

Guide for GED® Tutors

Portland Literacy Council

Volunteer Adult Tutor Training

Guide for Training

Adult Basic Skills and GED®

Tutors





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Introduction

Welcome, and thank you for taking the time to learn more about adult basic skills and GED® tutoring. In this session, we will explore the principles of adult learning and how adults learn differently from children. We will discuss what to expect from working with your learners and provide resources to get you started. Above all, we want you to feel comfortable and confident in working with your learner and enjoy this rewarding experience!

Objectives

By the end of this workshop, you will be able to:

- 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.

Acknowledgements

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Adult Learning

Learners may approach you with a variety of goals—academic, personal, or career-related. These goals are often specific and practical, such as writing a resume, preparing for a driving exam, or addressing financial challenges. In some cases, adults express interest in pursuing their GED® but may not yet be academically prepared. Because the GED® requires a strong level of reading proficiency, it's often necessary to build language comprehension skills before engaging with GED®-specific materials.

Principles of Adult Learning

1. Adults are self-motivated and goal-oriented

The learners you will meet will generally know what they want to accomplish, but they do not necessarily know what it takes to achieve their goals. You can assist them as a guide. Unlike traditional students, adult learners usually **choose to return to education voluntarily**, which means they are often more **focused, determined, and personally invested** in their progress.

2. Adults are ready to apply what they have learned

Adult learners are typically ready to apply what they learn immediately. Because their learning is often connected to real-life goals—such as improving job performance, managing finances, or helping their children with school—they are eager to see practical results. This readiness to apply new knowledge helps make learning more meaningful and reinforces retention and engagement.

3. Adults bring their experiences to learning

Adults have a wealth of life experience to draw upon. They can quickly relate learning to work and family. Your learners are not blank slates. A learner lacking education in one area can also have a wealth of experience in another. Don't be surprised when a learner has advanced skills, but may have missed some foundational material.

4. Adults may have many barriers to learning

The socioeconomic issues that kept learners from achieving their full potential in school may still be a significant issue for adults. The need to earn money, the time commitment of raising children, and the emotional expense of challenging relationships all play a role in the adult learner's experience. Respect that these barriers are real and significant, and your learner must handle them as needed, on their schedule rather than your own.

How do you think Tutoring Adults is Different than Tutoring Children?

Adults	Children

What makes adult learning different than children's learning?

Adults have a wealth of experience to draw on, and like to do so. Adults need opportunities to connect learning to their own unique personal or work situations. Building bridges from existing skills creates a foundation for new knowledge.

Adults aren't used to taking direction in education like children are. Children learn because they are acquiring an understanding of things that will have some relevance in the future. They will often do so without questioning why. Adults need to be explicitly told what they are doing and why, so they can connect the desired learning outcomes to their own goals and progress.

Adults need specific opportunities to self-reflect and internalize their learning. Children are more social than adults in classroom settings. They are more likely to volunteer information about their experiences. Adults, however, need to be offered these opportunities to reflect on new learning, or they won't internalize and retain as much information.

Adults have preconceived notions about education, particular subjects, and their abilities. Adults may prefer to learn a certain way, even if it is not the most conducive to their individual needs. Children, on the other hand, will try most new tasks and see them through, regardless of how well they do. To overcome this adult learning barrier, we need to expose the learner to information in a variety of ways or demonstrate new approaches to particular subjects.

Adults are (often) afraid to fail. Children don't have the same social filters and are more willing to experiment. Adult learning needs to be scaffolded (built on in small pieces and supported) or they risk losing their intrinsic motivation and focus.

Learners

Who are your learners?

The age range of your learner may depend on where you tutor. Although adult learners and GED®-seekers are often younger (18-30 years old), these younger individuals are not as likely to seek tutoring. Sometimes, younger learners possess fresh academic skills that support self-study and result in faster completion. The majority of learners seeking tutoring are 30-50 years old. These learners have already discovered that they need assistance to reach their goals.

Learners have a variety of social, academic, and socioeconomic reasons that have kept them from completing school. Getting to know your learner and understanding their unique circumstances aids the process.

Many adult learners are in addiction recovery and will discuss how academic and career achievement is a part of their recovery process. You may also work with learners who have previously been in custody and are trying to complete the education they began while incarcerated.

Another portion of learners have been very successful in their careers, and now either desire a job change or an opportunity has come up where they now need their GED® to be competitive or eligible for a promotion.

ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) learners make up a portion of the general adult education and GED®-seekers. After obtaining a higher level of comprehension, ESOL learners often transition to GED® studies. The academic experience of these students varies widely. Some may have had minimal access to education, while others may be extremely educated. Obtaining a GED® is often a quicker path for students to prove their academic success than to complete the required ESOL courses for admission at certain colleges, even if the student has a high school diploma from their home country.

