KeyTrain®
Reading for Information
Workbook Introduction

and

Introduction to WorkKeys®
Course Introduction

This course will introduce you to the WorkKeys system of workplace skills evaluation. This course will teach you Reading for Information skills.

This section will focus on the goals and organization of the course.

What is Reading for Information?

This course will provide you with training for the Reading for Information skills area of the WorkKeys system.

Reading for Information is the skill of reading and understanding common workplace documents. These may include letters, manuals, procedures and memos.

These documents are not necessarily well-written or aimed at a particular audience. This is unlike narrative texts, such as fictional novels. Therefore you need to carefully examine the main ideas and details in the texts.

The ability to read and understand documents in the workplace is essential to your health and success. Your safety may depend on you being able to read warnings or labels on chemicals and equipment. You will need to read policies and memos to be sure that you get the pay and benefits you deserve.

In addition, you will need to be able to read instructions and procedures. These will help you to contribute to the success of the company. This will help to guarantee your future job with your employer.
Course Objectives

The overall objectives of this course are:

- Introduce WorkKeys and Reading for Information.
- Improve your Reading for Information skills by teaching you skills you need and giving you a chance to practice these skills.
- Provide you practice in answering questions similar to those on the WorkKeys Reading for Information test.

Reading for Information Skills

The skills required for Reading for Information can be loosely grouped into four categories:

Choosing Main Ideas or Details
You should be able to determine the main idea of a document. You should also be able to identify important data. This requires skill at selecting the important and supporting details from a written document. These main ideas and details may need to be separated from unimportant information.

Understanding Word Meanings
You should be able to understand the meaning of words in the document. The emphasis is on using context to interpret specific word meanings. Using information in the document, you should be able to guess the meaning of the new word.

Applying Instructions
You should be able to follow instructions given in a document. This skill in applying instructions involves sequencing and generalizing.

Applying Information and Reasoning
You should be able to judge when and where to apply the instructions or information given in a document. This can involve applying information to similar or new situations.
Reading for Information Skill Levels

WorkKeys Reading for Information has 5 levels. The higher levels correspond to more difficult skills. As the level increases, so does the difficulty of the documents and problems to be solved.

Level 3 ⇒ Level 4 ⇒ Level 5 ⇒ Level 6 ⇒ Level 7

Text to Read ⇒ More Detailed
Presentation of Information ⇒ More Difficult and Unfamiliar

At the higher levels the text you must read includes more details and information. The information is also presented in more unfamiliar language which is more difficult to understand.
Level 3

In Level 3 you will be reading short letters, memos, announcements, or directions. By reading and understanding the information contained in these documents, you should be able to answer questions about them.

Level 3 Reading for Information involves short, uncomplicated passages using elementary vocabulary. All of the information required to answer the question is contained in the documents, and the questions deal with the major points of the documents.

In Level 3, You Will Learn To:

- Identify the main idea and simple details.
- Identify the meanings of words that are defined within the passage.
- Recognize the meanings of words that are not defined in the passage.
- Determine the proper placement of a step in a sequence of events or the proper time to perform each step of a task.
- Apply instructions outlined in the passage to situations that are described in the passage.

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Level 4

The passages that you see in Level 4 questions are slightly more complex than those in Level 3. They contain more detail and describe procedures that involve a greater number of steps.

Some passages describe policies and procedures with a variety of factors that must be considered in order to decide on appropriate behavior.

In Level 4, You Will Learn How To:

- Identify important details that are less obvious than those at Level 3.
- Apply complicated instructions, some of which involve several steps, to situations described in the reading materials.
- Recognize cause and effect relationships.
- Determine the meanings of words that are not defined in the reading materials.
Level 5

Passages at Level 5 are more detailed, more complicated and cover broader topics. Words and phrases may be specialized, such as technical terms and jargon, and some words may have multiple meanings.

In this level you may have to apply information given in the passage to a situation that is not specifically described in the passage.

Level 5 Reading for Information Skills:

- Understand the paraphrased definition of jargon or technical terms defined in the passage.

- Use jargon or technical terms appropriately in describing situations stated in the passages.

- Understand the definitions of acronyms that are defined in the passage.

- Identify the appropriate definition of words with multiple meanings based on the context of the passage.

- Apply information given in a passage to situations that are not directly described in that passage.

- Apply more complicated instructions involving conditionals (if X happens, then it will lead to Y) or procedures with a number of steps, to described situations.
Level 6

Passages at this level are significantly more difficult than in those earlier. The presentation of information is more complex. Passages may include excerpts from regulatory and legal documents. The procedures and concepts described are more elaborate. Advanced vocabulary and technical terms are used.

**Level 6 Reading for Information Skills:**

- Identify implied details.
- Understand jargon or technical terms when used in an unfamiliar context.
- Figure out from context the less common meaning of a word with multiple meanings.
- Apply complicated information to new situations.
- Figure out the general principles underlying situations described in the reading materials and apply those principles to related situations.
- Figure out the reasoning behind a procedure, policy or communication.

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Level 7

Level 7 questions require the examinee to generalize beyond the stated situation, to recognize implied details, and to recognize the probable rationale behind policies and procedures.

In this level, the passages are more difficult. The density of information is higher, the concepts are more complex, and the vocabulary is more difficult.

**Level 7 Reading for Information Skills:**

- Figure out the definition of difficult, uncommon jargon or technical terms from the context of the reading materials.

- Figure out the general principles underlying described situations and apply them to situations neither described nor completely similar to those in the reading materials.

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The WorkKeys® System

This course helps you to study the skills outlined by the ACT WorkKeys® system. But what is the WorkKeys system? The WorkKeys system was developed by ACT, Inc. to help you get the skills you need to be successful in most workplaces.

