Grade Level 11

Overview

As the competition increases for postsecondary educational opportunities, it is more important than ever for students to understand and be prepared for high-stakes placement and admissions testing. This lesson will introduce students to three common examinations (ACT, SAT, ASVAB) where students will learn and practice test-taking strategies which are designed to improve student performance.

Learning Outcomes

At the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Take a practice ACT, SAT or ASVAB exam.
- Articulate difficulties they had with the practice exams.
- Formulate test preparation strategies that match the difficulties they experienced.

Language Objectives

At the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Verbally discuss the benefits of test preparation techniques.
- Verbally articulate challenges faced during practice exams.

Standards Alignment

- California Common Core State Standards: College & Career Readiness Anchor Standards:
  - RL 5, 7; W 2, 4, 7, 8, 9; SL 1, 2; L 1, 2
- California Career Technical Education Anchor Standards:
  - 1, 2, 3, 4, 5
- California Standards for Career Ready Practice:
  - 2, 3, 4
- National Career Development Guidelines:
  - PS 2, ED 1
- International Society for Technology in Education Standards:
Materials

1. Computer with Internet access for students
2. Computer with Internet access and projection capability for instructor
3. Projector and screen
4. Writing tools
5. Student Handout
   - Test Preparation Tips (p. 6)
6. Online Resources
   - [Ready, Set, Test! Start-Up Video](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TQXWUXPiNs)
   - [SAT Practice Test](https://sat.collegeboard.org/practice/sat-practice-test)
   - [ACT Sample Questions](http://www.actstudent.org/samptest/)
   - [ASVAB Test](http://www.asvabprogram.com)

Academic Vocabulary

- **ACT (formerly American College Testing)**: is a national college admissions examination that consists of subject area tests in English, mathematics, reading, and science.

- **ASVAB (formerly Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery)**: is used worldwide and assesses academic ability and predicts success in a wide variety of occupations. ASVAB test areas are general science, mathematical reasoning and knowledge, word knowledge, paragraph comprehension, mathematics knowledge, electronics information, auto and shop information, and mechanical comprehension.
• **SAT (formerly called the Scholastic Aptitude Test):** is a college admission exam that lets you show colleges what you know and how well you can apply that knowledge. SAT tests your knowledge of reading, writing, and math.

• **Test accommodations:** are any modifications made to tests or testing conditions that allow students with physical disabilities, learning disabilities, or limited English-language ability to demonstrate their knowledge and skills in a testing situation.

**Activity**

Students gather test preparation information and discuss test preparation techniques.

**Getting Ready**

- Preview the “Ready, Set, Test!” start-up video (link in Materials section)
- Review the ACT, SAT, and ASVAB practice exams (links in Materials section)
- Review the Test Preparation Tips handout
- Review the Additional Resources

**Lesson Procedures**

1. Introduce the lesson by showing the “Ready, Set, Test!” start-up video (link in Materials section) and confirm students understand what to expect. Or you can introduce the lesson without the video by describing the topic and activity.

2. Lead a class discussion about the benefits of test preparation (prep).
   - Ask students to identify techniques that are useful for taking any kind of test (e.g., getting sleep the night before, reviewing materials, following directions).

   - Ask students to identify techniques that might be unique to different types of test (e.g., essay, objective, lab practical, open book). For details on different test taking techniques, see the materials in the Additional Resources section at the end of this lesson.

   - If appropriate for students in your class, read and discuss the definition of “test accommodations”. Instruct students to enter the term “accommodations” into the search box when they are on the practice test sites to learn about available accommodations.

3. Distribute and discuss the “Test Preparation Tips” handout.
   - Ask students to share their own tips. What techniques do they use that help them successfully navigate high-stress testing?

   Record student responses on black or white board.
4. Have students go online to the SAT Practice Test, ACT Sample Questions, or the ASVAB Test (links in Materials section) and complete the practice test questions. While they are completing the practice test questions, have them record the things that make the test difficult for them.

