

Getting Your GED

Gateway to Your Future

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District of Columbia Public Library for sharing their document.

Introduction

So, you want to get your GED. That's great!

The first thing you need to do is to learn and to know everything you can about the GED (**G**eneral **E**ducational **D**evelopment) exam before you think about signing up to take the exam. There's nothing easy about the GED exam.

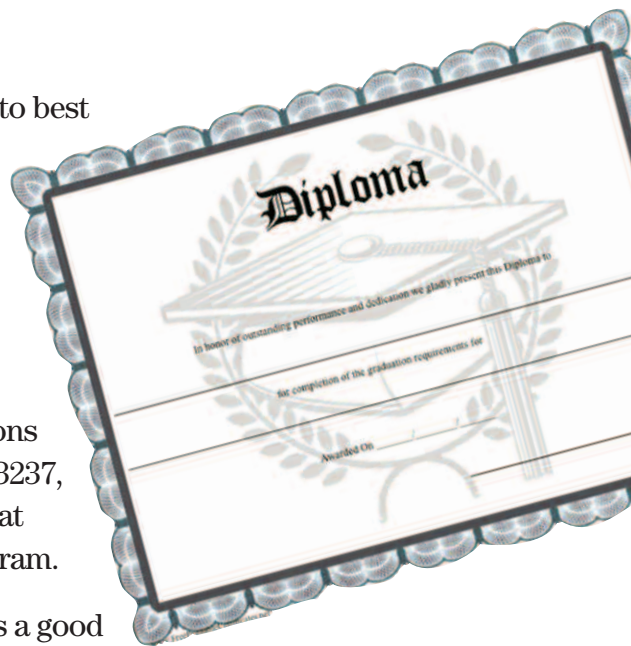
The information in this booklet will help you get started. It should answer a lot of the questions you may have about the GED exam. Questions like:

- ▶ what are the five tests that make up the GED exam;
- ▶ what and how you should study for the different tests;
- ▶ how do you apply to take the GED exam; and
- ▶ where can you go for help.

After you read this booklet, you can plan how to best prepare for the exam. You can study from GED test preparation books and websites, and/or get into a GED program.

If you have a hard time reading or understanding this booklet, there's a chance that you need to work on your reading skills first. Call the Office for Community Connections at the Westchester Library System at 914-231-3237, and tell the person who answers the phone that you are looking for a skills improvement program.

Last but not least, if you think this booklet does a good job of explaining what the GED is about, share it with other people. Tell them they can get a copy of the booklet by calling the Office for Community Connections at the Westchester Library System at 914-231-3237. They'll be glad they did.



General Information

Here are a few things you should know about the GED exam:

1. The complete GED is made up of five tests. The five tests are:

Language Arts, Writing (Part I and Part II)

Language Arts, Reading

Social Studies

Science

Mathematics (Part I and Part II)

2. Several of the tests (Language Arts, Writing Part I; Language Arts, Reading; Social Studies; and Science) are multiple-choice tests. This means that you are given five possible answers to every question, and from the five choices, you will choose the one that best answers the question.
3. On Language Arts, Writing Part II, you will need to write an essay.
4. The Mathematics Test will also have multiple-choice questions. There will also be questions where you have to write the answer into a special section (called a grid) on the answer sheet.
5. The GED tests are **timed**. This means that you will have only a certain amount of time to complete each test. The entire exam takes 8 hours and 10 minutes to complete. You can find the exact time for each test in the test descriptions beginning on Page 6 in this booklet.

6. You **do not have to attend a GED program** in order to take the GED exam. You can study on your own to prepare for the exam, or you may already have the knowledge and skills you need to pass the exam. However, it is a good idea to first take some practice exams to find out if you are ready to take the “real” exam (see page 20).
7. You can take the GED exam **in English, Spanish, French, Braille, large print or by audiocassette**, depending on your needs.

If you take the exam in Spanish or French, you can also take a test of English proficiency (ESL Test). If you pass the ESL test as well as the other five GED tests in Spanish or French, you will get an English GED. Getting an English GED may be helpful when you look for work or if you want to apply for college. Contact the New York State GED Testing Office at (518) 474-5906 for more information.

8. It is also possible for you to apply for a **special testing accommodation**, such as extended time, private testing, or frequent breaks, if you have a *specific* physical, psychological or learning disability. You will need to discuss your special needs with the New York State GED Testing Office. Contact the office by phone at (518) 474-5906.

Be the Next GED Success Story



First Things First: Reading the GED Tests

Before getting into more of what each of the GED tests is about, you should first understand that there is a common thread that runs through all of the GED tests. That common thread is **READING!** So let's start with that.

On most tests, your main purpose for reading is to answer questions about what you've read. This is especially true of the GED exam. Each of the five tests requires you to be a good reader. That means that you can at least:

- ▶ read fast enough to finish each of the tests on time;
- ▶ read GED-level materials without stumbling over too many words;
- ▶ understand most of what you're reading;
- ▶ use or apply what you've read to answer the test questions; and
- ▶ be able to read different kinds of materials, such as poems, lines from a play, math formulas, cartoons, and graphs.

