

Block **1**

GED Overview in 20 Minutes

The GED test offers people without a high school diploma the opportunity to earn the equivalent of an American high school diploma without the need for full-time attendance in either day or night school. The GED test is a recognized standard that makes securing a job or starting college easier.

The recently revised test is in line with current Grade 12 standards in the United States and meets the College and Career Readiness Standards for Adult Education.

The GED test measures whether you understand what high school seniors across the country have studied before they graduate. Employers seek better-educated employees. Colleges want to make sure students are qualified. When you pass the GED test, you earn a high school equivalency diploma that can open many doors for you — perhaps doors that you don't even know exist at this point.

You may wonder why you should even bother taking the GED test and getting your GED diploma. One reason is that people with high school diplomas earn more and spend less time unemployed than people without diplomas. In a recent year, unemployment for people without a high school diploma was 5.9 percent. That dropped to 3.7 percent for individuals with a diploma or a GED certificate. Incomes were about 25 percent higher for high school or GED graduates than people without diplomas. In addition, your GED can qualify you for even more education. Earnings increase and unemployment decreases at each level of education from associate's degree on up. Even with just some college, you can earn more, on average.

Ready to get started? This block gives you the basics of the GED test: How the test is administered, what the test sections look like, how to schedule the test (and whether you're eligible), and how the scores are calculated (so you know what you need to pass).

Registering for the Test

Before you go online to sign up for the GED, you need to know a few things. After you determine that you're eligible, think about whether you want to take only one or two sections at a time or all sections at once. If you're eligible for accommodations, you need to have your documentation ready. The following sections walk you through the details.

Knowing if you're eligible

Before you schedule your test date, make sure that you meet the requirements to take the GED test. You're eligible to apply to take the GED test only if

- » **You're not currently enrolled in a high school.** If you're currently enrolled in a high school, you're expected to complete your diploma there. The purpose of the GED test is to give people who aren't in high school a chance to get an equivalent high school diploma.
- » **You're not a high school graduate.** If you're a high school graduate, you should have a diploma, which means you don't need to take the GED test.
- » **You meet state requirements regarding age, residency, and the length of time since leaving high school.** When you open your online account at <https://ged.com>, the software will screen you to ensure that you meet your state's requirements.

Choosing when and where to take the test



REMEMBER

You can take the GED when you're eligible and prepared. You can then apply to take the GED as soon as you want. Pick a day (or days) that works for you.

The GED has four sections: language arts, social studies, science, and math. You can take each of the four test sections separately, at different times, and in any order you want. Taking all four sections of the GED together takes about seven hours. However, the test is designed so you can take each section when you're ready. In fact, you can take the test sections one at a time, in the evenings or on weekends, depending on the individual testing center.

You can also take some of the tests online at home and others at a testing center. This flexibility is one of the benefits of doing the test by computer. If you want to take the test online at home, you must pass the GED Ready practice test before you can sign up. Even if you're taking the test at a test center, this short online test can help you determine whether you're likely to be successful, which can help you avoid wasting time and money on retests. And if you don't pass, the detailed feedback will help you find your strengths and areas for improvement.

As the time this book was published, some states don't offer the test and some don't allow online testing. You can take the test in a neighboring state that allows online or non-resident testing. Just select the state you'd like to test in when you set up your online account. This information changes periodically, so be sure to check <https://ged.com/state-information-online-testing> for the latest information. And remember: Nearly all employers and higher education schools nationally accept your passing score.

If you need special arrangements to accommodate your situation, the GED Testing Service will help arrange the test for you at a convenient time and location.

Asking for accommodations or language options

If you have a special need, it can be accommodated. You shouldn't feel bad about requesting an accommodation, either. Many people do, and the most common accommodations are for vision-related issues. Remember, though, that if you request an accommodation, you will need to provide acceptable documentation.

If you're learning English, you can choose to take the test in Spanish or, in Canada, French.

Disability accommodations

The GED Testing Service makes every effort to ensure that all qualified people have access to the tests. If you have a disability, you may not be able to register for the tests and take them the same week, but, with some advanced planning, you can probably take the tests when you're ready. Here's what you need to do:

- » Review the information and instructions at https://ged.com/about_test/accommodations.
- » At least a month before you want to take the test, go to <https://ged.com> and open an online account, or log into an existing account.
- » Follow the instructions to request an accommodation. The software will walk you through the steps to request an accommodation and submit the proper documentation.
- » You will need documentation of your special need from an appropriate professional. The software will give the exact requirements and instructions you can show the professional so they can provide the correct documentation.
- » Complete all the proper forms and submit them with a medical or professional diagnosis.
- » Start planning early so that you're able to take the tests when you're ready.

The GED Testing Service defines specific disabilities, such as the following, for which it may make special accommodations:

- » Learning and cognitive disorders (LCD)
- » Attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)
- » Psychological and psychiatric disorders (EPP)
- » Physical disabilities and chronic health conditions (PCH)

Language options

The good news is that English doesn't have to be your first language for you to take the GED test. In the United States, the GED test is offered in English and Spanish. A French version is available in Canada.



TIP

If English (or Spanish) isn't your first language, you must decide whether you can read and write English or Spanish as well as or better than 40 percent of high school graduates. If so, then you can prepare for and take the test without additional language preparation. If you don't read or write English or Spanish well enough to pass, then you need to take additional classes to improve your language skills until you think you're ready. Your local community college or adult education center is the best place to get started. Your account at <https://ged.com> can also help you find local programs that will suit your needs.