5. Ask students to individually identify test prep techniques that match the difficulties they experienced. Students should record their answers in preparation for the class discussion. Remind students to use conventions of Standard English because their notes will be graded.

6. Debrief the class using the following prompts:
   - What are some challenges you faced while taking these practice tests?
   - Have you considered taking a test prep course designed for these tests? Why or why not?
   - Can you get special accommodations for taking these exams? If you can, how would you do that?
   - Do any of your instructors include test prep strategies in your classes? If not, have you thought of going to them and requesting information from them? If not, why not?
   - What test prep techniques do you think would help you? Will you add these to the ones you are currently using?

7. Wrap Up. The best antidote for test anxiety is being prepared. There’s a much higher chance of achieving the score they hope to earn if they’re prepared. If they have crippling anxiety, talk to someone who knows about test anxiety and can help them minimize its impact on their test scores.

8. Remind students to put their work products in their career portfolios whether they are using a paper folder or an online filing system.

**Estimated Time**

One class session

**Evaluation**

- Student notes can be evaluated for elements of the test they found difficult and individual testing preparation strategies they can use to help with that.

- Student participation in class discussion.

- Student staying on assignment when on the Internet.
Additional Resources

Testing with success series from Study Guides and Strategies:

- **Short answer tests**
  http://www.studygs.net/tsttak5.htm

- **True/false exams**
  http://www.studygs.net/tsttak2.htm

- **Multiple choice exams**
  http://www.studygs.net/tsttak3.htm

- **Math exams**
  http://www.studygs.net/tsttak6.htm

- **Essay exams**
  http://www.studygs.net/tsttak4.htm

- **Open book exams**
  http://www.studygs.net/tsttak7.htm

- **Tips for better test taking**
  http://www.studygs.net/tsttak1.htm

- **Mastering one test**
  http://www.studygs.net/onetest.htm

- **U.S. Army’s March 2 Success** (free study materials)
  https://www.march2success.com/

Adaptations

- Have students practice test prep techniques and report on their effectiveness.

- Have students interview counselors about test prep techniques.

- Print out practice tests and have students take them in small groups.

- Have students investigate and report on the pros and cons of online testing and how online testing may impact their testing strategies.

This lesson and all other lessons and materials are posted on the California Career Resource Network Web site at www.californiacareers.info.
Test Preparation Tips

Test preparation begins on your first day of class. Pay attention, take good notes, complete homework assignments, and review your study materials on a regular basis. These strategies will increase your chances for test-taking success.

1. Make sure you set aside time to study before the test and do it when you are well rested. (Cramming doesn’t work.)
2. Know the type of exam and content (e.g. cumulative or last chapter only).
3. Create 3x5 study cards with key concepts and questions.
4. Create outlines to summarize the content of a book chapter or lecture.
5. Study with a group to compare ideas and understand concepts.
6. Explain content to your family or friends that you think will be on the test to help you get things clear in your own mind.
7. Eat before you take a test to help with energy and to help focus. Avoid eating too much and having foods that might make you sleepy.
8. Get a good night’s sleep the night before the test.
9. Bring all the materials you are allowed. If you are unsure what is allowed, ask.
10. Arrive at the classroom at least 5 minutes before the test starts so you can be relaxed and ready to go.
11. Avoid anxiety—don’t hang out with peers cramming right before the test.
12. If it is an online test, go to the Web site and take any available practice tests.
13. Most importantly—follow the test directions!

At the test:

1. Bring at least two pens/pencils with good erasers, a calculator with fresh batteries, and any other resources you are allowed.
2. Bring a watch so that you can pace yourself.
3. When you first receive your test, do a quick survey of the entire test so that you know how to efficiently spend your time.
4. Do the problems that have the greatest point values first.
5. Always read the whole question carefully. Don’t make assumptions about what the question might be.