

INTERNATIONAL

GED[®] EDUCATOR HANDBOOK



Everything you need to prepare
students for the GED test



In-depth look at
GED test content



Recommended
teaching strategies



How to determine if
your students are ready

Edition 6.0

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New Educator Checklist

If you are new to teaching the GED® test, here's a checklist to help you get started.

1. First, familiarize yourself with some of the basics of the test and make sure you are receiving our latest updates.
 - ✓ Look through our [student study guides](#). These provide an overview of the skills being tested and include sample problems for each skill.
2. Once you know the basics, now it is time to better understand the student experience in GED.com.
 - ✓ Feel free to create your own [account in GED.com](#) so you understand what your students will go through (please list your last name as "Candidate" so we know you are an instructor).
 - ✓ Checkout the Study tab in your account to learn about 7 different learning preferences and take the assessment.
 - ✓ Take the [free practice test](#) so you understand the format of the test and the different types of questions.
 - ✓ Finally, consider taking a [GED Ready®](#) test, the official GED® practice test. This is half the length of the GED® test and is highly predictive of how students will perform on the actual test.
 - Make sure you review your detailed score report. This is the report that tells students the areas they need to work on to score higher on the test.
 - Notice that they can select their study materials from the drop-down box to create a customized study plan.
3. After becoming familiar with the student journey, it's time to look for [teacher resources](#) and [classroom materials](#).

Explore these additional tools and resources to help you prepare your students.

Tutorials and scoring tools

- Writing on the GED® test
 - Watch our helpful [videos](#) on how to write a great essay on the GED® test and share with your students.
 - To grade a student’s GED Ready® essay, use our free scoring [tool](#).
- Math
 - [Calculator tutorial](#)
 - [Calculator reference guide](#) and [formula sheet](#)

How To Guides

- Testing Guidance for Educators
- Transcript and Diploma Guidance for GED® Credentialing

More information on the GED® test and CCRS content

- [Performance Level Descriptors](#) — These are the skills that are measured on the GED® test.
- [Assessment Guide for Educators](#) — An in-depth guide to the GED® test.
- [High Impact Indicators](#) — Not all skills are created equal! Improving certain skills can help students improve in other areas. These resources provide detailed guidance on how you can best help improve student performance.

Professional Development

For free professional development take a look at our webinar training series, [Tuesdays for Teachers](#). Teachers can get a certificate for the trainings.

Chapter 1: The GED® Test – A Closer Look

The GED® test was built from the ground up to provide students a test that measures the skills they need to succeed. The test focuses on the foundational knowledge and skills needed for college and career readiness; colleges and employers can be confident that students who pass the GED® test have the skills to excel on the job or in the classroom.

Keep reading to learn more about the GED® test, including:

- GED® test basics
- GED® test benefits
- What's on the Reasoning Through Language Arts test
- What's on the Mathematical Reasoning test
- What's on the Science test
- What's on the Social Studies test

GED® test basics

- 4 test subjects: Reasoning Through Language Arts (RLA), Mathematical Reasoning, Science, and Social Studies
- Students must score at least 145 in all 4 test subjects to earn their GED® credential
- Students don't have to take all 4 tests at once
- Delivered on computer
- Available in U.S. English only
- 1 Extended Response question on the RLA test
- Passing levels are based on the performance of high school graduates who took the test as part of the standardization and norming study
- Scores reported in the Enhanced Score Report, available in student's GED® account

GED® test benefits

- Accommodations are free of charge, such as extra time and a paper test option
- Pay-as-you-go pricing allows students to pay for each test subject as they take it in order to spread out the cost of the entire test
- Scores are available within one day of taking the test
- 100% refund if a test is cancelled or rescheduled at least 24 hours before the appointment time

What's on the Reasoning Through Language Arts (RLA) test

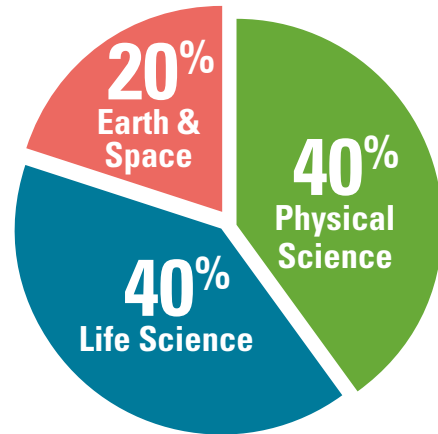
- 150 minutes (including a 10-minute break)
- Includes multiple choice, drop-down, and a variety of technology-enhanced items
- Includes one 45-minute extended response (essay)
- Measures the student's:
 - Ability to read closely, write clearly, edit and understand written English
 - Ability to understand, interpret, and answer questions based on text
 - Ability to use evidence to support an argument
 - Understanding of basic English skills at a level needed to succeed in college or a job

