



# Show-Me

The "Official" Newsletter of Literacy in Missouri

APRIL 2011

ISSUE NO. 189

Literacy

## Frequently Asked Questions about GED® Test A Review

Reprinted from: <http://www.acenet.edu/Content/NavigationMenu/ged/faq/index.htm>

### WHAT ARE THE GED® TESTS?

The Tests of General Educational Development (GED Tests) are designed to measure the skills and knowledge equivalent to a high school course of study. The five subject area tests which comprise the GED test battery are Mathematics; Language Arts, Reading; Language Arts, Writing (including essay); Science; and Social Studies.

### ARE THE GED TESTS AVAILABLE ONLINE?

The GED Tests cannot be taken online. Information may be available on the Internet about the tests or preparing for the tests, but the official tests are only available at an Official GED Testing Center. To locate a testing center go to [www.GEDtest.org/locator](http://www.GEDtest.org/locator).

To read more information about the myths and warnings about testing online, go to our [Truth About GED Testing Online](#) page.



### WHO PRODUCES THE GED TESTS?

The GED Tests are developed, delivered, and safeguarded by content specialists, researchers, psychometricians, and other staff of the General Educational Development Testing Service™ (GEDTS), a nonprofit program of the American Council on Education®. The tests are owned by ACE.

### HOW MANY PEOPLE TAKE THE GED TESTS?

In 2007, more than 728,000 adults worldwide took some portion of the GED test battery. Of that total, more than 614,000 (86%) completed the battery of five tests and 451,000 earned passing scores on the five-test battery.

**WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO "PASS" THE GED TESTS?**

In order to pass the GED Tests, an examinee must have a combined passing score of 2250; in addition, each individual subject area test score must be 410 or greater. Those passing the GED Tests have demonstrated a level of knowledge equal to or greater than 40% of graduating high school seniors.

**WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF EARNING A GED CREDENTIAL?**

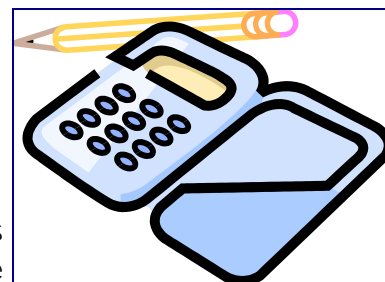
Among the many benefits of the GED testing program, passing the GED Tests provides an opportunity for adults to continue their education. In fact, 95 percent of U.S. colleges and universities accept GED graduates who meet their other qualifications for admission, according to the College Board.

A GED credential documents that you have high school-level academic skills. About 96 percent of U.S. employers accept the GED credential as equal to a traditional high school diploma, according to recent studies.

**WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO TAKE THE GED TESTS?**

You may take the GED Tests if:

- You are not enrolled in high school, and
- You have not graduated from high school, and
- You are at least age 16, and
- You meet state, provincial, or territorial requirements regarding age, residency, and the length of time since leaving school.



If you are considering leaving high school, the GED Testing Service recommends that you first meet with your high school counselor to talk seriously about your decision and the level of academic skill needed to pass the GED Tests.

Free publications are available to help in providing information about the tests. Check with your state, province, or territory's contact person for GED testing. Or search for a nearby testing center by entering your zip code at [www.GEDtest.org/locator](http://www.GEDtest.org/locator).

**WHAT DO I HAVE TO DO TO PASS THE GED TESTS?**

You have to be able to read, compute, interpret information, and express yourself in writing on a level comparable to that of 60 percent of graduating high school seniors. If you are uncertain whether you have the level of skill needed to successfully complete the tests, you can find out more about your abilities in several ways. Many programs are sponsored by local school districts, colleges, and community organizations. Teachers and tutors in these programs can tell you whether you need intensive preparation or a quick "brush up."

**SHOULD I STUDY FOR THE GED TESTS?**

Preparation is an essential part of any important examination. You probably have gained some knowledge and skills thorough life experience, reading, and informal training, but remember that the GED Tests are a rigorous battery of five tests that take

more than seven and a half hours to complete. Regardless of your ability, you'll be more certain to perform your best on the tests if you know what to expect before the testing day arrives.

### **HOW MUCH TIME DOES IT TAKE TO COMPLETE THE GED TESTS?**

The battery of five GED Tests takes 7 hours and 5 minutes to complete. In some areas, you must take the entire battery of tests in one or two sittings. Other places permit you to take a single test each time you come to the testing center and may offer testing in the evenings. It may take up to several weeks for your scores to be reported back to you. Check with your state, province, or territory's contact person for GED testing to find out about testing procedures in your area.

### **WHERE DO I GO TO TAKE THE GED TESTS?**

There are approximately 3,400 Official GED Testing Centers in the United States, Canada, and their territories. They are usually operated by local school boards, adult education centers, and/or community colleges.

Check your local telephone listings under the headings listed above.

Call (800) 62-MY GED (800-626-9433).

Check with your state, province, or territory's contact person for GED testing.