You must also understand and be able to use **critical reading skills**. Most of the readings and questions on the Science, Social Studies, and Language Arts tests will require that you understand and use these skills.

What are Critical Reading Skills?

- ▶ You may be asked to decide whether something you've read is a **fact** or an **opinion**. A fact is a statement that can be proven to be true. An opinion is an idea that is believed but cannot be proven to be true.
- ▶ You may be asked to make **inferences** about what you read. Writers don't always come right out with their messages or meanings. When they don't make direct statements, readers have to make inferences or "read between the lines." When you have to combine what the text says with what it might mean, you are making an **inference**. As you read, look for clues to the author's message. Put those clues together with what you know in real life. When you bring the clues and your knowledge together you can make an **inference** about what the author means to say.

- ▶ You may be asked to **compare** or **contrast** two or more things or ideas about what you have read. **To compare** them is to look for **similarities** between them. **To contrast** them is to look for the **differences** between them. (You may also be asked to do this on the essay in the Language Arts, Writing test.)
- ▶ You may be asked to **draw a conclusion** about what you've read. This means "putting together" what you've read in order for you to come up with a new idea or understanding about something, or deciding what information makes the **best sense** in a given situation.
- ▶ You may be asked questions about **time-order**. In other words, what happened *when* and in *what order* did it happen? This is an important skill to have when you are reading in the Social Studies and Science tests.
- ▶ You may be asked questions about **cause and effect**. In other words, if something is being *described* or *explained* to you in what you are reading, you may be expected to know if one action or event was caused or effected by another action or event. Did one thing lead to another? This is especially something you can expect to see in the Science test.
- ▶ You may be asked how a writer used **figurative language** or a "figure of speech" to get a point across. In other words, did the writer say one thing but really mean something else? Sayings like, "My love is like a red, red rose," "I smell a rat," or "Between the devil and the deep blue sea" are examples of figurative language. You'll see questions about figurative language mainly in the Language Arts, Reading Test.
- ▶ And you will most likely be asked questions about what the **main idea** is in a reading passage, what a writer's **point of view** is, what **tone** of voice the writer is using or what **mood** the writer is trying to express.

You need to have many different reading skills before you can expect to pass the GED exam. If you do not already have these skills, there are a lot of good reading comprehension and Pre-GED books you can use to help you brush up on your skills. You might also think about getting into an adult reading program, or getting a tutor to help you improve your reading skills. Call the Office for Community Connections at the Westchester Library System at 914-231-3237 to find a program that is right for you.

The Five GED Tests

Language Arts, Writing Part I

Time: 75 minutes

Number of Questions: 50

In Part I, you will be expected to correct errors in some written materials (documents) provided. For example, you could be given a business letter or memo, a set of instructions on how to do something, or a document that just gives information about a topic of some sort. You will be shown sentences that need to be corrected and five choices for making the correction. (See Sentence Correction, Sentence Revision, and Construction Shift below.)

There are three different ways in which the questions about the sentences will be asked:

1. Sentence Correction. In this type of question, you will be given a sentence to read, and then you will be asked, “What correction should be made to this sentence?” From the answers given, you will choose the answer that makes the sentence correct. *However*, about half of the sentences you are given to correct will not really have an error in them. For these questions choose the answer that reads, “no correction is necessary.”

Note: About 22 out of the 50 questions are like this.

2. Sentence Revision. In this type of question, you will be given a sentence to read, and part of the sentence will be underlined. You will have to choose the answer that makes the underlined part of the sentence correct. Out of the five answers you will have to choose from, the first one will always be written the same way the underlined part of the sentence is written. In other words, choosing this answer means that there is no need to make a correction to the sentence.

Note: About 18 out of the 50 questions are like this.

3. Construction Shift. In this type of question, you will be given a sentence and asked to “rewrite” the sentence in your mind. In other words, the test question will direct you to rewrite the sentence by beginning it in a different way, or by combining it with another sentence. However, you won’t have to do any actual writing. Instead, you will choose one of the answers provided in the test.

Note: About 10 out of the 50 questions are like this.

The most common errors that test takers make are in the following four areas:

1. Mechanics (12 questions)

- ▶ **Capitalization** – using *capital letters* where needed.
- ▶ **Punctuation** – using *commas* correctly.
- ▶ **Spelling** – using *apostrophes* (‘) and homonyms correctly. (Homonyms are words that sound the same but have different meanings and spellings, like *right* and *write*).

2. Usage — mainly using *verbs* and *pronouns* correctly. (15 questions)

3. Sentence Structure — putting the *parts of a sentence together correctly*, and using *the* above mechanics and usage correctly. (15 questions)

4. Organization — making sure that sentences and paragraphs are in the best order. For example, you may be asked to look at a business letter and decide if one or more of the sentences or paragraphs should be moved to a different place in the letter in order to improve the way the letter reads. (8 questions)

Below is a list of some writing terms and skills that you should know. If you want to learn more about them, or study and practice them, you should find them listed in any good GED test preparation or adult education writing skills book.

