

CLIFFS

GED

WRITING SKILLS PREPARATION GUIDE

THE WRITING SKILLS TEST

The New High School Equivalency Examination

By Loraine J. Weber, M.A. and
William A. Covino, M.A.
Series Editor: Jerry Bobrow, M.A.

Written by testing experts

New GED question types

Usage and spelling reviews

Two full-length practice tests

Complete answers and explanations

Proven strategies

Cliffs
NOTES

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PREPARATION GUIDE

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PREFACE

We know that passing the GED Test Battery is important to you! And thorough preparation is the key to doing your best. Because of this, your study time must be used most effectively. With this purpose in mind, the Cliffs GED Test Preparation Series was developed by leading experts in the field of test preparation. These guides are the most comprehensive test preparation materials that you can realistically complete in a reasonable time. Each of the GED Guides is easy to use, direct, precise, and thorough, giving you the important information, tips, and strategies that you need to pass the GED. These strategies and techniques have been carefully tested and are presently used in test preparation programs at many leading universities and colleges.

This GED Guide is divided into five parts:

- PART I:** Introduction—a general description of the exam, recent format, questions commonly asked, and basic overall strategy.
- PART II:** Analysis of Exam Areas—focuses on ability tested, basic skills necessary, directions, analysis of directions, and suggested approaches with samples.
- PART III:** Assessment—a half-length Mini-Test to assess your strengths and weaknesses.
- PART IV:** Writing Skills Review—intensive review of the important areas including: spelling, punctuation and capitalization, usage and sentence structure, and logic and organization.
- PART V:** Practice-Review-Analyze-Practice—two complete full-length practice tests with answers and in-depth explanations.

The Mini-Test and each practice test are followed by analysis charts and score approximators to assist you in evaluating your progress.

These guides are not meant to substitute for comprehensive courses, but if you follow the Study Guide Checklist and study regularly, you will get the best test preparation possible.

STUDY GUIDE CHECKLIST

- 1. Read the GED information materials available at your local GED center. Check minimum score, age, and residence requirements.
- 2. Become familiar with the Test Format, page 3.
- 3. Read the General Description and Questions Commonly Asked about the GED Test Battery, starting on page 3.
- 4. Learn the techniques of A Systematic Overall Approach, page 6.
- 5. Carefully read Part II, Analysis of Exam Areas, starting on page 9.
- 6. Take the Mini-Test Assessment, starting on page 25.
- 7. Check your answers and analyze your results, page 38.
- 8. Fill out the Tally Sheet for Questions Missed to pinpoint your mistakes, page 40.
- 9. Review Spelling Rules and Words Commonly Misspelled, starting on page 47.
- 10. Take Extra Spelling Practice, starting on page 56.
- 11. Review Punctuation, starting on page 61.
- 12. Review Capitalization, starting on page 67.
- 13. Review Usage and Sentence Structure, starting on page 68.
- 14. Read Logic and Organization review section, starting on page 77.
- 15. Strictly observing time allotments, take Practice Test 1.
- 16. Check your answers and analyze your Practice Test 1 results, page 104.
- 17. Fill out the Tally Sheet for Questions Missed to pinpoint your mistakes, page 106.
- 18. Study ALL the Answers and Explanations to Practice Test 1, starting on page 107.
- 19. Review weak areas as necessary.
- 20. Strictly observing time allotments, take Practice Test 2.
- 21. Check your answers and analyze your Practice Test 2 results, page 137.
- 22. Fill out the Tally Sheet for Questions Missed to pinpoint your mistakes, page 139.
- 23. Study ALL the Answers and Explanations to Practice Test 2, starting on page 140.
- 24. Review weak areas as necessary.
- 25. Review How to Take the Test, starting on page 9.
- 26. Carefully read Final Preparation: "The Final Touches," page 147.

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PART I: Introduction

PART I: Introduction

FORMAT OF THE NEW GED WRITING SKILLS TEST

Time: 60 Minutes

80 Questions

CONTENT AREAS

Spelling	about 12½%
Capitalization and Punctuation	about 12½%
Usage	about 30%
Sentence Structure	about 30%
Logic and Organization	about 15%

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The GED Writing Skills Test lasts 1 hour (60 minutes) and consists entirely of multiple-choice questions. The test contains 80 questions focusing on the ability to use standard English clearly and effectively. The test questions are drawn from five categories: spelling, capitalization and punctuation, usage, sentence structure, and logic and organization. Usage and sentence structure questions comprise about 60% of the test with capitalization and punctuation, spelling, and logic and organization split approximately evenly in the remaining portion. The test is scored from 20 to 80 with all questions being of equal value.

