

Appropriate Use of ASVAB Test Scores

The Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) is a collection of tests used to qualify military applicants for entrance into the U.S. Military and into training programs for military occupations. ASVAB was designed to predict success in military training and military job performance. It has been validated extensively against Military training performance and found to be a good predictor of training grades. It has also been validated against job performance for a broad range of military occupations, and been found to be a good predictor of job knowledge and hands-on performance. In addition to providing a screen for military enlistment, applicant and recruit scores are tracked over time and used as one indicator of recruit quality and factor into measures of military readiness.

Although there is some overlap between ASVAB content and elementary and secondary school curricula, the ASVAB is not designed to be a measure of educational attainment, high-school achievement, or a measure of preparedness for college or a predictor of college success. ASVAB test scores are routinely collected from both military applicants and from students participating in the ASVAB Career Exploration Program. Since participation in these ASVAB programs is voluntary (there is an element of self-selection from the applicants, students, and/or school's perspectives) a comparison of scores across select subpopulations is likely to be unrepresentative of true subpopulation differences. For example, a comparison of ASVAB score distributions across schools or States is likely to give a distorted picture of true differences because of differential test participation rates caused by selection factors. Further, we find that many students, if they decide to consider military opportunities, will retake the ASVAB after graduation. This suggests that their initial scores may not reflect their best efforts. Since we do not have an independent measure of student motivation, the nature of the testing program and anecdotal evidence suggest caution should be taken if non-applicant ASVAB scores are used as proxy measures of student abilities.

For these reasons, the Department of Defense does not endorse the use of ASVAB scores for purposes other than those for which the test was designed.

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National Comparison -- 50 States

Education Level : 10

	Minimum	Maximum	Average
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Armed Forces Qualification Test	1	99	38.25
General Science	23	73	47.69
Arithmetic Reasoning	29	71	46.67
Word Knowledge	19	71	44.44
Paragraph Comprehension	24	66	46.80
Mathematics Knowledge	29	68	49.42
Mechanical Comprehension	22	76	44.94
Electronics Information	23	80	43.76
Auto and Shop Information	28	77	40.94

Number of Students Tested: 78,547

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National Comparison -- 50 States

Education Level : 11

	Minimum	Maximum	Average
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Armed Forces Qualification Test	1	99	43.06
General Science	23	73	49.06
Arithmetic Reasoning	29	71	47.98
Word Knowledge	19	71	45.83
Paragraph Comprehension	24	66	48.35
Mathematics Knowledge	29	68	51.05
Mechanical Comprehension	22	76	46.44
Electronics Information	23	80	45.04
Auto and Shop Information	28	77	42.33

Number of Students Tested: 384,830

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National Comparison -- 50 States

Education Level : 12

	Minimum	Maximum	Average
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Armed Forces Qualification Test	1	99	39.54
General Science	23	73	47.69
Arithmetic Reasoning	29	71	47.04
Word Knowledge	19	71	44.79
Paragraph Comprehension	24	65	47.59
Mathematics Knowledge	29	68	49.78
Mechanical Comprehension	22	76	45.58
Electronics Information	23	80	44.52
Auto and Shop Information	28	77	42.11

Number of Students Tested: 193,382