



# Student Guide to ACCUPLACER Preparation



# PLATO Learning Inc.

## ACCUPLACER Preparation

Welcome to the PLATO ACCUPLACER Preparation Program using the PLATO Web Learning Network!

All students attending a Massachusetts public college or university must participate in placement testing. Here at BCC, we use ACCUPLACER to assess students' skill levels in reading, writing and mathematics. The results of the test, in conjunction with academic background information, are used by college advisors to help students choose appropriate courses prior to registration.

Based on placement testing results, approximately 75% of students entering BCC register for at least one developmental course. Developmental courses are designed to prepare students for college-level courses. They help students to develop a foundation for all future learning and skill-building. While financial aid can be used to pay for these courses, the credits earned in them do not count towards a degree or certificate program. Depending on your ACCUPLACER scores, one or more developmental course may be a mandatory prerequisite for courses in your program. Unfortunately, they do increase the amount of time and money associated with the attainment of your degree or certificate.

### **Clearly, placement testing is very important!**

Research shows that students who take the time to refresh their skills in math and reading concepts *before* taking or re-taking the placement test are less likely to be placed into remedial courses.

BCC has partnered with the PLATO Learning Network to help you prepare for ACCUPLACER. PLATO is an online learning platform that diagnoses your areas of weakness and prescribes an individualized course of instruction to help you prepare for the placement test. All of your PLATO assignments can be done online and at your own pace.

**Let's get started!**

## HOW TO CONFIGURE THE COMPUTER TO UTILIZE THE PLATO COURSEWARE

This first section covers some of the technical details you'll need to get started and log-in.

1. Launch your web browser.

Please note: Internet Explorer is recommended. Firefox and other browsers do not interface well with PLATO.

*If AOL is your Internet provider: Once you sign-in to AOL, minimize this window and launch your Windows browser, Netscape Navigator, Internet Explorer, etc. Do not attempt to use the AOL window to navigate Plato's rich text and graphics.*

2. Enter the following URL: <http://www.platoweb.com>  
When you see the Account Information screen, enter your account number in the block exactly as shown; then click the button marked [Submit]. The log-in screen appears.

**Your account number is: 00-51326**

3. The next step involves disabling Pop-up blockers. **THIS IS IMPORTANT!** "Pop-ups" are those annoying messages that appear during program operations. All modern systems have programs called "Pop-Up Blockers" designed to keep these messages from appearing. Many programs such as Plato, however, use the pop-up feature to operate their programs. For this reason, you must accept pop-ups **FOR THE PLATO SITE ONLY** in order to use it properly.

NOTE: These plug-ins are harmless and will not negatively affect your computer.

Click [Turn Off Pop-up Blocker]. The drop-down menus disappear. You have disabled Pop-Up Blockers for the PLATO SITE ONLY. (See illustration on next page).

Having problems with plug-ins or pop-up blockers?



Access the PLATO help menu on the left hand side of the log-in screen

4. You may now download appropriate plug-ins so that the program will operate properly on your computer. With the Plato Web Learning Network Login screen showing, click the link to the left of the login boxes that reads, *"Where can I get the browser plug-ins I need to run courseware?"* Follow the directions for MAC or PC users.
5. After downloading and running the appropriate plug-ins, you are ready to enroll in PLATO.

## HOW TO ENROLL

Now that your computer is set up, it's time to enroll into PLATO.

1. With the PLATO Web Learning Network Login screen showing, click on the link above the login boxes which reads, *If you don't have a PLATO Name, click here to **self enroll***. The Self Enroll screen appears.
2. Type the word ACCUPLACER in the Group Name box (Not case-sensitive).
3. Type the word password in the Password box (Case-sensitive).
4. Click the [Send] button. If you receive a prompt asking if you want Windows to save this password, click the [No] button. The Self Enroll screen updates, requesting the entry of your personal information.
5. Enter your first and last name in the boxes provided.
6. In the box marked [PLATO Name], enter a user name that you will use when signing into the program. Remember that this user name is **case sensitive**. In the box marked [Personal Password], enter a password that you will use when signing into the program. Remember that this password is **case sensitive**.

7. Click the [Send] button. The Self Enroll Complete screen appears. The Self Enroll screen will indicate you are enrolled. Click OK.
8. The Login screen appears. To enter the program, use the Plato Name and the Personal Password that you have just created.
9. Grab a pen and record your PLATO Name and Password.



PLATO NAME: \_\_\_\_\_  
GROUP NAME: ACCUPLACER  
PASSWORD: \_\_\_\_\_

## ACCUPLACER MATH ASSIGNMENTS AND ASSESSMENTS



Once you've logged into PLATO, your assignment screen will appear. Let's take a look at your first assignment, ACCUPLACER Math. We will look at the other assignment, ACCUPLACER English in a later section.

1. Click on ACCUPLACER Math folder. This folder includes coursework that highlights concepts you will be tested on in ACCUPLACER. You'll see two sub-folders, Math and College Level Math. You cannot advance to College Level Math folder until you complete or exempt yourself from the Math folder. Click on the Math folder.
2. Now click on the first folder, Understanding Fractions (with Assessments). The first assignment (Understanding Fractions: Pretest) is a pretest to determine which sections in this folder (if any) you should complete. Click on it to begin, and the test will open in a separate window. Pretests usually take about 10-15 minutes to complete, and lessons should take about 20 minutes.