Signing up for your test

You book your appointment through the GED Testing Service's website, <https://ged.com>, based on available testing dates. When you sign up for the test, you can search for times and locations that suit you. Because a computer administers the test, you will schedule an individual appointment. Your test starts when you start and ends when the allotted time ends.

If you sign up to take the test online at home, your computer and your home (or other location where you take the test) have to meet special requirements outlined when you sign up. The <https://ged.com> website will walk you through these requirements. If you sign up to take the test at a testing center, you will take the test in a computer lab, often containing no more than 15 seats; testing facilities may be located in many communities in your state.

Identifying What to Bring to the Test

Passing the GED can bring you many benefits, so you need to treat it seriously and come prepared. Make sure you bring the following items with you on test day:

- » **You:** The most important thing to bring to the GED test is obviously you. If you enroll to take the test, you have to show up; otherwise, you'll receive a big fat zero and lose your testing fee. If something unfortunate happens after you enroll, go to your online account and see if you can reschedule. You may need to call the GED Testing Service or use their online chat to reschedule.
- » **Correct identification:** Before you can start the test, the test proctors — online and in person — want to make sure that you're really you. Bring a government-issued photo ID — a driver's license, a state ID card, a passport, or a matrícula consular are all fine. Have your ID in a place where you can easily reach it. And, when asked to identify yourself, don't pull out a mirror and say, "Yep, that's me."
- » **Registration confirmation:** The registration confirmation is your proof that you did register. If you're taking the test in an area where everybody knows you and everything you do, you may not need the confirmation, but I suggest you take it anyway. It's light and doesn't take up much room in your pocket or purse.
- » **Other miscellaneous items:** After you register for the test, you receive instructions that list what you need to bring with you. Besides yourself and the items I listed previously, other items you want to bring or wear include the following:
 - **Comfortable clothes and shoes.** When you're taking the test, you want to be as relaxed as possible. Uncomfortable clothes and shoes may distract you from doing your best. You're taking the GED test, not modeling the most recent fashions.
 - **A bottle of water and a healthful snack.** Check whether you can bring these with you into the room at the testing center. If you test online at home, you are only allowed to have some water, in a clear glass, on the desk with you. But you can eat a quick snack in the 10-minute break between tests if you take more than one test.
 - **Reading glasses.** If you need glasses to read a computer monitor, don't forget to bring them to the test. Bring a spare pair, if you have one. You can't do the test if you can't read the screen.
 - **Calculator.** You may bring a handheld Texas Instruments TI-30XS MultiView calculator to the testing center, which you may use whenever the calculator icon appears on the screen. For many people, a real calculator saves time on the test. However, you aren't required to BYOC (bring your own calculator). A calculator icon appears on the screen whenever one is necessary to answer a question. All you have to do is click on the calculator icon, and you have a fully functioning calculator on-screen. See the section "On-screen calculator" later in this block for details about how to use it.

Knowing What to Expect During the Test

When you know what to expect during the GED, it's easier to do your best on the test. The following section explains what you need to know: the exam room rules, the computer skills you need, and an overview of the material you need to know for each section of the GED.

Understanding exam room rules

The rules about what enters the testing room are strict. Don't take any chances. If something isn't on the list of acceptable items and isn't normal clothing, leave it at home. Laptops, cellphones, and other electronic devices will most likely be banned from the testing area.

Leave other electronics at home, locked in your car, or in a locker at the testing center. The last place on earth to discuss whether you can bring something into the test site is at the door on test day.



REMEMBER

Whatever you do, be sure *not* to bring the following with you to the testing room at the GED testing center, and make sure they are out of reach (or out of the room) if you test at home:

- » Books
- » Notes or scratch paper
- » Tablets
- » Cellphones
- » Smartwatches
- » Apple AirPods or other wireless earphones
- » Anything valuable, like a laptop computer that you don't feel comfortable leaving outside the room while you take the test

Also, keep your eyes on your monitor. Everybody knows not to look at other people's work during the test, but, to be on the safe side, don't stretch, roll your eyes, or do anything else that may be mistaken for looking at another test. At a test center, most of the tests will be different on the various computers, so looking around is futile and doing so can get you into a lot of trouble. You should also keep your eyes on the screen if you test online at home. Everything you need to take the test is on the screen in front of you. Looking around the room or looking away from the screen repeatedly could be considered suspicious behavior.

Identifying computer skills you need

If you know how to use a computer and are comfortable with a keyboard and a mouse, you're ahead of the game. If not, practice your keyboarding. Also, practice reading from a computer screen because reading from a screen is very different from reading printed materials. At the very least, you need to get more comfortable with computers, even if that means taking a short course at a local learning emporium. In the case of the GED test, the more familiar you are with computers, the more comfortable you'll feel taking the test.

When taking the computerized GED test, you have two important tools to allow you to answer questions: the keyboard and the mouse. You may also use an on-screen calculator and whiteboard for certain parts of the test. The following sections examine each tool in greater depth and explain exactly how you use them to complete the GED test. Make sure that you understand the

mechanics and use of the keyboard and mouse beforehand so you don't waste valuable time figuring out all of this stuff on test day.