- ▶ Capitalization
- ▶ Punctuation
- ▶ Apostrophes
- ▶ Contractions
- ▶ Possessives
- ▶ Homonyms
- ▶ Verbs
- ▶ Pronouns
- ▶ Subject and Verb Agreement
- ▶ Sentence Fragments
- ▶ Run-on Sentences
- ▶ Combining Sentences

Part II (The Essay)

Time: 45 minutes

Number of Questions: 1 Essay

(If you finish your essay before your time is up, you can go back to Part I to either finish or to check over your answers.)

In **Part II**, you will be expected to write an essay of about 200 words (about one full page of writing). You will be given the topic for your essay, and asked to give an opinion or state a point of view, or explain something. The topic will be on an issue, a problem, or a situation that affects people in their everyday lives.

Here's an example of an essay question: *What do you think is the most serious problem in the world? Why?* Your score on your essay will depend mostly on how well you:

- ▶ **understand** the topic;
- ▶ **stick to the topic** throughout your essay;
- ▶ explain **why** you think what you do about the topic, and give good examples and details to back up what you think; and
- ▶ present your thoughts in an **organized** and **clear** way.

Note: You will not lose points because of spelling or grammar mistakes, unless you have so many mistakes that the people reading your essay cannot understand what you are trying to say in your essay.

Here's how your essay will be scored: Two people will be reading and scoring your essay. Each reader can give you a score of 1, 2, 3, or 4 points. The two scores are then averaged (added together and divided by two). This means that you can end up with a total score of 1.0, 1.5, 2.0, 2.5, 3.0, 3.5, or 4.0.

Note: You must have a score of at least **2.0** on **Part II (the essay)** in order to pass the **Language Arts, Writing** test.

The scores on **Part I** and **Part II** of Language Arts, Writing are then combined. In other words, even though there are two sections of the test, you end up with only one score for both parts.



Language Arts, Reading

Time: 65 minutes

Number of Questions: 40

There are seven reading passages on this test, and each passage will be followed by several questions.

- ▶ Five of the passages will be **fiction, poetry, and drama**. Most passages will be fiction but at least one of the passages will be a poem, and at least one will be a piece of drama (lines from a play.)
- ▶ Two of the passages will be **nonfiction** reading material, such as from a biography, a book review, or a newspaper article. At least one of the nonfiction passages will be about the workplace or a business, such as a passage from an employee handbook or a training manual.

Most of the reading selections will consist of a small excerpt (“chunk” of writing) that has been taken out of a larger piece of written material (for example, a few paragraphs out of a book, a newspaper story or a magazine article).

These are the types of questions you will be asked:

- ▶ **Comprehension Questions.** You will be expected to understand what the writer is saying, and *especially*, to know if what the writer is saying is literal (words that mean what they say), or inferential (words that say one thing but really mean something else). **Note:** About 8 questions will be like this.
- ▶ **Application Questions.** You will be expected to understand what a writer’s ideas, beliefs or thoughts are, and use that information to answer the test questions. **Note:** About 6 questions will be like this.
- ▶ **Analysis Questions.** You will be expected to identify some of the writing *techniques* that the writer is using to get a point or idea across, and to understand how those techniques are used to make the reading more exciting, scary, complicated, romantic, or whatever. **Note:** About 12-14 questions will be like this.

- ▶ **Synthesis Questions.** You will be expected to pull information together from more than one place in order to answer a question. The information might come from two different places in the reading passage, or from the reading passage and the question itself. **Note:** About 12-14 questions will be like this.

Note: If you have a hard time understanding the types of questions described above, you may need to improve your reading skills. Call the Office for Community Connections at the Westchester Library System at 914-231-3237, and tell the person who answers the phone that you are looking for a skills improvement program.

Social Studies

Time: 70 minutes

Number of Questions: 50

The Social Studies Test is made up of reading passages and graphics, such as maps, cartoons, and graphs. The reading passage or graphic is followed by several questions. About 20 questions will be based on a reading passage only; about 20 will be based on a graphic only; and about 10 will be based on a passage combined with a graphic.

You will *not* be expected to recall social studies facts or information from memory, such as when the Civil War ended, who the fifth President of the United States was, or how many justices there are on the Supreme Court. The information you need to answer the questions will come from the reading passages and graphics provided.

Most of the reading is about topics that you would study in high school, and about issues that you might see discussed in a newspaper or magazine or on TV. You can also expect to read and answer questions about at least one “practical” document, such as a voter’s guide or tax form, and at least one U.S. historical document, such as the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, or a Supreme Court ruling.

The social studies topics you will be reading about on the test will come from five subject areas. These areas are listed below, along with a very brief description of each area and about how many questions (out of 50 total questions) you can expect to be asked in each area.

Social Studies Subject Area**Number of Questions****History** (U.S. History and World History)**(about) 20**

Past events in United States and the world

Geography**(about) 8**

About the earth and its people

Civics and Government**(about) 12**

How the government works or should work

Economics**(about) 10**

How goods and services are produced and used

These are the types of questions you'll be asked:

- ▶ **Comprehension** — understanding what you've read. See the *First Things First* section on page 2.
- ▶ **Application** — using what you've read to solve a problem or make a decision.
- ▶ **Evaluation** — making a value judgment about what you've read.
- ▶ **Analysis** — comparing or contrasting the ideas, information, or data that were presented in the reading.