Learner Motivation

Understanding your learner's motivation for study may impact the way you tutor.

Extrinsic

Most learners have extrinsic motivations: a job, a promotion, or starting college. These learners have goals that (usually) have a timeline. They want to obtain their driver's permit, complete their citizenship exam, or pass their GED® as soon as possible.

Knowing their timeline helps shape the goals you develop together.

Intrinsic

A smaller portion of learners are pursuing education simply to prove something to themselves, gain knowledge, or model academic achievement for their children. These learners may not be interested in rushing or hitting particular testing criteria. They may be free to explore areas of interest and want to understand everything about a topic. As a result, the pacing and expectations of tutoring sessions adjust.

Learner Disposition

Many learners are nervous and self-conscious, if not ashamed of their lack of education. Making new learners feel at ease, recognizing their strengths, and making it clear that you recognize the skills they have will go a long way toward relationship-building. As a tutor, you want to make it clear that you DO NOT have all the answers, but that you are there to help. Learning together removes the pressure from you both. Tutoring is not about perfection. Exposing your vulnerability in learning is the best modeling.

Demonstrating how you find the answers to unknowns is a valuable part of the process.

Learning Difficulties

Learners often self-identify learning difficulties, such as dyslexia or ADHD. **Tutors should not suggest or question learning diagnoses.** Instead, you can use these general tools that are recognized to aid learning comprehension for all types of learners:

Chunking

- Breaking reading into short, meaningful sections (chunks helps learners manage cognitive load).
- Use headings, bullet points, or numbered lists.
- Let students preview the structure before reading.

Graphic Organizers and Visual Aids

- Blocking multiple lines of text to reveal one line at a time can improve reading focus.
- Use story maps, cause-effect charts, and sequencing diagrams.
- Color-code information or vocabulary.

Pre-Teaching Vocabulary

- Reduces the challenge of unfamiliar language.
- Go over key terms and background knowledge before reading.
- Use images, definitions, and real-life examples.
- Let students match words to visuals or create vocabulary flashcards.

Guided and Repeated Reading

- Improves fluency and confidence through practice and support.
- Read the same passage multiple times with guidance.
- Alternate between teacher and student reading aloud (e.g., echo reading).

Minimize Distractions

- Supports focus and working memory.
- Provide quiet workspaces or noise-canceling headphones.
- Use overlays to reduce visual stress – focusing on one line of text at a time.
- Give one clear instruction at a time.

Trauma

It is not uncommon for learners to have experienced trauma that impacts their learning. The trauma could have originated directly from their educational experiences.

Trauma-informed instruction is essential for supporting adult learners who may have experienced significant adversity—such as abuse, neglect, displacement, or systemic marginalization. Tutors don't need to be therapists, but they *do* play a powerful role in creating a safe and supportive learning environment. Here are key tips for tutors using trauma-informed practices:

1. Prioritize Safety

- Greet learners warmly and consistently; create a calm, respectful tone.
- Establish predictable routines and clearly explain what to expect during each session.
- Allow learners to opt out of activities or take breaks without judgment.
- Avoid sudden surprises or changes in schedule when possible.

2. Assume Trauma May Be Present

- You don't need to know a student's trauma history to be supportive.
- Behaviors such as shutting down, zoning out, or anger may be **survival responses**, not defiance.
- Shift from "What's wrong with you?" to "What might you need right now?"

3. Build Trust

- Be dependable—start and end on time, follow through on promises.
- Respect boundaries—don't press for personal stories or emotions unless invited.
- Show empathy and patience, especially when a learner seems discouraged.

4. Offer Choice and Voice

- Let students choose between tasks when possible (e.g., reading aloud or silently).

- Allow them to decide where to sit or what tools to use.
- Encourage them to set personal goals and reflect on their progress.

5. Focus on Strengths and Growth

- Celebrate progress, even small wins.
- Reframe failure as part of the learning process.
- Highlight resilience and perseverance—many adult learners have overcome enormous barriers.

Learner Profiles (fictitious):

Esme



Esme is a grandmother. She arrived in the US from the Philippines in the late 70s. Now that her children are grown, she has time to work on her education. She is employed as a cleaner but would like to get a better job that is less physical. She has an intermediate proficiency in English and wants to work specifically on Math to prepare for her GED®. Esme's critical thinking and reading skills are strong, but she lacks confidence in what she knows because she has low-level technology skills and no experience using a mouse on the computer. She contacted Multnomah County Library for tutoring. She is seeking in-person evening assistance.

Angel



Angel has friends who are working as nurses and wants to change careers and join the medical profession. He plans to begin by completing the CNA exam to become a certified nursing assistant, and then continue with his nursing degree. Angel wants to improve his English while working on the academic aspects of the exam. He is taking a 12-week CNA class and would like assistance with job-specific pronunciation and exam prep. He hopes to continue tutoring after the class is completed to continue to improve his professional English skills. He prefers to meet for tutoring in person.

