WorkKeys®

Occupational Opportunities

A listing of the most common occupations across the country

ACT®

Today's Jobs Demand Higher-Level Skills

Good jobs go to highly skilled workers. The U.S. economy is entering a period of transformation that will see the steady elimination of low-skill jobs and substantial growth in occupations that demand the knowledge and skills needed to master complex tasks and responsibilities. Opportunities abound for those who prepare to meet new challenges. The role of essential skills in workplace performance is demonstrated by the information provided in this booklet, which can help individuals, educators, and employers learn more about the relationship between skills and performance. Common understanding and shared expectations generate a driving force that can power innovative programs to improve workforce skills, enhance quality of life, and lead to successful careers.

A National Commitment to Essential Skills

National Career Readiness Certificate®

The National Career Readiness Certificate—a portable credential issued by ACT—uses the WorkKeys® system to verify that individuals possess the essential skills associated with the broadest range of jobs and occupations. This enables employers across the United States to validate the presence of core employability skills that are closely related to job performance and success. The National Career Readiness Certificate and other credentials that share its principles are based on three WorkKeys assessments—Reading for Information, Applied Mathematics, and Locating Information. ACT research shows that these three skills are important to 85 percent of the 16,000 jobs that have been analyzed since the WorkKeys system was launched.

Understanding *Occupational Opportunities*

The following occupational charts present skills and average annual salaries associated with some of the nation's most common occupations. The information in the charts is based on ACT research conducted for its DISCOVER® and WorkKeys systems, and data extracted from the Occupational Information Network (O*NET) developed by the U.S. Department of Labor. Some of the data reflect estimates developed from representative samples of WorkKeys job analysis studies and recommendations of expert raters.

The occupation charts are divided into three categories:

- The **Now** section provides data for occupations that are commonly available to high school graduates. These positions frequently serve as gateways to higher-level jobs and careers.
- Occupations listed in the **Next** section require additional training that is usually acquired on the job or via educational programs offered by community colleges or other providers.
- Occupations included in the **Later** section typically require postsecondary educational credentials and may call for professional experience.

The **Occupational Title** column lists the most common and fastest-growing occupations in the United States as identified in data published by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics for 2007.

The **CA** column lists corresponding career areas reported by ACT's DISCOVER program and the World-of-Work Map, which is explained on page 6.

Next to the CA column are columns for three WorkKeys assessments: **AM** (Applied Mathematics), **LI** (Locating Information), and **RI** (Reading for Information). WorkKeys scores are expressed in levels that range from 3 to 6 or 7, depending on the assessment. National Career Readiness Certificates issued at the Gold level require minimum scores of 5 or higher on these three assessments. Silver certificates require minimum scores of 4 or higher and Bronze certificates are awarded for minimum scores of 3 or higher. The complete database of occupational profiles can be found at **www.act.org/workkeys/profiles/occuprof/index.html**.

The last two columns, based on the published U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics data, show the **U.S. Median Wage** and **Annual Openings**, which projects nationwide job demand.