Typing on the keyboard

You need to have at least some familiarity with a computer's keyboard. If you constantly make typing errors or aren't familiar with the keyboard, you may be in trouble. The good news is that you don't have to be a keyboarding whiz. In fact, the behind-the-scenes GED people have shown through their research that even people with minimal keyboarding skills still have adequate time to complete the test.

On the GED test, you'll use the keyboard to type your answers in the essay (Extended Response) segment in the Reasoning through Language Arts test and in the fill-in-the-blank questions on the other three tests. These answers can include words, phrases, and numbers. Although you may be familiar with typing by using one or two fingers on your smartphone or tablet, with the screen often predicting and suggesting (correctly spelled) words that you need, the word processor on the GED test for the Extended Response has a bare minimum of features. It accepts keyboard entries, cuts, pastes, and copies and lets you redo and undo changes, but no more. It doesn't have a grammar-checker or a spell-checker, so be careful with your keyboarding because spelling and grammatical errors are just that — errors.



TIP

The GED test uses the standard English keyboard (see Figure 1-1). If you're not familiar with it, take time to acquaint yourself with it before you take the GED test. If you're used to other language keyboards, you will find that the English keyboard has some letters and punctuation that appear in different places. Before test day, practice using the English keyboard so that the differences in the keyboard don't throw you off the day of the test. You won't have time to figure out the keyboard while the clock is ticking.

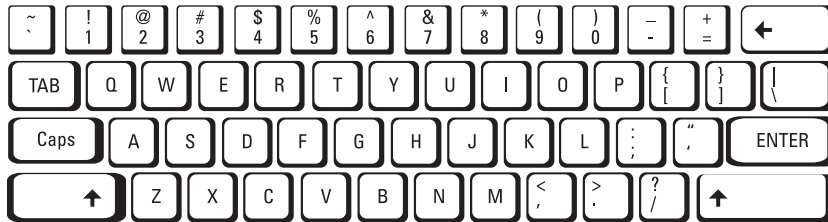


FIGURE 1-1:
An example of a standard English keyboard.

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Clicking and dragging with the mouse

Most questions on the GED test require no more than the ability to use the mouse to move the cursor on your screen to point to a selection for your answer and then click that selection, which is very basic.

If you're unfamiliar with computers, take time to become familiar with the mouse, including the clickable buttons and the scroll wheel. If the mouse has a scroll wheel, you can use it to move up or down through text or images. When you hold down the left button on the mouse, it highlights text as you drag the cursor across the screen, or you can "drag and drop" questions on the screen.

If you test online at home using a laptop, that computer may have a trackpad mouse (a small panel at the bottom of the screen that you touch with one or more fingers to move the pointer on-screen and click in the left or right corner). Use the instructions that come with your laptop to get familiar with a trackpad mouse. If you're more comfortable with a traditional mouse, you can buy a wired or wireless one for a few dollars online. Make sure that it's compatible with your specific laptop.

FINDING HELP WITH COMPUTER SKILLS

Some websites offer free training on basic computer skills, but you need a computer to use them. Your local library should have free computer access if you don't have your own computer. Many libraries and community agencies offer free computer classes that are worth checking out. If you're a bit computer savvy, type "basic computer skills training + free" into a search engine and follow the links until you find one that suits you. If you want to improve your typing skills, search online in your favorite search engine using the keywords "free typing tutor." Be aware that free or limited-time trial software can be full of advertising.

Take your time at home or in the library developing your skills and working through the practice tests. Test day isn't the time to figure out how to use the computer.

On the GED test, you'll use the mouse or keyboard to answer the four main question types: multiple-choice, fill-in-the-blank, drop-down menu, and drag-and-drop. You'll use both the mouse and the keyboard to answer the Extended Response item on the RLA test.

Fill-in-the-blanks are another type of question you'll encounter on the GED test. They're simply statements with a blank box in the text somewhere. To answer the question, you need to enter the word(s), name, or number. The statement will be preceded by directions setting up the text, so you'll know what is expected.



REMEMBER

You must type the precise word or number required. Spelling mistakes, misplaced decimals, and even wrong capitalization count as errors.

Calculating with the on-screen calculator

The Math test provides an on-screen calculator for you to use on all but the first five questions of the test. (If you don't see the calculator tab on the screen, then you have to do the math in your head or on the whiteboard.) When you need the calculator, simply click on the Calculator link and the calculator appears (see Figure 1-2). If you test at a testing center, you can bring your own TI-30XS MultiView calculator. The GED Testing Service's website, <https://ged.com>, has a number of resources, including a reference sheet that shows you all the features you need to know and an actual on-screen calculator you can practice with.

Using the tablet or on-screen whiteboard

You don't get scratch paper when you take the GED. Instead, you have an erasable tablet and/or on-screen whiteboard for taking notes about your essay, solving math problems, and so on. If you take the test at a testing center, you'll have an erasable tablet. If you test at a testing center or online at home, you'll have an online whiteboard for taking notes and organizing your ideas. Either way, nothing you write on the boards will be seen by anyone but you. Only the answer that you enter in the answer window counts.

The order, topics, and time for each test

The GED test includes the four sections (also referred to as tests) outlined in Table 1-1. Each test is timed and covers somewhat predictable topics, also outlined in Table 1-1 and covered in the following sections. For help preparing for each of these tests, see Block 2 for background information and Block 3 for sample questions.