What's on the Mathematical Reasoning test

- 115 minutes
- Two parts with no break
 - No calculator allowed on the first section
 - Students may use the built-in virtual calculator for the remaining questions
- Includes multiple choice, drop-down, and a variety of technology-enhanced items
- A calculator guide and a math formula sheet are provided in the testing center and on the screen
- Measures the student's:
 - Algebraic problem-solving abilities (55%)
 - Quantitative problem-solving abilities (45%)

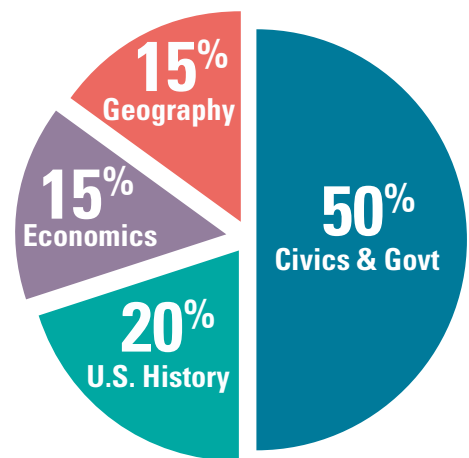
What's on the Science test

- 90 minutes
- No break
- Includes multiple choice, drop-down, and a variety of technology-enhanced items
- Students may use the built-in virtual calculator
- Measures the student's scientific reasoning skills in three areas:
 - Reading and writing in science (30%)
 - Science concepts (40%)
 - Mathematical reasoning in science (30%)
- These skills apply to real world situations in the context of the three [science content topics](#)



What's on the Social Studies test

- 70 minutes
- No break
- Includes multiple choice, drop-down, and a variety of technology-enhanced items
- Students may use the built-in virtual calculator
- Measures the student's reasoning skills in three areas:
 - Reading and writing in Social Studies (33%)
 - Social Studies concepts (33%)
 - Mathematical reasoning in Social Studies (33%)
- These skills are applied to real world situations in the context of the [four content topics](#)



Chapter 2: What Scores Look Like

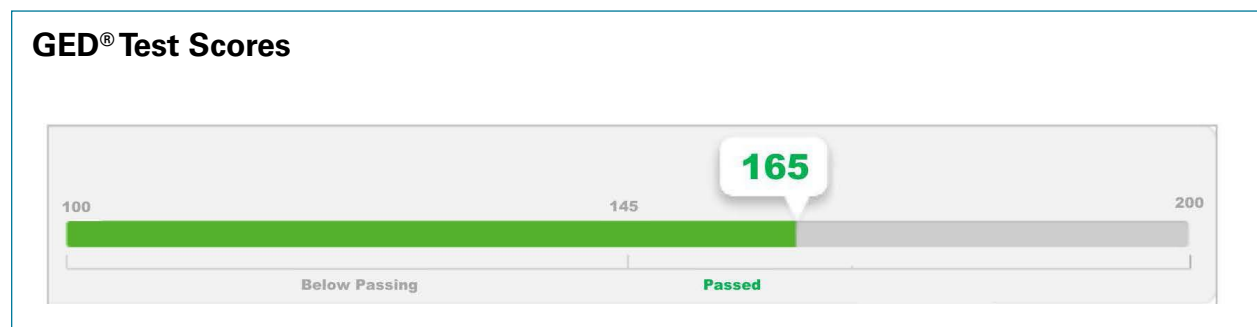
Students who take the GED® test will get their test scores in their GED.com accounts. All students receive an Enhanced Score Report under the “My Scores” section that includes four parts:

- My Scores
- Link Your Study Material
- Your Skills to Improve Checklist
- Your written response (for the RLA Extended Response item)

