



VOLUNTEER TRAINING: ADULT BASIC SKILLS & GED

SEPTEMBER 13, 2025
9:30 - 3:00

COLLEEN LATIMER

COLLEEN LATIMER

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THANK YOU



Portland LITERACY Council

AGENDA

1.

Adult Learning

2.

Learners

3.

Common
Learning Goals

4.

Tutoring Tips

5.

Common
Challenges

6.

What is the
GED®?

7.

GED® Content

8.

Resources

OBJECTIVES FOR THIS WORKSHOP

- Explain the expectations for working with adult learners.
- Contrast adult learning with children's learning.
- Identify common challenges for adult learners and opportunities to mitigate.
- Develop a plan for meeting new learners.
- Describe the process for obtaining a GED®.
- Implement a "course of study" for your learner.



WHAT THE WORKSHOP IS NOT

This workshop is not a system for matching tutors and learners.

If you choose to tutor, you will contact the organization of your choice based on your location and availability. They will match you with learners. Check your email from PLC for tutoring opportunities.

Multnomah County Library mcl.adult.literacy@multcolib.org 503.577.9984

Portland Community College:

- Sylvania Campus, PCC Coordinator: Mark Palmer, 971-722-4903, mark.palmer2@pcc.edu
- Rock Creek Campus, PCC Coordinator: Edit McDonald, 971-722-2578, emcdonal@pcc.edu
- Southeast Campus, PCC Coordinator: Lucy Marincel, lucia.marincel@pcc.edu
- Cascade Campus, PCC Coordinator: Lisa Palm, lisa.palm@pcc.edu





SPEAK UP!

Please do not hesitate to speak up and ask questions as we go - it is more enjoyable when the training is conversational!



BEFORE WE GET STARTED...

What concerns do you have about tutoring? I want to make sure we hit every one of those today.

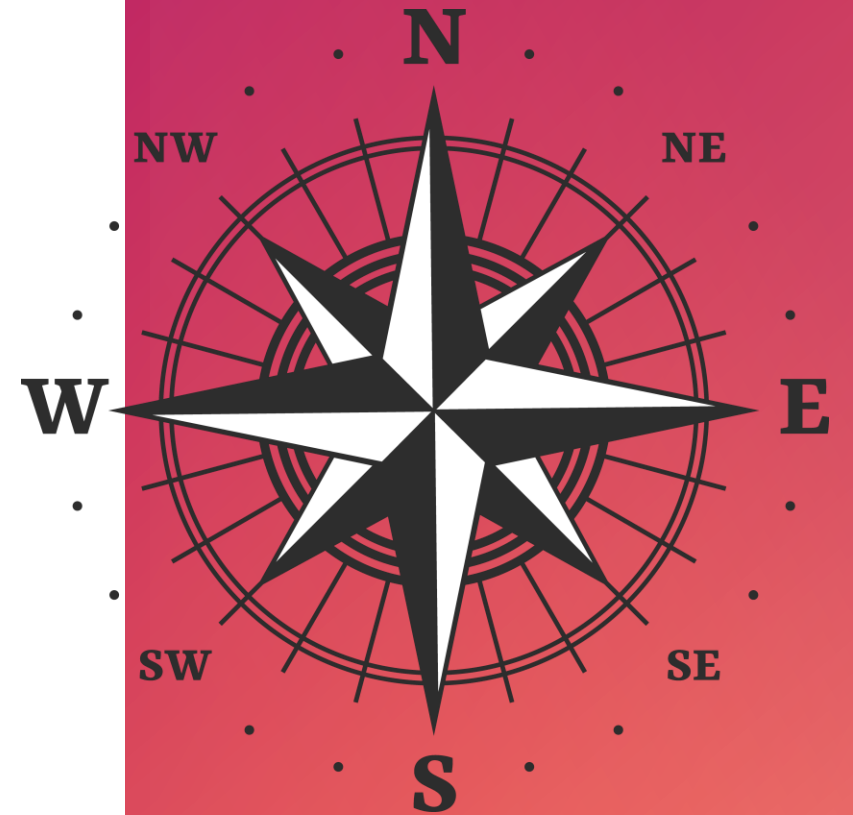
1. ADULT LEARNING



**YOUR LEARNER IS "IN
CHARGE" OF THEIR
LEARNING, YOU ARE SIMPLY
THERE TO ASSIST THEM.**

PRINCIPLES OF ADULT LEARNING

1. Adults are self-motivated and goal-oriented.
2. Adults are ready to apply what they have learned.
3. Adults bring their experiences to learning.
4. Adults may have many barriers to learning.



**HOW IS
LEARNING
DIFFERENT
FOR
ADULTS VS
CHILDREN?**



2.

**WHO ARE
YOUR
LEARNERS?**





Your Average Learners

- Age range depends where you tutor.
- Typical tutees age range is 30-50 (even up to 80 y.o.).
- Social circumstances/childbirth/need to work, kept learners from finishing school.
- Recovery and/or Re-entry
- Non-native speakers/minimal access to school
- Job seekers

LEARNER POPULATION



LEARNER MOTIVATION

INTERNAL

- Prove something to themselves
- Demonstrate something to their children

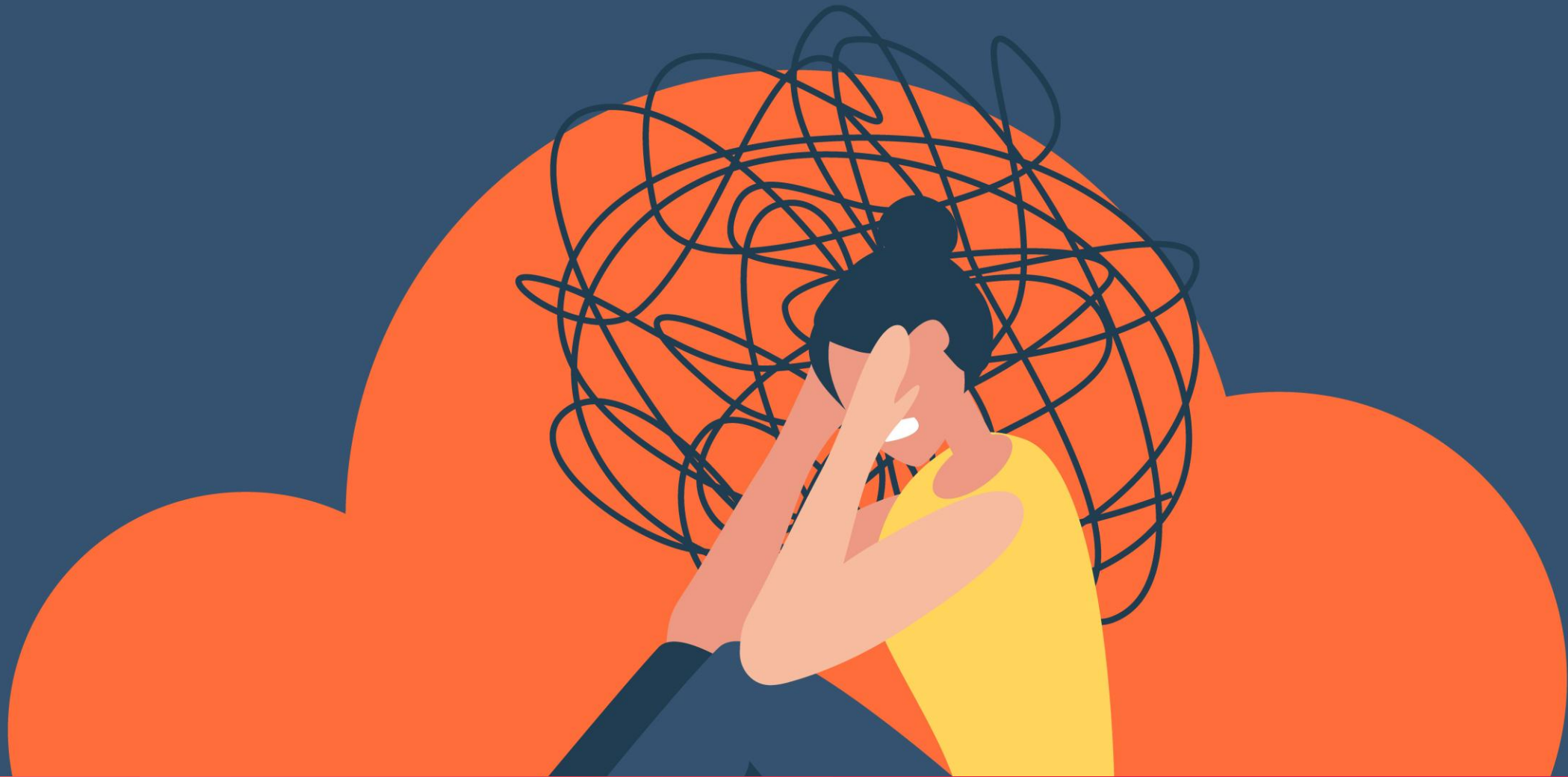
EXTERNAL

- Job \$\$\$
- Promotion
- College

INTERNAL VS EXTERNAL MOTIVATIONS



LEARNER DISPOSITION



TRAUMA

**LEARNER
PROFILES**



ESME



ANGEL



**MARIA &
SYDNEY**



LEN



3.

