

The GED® Test

History of the GED® Test

In the United States, almost 1 in 5 adults, more than 39 million individuals, lacks a high school credential. The GED® test, established in 1942, has assisted over 18 million adults in earning their high school credential.

The GED® test was initially developed in 1942 by the United States Armed Forces Institute (USAFI) to provide military personnel and veterans an opportunity to demonstrate achievement comparable to that of high school graduates. In the 1950s, non-veterans were also allowed to take the test and the GED Testing Service® was established.

There have been five generations of the GED® test: 1942, 1978, 1988, 2002, and the new test in 2014. Each new generation of the GED® test has been the result of the identification of specific areas of need or changes in assessment that strengthens the test and ensures its validity and credibility in an ever changing world.

Reasons for Taking the GED® Test

The reason adults take the GED® test has changed since the test's inception. In the 1940s through the 1960s, most people took the test for employment reasons. Today, over two-thirds of all examinees indicate that they are taking the test to pursue postsecondary education and training. Approximately one in seven high school diplomas awarded annually is a GED® diploma.

Benefits of the GED® Test

Obtaining a GED® credential provides students with opportunities otherwise unavailable to them. Passing the GED® test opens the door for adults to continue their education and transition to postsecondary education and training programs. According to the College Board, 95 percent of U.S. colleges and universities accept GED®

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“Imagination is everything. It is the preview of life’s coming attractions.”

Albert Einstein

graduates who meet their other qualifications for admission.

A GED® credential also documents that students have college- and career-ready skills. According to recent studies, approximately 96 percent of all U.S. employers accept the GED® credential as equal to a traditional high school diploma.

Overview of 2014 GED® Test

Changes in the landscape of education and the workforce required a new GED® test. The purposes of the 2014 GED® test are to provide:

- A high school equivalency credential that continues to remain meaningful for adult learners, employers, and institutions
- Evidence of readiness to enter workforce training programs or postsecondary education and the workplace
- Information about a candidate's strengths and areas of developmental need

The 2014 GED® test has four content-area assessments. The following are the different content area assessments and the time provided for taking each content area on the 2014 GED® test:

- Reasoning through Language Arts – 150 minutes, including a 10 minute break
- Mathematical Reasoning – 115 minutes
- Science – 90 minutes
- Social Studies – 90 minutes

Each of these content-area assessments measures a foundational core of knowledge and skills, as well as practices. The assessment targets for the 2014 GED® test are derived from the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and similar career- and college-readiness standards in place in Texas and Virginia.

Common Core State Standards

The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) were developed through a state-led national initiative to establish consistent and clear education standards for English language arts and mathematics that would better prepare American students for success in college, career, and the competitive global economy. The initiative is sponsored by the National Governors Association (NGA) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO). Forty-five of the fifty states have adopted the standards. The state of Florida adopted the standards for the K-12 system in July 2010.

The Common Core State Standards form the basis of the skills necessary to successfully pass the GED® test. Additional information on the assessment targets for the GED® test is available in the next segment of the **Florida's Instructor Handbook for GED® Preparation**.



Resources

For additional information on Common Core State Standards, access the standards at:

- Common Core State Standards
<http://www.corestandards.org/>

College and Career Readiness Standards for Adult Education

Standards-based education provides a structured approach for state adult education agencies and local programs to create a system that explicitly links standards, assessments, and instructional delivery. The Office of Vocational and Adult Education (OVAE) has identified a set of college and career-readiness (CCR) standards in English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects and in the area of Mathematics. The Common Core State Standards were reviewed with a focus on identifying a set of content standards reflecting what is essential for adult students to know to be prepared for the rigors of postsecondary education and the workplace. These standards are being reviewed by the Florida Department of Education and the Common Core Advisory Committee for ABE program. The ABE curriculum frameworks will include the College and Career Readiness Standards in program year 2014-2015. The College and Career Readiness Standards for Adult Education Report were not used as a resource for the development of the GED® curriculum frameworks for 2013-2014.

More information on specific content areas of the standards will be covered in content-area chapters of the **Florida's Instructor Handbook for GED® Preparation**.

Computer-Based Testing

Computer-based testing is the standard for many different types of assessments in today's world. In fact, it is rapidly becoming the method of delivery for the K-12 system as well.

Computer-based testing is simple and easy to deliver. It allows for more consistent delivery, scoring, reporting, and security. Computer-based testing also improves access for students to the GED® testing program. Students have easy access to online registration and scheduling for the test, as well as instant score reports. Testing on a computer uses on-screen cues and directions to guide the test-taker through the process. Because The 2014 GED® test includes the latest standards in assessment development, a computer-based delivery platform was required to develop the various complex item types.

A tutorial for students is available on the GED Testing Service® website, as well as information on setting up a computer-based testing lab.



Resources

For additional information on computer-based testing, setting up a computer-based testing lab, and a tutorial for students, access the:

- 2014 GED® test on computer website
<http://www.gedtestingservice.com/educators/ged-test-on-computer>

Eligibility Requirements for the GED® Test

To take the GED® test in Florida, an individual must:

1. Be 18 years of age or older
2. Be a resident in Florida at the time of application.
3. Possess a State of Florida Identification Card or Florida Driver License
4. Apply for an Age Waiver if under the age of 18. Individuals ages 16 and 17 may be granted an Age Waiver according to the policies and procedures of the school district or college.