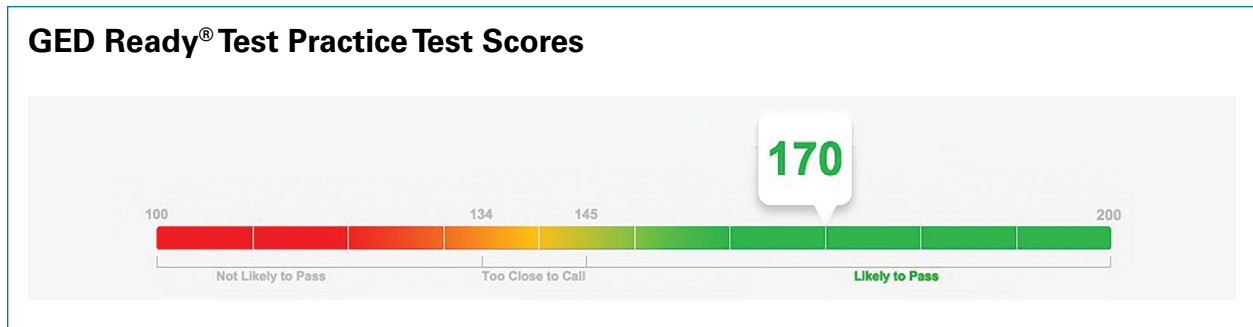
My Scores

This section looks slightly different depending on whether the score is for the GED® test or the [GED Ready® practice test](#) because they have different score levels. The GED test score levels are: *

- **Below Passing (score of 100 – 144)** — Students who earned a below passing score did not demonstrate the skills graduating high school seniors need to earn their high school diploma.
- **GED Passing Score (score of 145 and above)** — Students who earned the GED Passing Score demonstrated the skills that graduating high school seniors need to earn their diploma.



* More information about the GED Ready® score levels is available in Chapter 4.



GED Ready® practice test score ranges are as follows:

Score	Score Range	What it means
Not Likely to Pass	100–133	Students who score Not Likely to Pass need to study more.
Too Close to Call	134–144	Students who score Too Close to Call may be able to pass the GED® test, but should study more before testing to be sure.
Likely to Pass	145–200	Students who score Likely to Pass are ready to take the GED® test.

Link your study materials

Students who didn't pass or who want to try for a higher score should use the personal study plan in the score report. The recommendations are based on their unique performance on each GED® test.

- Select their favorite study materials to get a personal study plan with pages and chapters to review

Your skills to improve checklist

This section describes all the skills that the student needs to work on to score higher.

Your written response

This section displays different information on students' responses depending on whether the score report is for the GED® test or [GED Ready® practice test](#).*

- **GED® test** — Shows the students' scores for their responses and the skills they need to work on to score higher on the RLA test.
- **GED Ready® practice test** — Displays the student's written responses to extended response. Educators can use the [constructed response scoring tools](#) to give test-takers feedback on their responses.

* More information about the GED Ready® score report is available in Chapter 4.

Chapter 3:

Strategies for Teaching the Test

Your students rely on you to teach them the skills and knowledge they need to pass the GED® test. Here are some teaching strategies to help your students develop those skills as they prepare for the test:

- Use [Performance Level Descriptors](#)
- Focus on the [skills](#) that have the biggest impact
- Direct students to take Learning Performance Assessment in their accounts
- Use the [Learning Styles eBook](#) to find the teaching techniques that work for your student learning preference
- Prepare your students with [test-day tools](#)
- Help students [write high-scoring extended responses](#)
- Share the [basic rules](#) for writing an extended response
- [Give students feedback](#) on their GED Ready® constructed responses
- [Essential resources](#) for math instructions
- Watch GED Testing Service [webinars](#)

Use Performance Level Descriptors

The Performance Level Descriptors (PLDs) explain the skills students must demonstrate to score in each of the three possible performance levels on the GED® test and the GED Ready® practice test. Here are some helpful tips for using the PLDs in your classroom to prepare your students for the test:

Tip 1: Use PLDs to assess your student’s current skill level

- Identify where to focus in order to develop the skills needed to move to the next performance level

Tip 2: Use PLDs to determine when your students are ready to test

- Determine if a student should take the GED Ready® practice test or the GED® test
- Use with the Enhanced Score Report’s personal study plan to develop student skills

Tip 3: Use PLDs to shape learning activities

- Set learning objectives in your classroom based on the PLDs
- Determine if you need to adjust how you’re approaching the content
- Work one-on-one with students to help develop necessary skills

Tip 4: Use PLDs to add perspective to lesson plans

- Determine your students’ levels of preparedness and create lesson plans accordingly
- Identify the gaps in your students’ skills and develop focused lesson plans to address those gaps

Focus on the skills that have the biggest impact

Make the most of instructional time with your students by focusing on the skills that will have the biggest impact on their GED® test success.

