

The ASVAB at a Glance

A quick reference for students, parents, and counselors

Prepared by ASVAB Hero, an independent study site. Not affiliated with the U.S. Department of Defense or any branch of the armed services. Every fact below is drawn from the official sources listed at the bottom of the page.

What the ASVAB is

The Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) is a multiple-aptitude test with nine subtests. It is used two distinct ways, which students often confuse:

Enlistment testing

Taken at a Military Entrance Processing Station (MEPS) or a satellite Military Entrance Test (MET) site, arranged through a recruiter. These scores count toward joining the military.

Career Exploration Program (CEP)

The school-based version. It pairs ASVAB results with an interest inventory to help students explore careers, and it carries no service obligation.

The nine subtests

Four subtests (marked AFQT) combine into the score that decides enlistment eligibility. All nine feed the job-qualification composites.

SUBTEST	WHAT IT MEASURES	IN AFQT?
Arithmetic Reasoning (AR)	Word problems and applied math	Yes
Mathematics Knowledge (MK)	High-school math concepts	Yes
Word Knowledge (WK)	Vocabulary	Yes
Paragraph Comprehension (PC)	Reading comprehension	Yes
General Science (GS)	Physical and biological science	No
Electronics Information (EI)	Electrical and electronics	No
Auto & Shop Information (AS)	Automotive and shop practices	No
Mechanical Comprehension (MC)	Mechanical principles	No
Assembling Objects (AO)	Spatial reasoning	No

How the scores work

- **Standard scores** are reported per subtest on a scale with a mean of 50 and a standard deviation of 10. They are not percent-correct.
- **The AFQT** (Armed Forces Qualification Test) is built from the four subtests above and reported as a percentile from 1 to 99. The AFQT decides whether a student can enlist at all.
- **Line / composite scores** combine subtests in branch-specific ways to determine which jobs a student qualifies for. Each branch uses its own composites.

What to do next

- **Hasn't tested yet:** start with the official fact sheet and sample questions; a recruiter arranges official testing.
- **Has scores already:** read the official scores guide to interpret the standard scores, AFQT, and composites.
- **Wants career exploration:** the school CEP program is built for this and carries no service obligation.

Official sources

- ASVAB fact sheet: officialasvab.com/applicants/fact-sheet/
- Scores guide: officialasvab.com/applicants/scores/
- Subtests (counselors & educators): officialasvab.com/counselors-educators/subtests/
- Career Exploration Program: officialasvab.com/counselors-educators/asvab-career-exploration-program/
- Sample questions: officialasvab.com/applicants/sample-questions/
- March2Success (free, U.S. Army sponsored): march2success.com