19.9	20.0	20.0	20.1	20.2	20.2	20.2	20.6 (5.0)	20.8 (5.1)	20.7 (5.0)	20.7 (5.0)	20.7 (5.0)
Male	19.3	18.9	18.9	18.6	20.7	20.6	20.7	20.8	20.8	20.9	20.9	21.3 (5.2)	21.5 (5.3)	21.4 (5.2)	21.4 (5.2)	21.4 (5.2)
Female	16.2	16.2	16.0	16.0	19.3	19.4	19.5	19.6	19.6	19.7	19.7	20.1 (4.7)	20.2 (4.8)	20.2 (4.7)	20.2 (4.8)	20.2 (4.7)
Reading, total ⁴	17.4	17.2	17.2	17.4	—	21.2	21.1	21.2	21.2	21.3	21.3	21.3 (6.1)	21.4 (6.0)	21.4 (6.0)	21.4 (6.1)	21.3 (6.0)
Male	18.7	18.2	18.3	18.3	—	21.3	21.1	21.2	21.1	21.1	21.0	21.2 (6.1)	21.1 (6.2)	21.1 (6.1)	21.2 (6.1)	21.1 (6.1)
Female	16.4	16.4	16.4	16.6	—	21.1	21.1	21.2	21.4	21.4	21.6	21.5 (6.0)	21.6 (5.9)	21.6 (5.9)	21.5 (6.0)	21.5 (6.0)
Science reasoning, total ⁵	21.1	21.1	21.0	21.2	—	20.7	20.7	20.8	20.9	21.0	21.1	21.1 (4.7)	21.1 (4.6)	21.0 (4.5)	21.0 (4.5)	21.0 (4.6)
Male	22.4	22.4	22.3	22.6	—	21.3	21.4	21.5	21.6	21.6	21.7	21.7 (4.9)	21.8 (4.9)	21.5 (4.8)	21.6 (4.8)	21.6 (4.9)
Female	20.0	20.0	20.0	20.0	—	20.1	20.1	20.3	20.4	20.5	20.5	20.6 (4.4)	20.6 (4.3)	20.6 (4.2)	20.6 (4.3)	20.6 (4.3)
	Percent															
Obtaining composite scores of—																
27 or above ⁶	—	—	—	—	12	12	11	12	12	12	13	10 —	10 —	10 —	10 —	10 —
18 or below ⁷	—	—	—	—	35	35	35	35	35	35	34	26 —	25 —	25 —	25 —	25 —
Planned major field of study																
Business ⁸	18	14	20	21	20	18	16	14	13	13	12	12 —	12 —	12 —	11 —	11 —
Engineering ⁹	8	6	8	9	9	10	10	9	9	8	8	8 —	8 —	8 —	8 —	7 —
Social science ¹⁰	10	7	6	7	10	10	10	9	9	9	9	9 —	9 —	9 —	9 —	9 —
Education ¹¹	16	11	9	6	8	8	8	8	8	8	9	9 —	9 —	9 —	9 —	8 —

—Not available.

¹ Test scores for 1990 and later data are not comparable with previous years because a new version of the ACT was introduced. Estimated average composite scores for the new version for prior years were: 1989, 20.6; 1988, 19.8; and 1986, 20.8; and 1982, 20.3.

² Beginning in 1985, data are for seniors who graduated in year shown and had taken the ACT in their junior or senior years.

³ Minimum score, 1; maximum score, 36.

⁴ Prior to 1990, reading was called social studies.

⁵ Prior to 1990, science reasoning was called natural science.

⁶ Beginning in 1997, data are for scores of 28 or higher.

⁷ Beginning in 1997, data are for scores of 17 or lower.

⁸ Includes political and persuasive (e.g., sales) fields for 1970. From 1975 through 1990, includes business and commerce. Thereafter, includes business and management, business and office, and marketing and distribution.

⁹ Beginning in 1990, includes engineering and engineering related technologies.

¹⁰ Includes social science and philosophy, religion, and theology except from 1975 through 1989.

¹¹ Includes education and teacher education.

NOTE: Standard errors appear in parentheses.

SOURCE: The American College Testing program, *High School Profile Report*, annual. (This table was prepared August 2001.)