COMMON
GOALS



GOALS

DRIVER'S LICENSE



**CNA
(CERTIFIED
NURSING
ASSISTANT)**



**ASVAB
(ARMED
SERVICES
VOCATIONAL
APTITUDE
BATTERY)**



CITIZENSHIP EXAM



GED



4.

**TIPS FOR
SUCCESSFUL
TUTORING**





GETTING TO KNOW YOUR LEARNER

HOW DO WE START?

Learn practical details AND goals and preferences.



NEW LEARNER INTAKE

New Learner:

Date:

| | |
|--|------------------|
| How did you hear about tutoring? | |
| Best way to reach you: | Phone: Email: |
| What is motivating you now? | |
| Primary Language: | Other Languages: |
| Last in School / Grade Completed: | |
| Study Experience (any prior classes/tutoring): | |
| Current Work / Schedule / Study Availability: | |
| Goals for reading: | |
| Computer Access: | Computer Skills: |

ROLE PLAY



- Let your learner take the lead.
- Ask questions about their preferences.
- Some individuals are very formal and reserved while others are very open.
- There is no one “right” way.

KEY POINTS

MAKE A PLAN



PLATFORMS FOR REMOTE LEARNING

Remote learning can happen **on any platform** that you and the learner are comfortable using!



Google Docs

**FOR THOSE OF YOU CURRENTLY
TUTORING, ARE YOU TUTORING
REMOTELY OR IN PERSON?**

**WHAT DO YOU FIND AS
ADVANTAGES OR CHALLENGES
TO YOUR METHOD?**

START WITH STRENGTHS

Start with the subjects that learners prefer and relate to the most. Build confidence in learning with an initial focus on their successes or interests before you move on to their struggles.



RELATIONSHIP

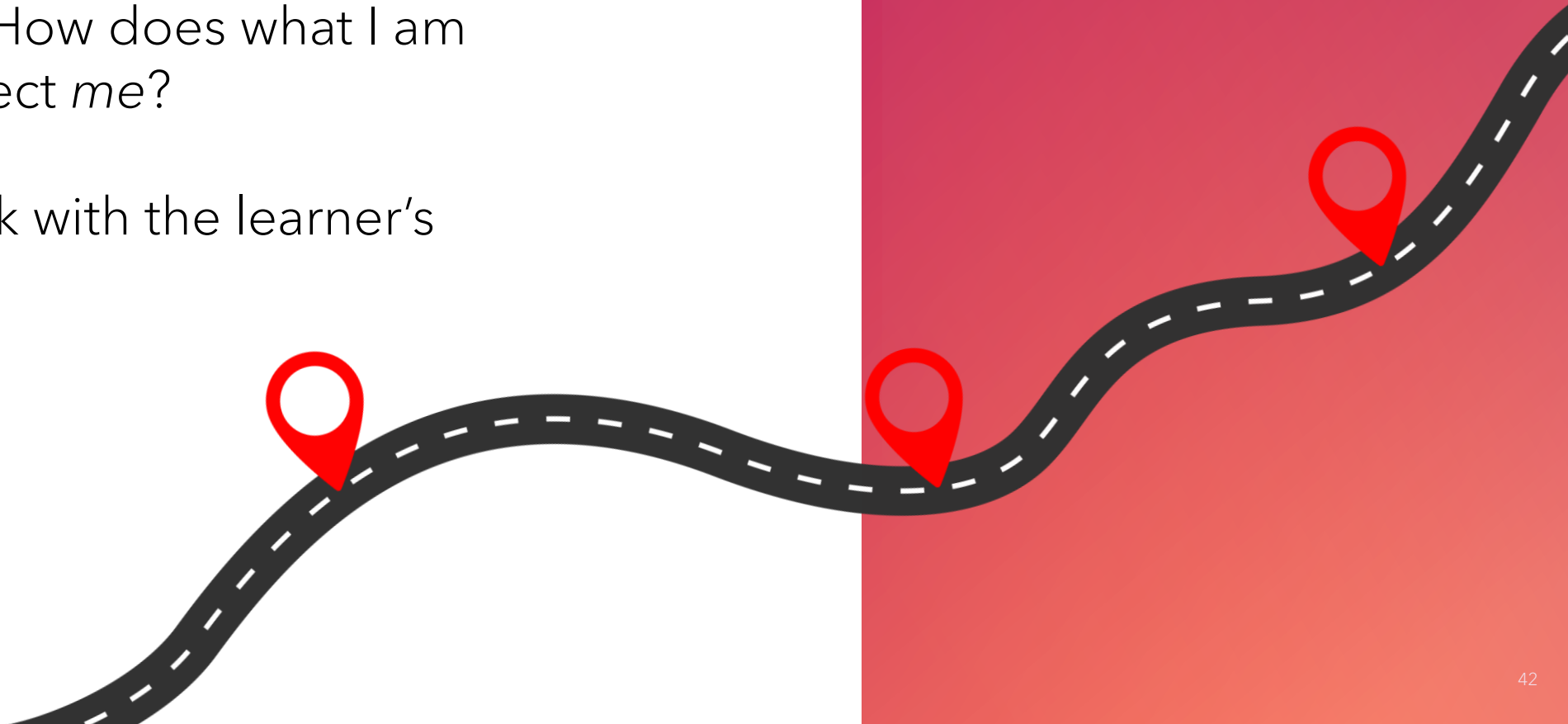
Adult learning doesn't happen in isolation—it thrives in relationships built on trust, respect, and mutual engagement.



RELEVANCE

Nothing is quite as motivating as relevance. How does what I am learning affect *me*?

Stay on track with the learner's motivation.



LEARNER SELF-CHECK FOR ACCURACY

Help learners develop the habits of estimating, narrowing down choices, and doing self-checks for accuracy.

Encourage them to check their own understanding for correctness before checking the answer key (or checking with you).



TIME

Ideal study time for one topic is around **50 minutes**, particularly for remote tutoring. Scheduling for an hour will give you time to check-in on either end.

You can switch between reading and visual or graphic material in the same subject.



WRITING

Learners are often reluctant to write.

Dedicate some portion of your tutoring time to writing.



TEACH BACKS

After covering a topic, ask the learner to teach it back to you. I think this is the most powerful tool for learning - the learner finds out exactly what they know, what they don't yet understand, and what tools would help.

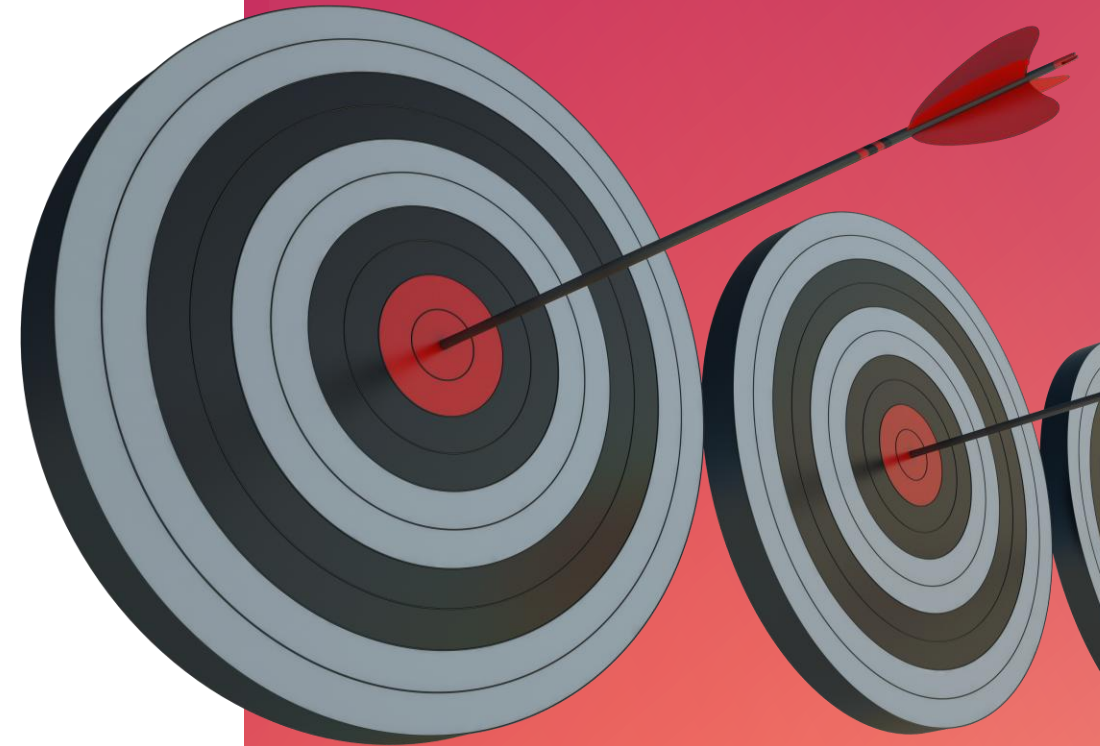
It may prompt finding different sources, physical material or writing activities.



GOAL SETTING / TRACKING PROGRESS

Take the time to help learners see the progress they are making. Some study plans are so large, it is difficult for the learner to see how they are progressing.

Wrap up tutoring by looking at what they have done, what you will work on next week and where that is in the overall study plan. Have the learners write in their notes what they learned and what they still need to know.



CONSISTENTLY QUESTION

Continue each week to ask your learner how they are feeling about how you spend your time.

When adults feel comfortable, they will speak up and let you know.