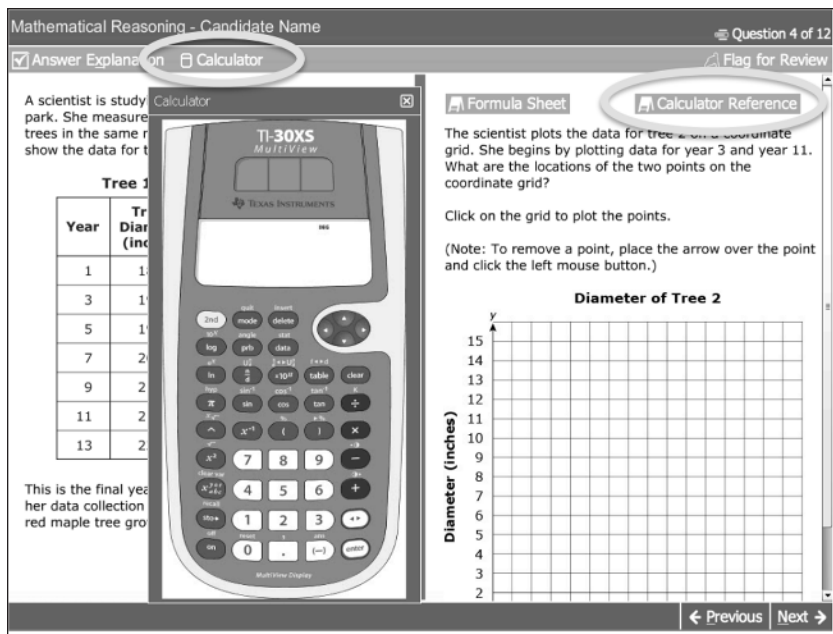


FIGURE 1-2: The computerized GED Math test has a calculator that you can use on-screen.

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TABLE 1-1 Time for Each GED Test Section

Test Section	Time Limit (in Minutes)
Reasoning through Language Arts	95 (split into two sections, 35 and 60)
Reasoning through Language Arts, Extended Response	45
Social Studies	70
Science	90
Mathematical Reasoning	115

Reasoning through the Language Arts test

The Reasoning through Language Arts (RLA) test is one long test that covers all the literacy components of the GED test. You have 150 minutes overall. However, the test is divided into three sections:

- » The Reading Comprehension section is 35 minutes and asks you to demonstrate a critical understanding of various passages.
- » The Extended Response (essay) is 45 minutes, followed by a 10-minute break. This test examines your skills in organizing your thoughts and writing clearly.
- » The Grammar and Language section is 60 minutes and asks you to correct errors in various kinds of texts. This includes demonstrating a command of proper grammar, punctuation, and spelling.

Remember that the time for the Extended Response can't be used to work on the other questions in the test, nor can you use leftover time from the other sections on the Extended Response.

The scores from all three components will be combined into one single score for the RLA test.

The question-answer part of this test consists mainly of various types of multiple-choice questions and drop-down menu questions with four answer choices. You'll also see drag-and-drop questions.

The questions are based on source texts, which are materials presented to you for your response. Some of this source material is nonfiction, from science and social studies content as well as from the workplace. Only 25 percent is based on literature. Here's a breakdown of the materials:

- » **Workplace and community materials:** These include work-related letters, memos, and instructions that you may see on the job. They also include letters and documents from companies and community organizations, such as banks, hospitals, libraries, credit unions, and local governments.
- » **U.S. founding documents and documents that present part of the Great American Conversation:** These may include extracts from the Bill of Rights, the Constitution, and other historical documents. They also may include opinion pieces on relevant issues in American history and civics.
- » **Informational works:** These include documents that present information (often dry and boring information), such as an instructional manual. They also include materials that you may find in history, social studies, or science books.
- » **Literature:** These include extracts from novels and short stories.

Social Studies test

On the Social Studies test, you have 70 minutes to answer 50 questions. On this test, you will see standard multiple-choice questions, as well as fill-in-the-blank questions, drag-and-drop questions, and drop-down menu questions. A few questions may ask you to calculate an answer.

The questions are based on various kinds of source texts. About half of the questions are based on one source text, such as a graph or short reading, with one question. Other questions have a single source text as the basis for several questions. In either case, you'll need to analyze and evaluate the content presented to you as part of the question. A few questions may ask you to compare and contrast information from two different sources. The test questions evaluate your ability to use reasoning and analysis skills. The information for the source materials comes from primary and secondary sources, both text and visual. That means you need to be able to "read" and interpret tables, maps, and graphs as well as standard text materials.

The content of the Social Studies test is drawn from the following four basic areas:

- » **Civics and government:** The largest part (about 50 percent of the test) focuses on civics and government. The civics and government questions examine the development of democracy, from ancient times to present day. Other topics include how civilizations change over time and respond to crises.
- » **American history:** American history makes up 20 percent of the test. It covers all topics from the pilgrims and early settlement to the Revolution, the Civil War, World Wars I and II, the Vietnam War, and current history — all of which involve the United States in one way or another.
- » **Economics:** Economics makes up about 15 percent of the test. The economics portion examines basic theories, such as supply and demand, the role of government policies in the economy, and macro- and microeconomic theory.

» **Geography and the world:** This area also makes up 15 percent of the test. The areas with which you need to become familiar are very topical: sustainability and environmental issues, population issues, and rural and urban settlement. Other topics include cultural diversity and migration.