Enter your zip code at [www.GEDtest.org/locator](http://www.GEDtest.org/locator) to find the nearest Official GED Testing Center.

If you live outside the United States, Canada, or their territories, you may be able to take the GED Tests at a testing facility operated by Prometric. Contact the regional registration center nearest you for specific information about testing locations and procedures.

Watch the videos: [Where can I take the GED Test?](#) or [Can I take the GED Test at a Military Education Center?](#)



### **HOW MUCH DOES IT COST TO TAKE THE GED TESTS?**

The cost of taking the GED Tests varies widely from no charge in some U.S. states to as much as \$80 in others. Check with your state, province, or territory's contact person for GED testing or your local official GED Testing Center to find out about how to register for testing.

### **WHAT DO MY SCORES MEAN?**

Your official GED transcript contains two sets of numbers: standard scores and percentile ranks. The standard scores make it possible to compare scores across tests and test forms. This is necessary because some tests contain a different number of questions and there are many forms of the GED Tests in circulation, all of them equally difficult.

The percentile rank makes it possible to compare your performance on each one of the tests with the performance of graduating high school seniors. The higher the percentile rank, the better your performance.

### **HOW DO YOU CONVERT GED TEST SCORES TO A GPA?**

Letter grades (A, B, C, etc.) are not standardized across every high school; that is, an "A" student at one high school may be a "C" student at a more rigorous high school. Therefore, we cannot equate GED test scores to a GPA. We can provide a national percentile rank that tells you where a GED candidate stands in relation to graduating high school seniors.

### **WHAT IF I DON'T PASS ALL THE TESTS THE FIRST TIME?**

You can take one or more of the tests again. However, note that many jurisdictions have special requirements for candidates who don't pass the GED Tests the first time. You may be required to wait several months or show proof of attending a preparation course before you're permitted to re-test. You may also have to pay an additional fee. For the specific regulations in your area, check with your state, province, or territory's contact person for GED testing.

### **HOW MANY QUESTIONS DO I NEED TO GET RIGHT ON EACH OF THE GED TESTS TO EARN THE 410 PASSING SCORE?**

Each correct answer is worth one point. For each individual GED test, these points are totaled and then converted to a standard score, which ranges from 200 to 800. Candidates need a standard score of 410 in order to pass each of the individual GED Tests and an overall average score of 450 for the five-test battery. To receive a 410 standard score on an individual GED test, candidates generally need to answer 60 to 65 percent of the questions correctly.



### **WILL PASSING THE GED TESTS GET ME INTO COLLEGE?**

About 95 percent of U.S. colleges and universities accept GED graduates in the same manner as high school graduates. GED graduates are also eligible for most federal financial aid if they meet the program's other criteria. After earning your GED credential, sign up to take the ACT and/or the SAT. The colleges to which you apply may also require you to take placement or achievement tests so that they can determine whether you need additional coursework.

## **ARE GED GRADUATES ELIGIBLE FOR FINANCIAL AID FOR COLLEGE?**

Federal monies are available to GED recipients as they are to traditional high school graduates who meet the eligibility criteria. These requirements usually include demonstrated financial need. A student must be enrolled in an accredited program leading to degrees or certificates. Applicants must be U.S. citizens or eligible noncitizens and must have Social Security numbers. The U.S. Department of Education's Office of Student Financial Assistance publishes two booklets that you may find helpful.

Call the Federal Student Aid Information Center, 1-800-4FED AID (1-800-433-3243) Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., Eastern time, or write to them at PO Box 84, Washington, DC 20044.

The GED Testing Service publishes a free brochure for GED graduates about finding financial aid and a companion booklet for adult educators. Visit our Publications page to learn more.

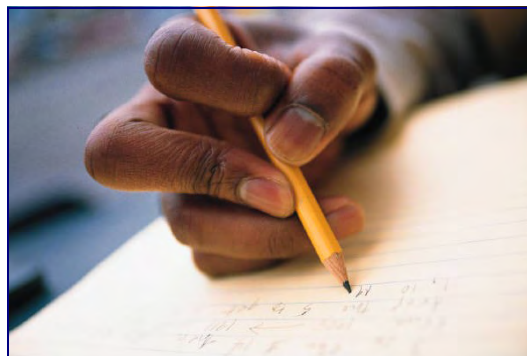
## **WHAT ACCOMMODATIONS ARE AVAILABLE FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES WHO WANT TO TAKE THE GED TESTS?**

For candidates with a documented physical, sensory, emotional, or specific learning disability, test accommodations are available. These accommodations may be requested by candidates who have disabilities that can be expected to negatively affect **the candidate's chances of passing the GED Tests.**

Tests are available in U.S. English-language Braille, U.S. and Canadian English-language audiocassette, and in large print editions. In addition, with documented disability, the following accommodations to the standard testing environment may be made: extended time, supervised breaks, use of an audiocassette edition, calculator, scribe, and, in some instances, a private room for testing. Some accommodations are not permitted—for example, having the questions read out loud to the candidate. The GED Testing Service does not permit the use of a dictionary or a spell checker.