Please refer to pages 10 – 11 for more information about these types of questions.

Note: If you need to learn more about the topics covered in the Social Studies Test, visit your local library to ask for books, DVDs, or websites that can help you.

Science

Time: 80 minutes

Number of Questions: 50

The Science Test is very much like the Social Studies Test, including the types of questions you'll be asked. However, the subject areas you'll be reading about are different. The subject areas are as follows:

Science Subject Area	Number of Questions
Life Sciences (Biology) About living things	(about) 22
Earth and Space Sciences About land, air, natural resources and "outer space"	(about) 10
Physical Sciences (Physics and Chemistry) About the earth's "forces" (such as heat and motion) and the earth's "matter" (such as atoms and molecules)	(about) 18

You can expect readings and questions about issues that you read and hear about everyday, such as pollution, recycling, preventing disease, and the climate. About 25 of the 50 questions will be based on graphics alone (maps, graphs, charts, diagrams) or reading passages combined with a graphic.

Note: If you need to learn more about the topics covered in the Science Test, visit your local library to ask for books, DVDs and websites that can help you.



Mathematics There are two parts to the Mathematics Test:

Part I (You May Use a Calculator)

Time: 45 minutes

Number of Questions: 25

Part II (You May Not Use a Calculator)

Time: 45 minutes

Number of Questions: 25

A Note About Calculators: A special calculator (Casio FX-260 Solar) will be provided by the testing center. Do not bring your own calculator because you will not be able to use it. The testing center may give you instructions on how to use the calculator.

However, it might be good to know something about the calculator ahead of time.

You can purchase the Casio FX-260 Solar for \$10 – \$15 at Wal-Mart, Staples or Office Depot. You don't have to use the calculator if you would rather do the problem with paper and pencil, but using the calculator may save you some time.

Math Subject Areas

The subject areas of the Mathematics Test and the number of questions you can expect in each area, are as follows:

Number Operations & Number Sense

10 – 15 questions

Whole numbers, fractions, decimals, percents, ratio and proportion

Measurement, Data Analysis, Statistics, and Probability

10 – 15 questions

For example, figuring out the distance around an object or how much liquid a drum will hold, the mean or average weight of 15 football players, or the chances of pulling a Jack of Diamonds out of a deck of cards

Algebra

10 – 15 questions

Signed numbers, equations, exponents and square roots

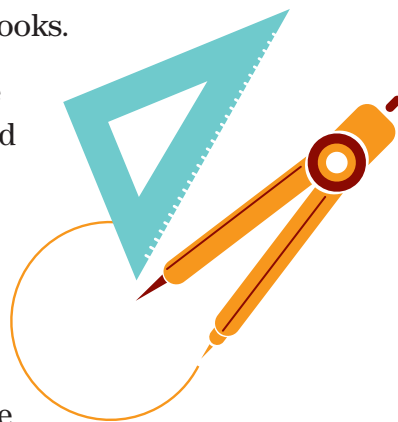
Geometry

10 – 15 questions

Using formulas to figure out the measurement of angles, triangles, squares, rectangles, cubes, cylinders, and other “geometric” shapes

Note: The above is not a complete list of the math skills within each subject area. You will find some others in the GED math books.

On the Mathematics Test, you will be expected to do more than just calculate whole numbers, decimals, fractions, and percents. You will be expected to use these math skills to **solve word problems**. In other words, before you can do the calculations, you will have to understand what a word problem is asking in order to know the steps to solving the problem.



In addition to basic math skills, you will be expected to use some other math skills, such as ratio and proportion, and solve some algebra and geometry problems. Also, a “graphic” or “visual aid” (such as a graph or chart) will be used in about 25 of the 50 math problems.

Fortunately, the **formulas** that you will need to use to work the geometry problems will come with the test. However, the “formulas” page will not show you how to use the formulas. You will need to know that before you take the test.

Some other things you should know for the Mathematics Test:

- ▶ In **word problems**, many different words can be used to say the same thing. It is important to know what the different **key words** are for addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division. For example, any one of these words — **sum, plus, increase, more, combine, and altogether** — could be used in an addition word problem.
- ▶ Several of the math questions will be what are called **set-up** problems. In these types of problems you are not asked to come up with an answer. Instead, you

will be asked to show what **steps** you would take to solve the problem. This is an important skill to know. Look for a GED math book that helps you understand what “set-up” problems are.

- ▶ In some of the word problems, you may not be given enough information or numbers to solve the problem. The skill is to know that you cannot solve the problem, and to choose the answer on the test that says, “not enough information is given.” There will be two or three of these types of questions on the test.
- ▶ Last but not least, one important skill (especially on a timed test) is to be able to **estimate**, or make an educated guess, about what the answer is to a problem. Also, take a moment to think whether or not the answers you chose make sense. These two skills are explained in many of the GED books.

Remember to look at Mike’s *Ten Tips for Taking the Math Test* (page 31) for more help.