A good way to prepare for this test is to read as much as possible. As you prepare for the test, read articles about civics, history, economics, and geography from reliable online sources. Even reading solid news coverage can help you develop the strong reading skills you need.

Science test

The Science test is scheduled for 90 minutes. My advice for the Science test is the same as for the Reasoning through Language Arts test: Read as much as you can, especially science material. Whenever you don't understand a word or concept, look it up in a dictionary or online. The questions in the Science test assume a high school level of science vocabulary.

You don't have to be a nuclear physicist to answer the questions, but you should be familiar with the vocabulary normally understood by someone completing high school. If you work at improving your scientific vocabulary, you should have little trouble with the Science test. (*Note:* That same advice applies to all the GED test's sections. Improve your vocabulary in each subject and you'll perform better.)

The Science test concentrates on two main themes:

- » Human health and living systems
- » Energy and related systems

In addition, the content of the test focuses on the following areas:

- » **Physical science:** About 40 percent of the test focuses on physics and chemistry, including topics such as conservation, transformation, and flow of energy; work, motion, and forces; and chemical properties and reactions related to living systems.
- » **Life science:** Another 40 percent of the Science test deals with life science, including biology and, more specifically, human body and health, the relationship between life functions and energy intake, ecosystems, structure and function of life, and the molecular basis for heredity and evolution.
- » **Earth and space science:** This area makes up the remaining 20 percent of this test and includes astronomy — interaction between Earth's systems and living things, Earth and its system components and interactions, and structure and organization of the cosmos.

Go ahead and type one of the three areas of content into your favorite search engine to find material to read. You'll find links to articles and material from all different levels. Filter your choices by the level you want and need — for example, use keywords such as “scientific theories,” “scientific discoveries,” “scientific method,” “human health,” “living systems,” “energy,” “the universe,” “organisms,” and “geochemical systems” — and don't get discouraged if you can't understand technical material that one scientist wrote that only about three other scientists in the world can understand.

The questions on the Science test are in multiple-choice, fill-in-the-blank, drag-and-drop, and drop-down menu formats. As on the Social Studies test, you will read passages and interpret graphs, tables, and other visual materials. A few questions may ask you to calculate an answer.

Mathematical Reasoning test

The Mathematical Reasoning (Math) test checks that you have the same knowledge and understanding of mathematics as a typical high school graduate. Because the GED is designed to prepare you for both postsecondary education and employment, it has an emphasis on both workplace-related mathematics and academic mathematics. About 45 percent of the test is about quantitative problem solving, and the rest is about algebra.

The Math test consists of different question formats to be completed in 115 minutes. Because the GED test is administered on the computer, the questions take advantage of the power of the computer. Some questions will simply pose a problem for you to solve. Other questions will refer to various kinds of stimulus materials, including graphs, tables, menus, price lists, and much more.

On the Math test, most of the questions are multiple choice with four answer choices. You'll also see a few drop-down questions and drag-and-drop questions, which typically ask you to arrange numbers in a certain order by clicking and dragging them on-screen. Fill-in-the-blank questions ask you to type your answer as a specific number or word into the space provided.

Some questions may be stand-alone with only one question for each stimulus. Others may have multiple questions based on a single stimulus. Each stimulus, no matter how many questions are based on it, may include text, graphs, tables, or some other representation of numeric, geometrical, or algebraic materials. Practice reading mathematical materials and become familiar with the vocabulary of mathematics. On the Math test, you're allowed to use your calculator on all but the first five questions. However, some questions can be answered more quickly using mental math or simple calculations on the whiteboard.

Navigating the question types

The GED has four types of questions. Before you take the test, have a look at each type and make sure you understand how to answer it on the computerized test.

Multiple-choice questions

In all the GED tests, the multiple-choice question is the most common. The basic multiple-choice question, shown in Figure 1-3, looks very similar to what you may expect. This one is presented in split-screen form, with the source text on the left and the question and answer choices on the right. If the source text extends beyond one screen, you use the scroll bar on the right side of the left screen. When you're ready to answer, use the mouse to click on the appropriate answer, and then click on Next to continue.



REMEMBER

If a scroll bar accompanies the source text on the left side of the screen, some of the text isn't visible unless you scroll down. If that scroll bar is on the answer side, some of the answer choices may not be visible without scrolling. This is important to remember because you may miss some important text when trying to answer the question. To use the scroll bar, click it with your cursor and then move your mouse up or down. When the text you want is visible, release the button.

Drag-and-drop questions

Figure 1-4 shows a drag-and-drop question. This question uses a four-page source text and asks you to select characteristics that apply to the main character, Anne. The key is that you can select only three of the five listed words. That isn't stated in the question but is obvious from the drag-and-drop targets, which include only three oval spaces. You have to read the text carefully to find the correct choices. When you decide which words apply, drag each word to one of the ovals and leave it there. Click on Next to continue.

RLA - Candidate Name Question 1 of 12

Answer Explanation Flag for Review

page 1 | page 2 | page 3 | page 4 | page 5

24 I handed him the gourd, and he took a big drink.

25 "Would you like to learn?"

26 "Yes!"

27 "All right," he said. "But by the time we finish, it will be too late to travel."

28 "I don't care."

29 "Good! We will stalk the rhinoceroses by those trees. Try not to wake them, though."