Maria and Sydney



Maria and Sydney are two classmates from Portland Community College. They became friends in their advanced Reading and Writing GED® Class and decided to seek tutoring together since they enjoy working together. Maria is a mother of three. She wants to set an example for her children by finishing her GED®. She works at a daycare and appreciates that her hours match her Children's school hours. Sydney was homeschooled (after her mother passed away) and feels that she is missing some important academic skills. She is already the manager of a bakery, but she wants to begin college-level classes to get a business degree. She is strong in math, but not confident in her writing. They are seeking tutoring to help with writing assignments. They are seeking assistance after class on Monday and Wednesday afternoons.

Len



Len has experience working in construction. He was in custody until 4 months ago. He began recovery from addiction and is working the 12 steps. Len completed his Science and Social Studies GED® exams while incarcerated. He wants to continue working toward his GED®. He prefers online tutoring and has intermediate technology skills. He is motivated to complete his GED® and hopes to complete that goal within 6 months.

Common Learning Goals

- Become a better reader
- Understand enough math to help their kids with homework
- Obtain a driver's license
- Pass the CNA (Certified Nursing Assistant) exam
- Pass the ASVAB (Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery) exam
- Complete the Citizenship exam
- Complete the GED® exams

Tutoring Tips

Your First Meeting

Set a tone of relaxed curiosity. Relationship-building may be the most important piece of the puzzle. To understand both the practical details necessary to tutor and your learner's educational goals, you'll need to get some information. Use the New Learner Survey (next page) to guide your questions. Responding to standardized form questions reduces stress for new participants. Their responses may provoke additional questions, making the experience more conversational.

We will model the brief interview to better understand the subtext behind the questions.

Key Points

- 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.

Your learner is "in charge" of their learning; you are simply there to assist them.

Tutoring Format

Remote learning can happen **on any platform** that you and the learner are comfortable using! There are advantages and disadvantages to both in-person and remote tutoring.



New Learner Form:

Referred by:

Phone:

Email:

What is motivating you to complete your Driver's Exam/Citizenship/GED® now?

Primary Language:

Test Language:

Last in School / Grade Completed:

Study Experience (any practice tests/tests completed):

Current Work / Schedule / Study Availability:

Goals for Completion?

Computer Access:

Computer Skills:

Notes:

New Learner Form: Use this page to take notes on the subtext and information we are trying to receive with each form question:

Referred by:

Phone:

Email:

What is motivating you to complete your Driver's Exam/Citizenship/GED® now?

Primary Language:

Test Language:

Last in School / Grade Completed:

Study Experience (any practice tests/tests completed):

Current Work / Schedule / Study Availability:

Goals for Completion?

Computer Access:

Computer Skills:

Notes:

Tips for Successful Tutoring

Most Adult learners know what they want to get out of a tutoring session and what they need to accomplish. Adults with a goal are generally very good at communicating how you can best help them. Much of tutoring is being a sounding board for learners and helping them see where the track is. They are the ones who will stay on or off track.

That said, the following are a few adult education-specific suggestions to help structure your time:

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.

1. Trust and Psychological Safety

Adults often return to learning with a mix of anxiety, past negative experiences, or fear of failure. A strong, supportive relationship creates a safe learning environment, where learners feel:

- Comfortable asking questions
- Willing to admit what they don't understand
- Open to feedback

Tutor Tip: Show empathy. Start by listening to the learner's story and goals—this builds trust early on.

2. Mutual Respect

Adult learners want to be treated as equals. They bring life experience, knowledge, and opinions that should be respected. It's not "teaching down" — it's a partnership

Tutor Tip: Ask learners how they've solved problems in life before. Use their strategies as a path forward.

3. Personal Connection and Motivation

Relationships allow tutors to tap into the learner's personal goals—like getting a better job, helping their kids with homework, or gaining confidence.

Tutor Tip: Start sessions by linking lessons to the learner's goals (e.g., "Let's work on this math problem — it's just like budgeting your paycheck.").

4. Feedback, Encouragement, and Growth

Constructive feedback is more effective in a trusting relationship. Adult learners are more open to correction if it comes from someone who clearly believes in them.

Encouragement reinforces a growth mindset — "I can get better with effort."

Tutor Tip: Celebrate small wins. Say things like, "That was a tough one—and you stuck with it!"

5. Co-Learning and Shared Power

In strong tutor-learner relationships, both people learn. The tutor learns how to teach more effectively, and the learner gains confidence by being taken seriously.

Adults thrive when they're invited to direct their own learning

Shared decision-making boosts ownership of the learning process

Tutor Tip: Ask, "What do you want to focus on today?" or "How do you learn best?"