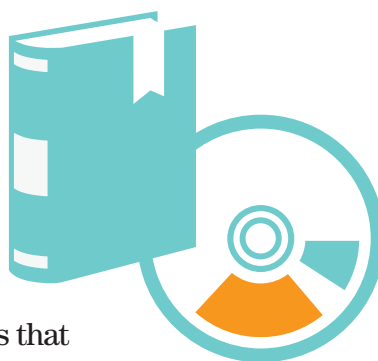
Getting Ready for the Exam

Studying for the Exam on Your Own

If you want to study for the GED exam on your own, rather than attend a GED program, that's up to you. But it's probably a good idea to review the subject areas using GED test preparation books and websites, **before** you take the exam. If you do, you will have a better idea about what's on each test, what's expected of you, and what the test questions are like.

Books and DVDs

You can get books and DVDs that cover each of the GED tests. For example, if you need to brush up on your math skills, you can get a GED Math book. Go to your local library to find materials that you can use for free or get information on where you can buy the books you need. Staff can also help you find the books that match your skill level. (See the back of this booklet for contact information for the library near you).



Some libraries also have some videos/DVDs and books to help you learn. There are three instructional programs available in libraries:

GED Connection; Workplace Skills, and TV411.

You can also watch these series on your local and cable TV. To find out if you can watch them in your area, visit www.thirteen.org/edonline/adulted/index.html.

Internet

Westchester Library System has created a website specifically for people who are getting ready for the GED exam. The website includes links to sites to help you improve your skills in specific areas as well as complete courses that cover all five GED tests.

You will also find several practice tests. Visit the GED website at www.firstfind.org/ged.

You can link to this website with any computer connected to the Internet. You can always visit your local library to use a computer and to get help from library staff. There is no charge.



Preparing for the Test by Enrolling in a Program

If you think it makes more sense for you to attend a GED program, here is a list of places that offer instruction, with hours and contact information:

Educational Opportunity Center of Westchester (EOC)

26 South Broadway, Yonkers, NY 10701

Phone: (914) 606-7600

Monday – Thursday, 9:00am – 4:30pm

Mount Vernon Continuing Education

161 Gramatan Avenue, Mount Vernon, NY 10550

Phone: (914) 358-2586

Wednesday, 8:00am – 3:00pm

Putnam/Northern Westchester BOCES

200 BOCES Drive, Yorktown Heights, NY 10598

Phone: (914) 248-2408

Monday – Friday, 8:30am – 3:30pm

Southern Westchester BOCES, Center for Adult and Community Services

65 Grasslands Road, Valhalla, NY 10595

Phone: (914) 345-8500

Monday – Friday, 8:30am – 4:30pm

White Plains Adult and Continuing Education

Rochambeau School

228 Fisher Avenue, White Plains, NY 10606

Phone: (914) 422-2357

Monday - Friday, 9:00am – 4:30pm

Yonkers Pathways to Success

75 Riverdale Avenue, Yonkers, NY 10701

Phone: (914) 376-8612

Monday – Friday, 8:30am – 3:30pm

Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, 6:00pm – 9:00pm

Practicing for the Exam

The best way to know if you're ready to take the GED Exam is to first do some practice testing. Here are some things you'll find out from taking practice tests:

- ▶ What the real tests will be like.
- ▶ What the directions and answer sheets look like on the real tests.
- ▶ Where your strengths and weaknesses are.
- ▶ What taking timed tests is like and how well you do keeping within the time limits of the different tests.
- ▶ How well you are apt to do on the real tests. (Scores you get on the practice tests should be within a few points of the scores you will get on the real tests.)

Here are some ways that you can take a practice exam:

- ▶ You may be able to take the Official GED Practice Test at your **local GED Testing Center** or if you are enrolled in a GED program. Contact any of the programs on page 28 for more information.
- ▶ Another way to practice is to take what are called the “full-length” or “simulated” **practice tests found at the end of many of the GED preparation books**. The answers to the tests are given in the book so that you can score your own test. Following the tests, there's usually a chart where you can record the number of questions you got right and what your total score is. There may also be a suggestion about whether you are ready to take the real GED tests, or whether you should do some more studying first. In any case, if the book doesn't tell you the value of your score, here's a “rule of thumb” to go by: If you answer 7 out of every 10 questions correctly (about 70%), you are probably ready to take the real test.

▶ **On the Internet!**

Here are a few links to FREE practice tests online:

***Steck-Vaughn* Online GED Practice**

www.gedpractice.com

Gedpractice.com is a free service provided by Steck-Vaughn to familiarize you with the types of items you will see on the actual GED exam.

4 Tests

www.4tests.com

This site will allow you to do some practice questions on each section of the GED exam.

***Contemporary* Online Learning Center**

Contemporary, a publisher of adult education books, has a free set of web pages, which may be used independently, or with *Contemporary* textbooks. *Contemporary* also has online GED instruction, chapter outlines, chapter reviews, GED exam questions and practice tests. No password or email address is needed.

- ▶ Language Arts/Writing Test: www.gedwriting.com
- ▶ Social Studies Test: www.gedsocialstudies.com
- ▶ Science Test: www.gedscience.com
- ▶ Reading Test: www.gedreading.com
- ▶ Math Test: www.gedmath.com

Remember that you can also find links to GED practice tests and study guides at the Westchester Library System's GED website: www.firstfind.org/ged.