Entry Level Occupations: NOW

Occupation Title	CA	AM	LI	RI	U.S. Median Wage	Annual Openings
Automotive body and related repairers	N	3	3	3	$35,690	24,827
Bartenders	Z	4	4	3	$17,090	75,183
Brickmasons and blockmasons	K	4	4	3	$44,070	17,636
Bus drivers, school	H	3	4	4	$25,860	52,365
Bus drivers, transit and intercity	H	3	4	4	$33,160	29,198
Cement masons and concrete finishers	K	5	4	4	$33,840	29,717
Child care workers	Z	4	4	4	$18,350	285,485
Construction laborers	K	3	3	4	$27,310	150,948
Correctional officers and jailers	D	3	4	4	$36,970	83,712
Counter and rental clerks	E	4	4	4	$20,070	127,488
Customer service representatives	E	5	4	4	$29,040	577,955
Dental assistants	W	4	4	5	$31,550	89,564
Drywall and ceiling tile installers	K	4	4	4	$36,520	17,572
Electrical power-line installers and repairers	N	3	4	4	$52,570	11,692
Emergency medical technicians and paramedics	R	3	5	5	$28,400	40,968
Fire fighters	K	3	4	4	$43,170	43,804
Fitness trainers and aerobics instructors	X	3	4	4	$27,680	68,398
Food preparation workers	L	3	3	3	$18,150	169,962
Hairdressers, hairstylists, and cosmetologists	Z	4	4	5	$22,210	88,718
Home health aides	W	4	4	4	$20,010	393,920
Hotel, motel, and resort desk clerks	E	4	4	4	$18,950	47,905
Janitors and cleaners, except maids and housekeeping cleaners	K	3	3	4	$20,800	390,328
Laborers and freight, stock, and material movers, hand	M	3	4	3	$21,900	128,884
Landscaping and groundskeeping workers	I	3	4	3	$22,240	247,877
Maids and housekeeping cleaners	K	3	3	3	$18,350	216,768
Maintenance and repair workers, general	N	5	5	4	$32,570	166,652
Medical assistants	W	4	5	5	$27,430	155,423
Nursing aides, orderlies, and attendants	W	3	4	4	$23,160	282,628
Office clerks, general	E	3	4	4	$24,460	474,658
Operating engineers and other construction equipment operators	K	3	3	3	$38,130	46,446
Painters, construction and maintenance	K	3	4	3	$32,080	61,546
Police and sheriff's patrol officers	D	4	4	5	$49,630	86,879
Police, fire, and ambulance dispatchers	G	3	4	4	$32,660	15,571
Postal service mail carriers	G	3	4	4	$44,500	14,350
Real estate sales agents	B	5	4	5	$40,600	54,468
Receptionists and information clerks	E	4	4	4	$23,710	230,880
Retail salespersons	B	4	4	5	$20,150	719,636
Roofers	K	3	4	3	$33,240	26,091
Security guards	D	3	4	4	$22,570	198,235
Tellers	F	3	4	4	$22,920	111,722
Truck drivers, heavy and tractor-trailer	H	3	4	4	$36,220	223,428
Truck drivers, light or delivery services	H	4	5	3	$26,380	98,413
Waiters and waitresses	Z	4	3	3	$15,850	376,303
Water and liquid waste treatment plant and system operators	M	4	4	4	$37,090	19,066
Welders, cutters, solderers, and brazers	M	3	3	3	$32,270	32,333
Averages		4	4	4	$29,324	151,235

Chart Key:

CA = Career Area (see World-of-Work Map, page 6)

AM = Applied Mathematics

LI = Locating Information

RI = Reading for Information

Occupations Requiring Postsecondary Training: NEXT

Occupation Title	CA	AM	LI	RI	U.S. Median Wage	Annual Openings
Actors	U	0	4	4	$49,733	8,996
Aircraft mechanics and service technicians	N	4	4	4	$49,010	15,966
Appraisers and assessors of real estate	F	5	4	5	$46,130	19,239
Architectural and civil drafters	O	4	4	4	$43,310	10,343
Audio and video equipment technicians	X	4	4	4	$36,050	13,325
Automotive service technicians and mechanics	N	4	4	4	$34,170	131,007
Bill and account collectors	D	3	4	4	$29,990	107,643
Bookkeeping, accounting, and auditing clerks	F	4	4	4	$31,560	303,213
Brokerage clerks	F	4	4	4	$37,360	15,644
Bus and truck mechanics and diesel engine specialists	N	4	4	5	$38,640	38,638
Cardiovascular technologists and technicians	Q	3	4	4	$44,940	12,421
Carpenters	K	4	4	4	$37,660	173,807
Chefs and head cooks	L	4	4	3	$37,160	12,151
Civil engineering technicians	O	5	5	6	$42,580	11,116
Claims adjusters, examiners, and investigators	D	3	4	4	$53,560	31,039
Computer support specialists	J	5	4	5	$42,400	78,027
Construction and building inspectors	K	4	4	3	$48,330	22,528
Cost estimators	O	6	6	5	$54,920	45,878
Dental hygienists	W	3	4	5	$64,740	51,619
Diagnostic medical sonographers	Q	4	5	5	$59,860	9,611
Electrical and electronic engineering technicians	O	4	4	4	$52,140	9,718
Electricians	K	5	5	5	$44,780	66,390
Executive secretaries and administrative assistants	E	4	4	4	$38,640	270,183
Flight attendants	Z	4	5	5	$61,120	11,347
Food service managers	C	3	4	3	$44,570	23,264
Funeral directors	C	5	6	7	$50,370	4,458
Heating, air conditioning, and refrigeration mechanics and installers	N	4	4	4	$38,360	29,416
Industrial engineering technicians	O	4	4	4	$47,490	9,059
Industrial machinery mechanics	N	4	4	4	$42,350	28,893
Legal secretaries	E	4	5	5	$38,810	37,517
Library technicians	J	4	4	4	$27,680	14,793
Licensed practical and licensed vocational nurses	W	4	4	4	$37,940	121,470
Lodging managers	C	5	4	5	$44,240	9,906
Massage therapists	W	0	4	4	$34,870	26,068
Medical and clinical laboratory technicians	Q	5	5	5	$34,270	26,766
Medical records and health information technicians	E	3	4	5	$29,290	32,694
Medical secretaries	E	3	4	4	$28,950	76,094
Medical transcriptionists	E	3	4	5	$31,250	15,121
Paralegals and legal assistants	Y	4	4	6	$44,990	54,729
Pharmacy technicians	Q	5	5	5	$26,720	95,080
Photographers	T	4	4	4	$27,720	15,147
Physical therapist assistants	W	3	5	4	$44,130	20,547
Plumbers, pipefitters, and steamfitters	K	4	4	4	$44,090	64,813
Preschool teachers, except special education	X	3	4	4	$23,130	120,060
Private detectives and investigators	D	3	4	5	$37,640	10,577
Radiologic technologists and technicians	Q	4	4	4	$50,260	33,361
Real estate brokers	B	5	4	5	$58,860	17,149
Respiratory therapists	R	5	5	5	$50,070	26,500
Sales representatives, wholesale and manufacturing, except technical and scientific products	B	4	5	5	$50,750	171,904
Secretaries, except legal, medical, and executive	E	4	4	4	$28,220	60,785
Self-enrichment education teachers	X	4	5	5	$34,580	63,678
Social and human service assistants	Y	4	4	4	$26,630	119,823
Surgical technologists	Q	4	4	5	$37,540	22,193
Surveying and mapping technicians	O	5	4	4	$33,640	17,440
Veterinary technologists and technicians	W	3	3	4	$27,970	30,168
Averages		4	4	4	$41,021	52,169