Ways to Make Learning Relevant

1. Subject-specific content

Time is a valuable resource. Unless your learner requests otherwise, stick to material that will be covered on their tests.

2. Use your learner's experience and interests

- Put anything you can in context to the learner's work / home / future career
- Measurement / Building
- Cooking / Hobbies
- Helping with children's homework
- Potential next course of study, (e.g, "Nurses use this kind of Math to...")
- Finances (almost everyone understands math better when you put it in terms of money)

3. Keep motivation high with consistent encouragement

4. Help set SMART learner goals

Refocus learners' broad goals into SMART goals. SMART Goals are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-Bound. Examples of SMART goals:

Goal: *"I need to get better at reading."* This is too broad.

SMART Goal: *"I will read one news article each day and summarize it in 3 sentences for the next 3 weeks to improve my reading comprehension."*

Goal: *"I want a better job."* Again, too broad.

SMART Goal: *"I will update my resume and apply to 5 jobs by August 30 so I can interview by the end of September."*

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).

Whenever possible, encourage learners to estimate before performing the calculations.

In math problems where estimation is difficult or impossible, encourage learners to put the solution back into the problem and solve for a different part of the problem.

In reading, ask learners to narrow down choices and talk through why incorrect answers are not good choices. Eliminating what is incorrect is often easier than selecting the correct answer.

All of these habits reduce test anxiety and promote learner confidence.

$$2X + 6 = 14$$

$$\text{Solution: } X = 4$$

$$2(4) + 6 = 14 \quad \checkmark$$



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 of your session.

If you tutor for more than one hour, break the time into blocks. You can switch between reading and visual or graphic material in the same subject.

Examples: First Time Block / Second Time Block:

- Reading and completing GED® exercises / Drawing diagrams of learned material
- Calculating math worksheets / using math manipulatives to identify patterns
- Grammar worksheets / Writing an essay
- Reading science / interpreting scientific charts and graphs
- Learning vocabulary / making flashcards

Writing

Learners are often reluctant to write.

Encourage using some portion of your tutoring time to writing. Remind learners of the benefits of writing as another pathway to form memory.

Teach Backs

After covering a topic, ask the learner to teach it back to you. 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 may help.

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

Relevance

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

Stay on track with the learner's motivation.

Goal-Setting

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 Your Learner

Continue each week to ask your learner how they are feeling about how you spend your time. Even if things have been going great, learners change their minds.

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?”

Who is Talking?

This is challenging, but try to ensure that your learner is talking at least as much, if not more, than you.

Stress and Learning

Remind your learner that learning is stressful. Our brains require a certain amount of stress to remember. If there is no stress, there is no real learning. Too much stress, and the learner experiences overwhelm and cannot learn. Aim for balance. Encourage your learner to reflect on a time when they have overcome a difficult learning situation that they were able to overcome.

Common 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. They may want to cancel the session because they have not prepared. Encourage them to attend regardless.

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 a goal.

There can also be pressures from agencies that 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."

This cannot be stressed enough. As a tutor, you will encounter many new things and concepts. Please do not feel that you need to be an expert in any of them. You are a learner, and that is what you will model.

Attrition

It is very common for learners to stop and start and stop again. Work and life changes affect their ability to maintain schedules.

Have patience.

Your welcoming attitude could impact whether they come back and finish their goal.

I Can't Help Them Understand

Step away from the concept for a bit. Work on something else. Sometimes, our brains need time to process.

Watch videos about the same topic together.

Reach out – ask for help ☺ Hearing an explanation from someone else might ignite a spark.

The “lightbulb” moment is worth it!