While all the indicators listed in the GED® Assessment Target indicators are essential for test-taker success, it may be useful for educators to highlight the skills from the [High Impact Indicators](#) in their instruction.

Be sure to also look at the [Relationships Between the High Impact Indicators and Other Indicators](#). This tool shows the relationships between the High Impact Indicators and other indicators covered on the GED® test. Use this resource to maximize the effectiveness of your teaching lessons by covering skill sets for multiple test subjects at the same time!

Curriculum & Notional Learning

This section provides educators with detailed information on the GED® Test Content Topics and the time expected to be spent by a student seeking a high school credential. Notional learning time is included for each content area and includes the time expected for:

- Participation in classroom instruction and activities
- Independent study, skill practice, and reading
- Completion of coursework
- Completion of both formative and summative assessment

[Access GED® Test Curriculum and Notional Learning PDF here.](#)

GED® Overview and Notional Learning Time

Content	Overview	Notional Learning Time
Reasoning Through Language Arts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading • Writing • Language 	<p>The GED® RLA test focuses on three essential skills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Close reading • Clear writing • Editing and understanding the use of standard written English in context. <p>Because the strongest predictor of career and college readiness is the ability to read and comprehend complex texts, especially nonfiction, the RLA test includes texts from both academic and workplace contexts. The test's ideas, syntax and style reflect a range of complexity levels. The writing task, or extended response (ER) item, requires test-takers to analyze given source texts and use evidence drawn from the texts to support their argument.</p>	120 - 125 hours
Mathematical Reasoning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantitative Problem Solving • Algebraic Problem Solving 	<p>The GED® Mathematical Reasoning test focuses on two major content areas:</p> <p>Quantitative problem solving (45%) Algebraic problem solving (55%)</p> <p>The GED® Mathematical Reasoning test focuses on the fundamentals of mathematics while striking a balance among</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deeper conceptual understanding • Procedural skill and fluency • Ability to apply these fundamentals in realistic situations. 	115- 120 hours

Content	Overview	Notional Learning Time
<p>Science</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Life Science • Physical Science • Earth and Space Science 	<p>The GED® Science test focuses on the fundamentals of scientific reasoning, balancing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deeper conceptual understanding and • Procedural skill and fluency, with • The application of these fundamentals in realistic situations. <p>Each item on the Science test aligns with one <i>Science Practice</i> and one <i>Content Topic</i>.</p> <p>The Science test focuses on three major content domains:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Life science • Physical science • Earth and Space science 	<p>75 - 80 hours</p>
<p>Social Studies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Civics and Government • U.S. History • Economics • Geography and the World 	<p>The GED® Social Studies test focuses on the fundamentals of social studies reasoning, balancing items such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deeper conceptual understanding • Procedural skill and fluency • Ability to apply these fundamentals in realistic situations <p>Each item on the Social Studies test aligns with one <i>Social Studies Practice</i> and one <i>Content Topic</i>. The Social Studies Practices are key to reasoning in both textual and quantitative social science contexts.</p> <p>The Social Studies test focuses on four major content domains:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Civics and government • U.S. history • Economics • Geography and the world 	<p>85 - 90 hours</p>

Prepare your students with test-day tools

It's just as important for students to know how to use the tools available to them during the test. Use these tools in your classrooms so they are prepared on test day.