Taking the GED Exam in New York State

You May Take the GED Exam IF

- ▶ You are not currently in high school, *and*
- ▶ You have not graduated from high school, *and*
- ▶ You are at least age 16-years-old and attended school through the end of the school year in which you turned 16, *and*
- ▶ You are a legal resident of New York State.

There are special requirements for taking the GED Exam if you are under 19 years of age.

If you are 16 years old:

- ▶ You must be enrolled in an Alternative High School Equivalency Preparation (AHSEP) program. Verification Form (www.emsc.nysed.gov/ged/docs/attch-c.pdf) - must be completed by an official from an approved AHSEP program.

If you are 17 or 18 years old, you must meet one of the following requirements:

- ▶ One year has passed since you were legally able to leave school and you were enrolled in a regular full time high school program that year. When you submit an application to take the GED exam, you must include a Verification Form (www.emsc.nysed.gov/ged/documents/attch-b.pdf) that was completed by an official of the school district you last attended.
- ▶ You were a member of a high school class that has already graduated. When you apply to take the GED exam you must include a copy of a Verification Form (www.emsc.nysed.gov/ged/documents/attch-b.pdf) that must be completed by an official of the school district you last attended.

OR

- ▶ You are enrolled in an approved Alternative High School Equivalency Preparation (AHSEP) Program. When you apply to take the GED exam you must include a copy of a Verification Form (www.emsc.nysed.gov/ged/docs/attch-c.pdf) that must be completed by an official from an approved AHSEP program.

OR

- ▶ You have applied to the U.S. Armed Forces, college, university or an accredited postsecondary institution. When you apply to take the GED exam, you must include a copy of a Verification Form (www.emsc.nysed.gov/ged/documents/newattch-d.pdf) that must be completed by a recruiting officer or college/university admissions official.

OR

- ▶ You have been a participant in a Job Corps program for at least six (6) months. When you apply to take the GED exam you must include a copy of a Verification Form (www.emsc.nysed.gov/ged/documents/newattch-d.pdf) that must be completed by a Job Corps official.

OR

- ▶ You are a resident confined to a narcotics addiction control center, Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) facility, jail or Department of Correctional Services (DOCS) facility, or a patient in a hospital in New York. When you apply to take the GED test you must include a copy of a Verification Form (www.emsc.nysed.gov/ged/docs/attch-e.pdf) that must be completed by an official of the facility/institution certifying that you are confined to the facility or institution and the HSE diploma is an essential part of the rehabilitation process.

You can find and print copies of each form at the New York State GED Testing Office website at www.emsc.nysed.gov/ged

How Do I Apply to Take the Exam?

There is no cost to take the GED exam in New York State. You can take the test several times if you need to.

First, you need to fill out and submit the necessary applications:

1. **Complete Application for GED Testing** (Attachment A can be found at www.emsc.nysed.gov/ged/docs/attch-a.pdf). Bring or send the application to one of the following local GED test centers. You can also contact the site for a schedule of when the exam will be given.

Educational Opportunity Center of Westchester

26 South Broadway
Yonkers, NY 10701
Monday, Tuesday, Thursday
1:30pm – 9:30pm
Wednesday and Friday
9:00am – 5:00pm
(914) 606-7630

White Plains City School District

Rochambeau School
228 Fisher Avenue
White Plains, NY 10606
Monday – Friday
9:00am – 4:30pm
(914) 422-2333

Putnam/Northern Westchester BOCES

Tech Center, Room 202
200 BOCES Drive
Yorktown Heights, NY 10598
Monday – Friday
8:30am – 3:30pm
(914) 248-2417

Note: There are eligibility requirements at Putnam/Northern Westchester BOCES. Please call BOCES for more information.

Yonkers Pathways to Success

Send application to:
75 Riverdale Avenue
Yonkers, NY 10701
Monday – Friday
8:00am – 3:00pm
(914) 376-8600

Note: Pathways GED exams are given at the Firefox School
1061 N. Broadway
Yonkers, NY 10701

2. Everyone must complete the Application (Attachment A) for GED Testing. If you are under 19 you must also complete and include other applications described in the previous section. All applications are available at the GED testing sites and at the State GED Testing Office website at www.emsc.nysed.gov/ged.

For more information on GED in New York State, contact the New York State GED Testing Office at (518) 474-5906 or on the web at: www.emsc.nysed.gov/ged

What are the Requirements for Passing the Exam?

- ▶ When you take the test for the first time, you must take all five parts of the test at once.
- ▶ You must receive a minimum standard score of 410 on each of the five tests, an average passing score on all five tests of 450 or more, and a total minimum passing score of 2,250.
- ▶ All testing records are forwarded to the New York State GED Testing Office. When requirements for issuance of a diploma have been met, a New York State High School Equivalency Diploma will be issued by the New York State Education Department.

If You Do Pass the Exam:

Your New York State High School Equivalency Diploma will be mailed to you. It may take up to two months to receive your diploma.