QUESTIONS COMMONLY ASKED ABOUT THE NEW GED TEST BATTERY

Q: Who administers the GED Test Battery?

A: The GED Test Battery is administered by the GED Testing Service of the American Council on Education (ACE). The test development was conducted by Educational Testing Service with the guidelines drawn up by experienced secondary school educators.

Q: When are the GEDs given?

A: The tests are administered nationwide on a continuous basis. You can get administration dates and test locations by contacting your local GED testing centers, high schools, or adult schools.

Q: Are there any special editions of the GED?

A: Yes! Aside from the English version, the GED is also given in Spanish and French. There are also special large-print and/or tape-recorded editions for handicapped candidates.

Q: Do I have to take the complete battery of tests at once?

A: No! You may take one, two, three, four, or all five of the tests on the same day.

Q: Can I take the GEDs more than once?

A: Yes! You may take any or all of the tests more than once. But remember your plan is to pass on the *first* try.

Q: What is a passing score?

A: There are no national standards for the GEDs. Each state has established its own standards for passing the tests. In many cases you need only 40% correct to pass. The Appendix includes a chart to give you an indication of previous requirements. Each candidate should check the up-to-date policies in his or her specific state. It should be noted that some states require candidates to pass each test, while others require the average score of the tests to be passing.

Q: What grade level are the tests?

A: The tests are standardized to reflect the range of knowledge and ability of twelfth grade students who are certain to graduate.

Q: How are the *new* GEDs different from the *old* GEDs?

A: The new GED Test Battery was shortened from 10 hours to 6 hours with fewer questions in each test. The Social Studies and Science Tests now

include general knowledge questions and shorter reading passages. The Writing Skills Test, formerly the Test on Correctness and Effectiveness of Expression, now includes logic (not formal logic) and organization questions. The Reading Skills Test now draws more information from modern literature and everyday reading. The Math Test is basically the same.

Q: How should I prepare?

A: Understanding and practicing test-taking strategies will help a great deal, especially on the reading comprehension type questions. Subject matter reviews, by reviewing major concepts and important terminology, are invaluable. Both subject matter and strategies are covered in this book. Also many states offer preparation programs to assist students. Check with your local high school, adult school, or occupational center for further information.

Q: Should I guess on the tests?

A: Yes! Since there is no penalty for guessing, GUESS if you have to. If possible, first try to eliminate some of the choices to increase your chances of choosing the right answer.

Q: How and when should I register and where can I get more information?

A: This information is available from your local GED Testing Center, or write to General Educational Development, GED Testing Service of the American Council on Education, One Dupont Circle, Washington, D.C., 20036

A SYSTEMATIC OVERALL APPROACH

Many who take the GED don't get the scores that they deserve because they waste time on hard questions, leaving insufficient time to answer the easy questions. Don't let that happen to you. Use the following system to mark your answer sheet:

1. Answer easy questions immediately.
2. Mark a "+" next to the number of any question that seems solvable but very difficult. Go on to the next question.
3. Mark a "-" next to any question that seems impossible. Go on to the next question.

The strategy is to defer difficult and impossible questions. Act quickly. Don't waste time deciding whether a question is a "+" or a "-."

Your answer sheet should look something like this after you finish answering your easy questions:

1. ① ② ● ④ ⑤
2. ● ② ③ ④ ⑤
- +3. ① ② ③ ④ ⑤
4. ① ② ③ ④ ●
- 5. ① ② ③ ④ ⑤

Then go back and answer your difficult (+) questions. By now they may seem easier, after your mind has worked on other questions. Finally, use educated guesses to answer the impossible (-) questions. Remember, there is no penalty for guessing and it is unwise to leave any question unanswered.

Make sure to erase your "+" and "-" marks just before the end of the test, as stray marks on the answer sheet can confuse the scoring machine.

Practice this Systematic Overall Approach on the tests in this book, so it becomes a habit for the actual GED Writing Skills Test.

PART II: Analysis of Exam Areas

This section is designed to introduce you to each area of the GED Writing Skills Test by carefully reviewing the

1. Ability Tested
2. Basic Skills Necessary
3. Directions
4. Analysis of Directions
5. Suggested Approach with Samples

This section emphasizes important test-taking techniques and strategies and how to apply them to a variety of problem types. It also includes valuable terminology, a review of basic spelling, punctuation, and capitalization rules, a summary of the essential writing skills being tested, and a list of commonly misspelled words to assist you in your preparation.

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