Five Tools To Make Sure Students See Before Test Day

- The [Computer-Based Testing Tutorial](#) is a hands-on tutorial that shows students what the computer-based test will look like and walks them through the test's functionality and features. Every student should complete the tutorial before taking the GED® test in order to know how to use the test interface and know what to expect on test day.
- [Extended Response Answer Guidelines](#) include recommendations for students when crafting their RLA extended response and the criteria that are used in scoring the response.
- [Calculator Reference Sheet](#) features instructions for using the on-screen TI-30XS calculator allowed on the Mathematical Reasoning, Social Studies, and Science tests.
- [Math Formula Sheet and Explanations](#) offers a list of formulas students can reference when taking the test.
- Erasable note boards are used on test day and would be useful for student practice, however, they are not available for international shipping. Please consider procuring them locally, or laminating paper sheets for your students. Other materials are available for download here: https://ged.com/en/international_prep_providers/teaching/free_classroom_materials/

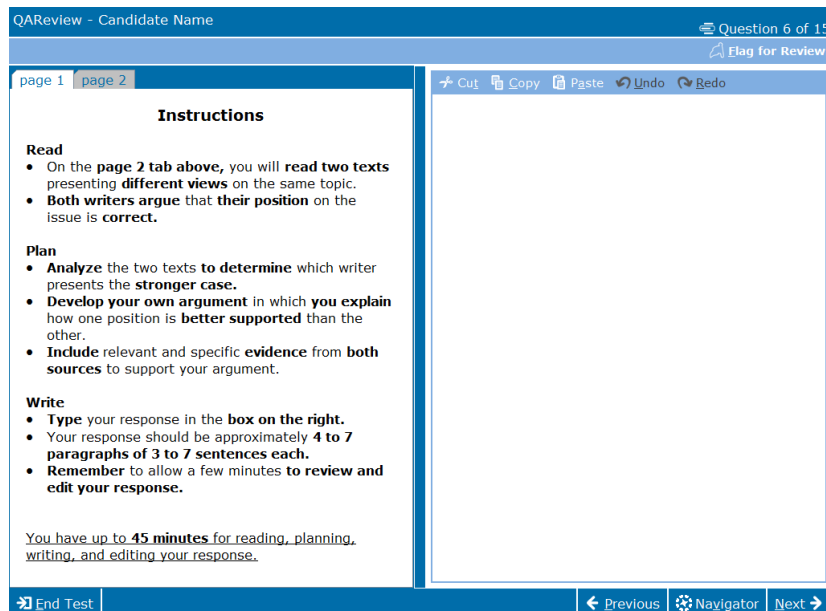
Help students write high-scoring RLA extended responses

During the scoring process, some items are weighted more heavily than others. The extended response item makes up about 20% of the student's score. We recommend that all students answer this item. There are no score deductions for incorrect answers. Make sure your students are prepared to craft fully developed responses. Use the [Sample Extended Response Passages and Prompts for Classroom Practice](#) to gauge your students' writing skills and give them feedback for improvement.

Use these **Steps for Drafting an Extended Response** to guide your students through each stage of this process.

Steps for Drafting an Extended Response

1. Read the passage and question.
2. Unpack the prompt (identify key words including the verbs and action required).
3. Rewrite the question and turn the question into a thesis statement.
4. Collect relevant details from the passage.
5. Organize details into a logical order. Use a graphic organizer if that helps.
6. Draft an answer.
7. Re-read and edit/revise the answer making sure all parts of the question are answered.



The screen is divided in half. On the right-hand side there is a large response box where your students will write their extended responses. On the left-hand side, there are two tabs. The first tab is labeled "Instructions" and tells the student what they must do. The instructions are scaffolded to guide the student. The second tab contains both passages for them to read. They must read the two passages, then they should plan what they will write, and finally write the ended response.

While planning a response, the student should think about how to develop their own argument. In the argument, the student should explain how one position is better supported than the other using evidence from both passages. Some words in the instructions are in bold. This is to help the student understand what to do even if they skip some words. There is no word counter, so to guide the student best, they should write approximately 4 to 7 paragraphs of 3 to 7 sentences each. The student will have 45 minutes to complete their response.