Occupations Requiring Postsecondary Degree: LATER

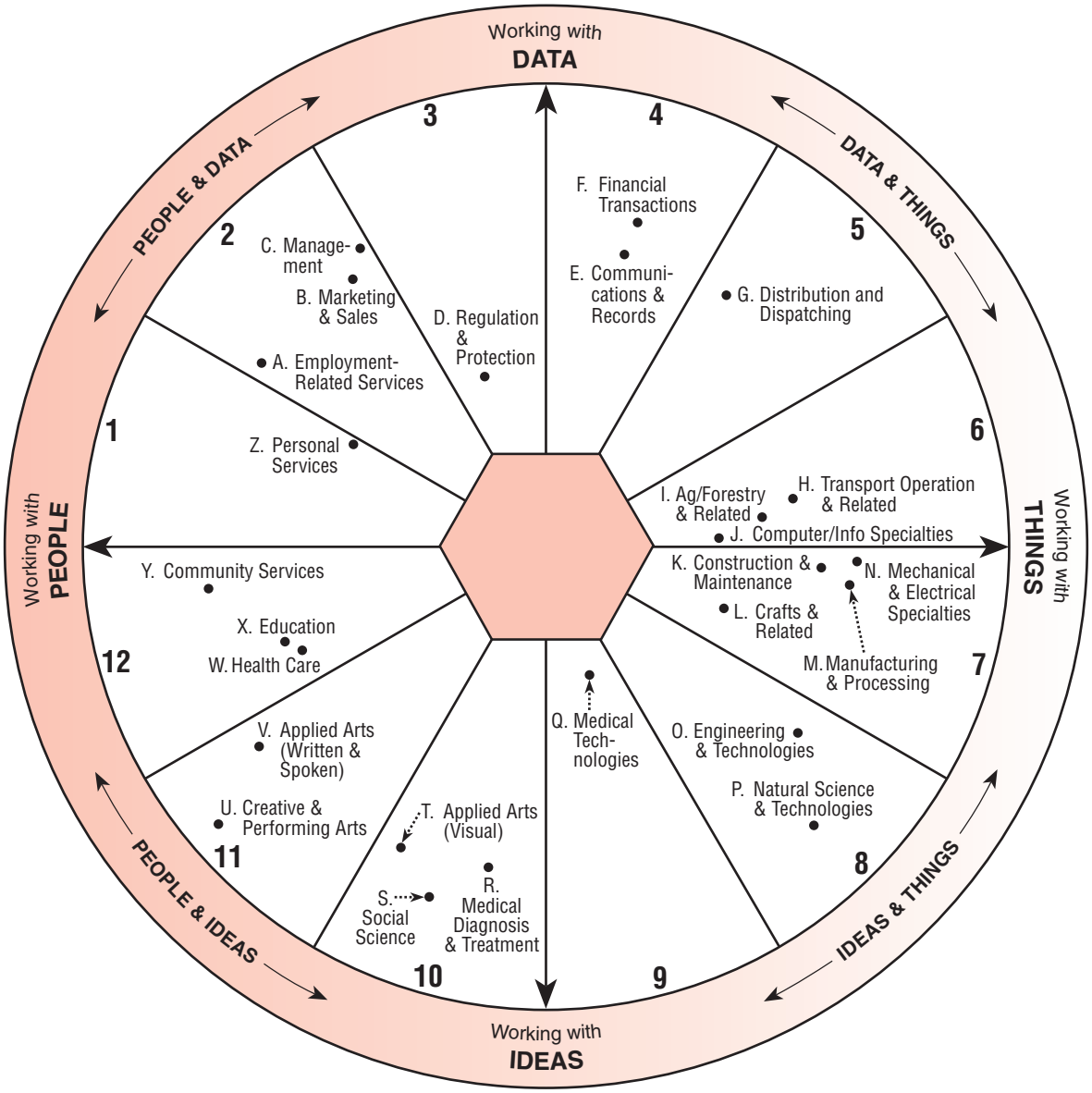
Occupation Title	CA	AM	LI	RI	U.S. Median Wage	Annual Openings
Accountants and auditors	F	3	3	3	$57,060	249,672
Aerospace engineers	O	7	6	7	$90,930	11,387
Airline pilots, copilots, and flight engineers	H	6	6	6	$148,810	12,534
Chemists	P	6	5	6	$63,490	10,413
Chief executives	C	6	5	5	$151,370	15,829
Child, family, and school social workers	Y	4	4	5	$38,620	58,826
Civil engineers	O	7	5	6	$71,710	50,187
Clergy	Y	4	4	5	$40,460	84,767
Clinical, counseling, and school psychologists	Y	5	5	6	$62,210	27,445
Coaches and scouts	X	4	4	4	$27,840	35,926
Computer and information systems managers	J	6	5	6	$108,070	47,949
Computer systems analysts	J	3	4	5	$73,090	151,659
Construction managers	C	3	3	4	$76,230	85,338
Dentists, general	R	4	5	6	$137,630	14,749
Detectives and criminal investigators	D	4	5	5	$59,930	21,297
Dietitians and nutritionists	Q	4	4	5	$49,010	6,442
Directors, religious activities and education	Y	4	4	5	$35,370	20,583
Editors	V	0	4	4	$48,320	5,694
Elementary school teachers, except special education	X	3	4	4	$47,330	243,257
Financial managers	C	4	5	5	$95,310	71,274
Graphic designers	T	5	4	5	$41,280	29,115
Insurance sales agents	B	4	4	5	$44,110	66,806
Interior designers	T	6	5	4	$43,970	15,025
Interpreters and translators	V	0	4	4	$37,490	10,240
Kindergarten teachers, except special education	X	4	4	4	$45,120	29,819
Lawyers	Y	5	5	7	$106,120	93,330
Librarians	V	5	5	5	$50,970	9,573
Loan officers	C	3	4	4	$53,000	48,702