30 Good safety tip, I thought.

From THUNDER CAVE by Roland Smith. Text copyright © 1995 by Roland Smith. Reprinted by permission of Hyperion Books for Children. All Rights Reserved.

Which quotation from the passage supports the idea that Supeet is teaching the narrator a skill that requires patience?

A. "I will be too busy to drink."

B. "Each step was exaggerated and painfully slow."

C. "When we were boys we practiced with rhinoceroses when they were asleep."

D. "The tribe taught me to stalk many other animals."

Next →

FIGURE 1-3:
An example of a standard multiple-choice question.


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RLA - Candidate Name Question 7 of 12

Answer Explanation Flag for Review

page 1 | page 2 | page 3 | page 4

Excerpt from *Anne of Green Gables*
by L. M. Montgomery



1 Marilla came briskly forward as Matthew opened the door. But when her eyes fell on the odd little figure in the stiff, ugly dress, with the long braids of red hair and the eager, luminous eyes, she stopped short in amazement.

2 "Matthew Cuthbert, who's that?" she exclaimed. "Where is the boy?"

3 "There wasn't any boy," said Matthew wretchedly. "There was only *her*."

Drag and drop each word that describes Anne into the character web.

```

graph TD
    A(( )) --- B((Anne))
    B --- C(( ))
    B --- D(( ))
    E(dramatic)
    F(practical)
    G(satisfied)
    H(enthusiastic)
    I(disappointed)
  
```

← Previous Next →

FIGURE 1-4:
A drag-and-drop example.

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Drop-down menu questions

Questions involving a drop-down menu (see Figure 1-5) are just a variation of the multiple-choice questions. You use the mouse to expand the choices and then again to select the correct one.

Fill-in-the-blank questions

For fill-in-the-blank questions, you type an answer in a box provided, using the keyboard. The answer might be a word or phrase, a number, or an equation. On the math test, you may have to use the symbols on the keyboard or click on the \mathbb{A} Symbol tab for additional symbols that you may need (see Figure 1-6).

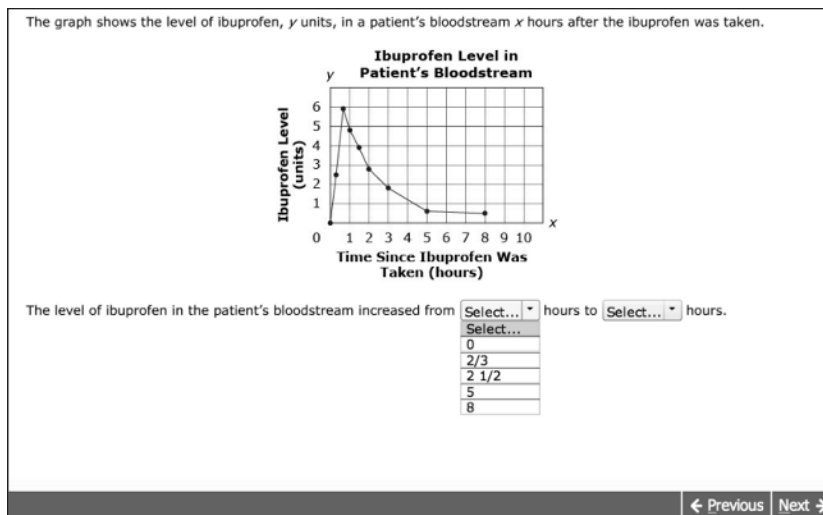


FIGURE 1-5:
An example of a drop-down menu question.

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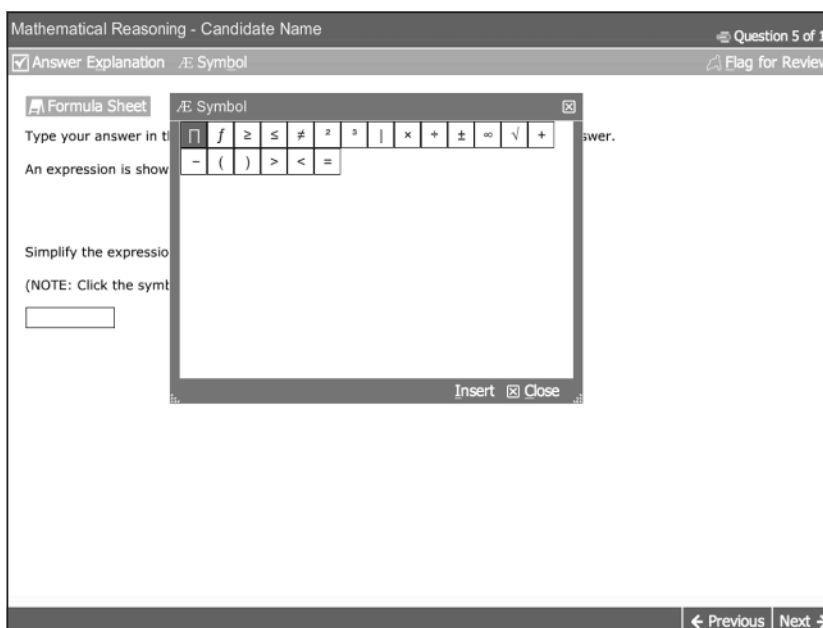


FIGURE 1-6:
An example of the Symbol box popping up.