Share the basic rules for writing the RLA extended response

Simply attempting a written response on the RLA test subject doesn't mean a student will earn points. Responses must meet the minimum scoring criteria, which you can find in the [Extended Response Resource Guide for Adult Educators](#). Also, make sure your students follow these basic but important rules so they'll maximize the points they earn on their responses:

- 1. Students need to explain why the evidence they're quoting supports their argument.** Quotes should be used sparingly; most of their response should be their own words.
- 2. Develop 2-3 main ideas.** Students should focus on a few main points that they fully develop with evidence and support.
- 3. Write a complete essay.** Students should aim to write 4-7 paragraphs containing 3-7 sentences each.
- 4. Proofread.** Students should spend the last 4-5 minutes proofreading their response, especially checking for grammar issues. Spelling is not scored as long as the words attempted are understandable. Since this is a timed task we accept "on-demand draft writing" but students should check for the following:
 - Ensure varied sentence structure
 - Ensure correct subject-verb agreement
 - Correct use of transitions
 - Eliminate wordiness or awkwardness
 - Proper capitalization
 - Eliminate run on sentences, sentence fragments
 - Proper use of apostrophes
 - Correct punctuation
 - Ensure correct homophone usage (e.g., your vs. you're)
 - Ensure proper word order

Create a Thesis Statement

A thesis is an answer to a specific question. A thesis statement makes a claim or proposition that reflects a specific point of view. The thesis statement should recognize both sides of a question, yet focus on two to three specific points (discussion points) sometimes called points of analyses. A thesis statement is the roadmap for the written response. The placement of the thesis statement is generally located in the introduction and summarized in the conclusion of a writing sample.

Sample Thesis Frames

The general argument made by _____ in his/her work _____ is that _____.

Although _____ (believes, demonstrates, argues) that _____, _____ supports/provides the clearest evidence _____.

A key factor in both _____ can be attributed to _____.

When comparing the two positions in this article, _____ provides the clearest evidence that _____.

Looking at the arguments regarding _____, it is clear that _____.

In discussion of _____ one controversial issue has been _____ believes that _____. On the other hand, _____ asserts that _____. _____ is clearly the best supported argument on the issue of _____.

Here are more constructed response tools to use in your classroom:

- [Sample Lesson Plan & Instructional Plan](#)
- [Websites and Resources](#)

Give students feedback on their GED Ready® constructed responses

The constructed response items on the GED Ready® practice test for RLA are just like the items that are on the GED® test. **Since the GED Ready® practice test doesn't score the constructed responses, your students are counting on you for feedback.**

To give your students feedback on their constructed responses:

1. Have students take the GED Ready® practice test
2. Once they've finished, ask them to print out their score report. This will include their written responses.

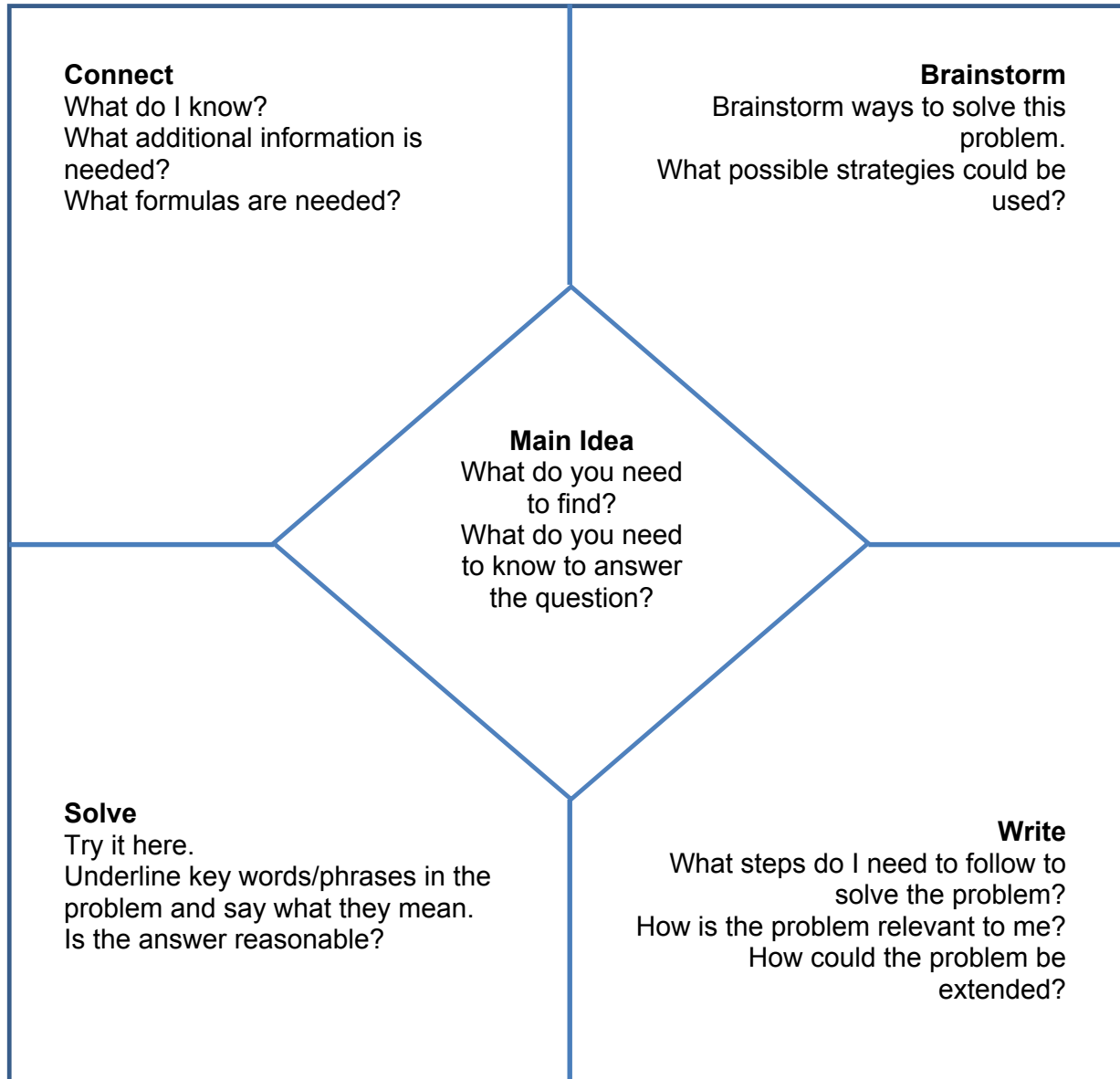
Use these constructed [response tools](#) to help you score students' responses:

- [GED Ready® Practice Test Extended Response Prompts and Source Texts](#) show the question students responded to and the text or data they based their response on.
- [Extended Response Resource Guide for Adult Educators](#) give sample responses for GED Ready® practice test questions at each possible score level. They also explain why each response received the score it did, so you can understand what to look for in each response. Two guides (with sample responses from two different extended response prompts) are available for the RLA test.
- [The Extended Response Scoring Tool](#) is a hands-on resource to use when scoring a constructed response. The tool allows you to score a response on each of the dimensions and sub-dimensions. The tool automatically calculates a total for each trait based on your evaluation.

Help organize math problems

Help students translate mathematical questions into steps that help them solve the problem using the [Math Graphic Organizer](#). Use this organizer in the classroom to show students how to break down the problem and organize available information.

Problem: _____



Adapted from Zollman (2009)

Here are more math tools to use in your classroom:

- [Math Graphic Organizer](#)
- [Math Formula Sheet & Explanation](#)
- [Calculator Reference Sheet](#)
- [More Math Tools: Websites and Resources](#)
- [Math Word Problem Translation Guide](#)

Watch GED Testing Service webinars

You'll find more helpful information to use in the classroom in our [Tuesdays for Teachers](#) webinars. Watch the webinar archive and keep an eye out for new webinars, added monthly.

Webinars are free and available on-demand. Webinars will include:

- Teaching strategies to help shape your instruction
- Ideas for classroom projects
- Handouts and worksheets to share with students
- The latest news and updates about the GED® test

Chapter 4:

See If Your Students Are Ready

The best way to find out if your students are ready for the real test is to give them the [GED Ready®](#) official practice test. The GED Ready® is the only practice test that tells if a student is likely to pass the GED® test.

Keep reading to learn more about:

- How the GED Ready® practice test predicts GED® test performance
- What GED Ready® scores mean
- How to use the personal study plan
- What to do if a student doesn't pass

How GED Ready® predicts test performance

Unlike other practice tests, GED Ready® was designed to predict whether a student can pass the operational GED® test. It went through the same standardization and norming process as the operational test, so students who receive a “Likely to Pass” score should be considered prepared and encouraged to take the operational test.

GED Ready® practice test questions are at the same level of difficulty as questions on the operational test, so it really does predict success on the operational GED® test!

“We’ve found that our students’ GED Ready® results are within a point or two of the score they receive on the actual test. It’s a really good predictability tool and we’re confident that when a student takes GED Ready®, they’ll earn a similar score on the real GED® test.”

