

# LEARN!

GED® Program

# Educator Handbook

Everything you need to prepare students for the GED® test

- ☒ In-depth look at GED® test content
- ☒ Recommended teaching strategies
- ☒ How to know if your students are ready



Annette, GED® graduate

International Edition

GED® and GED Testing Service® are registered trademarks of the American Council on Education. Used under license. Copyright © 2017 GED Testing Service LLC. All rights reserved.



0939e

# Chapter 1: The GED® Test – A Closer Look

The GED® test was built from the ground up to give students a test that measures the skills they need to succeed. The test focuses on the foundational knowledge and skills needed for career- and college-readiness, so colleges and employers know 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

- Four test subjects: Reasoning Through Language Arts (RLA), Mathematical Reasoning, Science, and Social Studies
- Students must score 145 in all four test subjects to earn their GED® credential
- Students may take tests one-at-a-time and in any order
- Delivered on computer
- Available in US English only
- Approximately eight hours for all four test subjects
- One essay (known as a “constructed response” item)
- Passing level is based on the performance of graduating high school seniors from the class of 2013 who took the test as part of the Standardization and Norming Study
- Scores reported in the Enhanced Score Report, available in student's MyGED® account

## GED® test benefits

- Pay-as-you-go option lets students pay for the test subject they want, when they want to take it
- Same-day scoring
- Free accommodations available including extra time
- 100% refund when test canceled or re-scheduled at least 24 hours before appointment

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

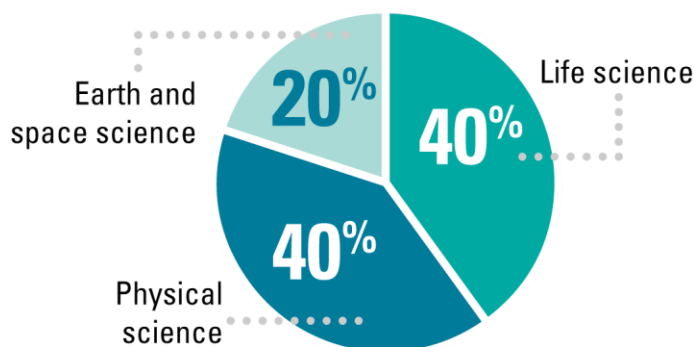
- 150 minutes in three sections (including a 10-minute break between section two and section three)
- Includes multiple choice, short answer, drop-down, and a variety of technology-enhanced items
- Includes one 45-minute extended response (essay)
- Test includes 75% informational (non-fiction) text, 25% literary (fiction) text
- Text ranges in complexity, including texts at the career- and college-readiness level
- Text ranges from 400 to 900 words in length
- Text vocabulary focuses on words that appear frequently in a wide variety of disciplines
- Measures the student's:
  - Ability to read closely, write clearly, and 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 (approximately 5 - 7 questions)
  - Use of the TI-30XS onscreen calculator is allowed for the remaining questions
- Includes multiple choice, drop-down, and a variety of technology-enhanced items
- Calculator reference guide is provided
- Math formulas are provided
- Test measures the student's:
  - Quantitative problem-solving abilities (45%)
  - Algebraic problem-solving abilities (55%)

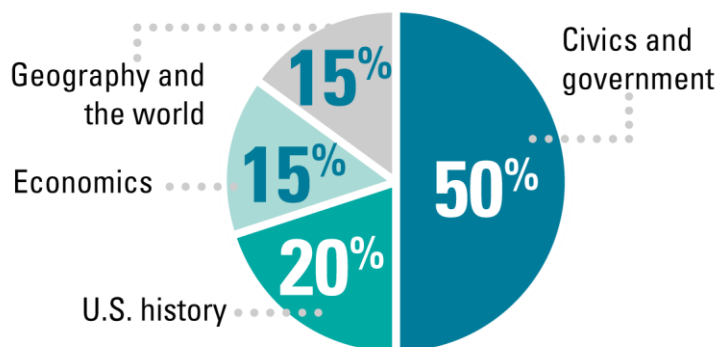
## What's on the Science test

- 90 minutes
- Includes multiple choice, drop-down, and a variety of technology-enhanced items
- Use of the the TI-30XS onscreen calculator is allowed as needed
- Test measures the student's:
  - Ability to read, understand, and interpret science-related texts
  - Problem-solving abilities in science-related situations
  - Knowledge of:



## What's on the Social Studies test

- 70 minutes
- Includes multiple choice, drop-down, and a variety of technology-enhanced items
- Use of the the TI-30XS onscreen calculator is allowed as needed
- Test measures the student's:
  - Ability to read, understand, and interpret social studies-related texts and data
  - Problem-solving abilities in social studies-related situations
  - Knowledge of:



## Chapter 2: What Scores Look Like

Students who take the GED® test or the official GED Ready® practice test will get their test scores in their MyGED® accounts at [GED.com](https://GED.com). All students receive an Enhanced Score Report under the “My Scores” section that includes 4 parts:

- My Score
- How I Can Score Higher (Personal Study Plan)
- What My Score Means
- My Written Answers (for the RLA Extended Response item)

Read below for more information on the score scale and personal study plan.

### My Score

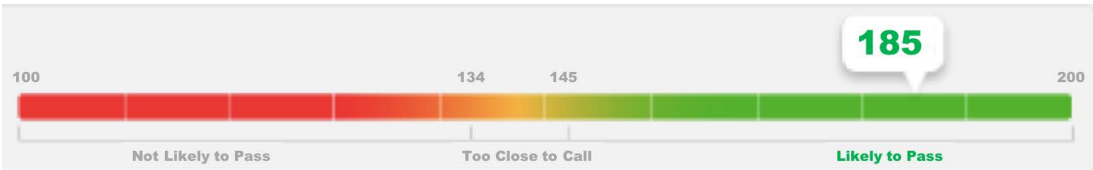
The My Score section is where students find the scores they received on their GED® test or GED Ready® practice test. The section looks slightly different depending on whether the score is for the GED® test or the GED Ready® practice test. That’s because the tests have different score levels.

#### GED® Test Scores



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

GED Ready® Practice Test Scores



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.

How I Can Score Higher (Personal Study Plan)

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 or GED Ready® practice test.

- See what skills they need to work on to score higher
- Select their favorite study materials to get a personal study plan with pages and chapters to review

My Written Answers

The My Written Answers 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 students' written response scores for the Reasoning Through Language Arts extended response
- **GED Ready® practice test** - Shows the written responses students submitted for the Reasoning Through Language Arts extended response. You can use the tools listed in Chapter 3's *Give students feedback on their GED Ready® constructed response* section to guide your students.

## 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 GED® test:

- Use Performance Level Descriptors
- Focus on the skills that test-takers are missing
- Prepare your students with test-day tools
- Help students write high-scoring constructed responses
- Share the basic rules for writing an extended response
- Give students feedback on their GED Ready® constructed responses
- Help organize math problems

### Use Performance Level Descriptors

**The Performance Level Descriptors (PLDs) explain the skills students must demonstrate** to score in each of the 2 possible performance levels (non-passing and passing) on the GED® test and the GED Ready® practice test. Here are 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 needed 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 test-takers are missing

Don't let your students make the same mistakes others have made. Make sure they're prepared with the **High Impact Indicators**.

These are the skills that students must demonstrate that cross across the content areas. Focus on these skills in your lessons plans so your students will be able to best demonstrate their skills on test day.

## 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.

- **Extended Response Answer Guidelines** include recommendations for students when crafting their response. Available for RLA and Social Studies.
- **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 available so students can practice with these tools for test day. Order some for your classroom through GED PrintHub for the cost of shipping and handling at <http://www.gedtestingervice.com/educators/orderfreematerials>.