Each request for accommodation, or for testing session modifications, is considered on an individual basis. To begin the process of requesting an accommodation, a GED candidate should go to the nearest GED Testing Center and request Form L-15 (for specific learning disabilities and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder) and Form SA-001 (for emotional and physical disabilities). These forms describe the information needed to document the disability. When the form is complete, it should be returned to the GED Testing Center. The GED Testing Service is available during regular business hours to answer specific questions about policies and procedures.

Because extended testing hours and special materials are often needed, the first point of contact for the person with a disability or his/her advocate must be the nearest GED Testing Center.



# GED Test Taking Tips

## General Tips

The scores on the GED tests are based only on the number of questions answered correctly. If a test taker does not know the answer to a question, they should mark the answer that appears to be the best of the five choices. A test taker should not spend too much time on a question whose answer they do not know; they should answer it if they can, and go on to the next question. It is to the test taker's advantage to answer every question.

If two answers are marked for a question, the test taker will receive no credit for that question. Only one response can be marked for each question. There is only one correct answer for each question.

The test taker should make sure that the marks on the answer sheet are dark and completely fill the circles. On the Writing Skills answer sheet the multiple-choice questions have a large bubble surrounding a smaller white bubble; only the smaller white bubble needs to be filled in. Make no stray marks on the answer sheet booklet. Make sure that every circle marked on the answer sheet booklet corresponds to the number of the question and to the test taker's answer choice. If the test taker needs to change an answer, it should be done so completely by using the White-Out pen provided.

## Tips for Testing Within the Time Limits

The time limits are sufficient to permit at least 85% of the GED test takers to complete the tests while working at a comfortable rate. The use of uniform time limits permits GED Testing Services to ensure that each test taker is given the same opportunity to demonstrate educational achievements.

The examiner should note the beginning time for each test and when the test should be completed. The examiner should post this information at the start of each test.

Test takers sometimes encounter problems with the time limit on the Social Studies test; the Social Studies test and the Science test have the same number of questions (50 each) but the time limit for the Social Studies test (70 min.) is ten minutes less than for Science (80 min.).

## Tips for the Mathematics Test

The mathematics test is in two parts. A calculator is provided by the test center and may be used on Part 1 of the Mathematics test (25 questions). The calculator is not permitted on Part 2 (25 questions). Most of the questions (80 percent) on the Mathematics test are multiple-choice format; 20 percent of the questions must be answered on an alternate grid. All the correct answers fit the alternate format grids. If a test taker has an answer that does not fit they should reread the question to make sure they have given the answer in the form requested. Mixed numbers, such as  $3\frac{1}{2}$ , cannot be entered in the alternate format grid. Instead, represent them as decimal numbers (3.5) or fractions ( $\frac{7}{2}$ ). No answer can be a negative number. Answers can begin in any column that will allow the answer to be entered, but do not leave a blank space in the middle of an answer.

A common mistake is to mark more than one answer on the coordinate plane grid. Test takers should mark only the one circle that represents their answer. If more than one answer is given the test taker will receive no credit for the answer.

## Tips for the Essay

The essay must be written on the topic assigned at the examination session. The student reads the assigned essay topic before beginning the Writing Skills test. The topics are assigned randomly.

In rare cases, an exemption may be granted to an assigned topic because the topic is inappropriate due to a test taker's disability, religion, or incarceration. Exemptions are not allowed because a test taker does not understand the topic or has no opinion about the subjects who think they should be granted an exemption for one of these reasons should notify the examiner at the test session after reading their assigned topic. All exemptions must be filed with GED Testing Services in Washington and with the State GED Administrator in Frankfort.

If a student writes an essay on a topic other than the one assigned, the essay will not be scored. The student will receive a score of 0 and will have to take both parts of the Writing Test again. It will be noted on the score report that the essay was off-topic.

If a student writes an inadequate essay, the student will receive a score of 0 and will have to take both parts of the Writing Test again. It will be noted on the score report that the topic was inadequate.

The essay on the Writing Skills test must be written in a black ballpoint pen that is provided by the examiner. The essay written during the GED examination is considered draft writing. It is expected that the student will have to cross-out words to make corrections. It does not matter if a student uses cursive writing or prints. While students should write as clearly as possible, handwriting and neatness do not affect the essay score.

The student is given a sheet of lined scratch paper to use during the Writing Skills test. This sheet of scratch paper will not be scored; it will be collected with all other test materials at the end of the test and shredded. The essay must be written in black ballpoint ink on pages 3 and 4 of the Language Arts, Writing Test answer sheet booklet during the two hour time period of the examination. Only the writing on pages 3 and 4 will be scored. All test takers must write their essays on the answer sheets and may not attach additional paper or use a second answer sheet if the essay exceeds the space provided. Only the writing on the two lined pages in the answer sheet booklet will be read and scored.

GED Testing Service in Washington prohibits discussing or publicizing the topic or content of any essay. The essay must be treated as confidential material.

The essay topics are just like questions and it is considered testing misconduct to disclose the essay topic with anyone including the test takers adult education instructor.