Availability

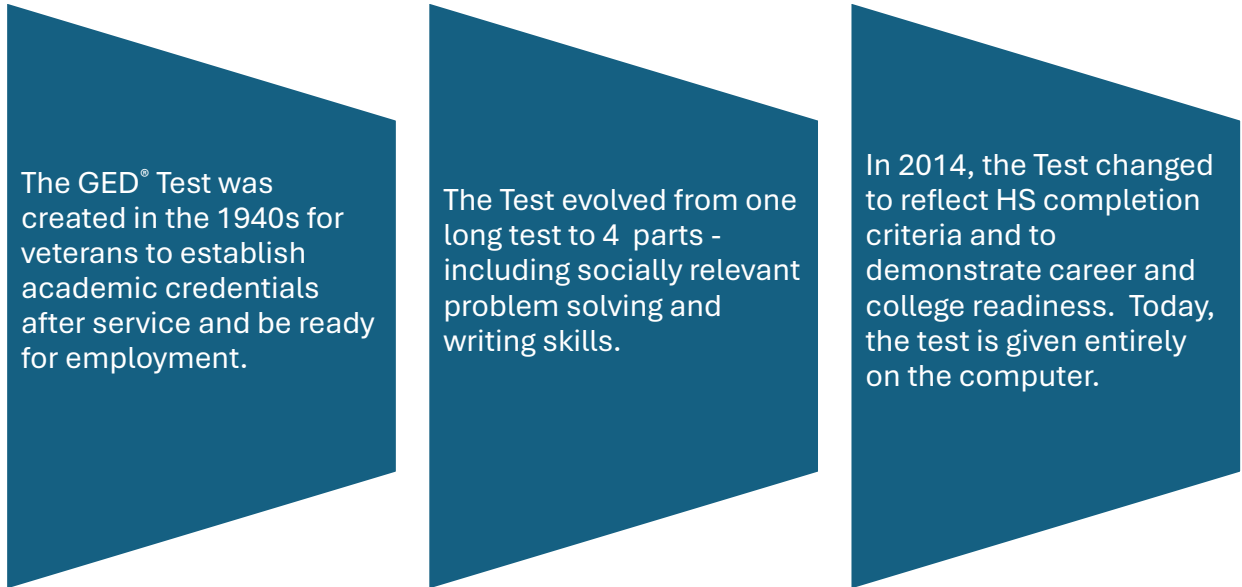
Occasionally, learners want more time from you than you are available to give. It is okay to have limits on your time.

What is the GED®?

Many learners come to tutoring with little or no information about the process to obtain a GED®. One part of being a GED® tutor is helping learners understand what is involved, including correcting misinformation they may have gained from previous incarnations of the test.

GED® tests are developed and administered by the Pearson Vue testing company. The only way to obtain your GED® in Oregon is through the GED® testing service found online at [ged.com](https://www.ged.com).

History



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

The Test evolved from one long test to 4 parts - including socially relevant problem solving and writing skills.

In 2014, the Test changed to reflect HS completion criteria and to demonstrate career and college readiness. Today, the test is given entirely on the computer.

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

Structure

There are four separate tests that are scheduled individually, all of which are taken on a computer either at an official testing site or remotely from a home computer. Each exam must be completed with a score of 145 or higher. No single exam affects the outcome of the other subjects. A non-passing test may be repeated for a reduced fee. If you don't pass on the third attempt (for any individual subject), you must wait **60 days** to re-test.

The four tests are:

- **Reasoning Through Language Arts**
- **Mathematical Reasoning**
- **Social Studies**
- **Science**

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, number, 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

Language

The GED® test is only available in English and Spanish. You can take some of the exams in English and some in Spanish. There is no distinction on the certificate.

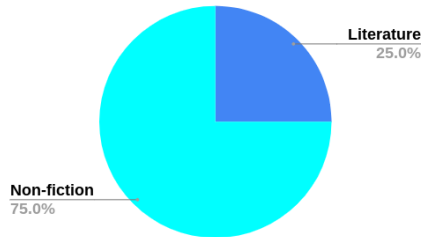
GED Exam Breakdown

Reasoning Through Language Arts



150 minutes

10 min break between parts 2 and 3
45 minutes for the written essay
Approximately **50 questions**

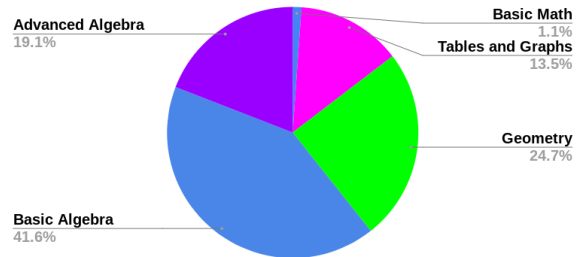


Mathematical Reasoning



115 minutes

Short break between parts
Part 1: 5 questions, no calculator
Part 2: calculator okay
Approximately **45 questions**

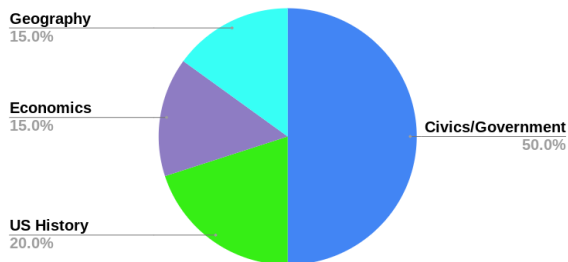


Social Studies



70 minutes

No breaks
Approximately **35 Questions**

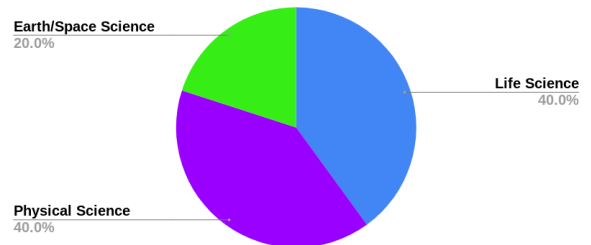


Science



90 minutes

No breaks
Approximately **30 Questions**



Scoring

Range: 100-200
100-144 Not Passing
145+ Passing
165+ College Ready

When each test has a passing score, you automatically receive your GED®.