Market research analysts	S	5	4	4	$60,300	53,098
Mechanical engineers	O	4	5	4	$72,300	15,573
Meeting and convention planners	C	4	5	4	$43,530	11,211
Mental health counselors	Y	0	5	5	$36,000	32,309
Musicians and singers	U	0	4	4	$56,722	23,790
Occupational therapists	R	4	4	6	$63,790	24,211
Personal financial advisors	Y	5	5	5	$67,660	74,413
Pharmacists	Q	6	4	6	$100,480	57,615
Physician assistants	R	4	4	6	$78,450	18,730
Physicians and surgeons	R	5	5	7	$153,640	98,925
Postsecondary Teachers	C	5	5	5	$64,900	420,031
Property, real estate, and community association managers	C	4	4	5	$43,670	55,897
Recreation workers	Y	4	4	5	$21,220	48,003
Registered nurses	W	4	4	5	$60,010	639,815
Sales managers	B	6	5	6	$94,910	38,362
Secondary school teachers, except special and vocational education	X	4	5	5	$49,420	87,767
Special education teachers, secondary school	X	4	5	5	$49,640	15,076
Speech-language pathologists	R	5	5	5	$60,690	14,390
Substance abuse and behavioral disorder counselors	Y	0	4	5	$35,580	30,577
Surveyors	O	6	5	5	$51,630	16,279
Technical writers	V	5	6	5	$60,390	10,992
Veterinarians	R	5	5	6	$75,230	23,231
Averages		4	5	5	$66,100	66,763

World-of-Work Map

The World-of-Work Map organizes occupations into six clusters (parallel to John Holland's six occupational types), 12 regions, and 26 career area (CA) groups of similar jobs. It graphically shows how occupations relate to each other according to primary work tasks. For more information on the World-of-Work Map, go to **www.act.org/wwm/about.html** or **www.actstudent.org/wwm/world.html**.