Example: Pronunciation

“Do you want to try it first, pause for words you don’t know, and I say it, or correct the pronunciation at the end?”

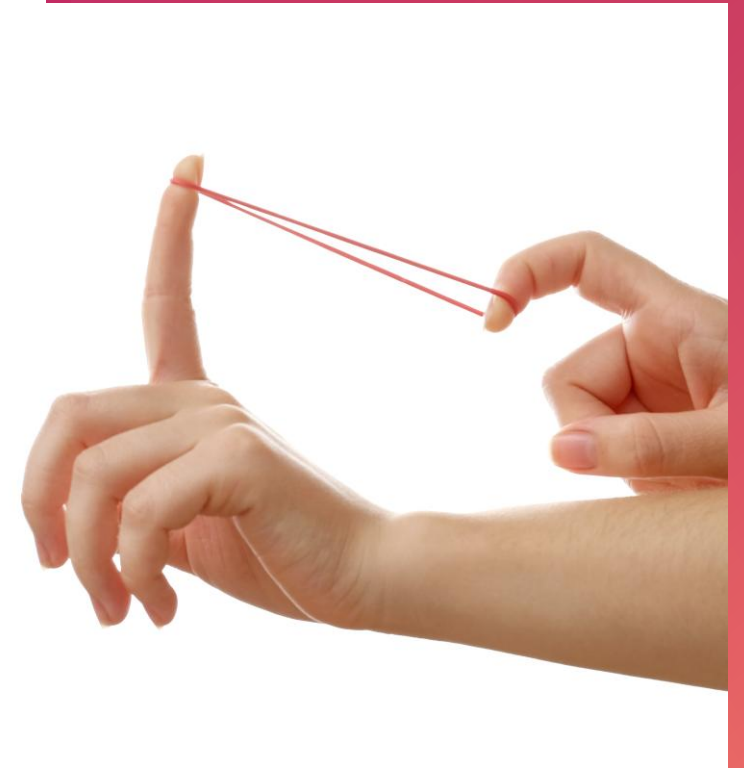


**TRY TO
ENSURE YOUR
LEARNER IS
TALKING
MORE THAN
YOU**



STRESS AND LEARNING

- The right amount of stress helps us learn and remember.
- Too little - no learning
- Too much - overwhelm - no learning



5.

**COMMON
ISSUES AND
CHALLENGES**



PREPARATION

Meet learners wherever they are - they may have planned to complete something by the time you are meeting, and it didn't happen.

Work with them right where they are - talk through the work.

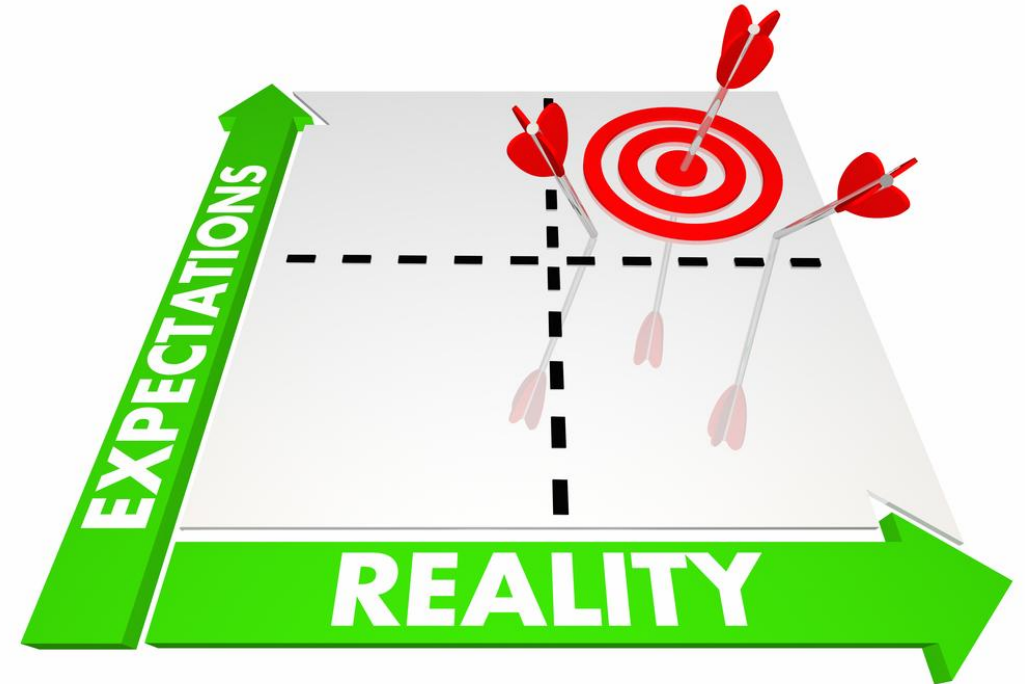


EXPECTATIONS

It is common to take more than a year of routine study to achieve their goal.

There can be pressures from agencies who do not understand the scope of the exams.

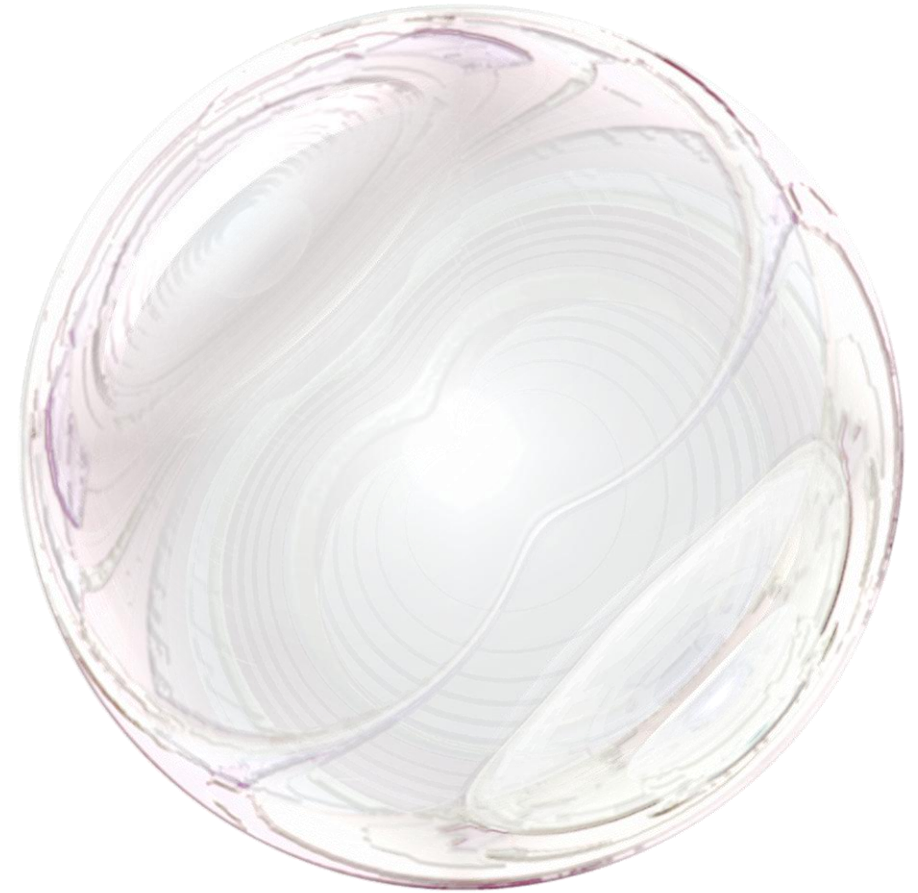
Remind the discouraged. It takes time, but YOU can do it!



LEARNING VULNERABILITY

This is a strength, not a weakness.

The most powerful phrase you can say is
"I don't know, let's find out."

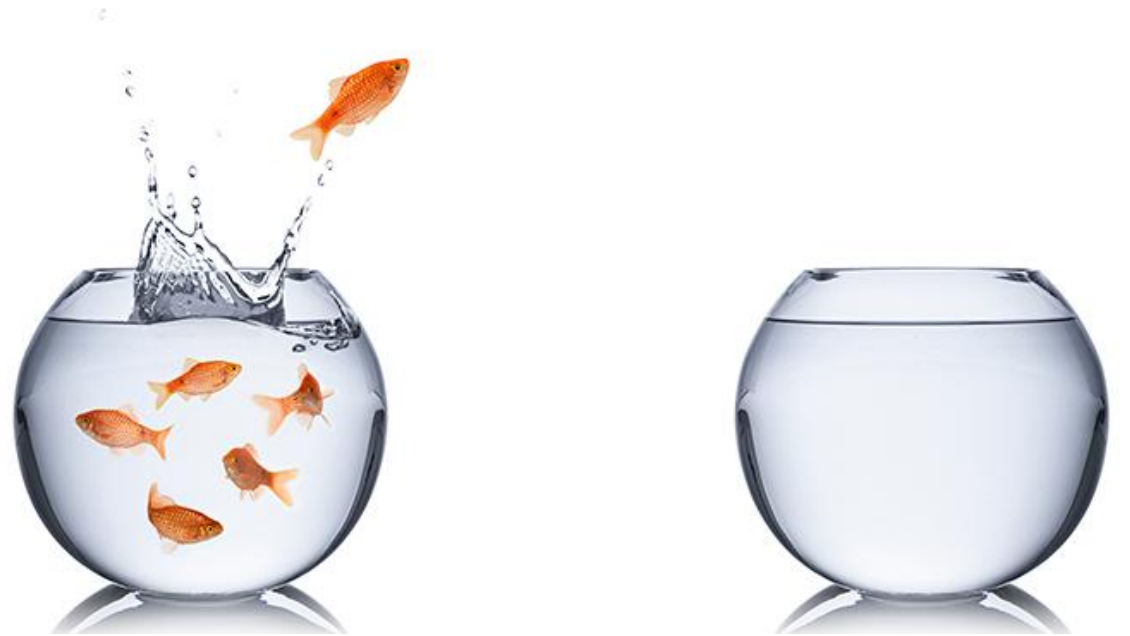


ATTRITION

It is very common for learners to stop and start and stop again.