Approach

Each test takes a different amount of time and has a different number of questions, approximating two minutes per question. Because the breadth of material can be overwhelming, it is advisable to focus on one test at a time. Learners often decide to start with their strongest subject, but some like to begin with their biggest challenge. Many of the skills will overlap from test to test.

Learners must pass each test with a score of 145 or above to complete the GED®. They do NOT have to take all the tests at once.

A GED® is earned once all four tests are passed. Your account at ged.com will store all testing information until (and after) you complete the tests. While some people take the tests in rapid succession, some have years in between test completions.

Official Practice Tests

Before scheduling the official exam, it is advisable to take a GED Ready® Practice Test on the ged.com account to discover how well the learner is prepared.

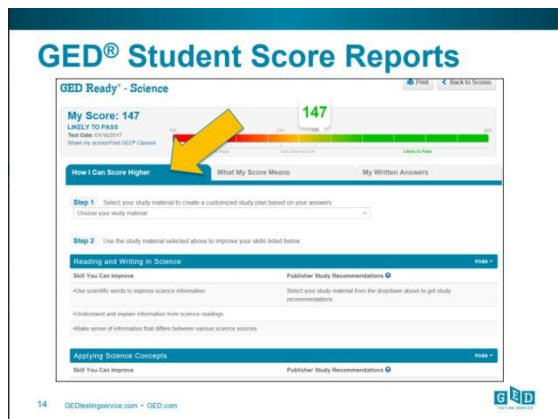
This practice test is the best indicator of how one will perform on the official exam. The format and the scoring system are the same as the official test, but the time and number of questions are approximately half the length of the official counterpart. Practice tests can be taken from any computer at any time.

GED Ready® Test Lengths:

Reasoning through Language Arts	95 minutes
Science	47 minutes
Social Studies	35 minutes
Math	60 minutes

Taking a practice test with your learner is encouraged! Talking through the way questions are phrased is a great way to prepare. Do not worry if this does not produce the most accurate score. It is a very valuable way of learning.

Completed tests include a “Score Report”. Although the score report will not provide exactly which questions were incorrect, it will provide a list of the specific areas you should continue to practice.



Practice Test Scoring:

- 100 - 133 **Red Zone** (not likely to pass)
- 134 - 144 **Yellow Zone** (too close to call)
- 145 - 200 **Green Zone** (likely to pass)

Testing Reminders:

- Help your learner reduce test anxiety by being prepared with good testing strategies, such as:
- Take an official GED® Ready Practice Test to be comfortable with the format.
- Answer every question - there is no scoring difference between blank and wrong answers.
- Flag questions that you want to revisit.
- Use the calculator and formula sheet whenever provided.
- Practice eliminating choices so you can make reasonable guesses when needed.
- Eat a reasonable meal before the test.
- Bring comfortable clothing - the testing room may be hot or cold.

- Remember to bring government-issued ID with you on the test date!
- Be on time – latecomers will be rescheduled

Combating Test-Anxiety

Practice Calm Breathing Techniques

- Try **box breathing**: Inhale 4 seconds → hold 4 → exhale 4 → hold 4.
- Repeat 2–3 times before the test and during breaks.
- Helps regulate stress response and improves focus.

Familiarize Yourself with the Test Interface

Use **GED Ready® practice tests** or official test tutorials to:

- Learn how to flag questions, scroll, drag-and-drop, and more.
- Practice using the **calculator**, **drop-downs**, and **reading tabs**.

Build Keyboard and Mouse Confidence

- Practice **basic typing**, selecting answers and using backspace/delete.
- Take **free online practice tests** with the same format.
- If fine motor skills are an issue, try **using a stylus** on a touchscreen if available.

Use a Pre-Test Routine

- Arrive early or start early online (if remote).
- Bring or keep **water**, **scratch paper**, and **ID** ready.
- Do a familiar, relaxing task 10 minutes before (e.g., listening to calming music or stretching).

Use Elimination Strategies

It is often easier to eliminate wrong answers than to select the correct one. Narrow your choices through elimination.

Use a Positive Inner Script

Replace negative thoughts like:

“I’m going to fail” → “**I’ve prepared, I just need to focus.**”

“Computers confuse me” → “**I’ll take it step by step.**”

Manage Time—but Don’t Obsess Over It

- Learn the **timer location** on the screen—but don’t fixate.
- Practice timed sections to build pacing skills.
- If stuck, **flag the question** and move on. Return later.