— Raymond Haddix, Simpson County Adult Education, Franklin, KY

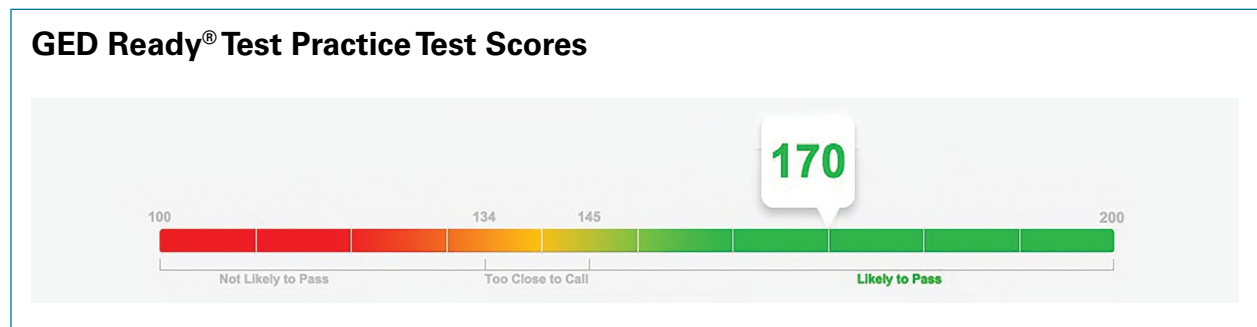
Note: Even though the GED Ready® doesn't score constructed responses, it can still tell if a student is ready to test! *Each GED Ready® practice test score considers how a student would typically score on a constructed response based on how they did on the rest of the test.*

What GED Ready® practice test scores mean

Once students take GED Ready®, they'll receive their Enhanced Score Report after they log into their [GED.com](https://ged.com) account. Score reports show their test score, the skills they need to work on, what they did well on, and their constructed response, if applicable.

Scores fall into one of three categories: Likely to Pass, Too Close to Call, and Not Likely to Pass.

- **Likely to Pass (145-200)** — If your students score Likely to Pass, they should take that GED® subject test as soon as possible. Score predictions are valid for 60 days; make sure they test while the prediction is still valid.
- **Too Close to Call (134-144)** — If your students score Too Close to Call, use the Enhanced Score Report to see which skills they need to improve before they take the operational test. Depending on their score, they may want to take the GED Ready® practice test again before taking the GED® test.
- **Not Likely to Pass (100-133)** — If your students score Not Likely to Pass, use the Enhanced Score Report to see which skills they need to improve before they take the operational test. Have students take the GED Ready® again to make sure they're confident to pass.



How to use the personal study plan

Students get a personal study plan in their Enhanced Score Report after they take the GED Ready®. As an educator, you can use this plan to identify the skills and pages to work on in class. You can also use the [constructed response scoring tools](#) to give students feedback on their GED Ready® RLA Extended Response questions.

To make the most of the Enhanced Score Report's study plan in your classroom:

1. Have students log into their GED.com account and view their score report.
2. Ask students to select the study materials used in class from the drop-down menu to get the recommendations specific to your classroom materials.
3. Ask students to print their report with the recommendations and personal study plan.

Start reviewing the recommended materials in your class. It's that simple!

What to do if a student doesn't pass

With the GED® program, students who don't pass the GED® test have more tools than ever to help them succeed on their next try! When students need to retake a GED® test subject:

1. Use the Enhanced Score Report's study plan to help focus their studying on exactly what they need to improve.
2. Give students the GED Ready® practice test before taking the test again.
3. Once they're ready, have students schedule their retake in their GED.com account.*

To download a digital copy of this handbook and to access all of the tools and resources mentioned, go to GED.com/en/international_prep_providers/professional_development/develop_student_skills/.

* Through the [Discounted Retake Program](#), every candidate is eligible for two discounted retakes for a failed attempt on a GED® test subject. These discounted retakes are valid for twelve months after the initial subject area test attempt. For each discounted retake, GED Testing Service waives all testing fees, so the only costs to the student are any applicable state or testing center fees. This applies to U.S. test takers only. International students are not eligible.

Subscribe to the GED Testing Service e-newsletter to get the latest news, tools, and tips on teaching the GED® test.

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