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After reading the question carefully, you use the keyboard and the Symbol box to type your answer in the box. To insert a symbol, place your cursor in the correct place in the answer box. Then click on the Æ Symbol tab. The Symbol box will open. In the Symbol box, click on the symbol you want and then click the Insert button in the lower-right corner of the Symbol box. The symbol will appear next to your cursor. To make the Symbol box go away, press the Close button in the lower-right corner.

Discovering Important Test-Taking Strategies

You can increase your score by mastering a few smart test-taking strategies. To help you do so, I give you some tips in these sections on managing stress, managing your time, and answering questions.

Managing stress

To succeed in taking the GED test, you need to be prepared. In addition to studying the content and skills needed for the four test sections, you also want to be mentally prepared. Although you may be nervous, you can't let your nerves get the best of you. Stay calm and take a deep breath. Here are a few pointers to help you stay focused on the task at hand:

- » **Take time to relax.** Passing the GED test is an important milestone in life. Make sure you leave a bit of time to relax, both while you prepare for the test sections and just before you take them. Relaxing has a place in preparing as long as it doesn't become your main activity.
- » **Make sure that you know the rules of the room before you begin.** The earlier section, "Exam room rules," explains most of these rules. If you have questions about using the bathroom during the test or what to do if you finish early, ask the proctor before you begin. If you don't want to ask these questions in public, call the GED office in your area before test day, and ask your questions over the telephone. For general GED questions, call 877-392-6433 or check out <https://ged.com>. This site has many pages, but the FAQ page is always a good place to start.
- » **Stay calm.** Your nerves can use up a lot of energy needed for the test. Concentrate on the job at hand. You can always be nervous or panicky some other time.

Because taking standardized tests probably isn't a usual situation for you, you may feel nervous. This is perfectly normal. Just try to focus on answering one question at a time and push any other thoughts to the back of your mind. Sometimes taking a few deep breaths can clear your mind.

Watching the clock: Using your time wisely

When you start the GED test, you may feel pressed for time and have the urge to rush through the questions. I strongly advise that you don't. You have sufficient time to do the test at a reasonable pace. You have only a certain amount of time for each section in the GED exam, so time management is an important part of succeeding on the test. You need to plan ahead and use your time wisely.

During the test, the computer keeps you constantly aware of the time with a clock in the upper-right corner. Pay attention to the clock. When the test begins, check that time, and be sure to monitor how much time you have left as you work your way through the test.



TIP

As you start, the opening screen will tell you the number of questions you have to answer. Quickly divide the time by the number of questions. Doing so can give you a rough idea of how much time to spend on each question. For example, on the Mathematical Reasoning test, suppose that you have 50 questions to answer. You have 115 minutes to complete the test. Divide the time by the number of questions to find out how much time you have for each one: $115/50 = 2.3$ minutes or 2 minutes and 18 seconds per question. As you progress, repeat the calculation to see how you're doing.



TIP

Remember that you can answer the questions in any order, except for the RLA Extended Response. Do the easiest questions first. If you come to a question that will take a long time to answer (such as a complicated math question), skip it. If you get stuck on a question, leave it and come back to it later if you have time. If you are unsure of an answer, use the Flag for Review button to mark it so you can return to it later if you have time. The Review screen will help you quickly find and return to flagged and skipped questions later in the test. In the meantime, you can keep to that schedule and answer as many questions as possible.

The following general time-management tips to help you complete each exam on time:

- » **Measure the time you have to answer each question without spending more time on timing than answering.** Group questions together; for example, calculate how much time you have for each question on each test. Multiply the answer by 5 to give you a time slot for any five test questions. Then try to make sure that you answer each group of five questions within the time you've calculated. Doing so helps you complete all the questions and leaves you several minutes for review.
- » **Keep calm and don't panic.** The time you spend panicking could be better spent answering questions.
- » **Practice using the sample test in this book and the online-only test.** The more you practice timed sample test questions, the easier managing a timed test becomes. You can get used to doing something in a limited amount of time if you practice. Block 4 is a shortened practice test.

When time is up, immediately stop and breathe a sigh of relief. When the test ends, the examiner will give you a log-off procedure. Listen for instructions on what to do or where to go next.

Addressing and answering questions

When you start the test, you want to have a game plan in place for how to answer the questions. Keep the following tips in mind to help you address each question:

- » **Whenever you read a question, ask yourself, "What am I being asked?"** Doing so helps you stay focused on what you need to find out to answer the question. Then try to answer it.
- » **Try to eliminate some answers.** Even if you don't really know the answer, the process of elimination can help. When you're offered four answer choices, some will be obviously wrong. Eliminate those choices, and you improve your odds of guessing a correct answer.
- » **Don't overthink.** Because all the questions are straightforward, don't look for trick questions. The questions ask for an answer based on the information given.
- » **Find the best answer and quickly verify that it answers the question.** If it does, click on that choice and move on. If it doesn't, leave it and come back to it after you answer all the other questions, if you have time. **Remember:** You need to pick the *most* correct answer from the choices offered. It may not be the perfect answer, but it is what is required.

Guess for success: Using intelligent guessing



REMEMBER

The multiple-choice questions, regardless of the on-screen format, provide you with four possible answers. You get between one and three points for every correct answer. Nothing is subtracted for incorrect answers. That means you can guess on the questions you don't know for sure without fear that you'll lose points. Make educated guesses by eliminating as many obviously wrong choices as possible and choosing from just one or two remaining choices.