## Help students write high-scoring constructed responses

During the scoring process, some items are weighted more heavily than others. The constructed response items make up about 20% of the student's score on the RLA test. We recommend that all students answer these items. There are no score deductions for incorrect answers. Make sure your students are prepared to craft fully developed responses.



Below is one suggested approach for drafting a fully developed constructed response. Use the **Steps for Drafting a Constructed Response** to guide your students through each stage of this process. See the *“Create a Thesis Statement” worksheet on the next page* and **Tools for Drafting a Constructed Response worksheet**.

### Steps for Drafting a Constructed Response

1. Read the passage and question
2. Unpack the prompt (identify key words)
3. Rewrite the question and turn the question into a thesis statement
4. Collect relevant details from 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

## Share the basic rules for writing an extended response

Simply attempting a written response on the RLA test doesn't mean a student will earn points. Responses must meet the minimum scoring criteria - which you can find in the **Constructed Response Educator Guides**. Also, make sure your students follow these basic but important rules so they'll earn points on their responses:

1. **Write a complete essay.** Students should aim to write at least 4-7 paragraphs, or 300-500 words per extended response.
2. **Give commentary on quotes from source texts.** 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.
3. **Develop 2-3 main ideas.** Students should focus on a few main points that they fully-develop with evidence and support.
4. **Proofread.** Students should spend the last 4-5 minutes checking for these grammar issues:
  - Ensure varied sentence structure
  - Correct use of transitions
  - Eliminate wordiness or awkwardness
  - Eliminate run on sentences, sentence fragments
  - Ensure correct homophone usage (i.e., your vs. you're)
  - Ensure correct subject-verb agreement
  - Proper capitalization
  - Proper use of apostrophes
  - Correct punctuation
  - 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 \_\_\_\_\_.

### Check the links below for more constructed response tools to print and use in your classroom:

- Sample Lesson Plan & Instructional Plan
- Tools for Drafting a Constructed Response
- Websites and Resources
- Extended Response Answer Guidelines
- Daylight Saving Time Prompt

## Give students feedback on their GED Ready® constructed responses

The GED Ready® practice test for RLA includes a constructed response item just like the items that are on the GED® test. **Since the GED Ready® practice test doesn't score the constructed responses automatically, 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.