Question Types on the 2014 GED® Test

Because of the integration of computer-based testing, a variety of question types are used by the 2014 GED® test. The following is a chart that includes the different item types and the tests on which each is used.

Item Type	Overview	Content-Area Assessment
Multiple choice (MC)	This type of question will have four answer options from which to select the correct answer.	All
Drag-and-Drop	These types of questions are interactive and require that test-takers move small images, words, or short phrases to designated drop targets on a computer screen.	All
Drop-down selection types	These item types are multiple response options that are embedded directly within a text. A test-taker selects an option, and the answer will display on the screen as part of the text.	All
Fill-in-the-blank	This item type requires that a test-taker fill in single or multiple blanks.	All
Hot spot	These test items consist of a graphic image with virtual sensors so that the test-taker can navigate the image. This question type is useful in selecting data points on a graph or chart or creating a geometric model or mapping activities	Mathematical Reasoning, Social Studies, Science
Extended response (ER)	A 45-minute task on Language Arts and a 25-minute task on Social Studies, extended response items require that test-takers analyze one or more source texts and produce a writing sample.	Reasoning through Language Arts, Social Studies
Short answer (SA)	This item type requires that test-takers demonstrate an understanding of cognitively complex skills by composing a brief response, approximately a 10-minute task. Two short answer questions will be used on the GED® Science test.	Science



Resources

For additional information on the format of the test and item types, access the Assessment Guide for Educators, Chapter 1:

- GED Testing Service® website
<http://www.gedtesting.com/educators/assessment-guide-for-educators>

Content Area Tests

Reasoning through Language Arts

Reasoning through Language Arts focuses on three essential components, a test-takers ability to:

- read closely
- write clearly
- edit and understand the use of standard written English in context

The Reasoning through Language Arts test integrates the reading and writing process. Seventy-five percent of the texts in the exam are informational (including literary nonfiction and texts from workplace contexts), whereas, the other 25% are passages from literature. Texts average between 400 to 900 words per passage.

The reading and writing standards that are used in the Reasoning through Language Arts test are also measured in both the Social Studies and Science Test. The Reasoning through Language Arts test features: multiple choice items, several different types of technology-enhanced items, cloze items embedded in passages, and a 45-minute extended response item.

Social Studies

The GED® Social Studies Test focuses on the fundamentals of social studies reasoning in four content domains:

- civics and government – approximately 50%
- United States history – approximately 20%
- economics – approximately 15%
- geography and the world – approximately 15%

Key concepts assessed in social studies focus on two major themes:

- Development of modern liberties and democracy
- Dynamic responses in societal systems

The Social Studies Test features: multiple choice items, a variety of technology-enhanced items cloze items, and a 25-minute extended response item.

Science

The GED® Science Test focuses on the fundamentals of science reasoning in three content domains:

- life science – approximately 40%
- physical science – approximately 40%
- Earth and space science – approximately 20%

Key concepts assessed in science focus on two major themes:

- Human health and living systems
- Energy and related systems

Each item on the Science Test is aligned to one science practice and one content topic. The Science test features: multiple choice items, brief short answer items, a variety of technology-enhanced item types, and drop-down items.

Mathematical Reasoning

The GED® Mathematical Reasoning Test focuses on two major content areas:

- quantitative problem solving – approximately 45%
- algebraic problem solving – approximately 55%

The area of descriptive statistics and basic inference are embedded primarily in the Science and Social Studies Tests.

The Common Core State Standards include Standards for Mathematical Practice, which describe the types of behaviors in mathematics that are essential to mastering mathematical content. Modeling is one of the most important behaviors, which emphasizes applying mathematics to real-life situations as well as to academic problems in other fields of study.

The Mathematical Reasoning Test features: multiple choice items, a variety of technology-enhanced item types, and drop-down items. A virtual scientific calculator is embedded in the computer-based delivery platform, along with a formulas page for use by the test-taker.

Knowledge and Skills Required for the 2014 GED® Test

While the 2014 GED® test is organized into four separate content-area assessments, many of the skills cross different content areas. It is important that students have effective reading comprehension and information processing skills so that they can read and understand the material provided. These skills serve as core knowledge that is essential in critical thinking and problem solving. Another very important skill for the 2014 GED® test is the ability to interpret graphic-based information, such as charts, maps, graphs, diagrams, political cartoons, and photographs.

In the next segment of the *Florida's Instructor Handbook for GED® Preparation*, you will find information on assessment targets for the 2014 GED® test and Webb's Depth of Knowledge.



Resources

The following are resources for additional information on the GED Testing Service® and state contacts:

- GED Testing Service
<http://www.gedtestingservice.com>
- Career and Adult Education
Rod Duckworth, Chancellor
<http://www.fldoe.org/workforce/>
- Florida Adult Education
Zelda Rogers, Senior Educational Program Director
<http://www.fldoe.org/workforce/adulted/>
- Official site of the Florida Department of Education for the GED® test
Tara Goodman, GED Administrator™
<http://ged.fldoe.org/>
- Florida Adult Education Curriculum Frameworks
http://www.fldoe.org/workforce/dwdframe/ad_frame.asp