Need a copy of your GED diploma or transcripts? You must complete a form and send a check or money order to the New York State GED Testing Office. Information about where to send the application and how much to send can be found on the form, available online at www.emsc.nysed.gov/ged/documents/attach-h.pdf.

What If I Don't Pass All Five Tests?

The GED Testing Office in New York State permits GED candidates to try again to pass tests that they did not pass the first time. This is called re-testing.

- ▶ You can re-test up to three times per subject (called subtest) per year (January 1 to December 31). For instance, if you do not pass the math test the first time, you can take it two more times during the calendar year.
- ▶ You are not required to pass all five subtests in the same year.
- ▶ If you're having difficulty passing a particular test, you may take skills improvement and GED test preparation classes at local school districts. You can also find a tutor, and purchase or check out the books or other resources at your local library.
- ▶ You can also watch educational programs on television at home. Thirteen/WNET New York (www.wnet.org) offers three series for adult learners: **TV411** and Workplace Skills (skills review) and **GED Connection** (test preparation).



Other Ways to Get an Equivalency Diploma or High School Diploma in New York

College Credit Program

You can also get a New York State High School Equivalency Diploma if you enroll in course work at an approved institution such as Westchester Community College. To earn the degree, you must complete 24 credits (usually 6 courses) as a recognized candidate for a degree or a certificate. For example, you may be part of a Telecommunications Technology program at the college.



To qualify for this diploma, you must enroll in classes that cover the subjects in the five tests on the GED. You must complete classes in language arts, math, science and social studies. For more information about these requirements and how to apply for a New York State High School Equivalency Diploma see www.emsc.nysed.gov/ged/docs/atth-j.pdf

External Diploma Program (EDP)

If you are 21 or older, you can participate in a special program that enables you to get a high school diploma by demonstrating your knowledge and experience through a series of tasks and projects. You may work at your own pace, completing most of the work in the privacy of your own home.

This program is offered by the Yonkers Pathways to Success and is open to any New York State resident who is at least 21 years of age and does not have a high school diploma.

To enroll in the EDP program you must first take the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE). When you achieve a score of 9.0 in both the reading and math, as well as pass a writing assessment, you become eligible for the EDP program.

You will then meet with an EDP counselor who will work with you one-to-one to complete 64 competences that are divided into 5 tasks. Assignments must be completed weekly. When you've completed all five booklets you are awarded a high school diploma from the Yonkers Public School District. **Remember, you are not required to live in Yonkers to enroll in this program.**

There is no cost to enroll in the External Degree Program. Call (914) 376-8600 to schedule an appointment with an EDP counselor.



Last But Not Least

Test-Taking Tips

Read the instructions carefully before starting each test.

- ▶ Don't get hung up on reading something over and over again if you don't understand it. You're better off moving on to the next reading or question and getting right what you do understand. Remember, some of the easier questions may come toward the end of the test!
- ▶ Don't spend too much time on one answer! The time averages out to **less than two minutes** for each question. And that *includes* the time it takes you to get through the readings that come before the questions!
- ▶ Take quick notes or draw a simple picture or diagram to help you figure out something that seems complicated. You will be given scratch paper to do this.
- ▶ It's okay to skip questions, but make sure you skip them on the answer sheet also. Remember if you finish the test ahead of time, you can go back and try to answer, or at least guess at, the questions you skipped. Whatever you do, **do not leave any answers blank**.
- ▶ On a lot of multiple-choice tests, where you have five answers to choose from, there are usually two, if not three, answers that make no sense in terms of what you've just read. If you can spot these and eliminate them, you will have fewer answers to choose from. It's a test taking skill called the "**process of elimination**." If you don't understand the idea, try to read more about it in the GED preparation books.



- ▶ Remember the common sense lesson you probably learned as a young child: if you don't ask the right question, you'll never come up with the right answer. In other words, make sure you know what the question is asking before you choose an answer.
- ▶ Read carefully the information the GED test center sent to you so that you'll know what to bring with you the day of the test —don't forget your picture I.D.!
- ▶ Get a good night's sleep and have a good breakfast.
- ▶ Bring your lunch with you, just in case you don't get enough time during the lunch break to shop around for some place to eat.
- ▶ Bring a watch — just in case there's no clock in the room, or so that you won't have to spend time looking up at the wall if there is a clock in the room.



Appendix: Mike's Ten Tips for Taking the Math Test

1 Tip 1: Watch Your Time!

Why? Because you will be timed. You will have **90 minutes** to solve **50 problems**. That gives you less than two minutes to do each problem. You should try and read each problem in about $\frac{1}{2}$ minute or 30 – 45 seconds. That leaves you about $1\frac{1}{2}$ minutes to work the problem. That's enough time to solve most problems. If you want to read the problem a second time, make it quick.

Practice: Practice reading through some problems from the GED Math practice tests or exercise books. Don't try to solve the problem. This is a reading exercise only.

- ▶ You will be timing yourself, but you don't have to keep track of the time it took you to read each problem unless you want to. For example, you can read ten problems and keep track of the total time it took you to read the ten problems.
- ▶ Did you finish reading the ten problems in about 5 – 7 minutes? If you did, great! If not, you should discuss this with your teacher.
- ▶ If you want to time how long it takes you to read each question, it's a good idea to practice this exercise with another student. You can time each other. That way, you won't have to be looking at your watch while you are reading.