Accommodations

Many learners ask about exceptions or alternate testing scenarios based upon learning or physical disability, age, or second-language status. The GED® Testing Service will allow accommodations only for “Learning & Cognitive Disorders, Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), and Psychological & Psychiatric Disorders (EPP)” that can be documented by a physician or educational assessment professional within the last 12 months, or “Physical Disabilities & Chronic Health Conditions (PCH)” that can be documented by a physician within the last five years depending on the duration or permanence of the disability.

Accommodations are difficult to get approved. Once all paperwork has been submitted to the GED® Testing Service, they have 30 days to respond with their decision. The most common accommodation provided is extra time to complete the test. Paper testing is not an option for accommodations, and no accommodations are provided for second language learners.

Discover more about the [GED® Testing Service’s accommodations](#) practices.

“BE STUBBORN ABOUT YOUR GOALS AND
FLEXIBLE ABOUT YOUR METHODS.” –
UNKNOWN

GED® Content

Reasoning Through Language Arts

Main ideas and supporting details

Characters, events, plots, and settings. How do these interact within the text?

Point of view, author’s purpose, and bias

Context clues

Drawing conclusions and making inferences

Sequence of events

Tone and figurative language

Evaluating arguments and supporting evidence

Grammar and punctuation

Writing an argumentative essay

Understand the following vocabulary:

Author intent or purpose
Main/central idea
Supporting details
Implicit language
Explicit language

Allusion
Inferences
Conclusion
Bias

Tone
Figurative language
Metaphor
Personification

Writing the RLA “Extended Response” Essay

In the essay portion of the RLA test, two articles on the same topic with differing opinions are presented. Testers are asked to determine which had the strongest argument and write an essay 4-5 paragraphs to support their thesis. This section is worth 6 points of the RLA exam.

The extended response (like the rest of the test) is graded electronically. Instructors who have conducted experiments to see how it is scored concluded the following:

- Using personal pronouns, I, my or me, anywhere in the essay will result in ZERO points.
- Writing less than four paragraphs will result in ZERO points.
- Diversity of vocabulary and sentence structure will result in higher scores.



Mathematical Reasoning

Interpret word problems using:

Basic operations
Decimals
Fractions
Percents
Proportions
Ratios
Unit value
Probability

Use mathematical formulae to find:

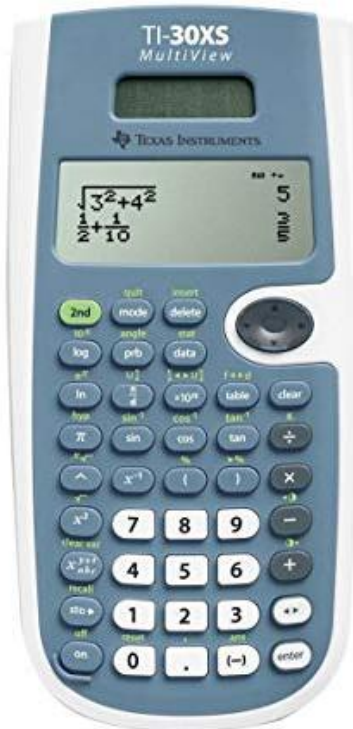
Area
Volume
Simple Interest
Slope
Average
Median
Mode

Interpret data in charts and graphs

Coordinate grid

Basic functions

Calculator & Formula Sheet



The TI-30XS calculator is the only calculator available for use during the test. This calculator is an amazing tool that can compute in fraction format and quickly convert between fraction and decimal and calculate using the proper order of operations. Being comfortable with this calculator can make a significant difference in test performance. You will not be able to use any other calculator. During the test, the calculator is simulated on-screen. These calculators are available at all tutoring sites. You can purchase one at most office supply stores for around \$19.00.

Mathematics Formula Sheet & Explanation

The 2014 GED® Mathematical Reasoning test contains a formula sheet, which displays formulas relating to geometric measurement and certain algebra concepts. Formulas are provided to test-takers so that they may focus on *application*, rather than the *memorization*, of formulas.

Area of a:

square	$A = s^2$
rectangle	$A = lw$
parallelogram	$A = bh$
triangle	$A = \frac{1}{2}bh$
trapezoid	$A = \frac{1}{2}h(b_1 + b_2)$
circle	$A = \pi r^2$

Perimeter of a:

square	$P = 4s$
rectangle	$P = 2l + 2w$
triangle	$P = s_1 + s_2 + s_3$
Circumference of a circle	$C = 2\pi r$ OR $C = \pi d$; $\pi \approx 3.14$

Surface area and volume of a:

rectangular prism	$SA = 2lw + 2lh + 2wh$	$V = lwh$
right prism	$SA = ph + 2B$	$V = Bh$
cylinder	$SA = 2\pi rh + 2\pi r^2$	$V = \pi r^2 h$
pyramid	$SA = \frac{1}{2}ps + B$	$V = \frac{1}{3}Bh$
cone	$SA = \pi rs + \pi r^2$	$V = \frac{1}{3}\pi r^2 h$
sphere	$SA = 4\pi r^2$	$V = \frac{4}{3}\pi r^3$