Have patience.

Your welcoming attitude could impact whether they come back.



I CAN'T HELP THEM UNDERSTAND

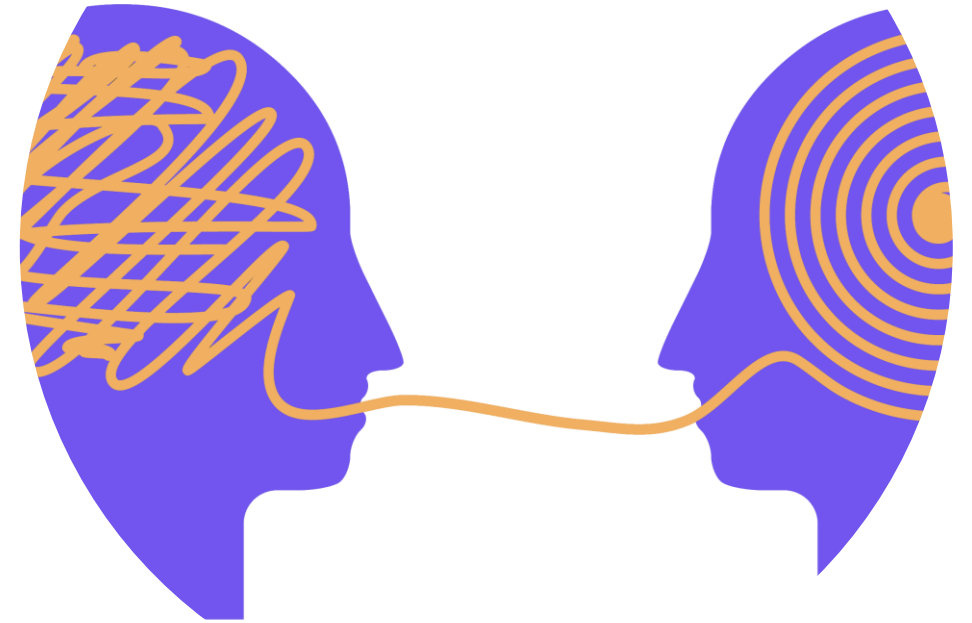
Step away from the concept for a bit.

Work on something else.

Watch videos about the same topic together.

Reach out - ask for help 😊

The "lightbulb" moment is worth it!



AVAILABILITY

Occasionally, learners want more time from you than you are available to give. It is okay to have limits on your time.



6.

WHAT IS THE GED?



WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THE GED® ?



WHAT DOES GED® STAND FOR?

A. General Equivalency Diploma

B. General Education Diploma

C. General Education Development

WHAT DOES GED® STAND FOR?

ANSWER

A. General Equivalency Diploma

B. General Education Diploma

C. General Education Development

HOW MANY TESTS DO YOU TAKE TO COMPLETE THE GED® ?

A. One test

B. Five separate tests

C. Four separate tests

HOW MANY TESTS DO YOU TAKE TO COMPLETE THE GED® ?

ANSWER

A. One test

B. Four separate tests

C. Five separate tests



Language Arts

Math

Science

Social Studies

**YOU HAVE THREE TRIES TO PASS
THE TEST.**

A. True

B. False



YOU HAVE THREE TRIES TO PASS THE TEST.

ANSWER

A. True

B. False

You have an unlimited number of chances to pass the tests.

However, each test costs money and after the third failed attempt, you must wait 60 days before you can try again.

This is true for each separate test.

**CORRECT SPELLING AND GRAMMAR
ARE IMPORTANT PARTS OF THE
GED®.**

A. True

B. False



CORRECT SPELLING AND GRAMMAR ARE IMPORTANT PARTS OF THE GED® . ANSWER

A. True

B. False

While the essay portion of the RLA exam does score spelling and grammar, this shouldn't discourage non-native speakers. They can pass the exam with perfect spelling and grammar.

Of course, if your learner plans to continue their education post-GED, this becomes more important.

THE FORMAT FOR THE GED® TEST QUESTIONS ARE:

- A. Fill-in short answer
- B. Multiple Choice
- C. Graphic "Hot Spot"
- D. All of the above

THE FORMAT FOR THE GED® TEST QUESTIONS ARE: ANSWER

- A. Fill-in short answer
- B. Multiple Choice
- C. Graphic "Hot Spot"
- D. All of the above

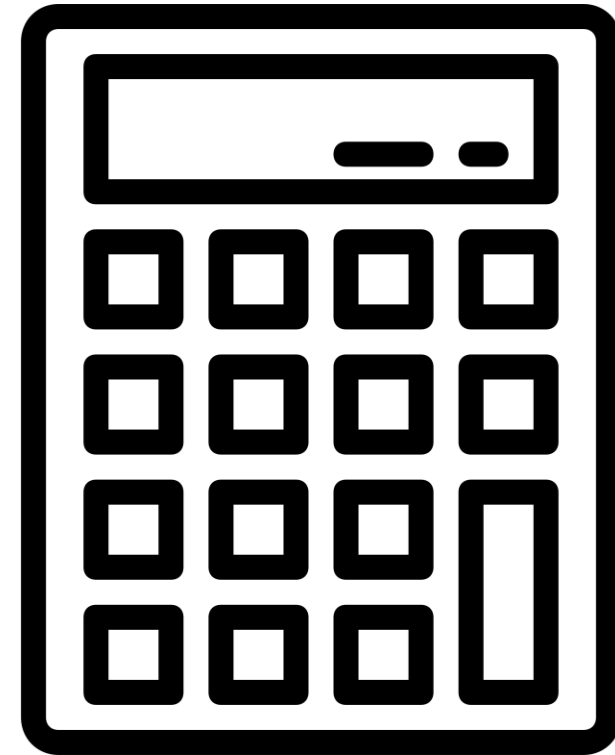
All of these formats are on the test:

Multiple Choice
Fill-in-the Blank
Drag and Drop
Drop-down
Hot Spot
Short Answer
Extended Response

**CALCULATORS ARE ALLOWED
DURING THE TEST.**

A. True

B. False

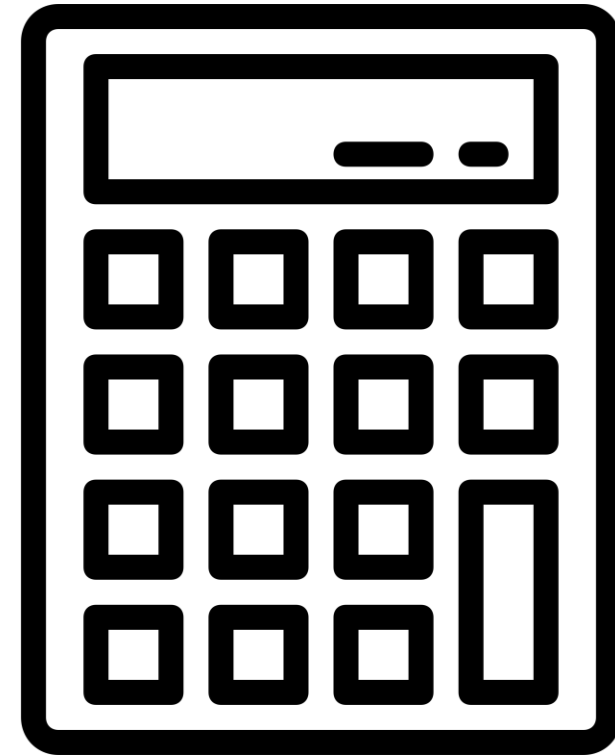


CALCULATORS ARE ALLOWED DURING THE TEST.

ANSWER

A. True

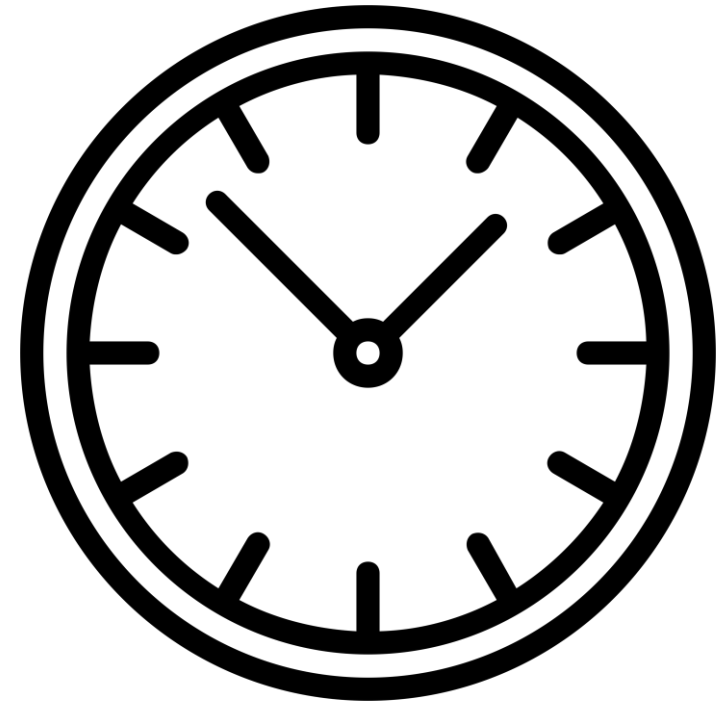
B. False



GED TESTS ARE TIMED.