2 Tip 2: Know What You Know and Don't Know

Why? Because you don't want to waste time trying to work a problem that you're not sure how to work. It is better to skip the problem and come back to it later. Just make sure you skip it on the answer sheet. Remember, some of the easiest problems may come at the end of the test. You don't want to miss out on the chance to do these easier problems. It could mean the difference between passing and failing the test.

Practice: You should practice reading through some problems from the GED Math practice tests or exercise books. Don't try to solve the problem. This is a reading exercise only. You also do not need to keep track of time.

- ▶ Select ten problems. Read each problem. If you think to yourself, "I'm pretty sure I can do this one," write "Y" for yes. If you think to yourself, "This one's got me stumped," write "N" for no.
- ▶ This exercise will give you an idea of about how many problems you think you can do out of the total number you have selected. Your goal is 7 out of 10 or 70%. If your number of "This one's got me stumped" is more than six, you need to talk with your teacher about this.
- ▶ Now that you have completed the reading exercise, go ahead and work the "I'm pretty sure I can do this one" problems to see how you do.

3

Tip 3: Get Whole Number Problems Out of the Way First

Why? Because word problems that only ask you to add, subtract, multiply, or divide whole numbers are, in most cases, easier to do than problems that involve decimals, fractions, percents, geometry or algebra. They are also problems that have more to do with everyday life.

About half of the problems on the test, if not more, will be about whole numbers, and you want to make sure that you get all of these problems done before you run out of time.

Remember, some of the easiest problems may come at the end of the test. You don't want to miss out on the chance to do these easier problems. It could mean the difference between passing and failing the test.

Practice: Using some practice tests or book tests, look over all of the problems quickly. Check the problems you think have to do with everyday life. For example, you go into a store and buy \$17.45 worth of items. You have a coupon worth \$.75, and the sales tax is \$1.34. How much change will you get back if you give the clerk a \$50 bill?

You only have to add and subtract to solve this problem. Get the problem done, get it out of the way, and move on! Just remember, if you move around through the test looking for and working the easier problems first, you've got to be very careful to place your answers in the box that matches the question you are working on. After you have finished working the whole number word problems, you may want to use this skill to select other problems to work on that you think are easy. Let's say you think measurement and decimal word problems are easy for you to do, and you spotted three or four of them while you were doing the whole number word problems. Go back and find them, get the problems done, and move on!

4 Tip 4: Picture Yourself in the Problem

Many of the questions on the GED are about everyday life. That means your life too, so put yourself into the problem. For example, if the problem is about some guy named Joe going into a music store to buy some CD's, forget about Joe. Picture *yourself* going into the store. You already know what to expect. You're going to pay for the CDs. You're going to pay a sales tax (percent). You're going to pay the cashier, and you may or may not be getting some change back unless you charge it.

You can practice this skill. Just look for some problems in the GED practice tests or GED books where the problem is about someone else. Picture yourself instead. Use your imagination!

5 Tip 5: Take Some Time to Think

Did you ever measure anything? Did your GED teacher tell you the same thing five different times about reducing fractions? Did your GED class work out a problem together? Think about it!

Don't expect the math you need to work out a problem to just pop out of your brain in ten seconds. That doesn't happen to most people no matter how smart they are. So give yourself a little time to think, or maybe even a little breather, before you attack that problem you just read. It takes time to remember something!

Practice this skill a little. How can you do that? Think about it!

6 Tip 6: Save Up Those Extra Seconds

Having some spare time to work or look over the problems that gave you a hard time is like having money in the bank. How do you do that? By not wasting a second of time on the problems you do know how to do. Every second counts!

A 90-minute test with 50 questions gives you less than two minutes to work each problem. Of course, some problems will take you only one minute to do, while other problems may take you four or five minutes to do.

Let's say you take only 1-½ minutes to work 20 of the fifty problems. That leaves you with 10 extra minutes "in the bank" to spend on those problems that take four or five minutes to do.

Try this. Pick out 10 whole number word problems from a practice test or GED book that you know you can do without any difficulty. Work the problems as quickly as you can and time yourself.

If you worked the problems in less than 20 minutes time, great! You've banked a few extra seconds to work on that difficult algebra or geometry problem. If you didn't beat the 20-minute time, try again. You can work the same problems or pick ten new ones. If you took more than 25 minutes, you should talk with your teacher about this.

You may want to try this exercise with another student. There's nothing wrong with a little healthy competition, and it could be fun.

10 Tip 10: Missing Information

If you are a careful reader and think you are pretty good at math, especially whole number word problems, you may find yourself scratching your head after reading a problem. Guess what? There's a good chance you've been tricked. Some problems will leave out some information you need to work the problem.

For example, Ellen wants to buy five tickets to the basketball game. Each ticket costs \$12 plus sales tax. How much will the tickets cost Ellen? Scratching your head? That's because you weren't given the information on how much the sales tax is.

Good Luck!