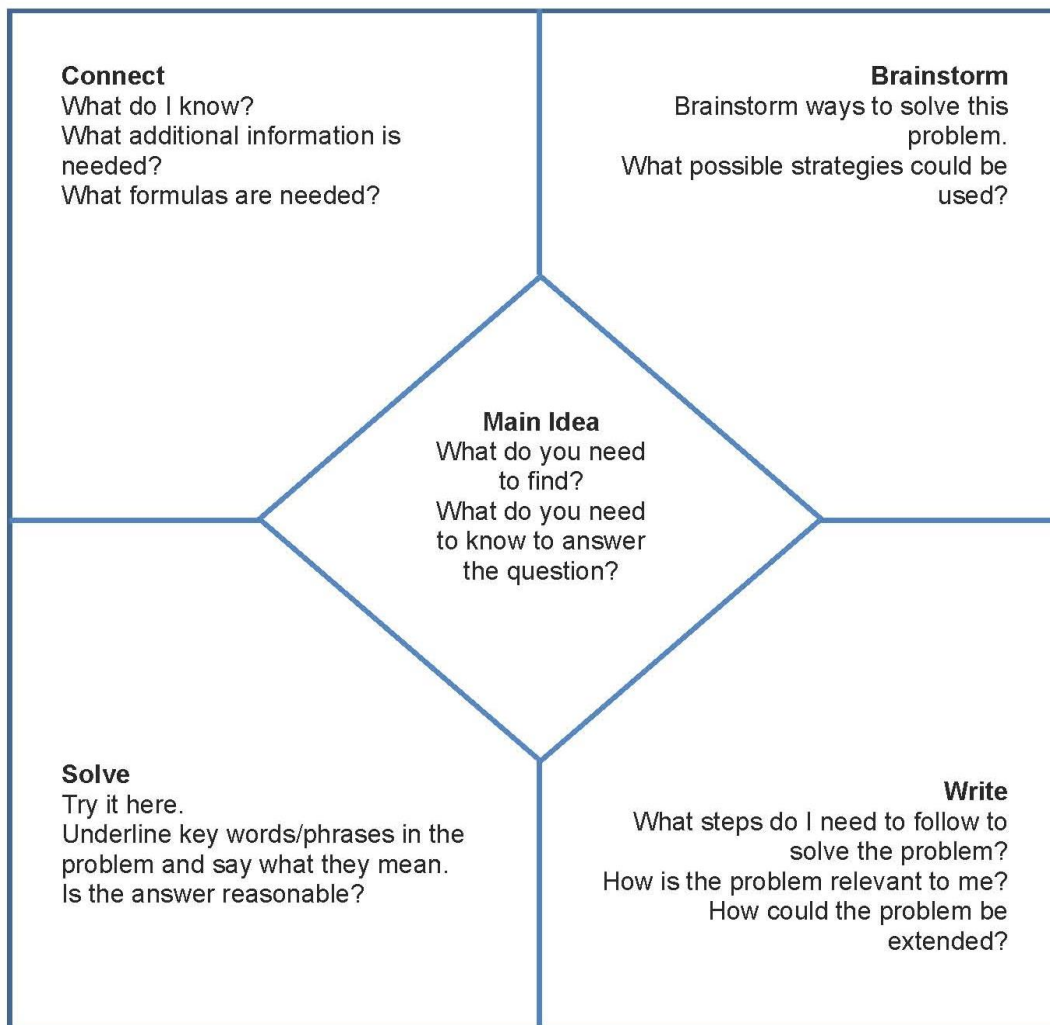
Use these constructed response tools to help you score students' responses:

- **Source Text and Prompts** show the question students responded to and the text or data they based their response on
- **Constructed Response Educator Guides** 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.
- **Constructed Response Scoring Tools** are hands-on tools to use when scoring constructed responses. They break down the constructed response into the dimensions and subdimensions that are being evaluated and explain how to award points.

## 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)

**Check the links below for more math tools to print and 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

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

### How the GED Ready® practice test predicts test performance

Unlike practice tests in the past, the GED Ready® practice test was designed to predict whether a student will 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, USA

Note: Even though the GED Ready® practice test 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 the GED Ready® practice test, they'll receive their Enhanced Score Reports on MyGED® at [GED.com](https://GED.com). 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. Score Ranges for each category vary by test subject. See *Chapter 2: What Scores Look Like for the score breakdown by test subject*.

- **Likely to Pass** — 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** — If your students score Too Close to Call, use the Enhanced Score Report to see what skills they need to work on 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** — If your students score Not Likely to Pass, use the Enhanced Score Report to see what skills they need to work on before they take the operational test. Have students take the GED Ready® practice test again to make sure they're ready.

## How to use the personal study plan

Students also get a personal study plan in their Enhanced Score Reports after they take the GED Ready® practice test. As an educator, you can use this plan to identify the skills and pages to work on in class.

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

1. Have students log into their MyGED® 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 the area they need to improve
  2. Give students the GED Ready® practice test before they try taking the test again
  3. Once they're ready, have students schedule their retake in MyGED®
- 

Subscribe to the GED Testing Service e-newsletter to get the latest news, tools, and tips on teaching the GED® test.   
Go to [GEDtestingservice.com/newsletter-educator](https://GEDtestingservice.com/newsletter-educator) to sign up.

Follow us online:



[facebook.com/GEDTesting](https://facebook.com/GEDTesting)



[@GEDTesting](https://twitter.com/GEDTesting)