**PLEASE NOTE:** Take your time and do your best. This test will determine what you know and don't know. Some of the tests may seem tedious, but is to your advantage to take them seriously. **A serious effort on the pretests will save a lot of time and work** by exempting you from certain lessons and help you focus on your areas of weakness. You may use scrap paper and a pen for the test, **but you should not use a calculator.**

3. Once you've completed the pretest, you must first click **EXIT** at the end of the test window and then **click here** on the next screen so the program can compute and save your score.
4. You will then be brought back to the folder for which you tested, in this case, Understanding Fractions. You will notice you have been locked out of the pretest  and in the Status column you may have an Exemption Star  next to some of the lessons. The Exemption Star notes that you demonstrated proficiency in that area and do not need to complete that particular lesson. The lessons that **do not** have the Exemption Star next to them are the ones you should focus on and complete. The next section instructs you on how to complete a lesson.




### WHAT'S IN A PLATO LESSON?

1. After completing the pretest for each assignment, PLATO will determine which lessons you should complete. Your goal is to master  and complete  lessons. Each lesson generally consists of a tutorial, one or more drills, and a mastery test. All the activities address the objective(s) for that module. Each component of a lesson has a different function:

Tutorial – presents a new skill

Drill – a chance to practice the new skill through an Application, Offline Activity, and/or Homework

Mastery Test - tests mastery of the new skill

2. For the fastest, most efficient use of Plato, go to any assignments that are marked as not started . Continue to click sub-folders until the assignment is reached and begin a lesson with either a Tutorial or Mastery Test. You can either begin a lesson with a Tutorial or by taking the Mastery Test in order to determine if you are already proficient with this skill. For this reason, it is recommended that you **attempt available lesson Mastery Tests first**. When you have mastered a test (80% or more answers are correct), continue on to the next lesson. Notice that when you have mastered a test, the test is locked and the yellow star  and green circle  status symbols will appear.

3. If you do NOT pass a Mastery Test (or if you don't complete it), the test will lock 🔒 and the red lock and in progress 🟡 status symbols appear. Simply go back to the lesson Tutorial section to review and practice a skill. The Mastery Test will then unlock and you can take the Mastery Test again. Also, you can always review practice problems in the Application or Drill section for extra practice. These activities will only open after you have completed the Tutorial.

4. Assignments are complete when you have Exempted ⭐, Completed 🟢, or Mastered ⭐ the activities and Mastery Tests within each lesson. (Look at the symbol next to each lesson to determine status.) Drills, Applications, Offline Activities and Homework activities are optional and not required for mastery and completion of a module.

## ACCUPLACER ENGLISH ASSIGNMENTS AND ASSESSMENTS

1. From your assignment screen, click on the ACCUPLACER English folder.
2. The first assignment is a Language Arts pretest called FASTRACK to determine which lessons you should complete in the Essay and Sentence Skills subfolders. Please note you cannot advance without first taking this pretest. Click on FASTRACK Advantage Language Arts Assessment Tests to begin, and the test will open in a separate window. The FASTRACK tests take longer to complete than the math pretests – plan on at least thirty minutes.  
**PLEASE NOTE:** Take your time and do your best. This test will determine what you know and don't know. Some of the tests may seem tedious, but it is to your advantage to take them seriously. **Serious effort on the FASTRACK test will save a lot of time and work** by exempting you from certain lessons and helping you focus on your areas of weakness.
3. To navigate through the FASTRACK Test, use the GREEN arrows in the bottom right corner to move forward or backwards. The RED arrow in the bottom left corner allows you to EXIT the test.

4. The next screen asks you to enter a letter that represents a skill level. When prompted for the letter, please use the default letter provided and click on the GREEN forward arrow to begin your test.
5. If you wish to stop taking the FASTRACK and come back to it later, your results will be saved. This is true only for the FASTRACK tests.
6. Once you've completed FASTRACK, you will need to click EXIT at the end so the program can compute and save your score.
7. You will then be brought back to ACCUPLACER English folder. You will notice you have been locked out of the FASTRACK Language Arts Tests 🚫. You may now enter the Accuplacer Essay and Accuplacer Sentence Skills folders. Continue to find your first lesson. Similar to the math module, where you begin depends upon your FASTRACK exemptions 🌟.
8. Repeat all steps for taking the FASTRACK Advantage Reading Skills and Strategies Assessment Test and complete the appropriate lessons in the Accuplacer Reading folder.
9. Once you have completed 🟢, mastered 🌟, or exempted 🌟 all of the assigned PLATO modules, you have successfully completed your assignment and are ready to take the ACCUPLACER.

## HELPFUL HINTS

1. If you're having problems with plug-ins or pop-up blockers, access the PLATO help menu on the left hand side of the log-in screen.
2. If you wish to stop taking the FASTRACK and come back to it later, your results will be saved. This is true only for the FASTRACK tests.
3. Attempt available Mastery Tests within a lesson first. Solid performance on Mastery Tests will indicate you do not need to complete the corresponding lesson.
4. Take your time and do your best on the pretests and FASTRACK tests. They will determine what you know and don't know. Some of the tests may seem tedious, but is to your advantage to take them seriously. Serious effort on these tests will save a lot of time and work by exempting you from certain lessons and helping you focus on your areas of weakness.
5. Drills, Applications, Offline Activities and Homework activities are optional and not required for mastery and completion of a module.

## NEED HELP?

For password issues: please contact the BCC PLATO group coordinator, Ben Baumann, at [ben.baumann@bristolcc.edu](mailto:ben.baumann@bristolcc.edu)

To schedule a placement test: To test at our New Bedford or Fall River campuses, call 508.678.2811 x2231. To test at our Attleboro Center, call 508.226.2484.

For Technical Support: please contact PLATO Learning Customer Support at 800.869.2200