A. True

B. False

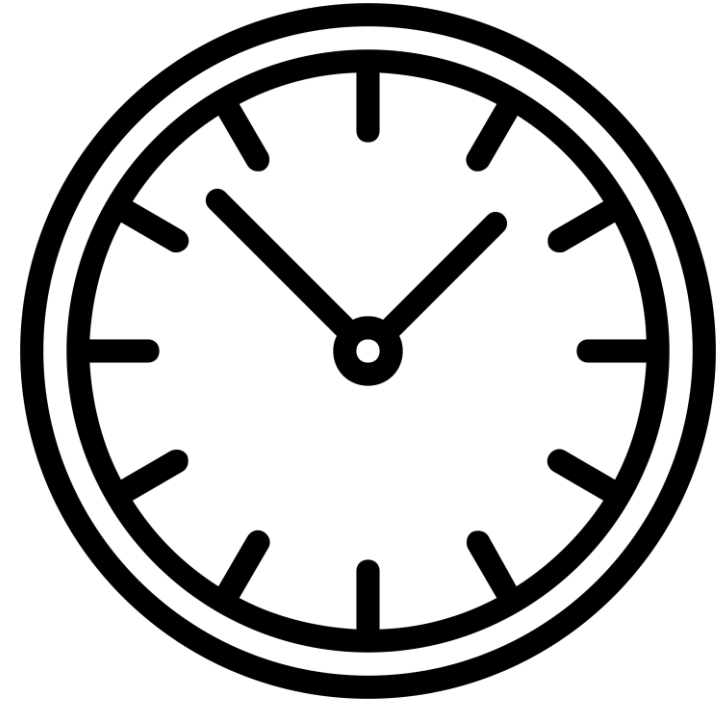


GED TESTS ARE TIMED.

ANSWER

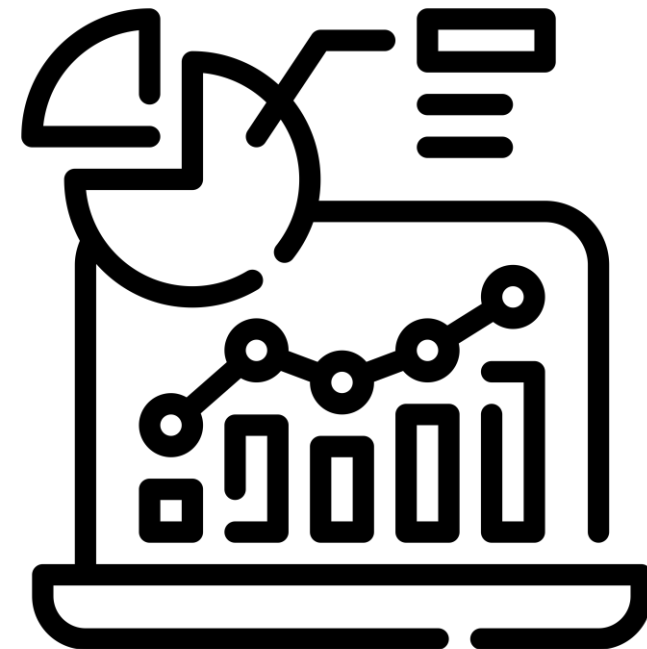
A. True

B. False



TABLES AND GRAPHS ARE COVERED ON WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING TESTS:

- A. Math
- B. Science
- C. Social Studies
- D. Reading



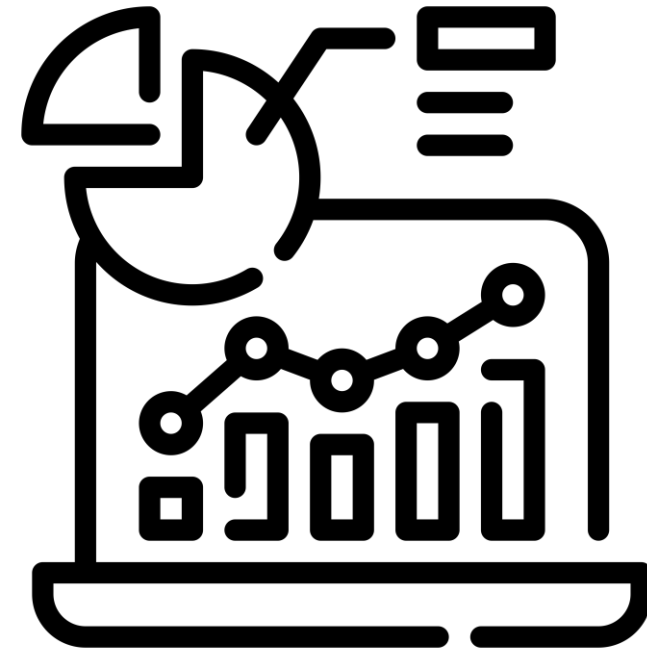
**TABLES AND GRAPHS ARE COVERED
ON WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING
TESTS: ANSWER**

A. Math

B. Science

C. Social Studies

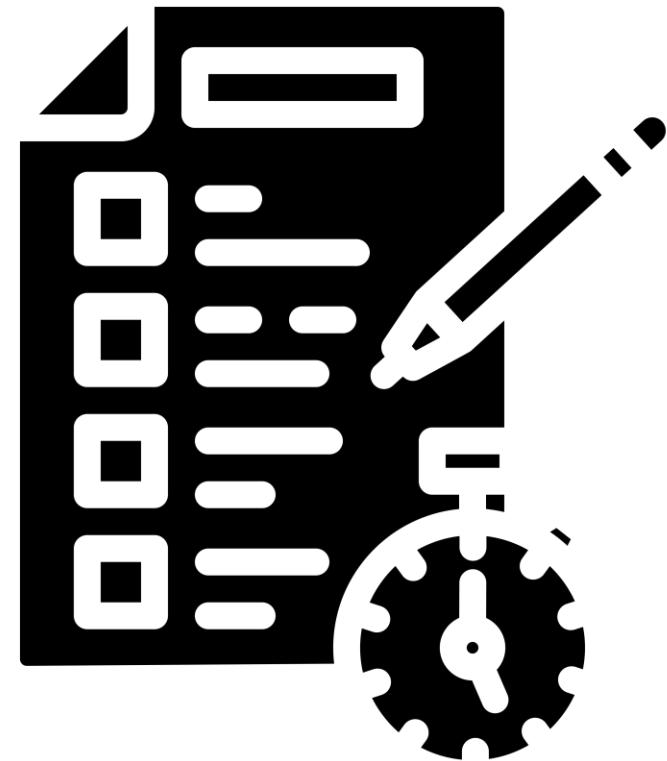
D. Reading



YOU CAN ONLY MISS 15% OF QUESTIONS AND STILL PASS.

A. True

B. False



YOU CAN ONLY MISS 15% OF QUESTIONS AND STILL PASS. ANSWER

Although the scoring is ambiguous, you can miss closer to 40-50% of the questions and still pass.

A. True

B. False

You don't have to know everything perfectly to pass the GED.

You also don't have to know everything to tutor!



CONGRATULATIONS!

HISTORY OF THE GED®

CREATION

The GED® test was created in the 1940s for veterans to establish academic credentials after service and be ready for employment

DEVELOPMENT


The test evolved to four individual parts to include socially relevant problem-solving skills moving toward academic achievement.

TODAY

In 2014, the test changed to reflect HS completion criteria and to demonstrate career and college readiness.

TEST STRUCTURE



A stack of five light-colored wooden blocks is shown on the left side of the page. The blocks are stacked horizontally, with the top block slightly offset to the left. The text on the blocks, from top to bottom, reads: "HOW", "MUCH", "DOES", "IT", and "COST?". The background is a blurred indoor setting with warm lighting.

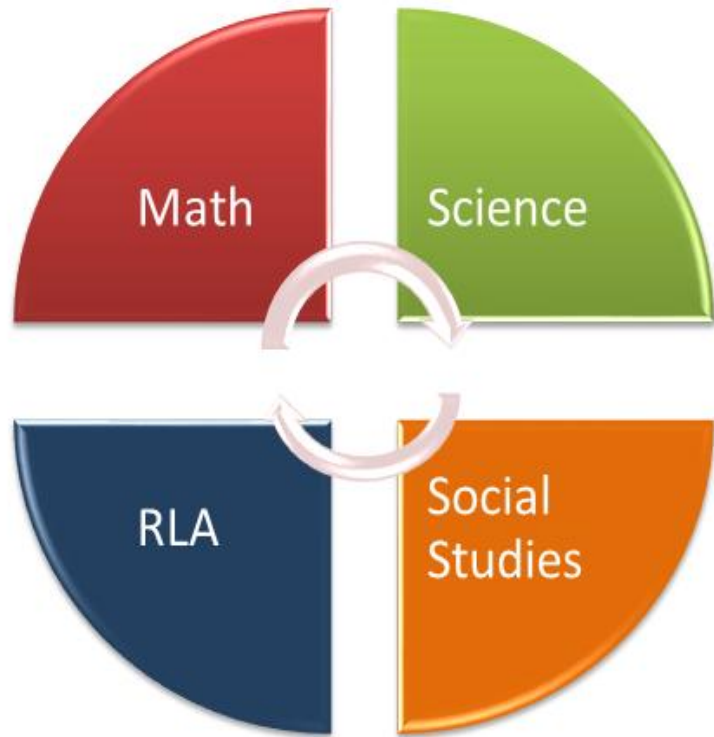
**HOW
MUCH
DOES
IT
COST?**

COST

For tests completed in Oregon (as of August 2025), each practice test costs \$7.99, and each official test costs \$44.00. Prices for exams do vary by state. (Minimum total cost in Oregon: \$207.96.)

