

Information concerning the ASVAB test

The ASVAB (Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery) is generally regarded as the best available group aptitude test battery. In spite of being a common term, aptitude testing is a very uncommon form of testing. There are a great many career exploration tools out there, but the vast majority of them are interest questionnaires. There are very few aptitude tests. Aptitudes are natural abilities, a measure of your own personal strengths and weaknesses. We all have those areas where we are more or less gifted, whether it is math, mechanical ability, clerical speed, ideas, working with other people, and so on. The idea behind aptitude testing is you tend to be more satisfied in areas that use your natural abilities, and less so if you are having to struggle to perform.

That you can do anything is not in doubt, but there are still those areas where you are at home, and those areas where you have to work harder to make it happen. To choose a career that is a good fit with your abilities, you need that information; what are your strengths and what are the requirements of the various careers (information that is the focus of the ASVAB student testing program). We do give an interest test (a variant of the Holland Interest Finder) to correlate with the aptitude scores, to see where the two meet, but the most important information are the aptitude scores themselves.

Regarding misunderstandings, first there is a common misperception that the ASVAB is the test for the military. It is the military's test. They devised it for the purposes of qualification and job placement, and certainly still use it for those purposes. If you choose to enlist, you will need a score from the ASVAB. But in this program, it is quite literally a case of your tax dollars at work. As it is largely the best group aptitude test around (probably since the military is in a unique position to be easily able to follow people throughout their careers -a necessary and troublesome issue in developing and maintaining aptitude tests), since 1968 it has been made available within this program for general public school use of career exploration. You soon will be out of high school and picking a career, going on to college, choosing a major, et al, and this is exactly the kind of information you will need to make such decisions.

Second, there is a fear that you will be recruited. And you will be. But that is completely unrelated to taking the ASVAB at school, or even having heard of the ASVAB. Being recruited is a function of being the age you are. There are lots of recruiters out there. They have access to lots of databases (census, school directories, DMV, credit and bank records, etc.), including ours. Their job is to find you and ask if you want to join the military, and they are very good at their job. If you do not want to, simply say no. Throughout your life, you will have endless similar opportunities to turn down the chance to change your long distance carrier, have your carpets cleaned, or siding put on your house. Think of it as a case of "welcome to adulthood, here is your junk mail". Such a false hope of not being recruited is a poor and ultimately pointless reason to avoid the value of using the ASVAB to learn of and use your aptitude scores.

Besides the career exploration value of the ASVAB, it has a very strong correlation with scores on the ACT, so much so there is a table in your counselor's office that can predict ACT scores from ASVAB scores and vice versa. This means the ASVAB can serve to give you a good idea what you will make on the ACT, without the expense of taking a trial run of the ACT.

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