The WorkKeys system provides a common language for employers and employees to describe and discuss the skills needed to perform common work tasks successfully. With this system, you will be able to demonstrate that you possess the skills and qualities required for certain job assignments. This section will explain briefly how this works.

The WorkKeys System:

- Was developed by ACT, Inc. in 1991 (the same company that created the ACT Assessment® exam).

- Examines your ability to perform common practical tasks.

- Teaches you to deal with common situations you will find in your current or future job.
Perhaps you have heard of the WorkKeys tests. You may be using this course to study for this test, or you may be using it just to improve your workplace skills. However WorkKeys is more than just a test. It is a system that provides a common language to describe common work skills. The three main parts of this system are **profiling**, **assessment**, and **training**.

**Profiling** - Matching skills to jobs.
Profiling is a step-by-step procedure for determining what basic skills and what skill levels are required to be successful in a specific job assignment. An experienced job profiler and current workers in the job examine the job assignment and produce a list of the most important skills and the level of each skill required by the job.

**Assessment** - The WorkKeys tests.
A series of tests measure the current skills of an individual person. This provides scores or "levels" in one or more skill areas.

**Instructional Support** – Improving your skills to match job requirements.
The WorkKeys system includes instructional support that identifies methods to help learners improve their workplace skills. This course was developed using these methods as identified by ACT’s *Targets for Instruction* series.
WorkKeys Skills Areas

The WorkKeys system includes the skills that are required for almost all jobs. These skills are essential to all professions at all levels of education. The WorkKeys system groups common work skills into eight groups.

Reading for Information
These skills include your ability to read documents and understand the information contained in them.

Applied Mathematics
Measures your skill at performing common math skills.

Writing
The ability to compose and write documents that communicate ideas.

Listening
The ability to hear spoken information and understand directions and details.

Teamwork
Skills required to work together with people in a group towards a common goal.

Observation
Being able to learn tasks and information by watching other people perform these tasks.

Applied Technology
Understanding and working with electrical, mechanical, thermodynamic and hydraulic systems.

Locating Information
The ability to understand and work with information in the form of graphs, charts and diagrams.

Note that WorkKeys does not include job-specific skills. WorkKeys includes the basic skills that are used by all employees to understand and learn the specific items you need for an individual job.
How The WorkKeys System Works

Many businesses use the WorkKeys system to match the skills required by their jobs with the skills of their employees. The WorkKeys system is flexible and allows you to choose when and how you apply it. However certain basic elements of the system are almost always used:

**Job Profiling**

Job profiling is a way to determine what skills and at what level are required for a specific job.
- A trained profiler gathers a group of people who perform a specific job.
- Together they examine the tasks required to perform the job.
- The tasks are prioritized and ranked according to the WorkKeys scales.

The result is a job profile, which describes the skills and skill levels that are required for the job.

**Employee Assessment**

- New or existing employees are tested in the skills essential for the job.
- Each person receives a report of their skill levels.

**Instructional Support**

- In areas where the person's skills do not match the requirements of the job, instructional support is provided to improve the skills to meet the job profile.
An Example of the WorkKeys System in Use

In this example, a particular job at the Osprey Manufacturing Company was profiled. The job was a Machine Operator. After the profiler met with a team of people from Osprey, it was determined that the basic skills most needed to learn and perform the job were:

- Reading for Information at a Level 4
- Applied Mathematics at a Level 5
- Locating Information at a Level 4

An employee who wanted to be promoted into this job took the WorkKeys assessments in these three areas. Her scores were:

- Reading for Information - Level 4
- Applied Mathematics - Level 4
- Locating Information - Level 5

She has exactly the skill level required in Reading for Information, and has more than the skills required in Locating Information. However, she needs to improve in Applied Mathematics. She could then study the Applied Mathematics Level 4 section of the KeyTrain course, take the practice quiz, and then take that WorkKeys assessment again.
Benefits of the WorkKeys System

For individuals and employees:

- WorkKeys allows you to find areas you are strong in. It allows you to demonstrate the skills that you already have to your current or future employer.
- WorkKeys provides a path for you to improve your skills. These skills are valuable to almost any job you have or want to have.
- WorkKeys gives you a way to qualify for better jobs. Jobs that require more WorkKeys skills generally pay better.

For businesses:

- WorkKeys allows a company to identify the skills that are needed for their most important job positions.
- WorkKeys helps a company to place employees in positions where they can succeed. It helps to ensure that employees in the key positions have the skills needed to do the job correctly.
- WorkKeys increases productivity and reduces hidden costs associated with poor hiring decisions. This helps the company to succeed.
- WorkKeys assists the company in making hiring and promotion decisions fairly and evenly.
Test Tips

You may be asked to take an assessment test as part of the WorkKeys system. Here are some tips to help you on this test:

- Get plenty of rest the night before the test. Eat a good breakfast that morning. Get to the test promptly, to give you time to relax and get comfortable before the test begins.

- Bring a watch to the test. Lay it on the table in front of you so you can keep track of time.

- Expect the first part of the test to be easier, and do not read more into a question than is asked.

- As the questions continue, you will be given more and more information on which to base your answer.

- When solving problems with lots of information, you need to read each line and pull out the important facts that are needed to solve the problem.

If you are running out of time and/or you have no idea how to answer the question you should try to make an educated guess. There are no points deducted for wrong answers.

The Reading for Information, Applied Mathematics, Locating Information and Applied Technology tests are multiple-choice tests. Each test is normally about 45 minutes long. Listening and Writing are given together, and involve listening to a tape and writing a description of what you heard. In the Observation and Teamwork tests you watch several video tape segments, and then answer multiple-choice questions about each segment.

Normally you would not be given all of the tests. Ask which tests you will be given before the test date, and study using the KeyTrain materials which you may have available.