Removing one or two choices you know are wrong makes choosing the correct answer much more likely. For example, if you know that two of the answers are wrong, you leave yourself only two possible answers to choose from, giving you a 50 percent (1 in 2) chance of guessing right — much better than 25 percent!

Try to spot the wrong choices by following these tips:

- » **Make sure that the answer choice really answers the question.** Wrong choices usually don't answer the question — that is, they may sound good, but they answer a different question than the one the test asks.
- » **When two answer choices seem very close, consider both of them carefully because they both can't be right — but they both can be wrong.** Some answer choices may be very close, and all seem correct, but there's a fine line between completely correct and nearly correct. Be careful. These answer choices are sometimes given to see whether you really understand the material.
- » **Look for opposite answers in the hopes that you can eliminate one.** If two answers contradict each other, both can't be right, but both can be wrong.
- » **Trust your instincts.** Some wrong choices may just strike you as wrong when you first read them. If you spend time preparing for the test, you probably know more than you think.

Leaving time for review

Having a few minutes at the end of a test to check your work is a great way to set your mind at ease. As soon as you answer the last question, the test will take you to the Review screen, which will show you a list of all the questions, and whether you skipped or flagged any questions. This way, you can quickly review any questions that may be troubling and go back and answer any ones you skipped earlier. Keep the following tips in mind as you review your answers:

- » **Figure out how much time you have per remaining question, and try to answer each question in a little less than that time.** The extra seconds you don't use the first time through the test add up to time at the end of the test for review. Some questions require more thought and decision-making than others. Use your extra seconds to answer those questions.
- » **Don't change a lot of answers at the last minute.** Second-guessing yourself can lead to trouble. Often, second-guessing leads you to changing correct answers to incorrect ones. Numerous studies show that when a test-taker changes an answer selection, the new selection is usually incorrect. If you have prepared well and worked numerous sample questions, then you're likely to get the correct answers the first time. Ignoring all your preparation and knowledge to play a hunch isn't a good idea, either at the racetrack or on a test.
- » **If you cannot answer all the questions in the time remaining, answer them randomly.** There is no guessing penalty on the GED, so don't leave any questions unanswered. The one or two points you pick up from answering all the questions may be the points you need to pass.
- » **On the Extended Response section, use any remaining time to reread and review your final essay.** You may have written a good essay, but you always need to check for typos and grammar mistakes. The essay is evaluated for style, content, and proper English. That includes spelling and grammar.

The Flag for Review button is a very useful feature on all four tests. This button allows you to mark questions for review later. You can select an answer and then press Flag for Review, or simply press Flag for Review without selecting an answer. At the end of the test, or at any time, you can go to the Review screen, which shows all the questions that are flagged or skipped. This way, you can return to these questions quickly at any time. When you complete the test, you will also be taken to this screen (as long as there is time remaining). You can continue to check your answers or complete unanswered questions until time runs out.

Understanding Your Score

To pass, you need to score a minimum of 145 on each section of the test, and you must pass each section of the test to earn your GED diploma. If you achieve a passing score, congratulate yourself: You've scored better than at least 40 percent of today's high school graduates, and you're now a graduate of the largest virtual school in the country. And if your scores range between 165 and 174, you've reached the GED College Ready level. This means you may be able to start your college studies right away without any additional college-readiness classes. This can save you time and money. If your scores are even higher, between 175 and 200, you've reached the lofty GED College Ready + Credit level. Depending on the policies of your institution, you can qualify for college credit in each of the GED subject areas.



TIP

If you score at the College-Ready or College Ready + Credit level, shop around at various colleges and universities. Some institutions may be more willing than others to waive requirements or grant credit. For example, you can start at a community college that grants credit. Then those credits will be on your transcript if you later go on to a four-year college.

There is more good news. Scores from the computer-based and online tests do not expire, so if you passed some sections years ago, you do not need to take them again. And if you took a test between 2014 and 2016 and scored below 150 but above 145, you will now get credit for passing that section of the test. (The passing score was lowered from 150 to 145 at that time.) Your transcript should have been adjusted automatically, so check your transcript at <https://ged.com>; there may be good news waiting for you. The following sections address a few more points you may want to know about how the GED test is scored and what you can do if you score poorly on some or all of the test sections.

Identifying how scores are determined

Correct answers may be worth one, two, or more points, depending on the question and the level of difficulty. The Extended Response (also known as the essay) is scored separately. However, the Extended Response is only one part of the Reasoning through Language Arts test. On each test section, you must accumulate a minimum of 145 points.

Retaking a test to improve your score

If you discover that your score is less than 145 on any test section, start planning to retake the test(s) — and make sure you leave plenty of time for additional studying and preparing.



TIP

As soon as possible after seeing your results, check out the rules for retaking that section of the test at <https://ged.com>. Remember, you need to retake only those sections of the test that you didn't pass. Any sections you pass are completed and count toward your diploma. Furthermore, the detailed feedback you receive on your results will help you discover areas that need more work before retaking a section of the test. That information can help you determine the sections of this book to review or whether you want to sign up for a class. You can find nearby adult education centers on <https://ged.com>.

No matter what score you receive on your first round of the section, don't be afraid to retake any section that you didn't pass. After you've taken it once, you know what you need to work on, and you know exactly what to expect on test day. Just take a deep breath and get ready to prepare some more before you take your next test.