Vouchers to pay for tests can be obtained through various organizations, including Portland Literacy Council, depending on the grant cycle and current budget.

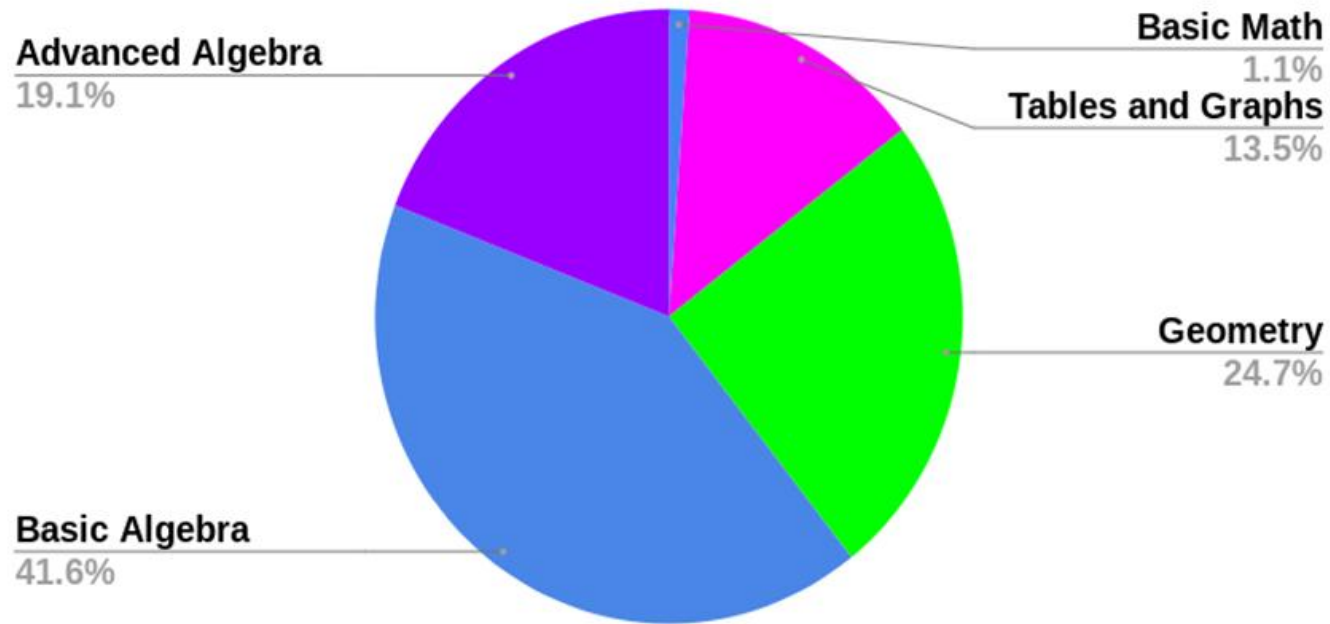
GED® COMPLETION



A learner must obtain a passing score of 145+ on each of the four computer-based exams offered only through the GED® Testing Service (ged.com). Tests may be taken in **any order, but must be completed at official testing centers** or remotely proctored*

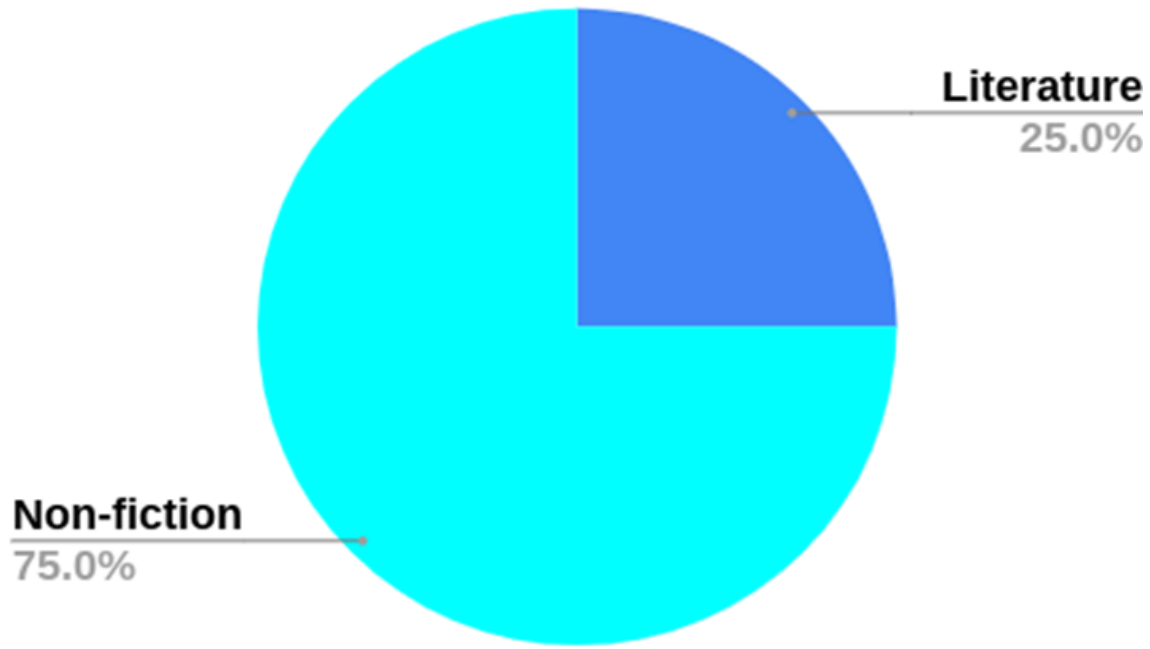
*meeting minimum system technology requirements.

MATH



115 minutes, 50 questions
5 questions - no calculator
All others calculator okay

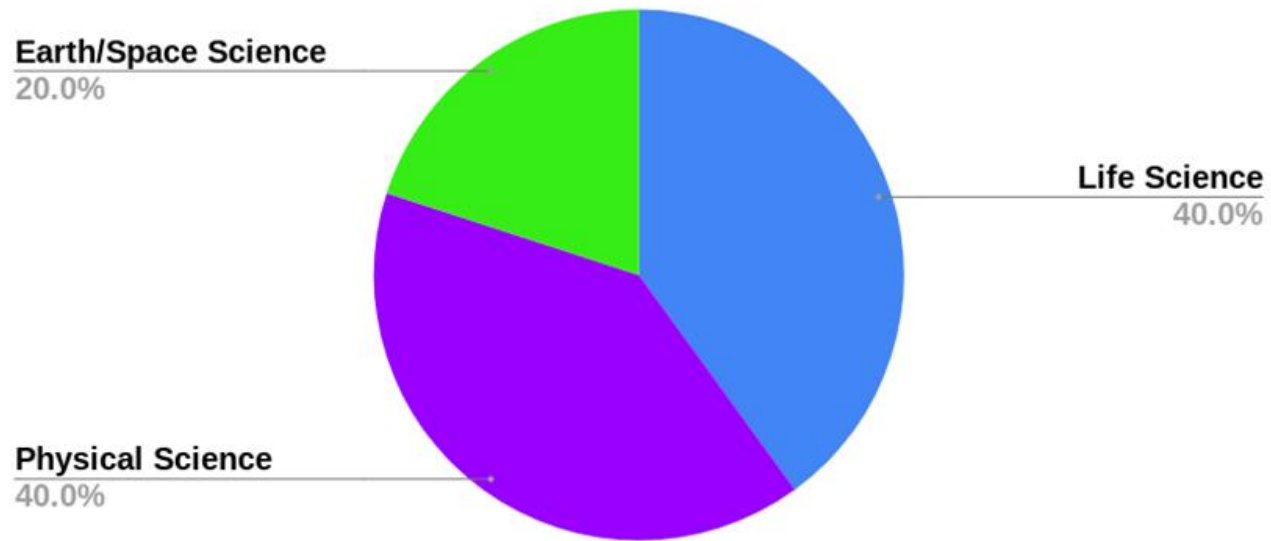
REASONING THROUGH LANGUAGE ARTS (RLA)