(p = perimeter of base with area B ; $\pi \approx 3.14$)

Data

mean	mean is equal to the total of the values of a data set, divided by the number of elements in the data set
median	median is the middle value in an odd number of ordered values of a data set, or the mean of the two middle values in an even number of ordered values in a data set

Algebra

slope of a line	$m = \frac{y_2 - y_1}{x_2 - x_1}$
slope-intercept form of the equation of a line	$y = mx + b$
point-slope form of the equation of a line	$y - y_1 = m(x - x_1)$
standard form of a quadratic equation	$y = ax^2 + bx + c$
quadratic formula	$x = \frac{-b \pm \sqrt{b^2 - 4ac}}{2a}$
Pythagorean theorem	$a^2 + b^2 = c^2$
simple interest	$I = Prt$ (I = interest, P = principal, r = rate, t = time)
distance formula	$d = rt$
total cost	total cost = (number of units) × (price per unit)

GED® PROGRAM CALCULATOR REFERENCE GUIDE

Working with complex problems on the test is simple when you use this guide to understand what order to click the buttons in the on-screen calculator. The GED® test calculator is the TI-30XS.

BASIC ARITHMETIC

To perform basic arithmetic, enter numbers and operation symbols using the standard order of operations.

Example: $8 \times -4 + 7 =$



The correct answer = **-25**

SCIENTIFIC NOTATION

To perform calculations with scientific notation, use the Exp key.

Example: $7.8 \times 10^8 - 1.5 \times 10^8 =$



The correct answer = **630000000**

MIXED NUMBERS

To perform calculations with mixed numbers, use the $\frac{\square}{\square}$ key. As with fractions, the answer will automatically be formatted in reduced form.

Example: $12\frac{5}{6} - 1\frac{1}{2} =$



The correct answer = $\frac{34}{3}$

FRACTIONS

To perform calculations with fractions, use the $\frac{\square}{\square}$ key. The answer will automatically be formatted in reduced form.

Example: $\frac{2}{9} \times \frac{3}{7} =$



The correct answer = $\frac{2}{21}$

This calculator reference sheet is provided for most items on the GED® test — Mathematical Reasoning, as well as certain items on the Science and Social Studies tests.

**Find everything you need to pass in
MyGED® at GED.com.**

PERCENTAGES

To calculate with percentages, enter the number, then the % key.

Example: $40\% \times 560 =$



The correct answer = **224**

POWERS AND ROOTS

To perform calculations with powers and roots, you will use the following keys:



Example: $1.2^2 =$



The correct answer = **1.44**

Example: $7^4 =$



The correct answer = **2401**

Example: $\sqrt{529} =$



The correct answer = **23**

Example: $\sqrt[3]{1728} =$



The correct answer = **12**

TOGGLE KEY

The answer toggle key $\frac{\square}{\square}$ can be used to toggle the display result between fraction and decimal answers, exact square root and decimal, and exact pi and decimal.

Example: $\frac{9}{10} =$



The correct answer = **0.9**





Science

Physical Science

Conservation, transformation, and flow of energy

Work, motion, and forces

Chemical properties, reactions, and balancing chemical equations

Life Science

Human biology systems

Feedback loops

Ecological networks

Primary and Secondary Consumers

Carrying capacity

Genetics, heredity, inheritance and natural selection

Earth and Space Science

Earth processes such as volcanoes, earthquakes, and hurricanes

Layers of the Earth: crust, mantle, outer core, and inner core

Weather patterns

Tectonic plates

Astronomy

Investigation design: observational and experimental

Hypothesis, independent and dependent variables

Application of scientific models, theories, and processes

Probability and statistics of scientific data



Social Studies

Civics and government

U.S. History

Economics

Geography

Draw conclusions from political speeches and documents.

Differentiate between political facts vs. opinions.

Analyze social, political, and economic maps, graphs, and charts.

Interpret political cartoons.

Understand the following vocabulary:

Democracy

Republic

Constitution

Federalism

Separation of powers

Checks and balances

Executive / Legislative / Judicial

Veto

Amendment

Bill of Rights

Due process

Suffrage

Electoral College

Urbanization

Migration

Immigration

Globalization

Climate

Region

Resources

Geopolitics

Trade

Diaspora

Compare

Contrast

Cause and effect

Analyze

Interpret

Evaluate

Perspective

Bias

Primary source

Secondary source

Claim / argument

Evidence

Inference

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 - Very careful reading is vital
- 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 specific facts
- Quadratic equations
- Knowing how to solve every GED® question!

Resources

Visit online resources to use with your students:



[Resources for Adult Education Tutoring](#)