The World-of-Work Map's career areas cover all U.S. jobs. A career area's location is based on its primary work tasks—working with:

- ***Data***—Facts, numbers, files, business procedures
- ***Things***—Machines, tools, living things, and materials such as food, wood, or metal
- ***Ideas***—Knowledge, insights, theories, new ways of saying or doing something
- ***People***—Care, services, leadership, sales

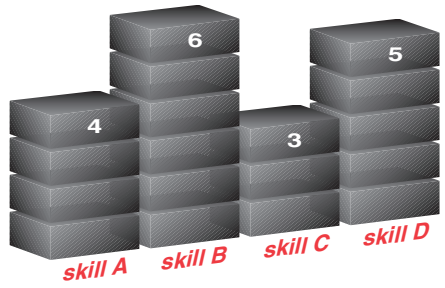


The WorkKeys System

The WorkKeys system identifies and measures "real world" skills that are shown by research to be essential to success in hundreds of jobs and occupations throughout the economy. The system includes three components—research, assessments, and skill development tools—that work together to establish a common language and metrics that enable individuals, educators, and employers to form shared expectations about job requirements and success. Research based on job analysis findings show that the essential skills measured by the WorkKeys system are valuable for any occupation—skilled or professional—and at any level of education.

WorkKeys assessments and research are developed and maintained by ACT, an international leader with 50 years of experience in educational measurement and workforce development services. It is most widely known for the ACT® test, which informs college admissions decisions for millions of college-bound students and thousands of postsecondary institutions each year.

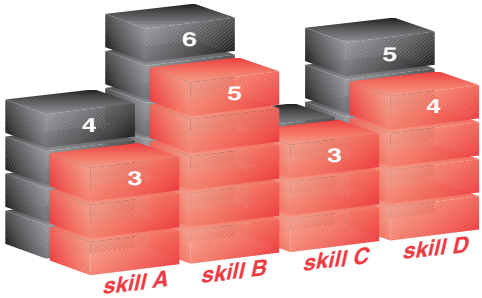
ACT developed the WorkKeys system nearly 20 years ago and has administered more than 12 million assessments during that time. ACT researchers have conducted or overseen more than 16,000 job analysis studies since the system was launched. The system is now used by thousands of educational institutions, government agencies, and private businesses.



Job Profiling

What skills and skill levels are needed in today's occupations?

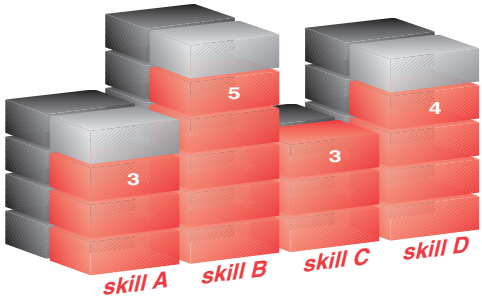
required skill levels



Skill Assessments

What work skills and skill levels does an individual currently have?

assessment scores



Need Determination

How can any skill gaps be addressed in education and training programs?

skill gaps

Pathways to Quality Jobs and Successful Careers

WorkKeys users raise understanding and improve work-related skills with proven strategies that:

- Align curriculum and instruction to achieve skill levels needed for workplace success (see WorkKeys *Targets for Instruction* at **www.act.org/workkeys/education/targets/index.html**).
- Improve assessment outcomes with WorkKeys prep packages or practice tests.
- Prepare for successful testing experiences.
- Use score reports to chart a course to higher skills and better jobs.
- Qualify for the National Career Readiness Certificate (see **www.act.org/certificate/index.html**).
- Meet employer expectations about the value of essential skills.
- Incorporate measures of essential skills into resumes and job search strategies.
- Achieve and document essential skill levels needed for hundreds of jobs and occupations (see **www.act.org/workkeys/analysis/occup.html**).

Three WorkKeys assessments—Reading for Information, Applied Mathematics, and Locating Information—serve as the basis for the National Career Readiness Certificate, a nationally recognized credential of essential foundational skills.

WorkKeys®

500 ACT Drive
P.O. Box 168
Iowa City, IA 52243-0168
www.workkeys.com
1-800/WORKKEY (967-5539)

12753
© 2009 by ACT, Inc. All rights reserved.

* 0 4 1 1 M E 0 9 0 *