150 minutes
45 minutes for the written essay
Approximately 50 questions

Reading for meaning
Creating and supporting arguments

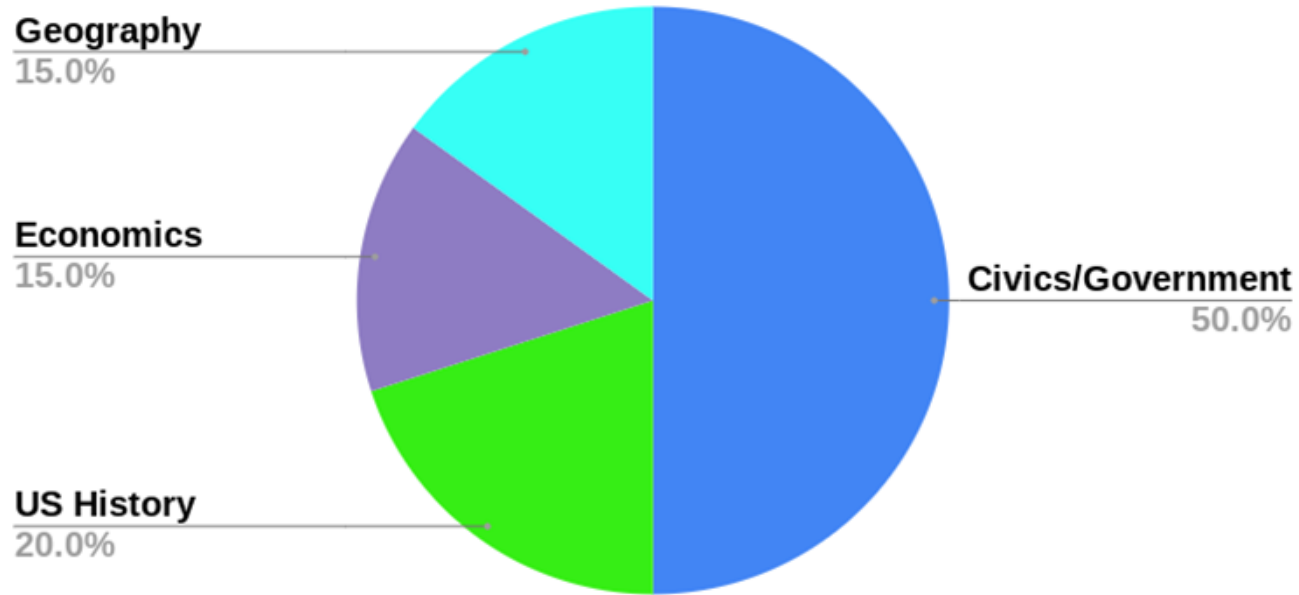
SCIENCE



90 minutes
Approximately 30 Questions

Reading for meaning
Understanding experimental design
Tables and graphs

SOCIAL STUDIES



70 minutes
Approximately 35 Questions

Analyzing historical events and speeches
Using tables and graphs

FORMAT

- There are seven kinds of computer-based questions:
- **Multiple choice** - click to choose from four choices
- **Fill-in-the-blank** - type a word, phrase, or number in a box
- **Drag and drop** - move words, numbers, or objects across the computer screen
- **Drop-down** - select from menus embedded in text on the computer screen
- **Hot spot** - click on “sensors” embedded in graphics on the computer
- **Short answer** - write a paragraph or two in response to passages or graphics
- **Extended response** - write a developed and supported response to passages or graphics

LANGUAGES



The test is only offered in English and Spanish.

ABOUT THE TESTS

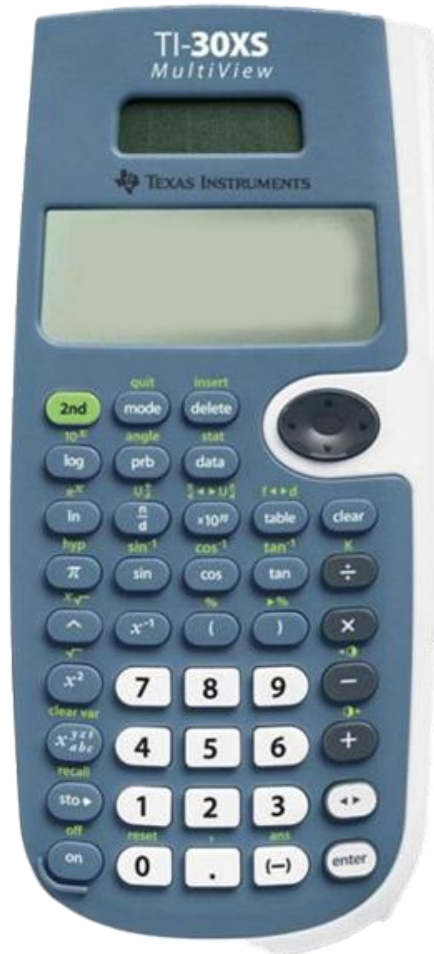
CONS

- Usual standardized testing problems
- Cultural bias toward white America
- Challenging vocabulary
- Prohibitive cost
- Time constraint is stress-inducing

PROS

- Focus on critical thinking
- No memorization
- More Tangible than abstract
- Identifying bias, perspective and purpose
- Civic and environmental issues

WHAT CAN YOU USE DURING THE TEST?

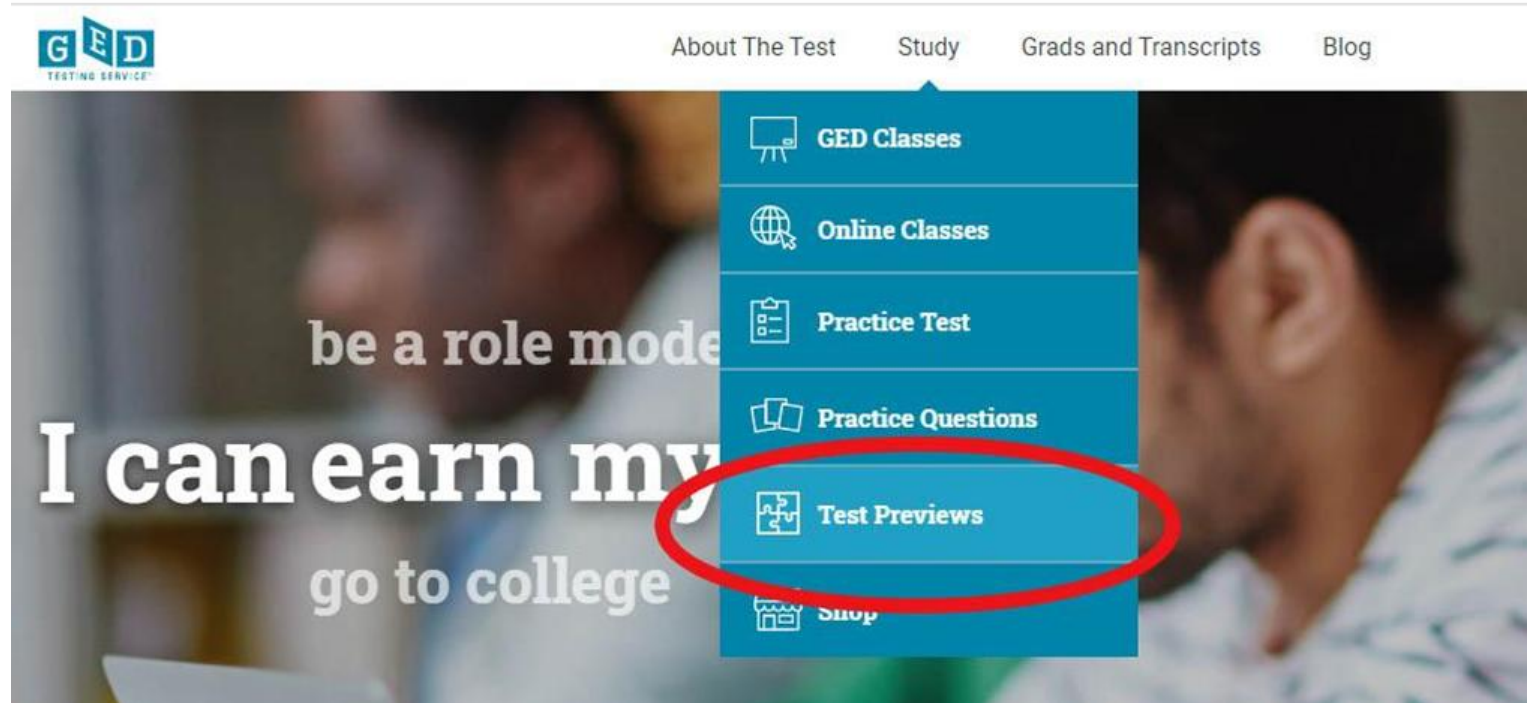


- Calculator: TI-30XS*
 - Noteboard (dry erase) if taking the test in-person/computer notepad if remote
 - Formula Sheet*
 - Calculator Reference Guide*
- *available in pop-up screen within the test

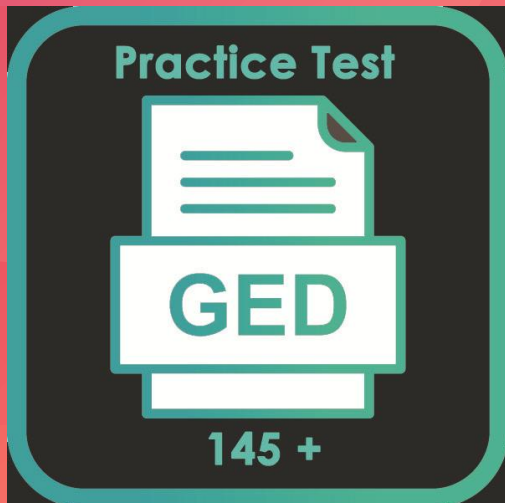
MY PHILOSOPHY ON TUTORING THE GED®



FREE
UNSCORED
MINI
PRACTICE
TESTS



PRACTICE TESTS AT GED.COM



- Half the length of Official Tests
- Can be taken from home on a Chromebook (not an iPad)
- Provide Scores within minutes
- Are accurate measures of how learners will do on the official test
- Provide Score Report - detailing how learners can improve
- Score Reports can be shared
- Cost \$6.99 (without a voucher)
- Reduce test anxiety

REVIEW SCORES

The screenshot shows the GED My Scores page. At the top, the GED logo is on the left, and navigation links for Home, Study, My Scores (circled in red), and More are in the center. A SCHEDULE TEST button is on the right. Below the navigation is a blue header with the title 'My Scores' and the subtitle 'Your GED Test and GED Ready Practice Test scores.' The main content area is divided into two sections. The first section, 'Highest GED Scores', includes a note that a score of at least 145 is needed to pass and a 'Learn more' link. It features four subject cards: Language Arts, Social Studies, Science, and Math. Each card shows 'No Score' and 'Not Taken' with a 'SCHEDULE TEST' button. A 'VIEW ALL TEST SCORES' button is centered below these cards. The second section, 'Most Recent GED Ready Practice Test Scores', includes a note about scheduling the test based on practice results. It features four subject cards showing scores: Language Arts (165), Social Studies (171), Science (198), and Math (169).

My Scores
Your GED Test and GED Ready Practice Test scores.

Highest GED Scores

You need to score at least 145 on each subject to pass and scoring higher can have additional benefits. [Learn more](#)

| Language Arts | Social Studies | Science | Math |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| No Score | No Score | No Score | No Score |
| Not Taken | Not Taken | Not Taken | Not Taken |
| SCHEDULE TEST | SCHEDULE TEST | SCHEDULE TEST | SCHEDULE TEST |

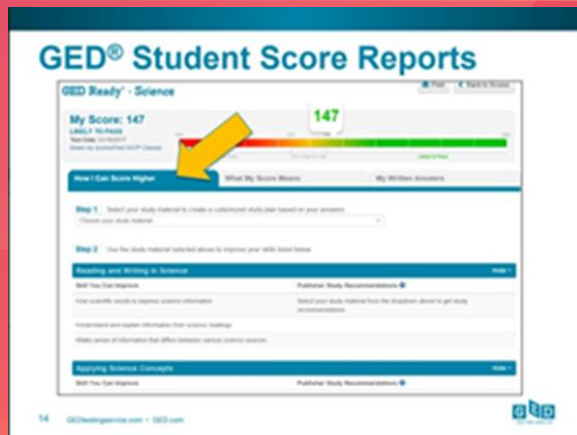
[VIEW ALL TEST SCORES](#)

Most Recent GED Ready Practice Test Scores

After taking your practice test, if you're *likely to pass* then schedule your test right away. If not, read your score report and see exactly what skills you need to brush up on.

| Language Arts | Social Studies | Science | Math |
|---------------|----------------|---------|------|
| 165 | 171 | 198 | 169 |

SCORE REPORTS



- Show the likelihood of passing
- Identify the **TYPES** of questions that were missed
- Can be emailed to tutor

Examples:

"Find evidence from a science reading that supports a finding."

"Draw conclusions from scientific data."

"Identify and improve hypotheses for scientific investigations."

DID I PASS?



Immediately after completing the test, learners know if they have passed and their specific score.

Scores sit within their account at ged.com until all four tests are passed. They also remain in their account for any job/school verification.

REQUIREMENTS TO TEST



- Government-issued ID
- At least 16 y.o. and if under 18 must have a signed parental or school release.
- Arrive on time for your scheduled test, no late arrivals.
- Lock up your phone

GED® TESTING CENTERS



Testing centers are usually located at Community Colleges.

Appointment availability varies.

Tests must be scheduled in advance.

TAKING TESTS REMOTELY



What is required:

- Computer
- Webcam
- Reliable internet connection
- Private workspace
- Green "Ready" Score on Practice Test

CLASSES



Specific preparation classes are not required, but they do exist and can help keep learners engaged.

Local GED classes are offered at:

Mt Hood CC

Portland CC

Chemeketa CC

Portland Youth Builders

Outside In

New Avenues for Youth

COMBATING TEST ANXIETY



ACCOMMODATIONS



Learners must apply for accommodations which can include a reader, scribe, a private testing room, or added time to complete the test.

Must have current documentation from a health professional (within the past year).

2.

CONTENT OVERVIEW



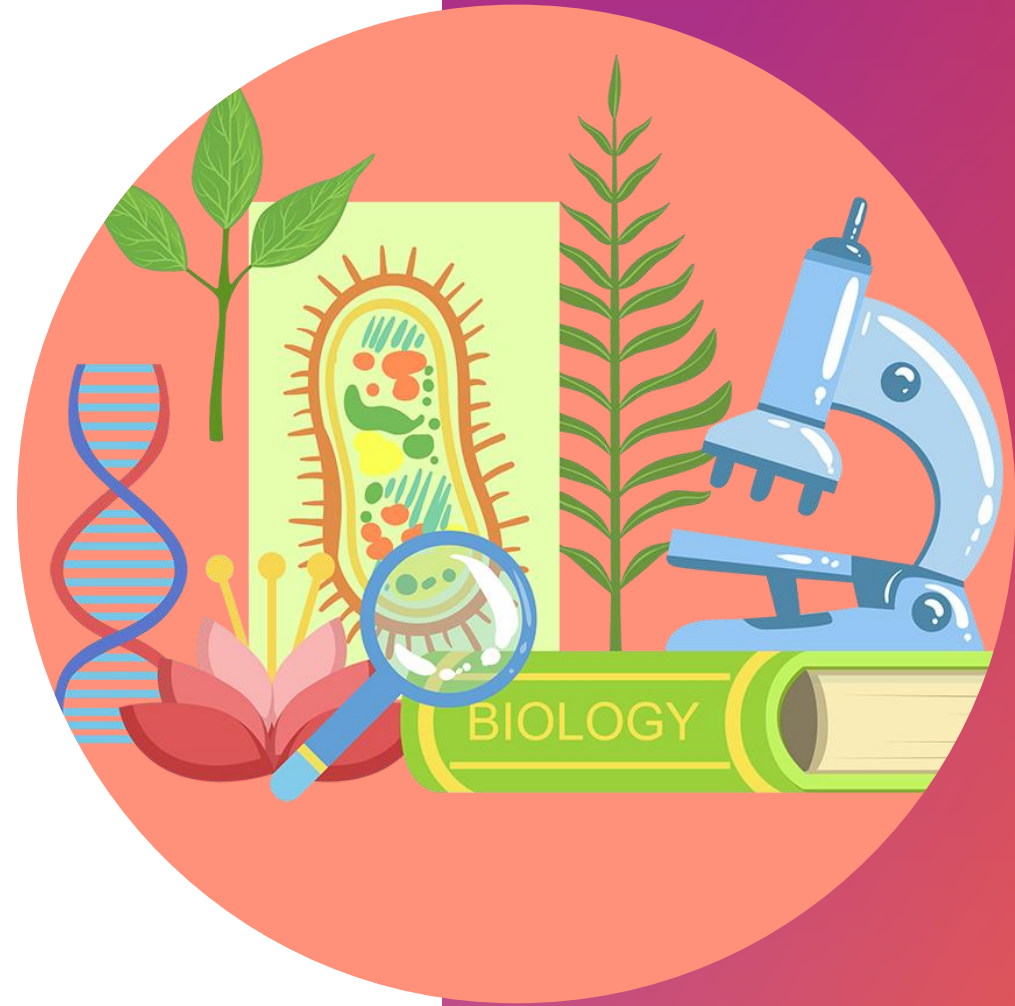
LANGUAGE ARTS



MATH



SCIENCE



SOCIAL STUDIES



WHAT DO LEARNERS REALLY NEED TO KNOW AND NOT NEED TO KNOW?

Must:

Basic Algebra - it is more than half of the math test

How to Translate Words into Problems

More than 95% of the complete test is in word problem format

Proportions and Averages

Finding and Using Percents

Reading Charts and Graphs:

Interpreting data is necessary across three tests

Reading for Information

How Government is Organized

Don't Worry About:

Fractions (adding by hand, converting, LCD)

Memorizing Times Tables

Long Division

Memorizing Scientific Details. Any necessary science formulas are provided within the questions.

Memorizing Historical Dates and Facts

Quadratic Equations

Knowing How to Solve Every GED® Question!



CURRENT CONCERNS

For those currently working with GED learners, what concerns do you have?



FUTURE CONCERNS

For those NOT YET tutoring GED learners, what concerns do you have about getting started?

3.

RESOURCES





IN-CLASS

- Students have material
- Help with homework or find material to further support



INDEPENDENT

- Complete books:
 - [Kaplan](#)
 - [Princeton Review](#)

**ONLINE
RESOURCES**



bit.ly/4msCbyA

QUESTIONS?



THANK YOU ONCE MORE

Colleen Latimer

[Email: colleenlatimer@gmail.com](mailto:colleenlatimer@gmail.com)

You can ask me questions anytime!

Thank you to Portland Literacy Council!

